



Athletic Handbook

Hilltop Christian School

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PHILOSOPHY

Athletics has been provided as an activity for competitive, athletic competition that, consequently, builds students' character, develops teamwork, and applies principles of godliness. Its level of priority falls below spiritual programs and academics. While planning, organization, and an attitude of excellence drive the administration of athletics, events do not take a higher place than church/school activities, and athletes' participation depends upon behavioral and academic criteria.

ATHLETIC PROGRAM

Hilltop Athletics competes within the North Carolina Christian School Association and offers the following sports:

Fall:

JV Girls Volleyball (7th-10th grades)
Varsity Girls Volleyball (7th-12th grades)
Varsity Boys Soccer (7th-12th grades)

Winter:

MS Boys Basketball (6th-8th grades)
JV Girls Basketball (7th-10th grades)
JV Boys Basketball (7th-10th grades)
Varsity Girls Basketball (7th-12th grades)
Varsity Boys Basketball (7th-12th grades)

Spring:

Varsity Girls Soccer (7th-12th grades)
Varsity Boys Baseball (7th-12th grades)

MISCELLANEOUS ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

HCS rules and regulations are determined largely through restrictions imposed by the North Carolina Christian School Association (NCCSA), which governs interscholastic athletics in the state of North Carolina for Christian schools. Some of the following rules are based on the restrictions for athletic recruitment into colleges. Pertinent eligibility rules include the following:

- A student must not have reached the age of 19 years, 7 months to be eligible for NCCSA varsity athletic competition.
- Students may participate in varsity sports a maximum of four seasons beginning with ninth grade enrollment. Participation involves any athlete who has played over one-half of the sport in season which shall be considered using that season of eligibility.
- Students legally transferred from another NCCSA school within a 50 mile radius shall be ineligible for the remainder of the school year unless the parents had a job-related move. Transfer students from non-NCCSA schools may not participate in an NCCSA game until 14 days after official enrollment.
- An athlete that is banned from another league is ineligible to play for one year in an NCCSA competition. After the year's suspension, a letter must be filed for admittance into the NCCSA.
- Students must meet all the attendance, academic, and other eligibility requirements established by the state and HCS.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Athletes must maintain a "C" average, having no grades below a "D." Students who do not meet the criteria when report cards come out will be placed on probation for a minimum of two weeks.
- During probation, athletes may practice with the team, but they may not participate in a game until probation has been lifted.
- An athlete will have a maximum of three weeks to bring his grade up to regulation status, and the principal will remove the athlete from probation.
- Before tryouts are finalized for any team sport, a list of players should be submitted to the teachers so the coach will know who does not qualify academically.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

Prior to a student's participation in practice or contests with a team, he/she must supply to the coach the following items:

- Current medical evaluation/sports physical form properly completed by a physician/nurse practitioner. Medical evaluations must be valid for the entire season. Medical evaluations are valid for one full year from the date of the physical.
- NCCSA waiver form signed by athlete and parent.
- Payment of any team-required clothing.

CONDUCT AND CITIZENSHIP

- HCS athletes and team members will be expected to display appropriate conduct and sportsmanship at all times throughout the season, both on and off the field. Specific violations might include, though are not limited to, fighting, theft, use of improper language, and misuse of school facilities and equipment. The conduct of individual athletes reflects on the entire team, the Athletic Department, HCS, and Christ. This certainly can contribute to the image and success of all of the above. Accordingly, exemplary behavior is a requisite for continued participation on all HCS athletic teams. It is important to note that in-class behavior will also be taken into consideration.
- At any time, an athlete not maintaining a Christian testimony on or off the field or in the classroom may be suspended or dismissed from the team. Detentions given to athletes will be served on Wednesdays when possible; however, an accumulation of detentions may result in an athlete serving on a practice date. An athlete who receives a detention that forces him to miss practice must serve that detention and accept the disciplinary measures consistent with the coach. Possible discipline may include extra running or a decrease in playing time in subsequent games.
- If an athlete receives a suspension from school, the student will be suspended from his team for the next game. Further action will be at the discretion of the administrator and/or athletic director. Any athlete or coach that is ejected from a game will be suspended for the next game. If the athlete or coach receives a second ejection, he will be suspended for two games. A third ejection will result in dismissal from the team and forfeiture of athletic privileges for the remainder of the school year.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- In order to participate in any athletic event or practice, athletes are expected to be in the stated number of their scheduled classes the day of the event. The principal or athletic director may excuse an athlete for pre-scheduled appointments, such as a driver's test, a court appearance, medical appointments, or unforeseen emergencies. A student who has any absence, other than those specified, may not practice or compete on that date. A student who violates the above policies or otherwise misses class due to an unexcused absence will not be allowed to compete in the next contest after the violation has been verified.
- An absence is considered arriving at school after 10:00 am or leaving before 12:00 noon.

ARRIVING LATE AND/OR MISSING PRACTICE

- Prompt, regular attendance at practice sessions is necessary for the safety and conditioning of the student as well as for the benefit of the team. Team members should notify their coach **PRIOR** to any practice that they must miss to offer an adequate explanation for the absence and determine whether the absence is excused.
- Excused absences may still result in diminished playing time in following games due to a player being less prepared for the upcoming contest as his teammates who were present at practice. Excused absences include but are not limited to sickness, bereavement, or an unavoidable doctor's appointment.
- Unexcused tardiness to practice will result in a punishment to be determined by each individual coach. (Ex: Extra laps or sprints)

EQUIPMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROPER CARE

- Most uniforms and equipment are assigned to student-athletes strictly on a loan basis for the duration of the sport season. It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to maintain that equipment/uniform in the same condition in which it was received. Any damage to or loss of the equipment/uniform will be considered the direct financial responsibility of the student-athlete who is responsible for its care. Any athlete withholding property from one sport is suspended from participating in any other sport until the equipment is returned. He/she is ineligible for any sport award until that equipment is returned. He/she will also not receive his/her student records at end of term or year.
- Student-athletes will be charged the replacement cost of any equipment or uniform not returned. This cost must be paid before participating in any other sport. Financial obligations must be settled with the coach, the athletic director, and the business manager.

EXPENSES AND FEES

Parents of athletes should expect the following fees and expenses throughout the course of the athletic seasons:

- There will be a fee of \$75.00 per sport assessed to the school bill of each participating athlete.
- Each sport may require the purchase of equipment and apparel necessary for competition which may include but is not limited to the following: baseball gloves, footwear, team socks, etc.
- Tournaments are sometimes played over the course of multiple days. Such events will require money for a hotel room (usually around \$25-\$30 per night).
- Away games usually require money for food at either the opposing school's concession stand or at a fast food restaurant following competition.
- Most schools, including ours, require payment upon entering a sporting event. Gate fees are usually no more than \$5 per person or \$10 per family. Athletes are free, but family members are not. Season passes are available in the school office for home games only.

ATHLETES' DRESS REQUIREMENTS

- Girls shirts must be loose and non-form clinging. Girls must be in modest dress at practice.
- Athletic clothing should be worn only in the gym building and on the athletic field, not in the main church building.
- Dress shirts and ties are required for boys basketball players on game days. All other sports have no game day dress codes. Some teams will change for games prior to departure depending on the sport and the preference of the coach.
- Cleats are not to be worn inside the gymnasium at any time.

SCHEDULING AND COMPETITION

- Schedules will be posted on the HCS website at www.hilltopchristianschool.com.
- Our goals in scheduling are to provide our athletes with games against teams who are both competitive and similar in philosophy to HCS. While these goals are sometimes not obtained, we try to consistently schedule with schools who have consistently met these two standards.
- The majority of HCS games involve teams within the North Carolina Christian School Association. Information regarding this conference can be obtained at www.nccsa.org.

PARTICIPATION ON OUTSIDE TEAMS

Students, while participating on a school team, are permitted to participate in other sports outside of school during the sport season. Such participation must meet the following criteria:

- The outside participation may not conflict with the sports schedule of the school, including tournament, regional, and state championship play. (Sports schedule includes games and practices.)
- A student who elects to participate on an outside team and does not participate on the school team during the designated sport's season is ineligible to represent his/her school in all meets and games that determine a tournament, regional, or state championship.

QUITTING

- A student may drop off the team any time before the first game without penalty. After that period of time no student may quit the team without penalty. There should be a strong sense of belonging to the team even when personal injuries would restrict the individual's participation in practices and games. An injured player is expected to be at all practices and games as if he were healthy.
- Any athlete who quits a team will sit out the following sports seasons. Coaches will also consider the athlete's history during the next year's tryouts. (Example: An athlete who quits basketball must sit out baseball that spring.)
- An athlete who leaves the team while on academic probation and does not return will be deemed to have quit.
- An athlete who quits will be removed from the team roster and forfeit any post-season rewards such as team pictures, letters, awards, etc.
- Exceptions to this rule would be for family hardships, severe injury, or serious academic problems. The athletic director and the administrator will decide any exceptions.

INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES

- HCS states that in the event schools are closed due to inclement weather conditions, all after-school activities are automatically cancelled. These after-school activities include practices, contests, meetings, or other events. Team members should make certain to contact their coach regarding interim or adjusted practice schedules. Only for a few special circumstances will this policy be voided. It is best to verify with the school or on the website for the day's activities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASS PARTICIPATION

- Athletes should not expect preferential treatment. Any student who has enrolled in physical education class will be expected to dress and participate in the daily activity. On the day of a contest, his/her participation may be limited if permission is granted by the physical education teacher.

TRANSPORTATION

- The majority of teams are transported to contests by HCS buses or vans while others are driven by coaches, parents, or other players.
- Away games will often require athletes to be dismissed from class prior to school dismissal. The time and pickup spot will be made known by the coach of each team or by homeroom teachers. We usually will allow teams to arrive at venues up to an hour prior to competition.
- Parents/guardians must sign a note or give verbal agreement to a coach in order to have their child ride with anyone besides official school transportation to or from games.

ATHLETIC RELATIONSHIPS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The best way to help your athlete is to provide encouragement and to be positive, both at home and in the stands. If there is a problem, have your child talk to his/her coach. If the problem is not resolved or if it is of a serious nature, then call the coach yourself. If no solution can be reached at that point, then call the athletic director to set up a meeting with all parties involved.

The Player-Coach Relationship:

The player-coach relationship is perhaps the most critical relationship in athletics. Unfortunately, a parent can have a pronounced effect on this very important and delicate relationship. While you may not agree with all decisions of a coach, how and when you express your feelings can have a distinct effect upon your child. If you express a negative opinion in the presence of your child, you need to remember that he or she will return to practice the next day and may carry with him or her your convictions. Your son or daughter will then have to interact with this coach. Receiving technical or strategic instruction at home may interfere and conflict with the instructional process at practice sessions and games. This may ultimately impede your son's or daughter's progress and affect his or her playing time or even winning a starting position.

The Parent-Coach Relationship:

In your role as a parent, you obviously love your child and are concerned about your child's welfare. You want the best for him or her. But an athlete can have only one coach. Allowing the coach to instruct and guide the team is crucial in many respects. Should you have any questions or concerns, do not approach the coach immediately at the conclusion of a contest. At this time, coaches have other responsibilities and it may be an emotional time. Call and make an appointment for a later time and approach this meeting in a calm and courteous manner.

The Parent-Player:

Some parents may try to live through their child's athletic efforts. Being positive and supportive is important, but adding pressure and unrealistic expectations can be extremely harmful. Allow your son or daughter to enjoy and grow from this valuable experience. In numerous national studies, it has been determined that most athletes participate for enjoyment or fun. Excessive pressure or expectations can alter this most fundamental reason for playing. When you do speak with your child after a contest, do not dwell on his or her play, how many points they scored, or if they started. Instead, first ask how the team did. Ask your son or daughter if he or she gave 100%.

Spectator-Cheerleader:

Cheerleaders/The Blue Crew try to infuse spirit into the fans/spectators and to lead them in selected cheers. Taking this responsibility into your own hands is not appropriate. Fans who leave the stands to direct cheers may often cause or lead to confrontations with the opponents. Following the cheerleaders' directions, therefore, is absolutely necessary at all athletic contests. The emotion and atmosphere at athletic contests can be very exciting, and the cheerleaders need to be allowed to direct and control this aspect of the event.

Athletic Chain of Command

At Hilltop Christian School, the following chain of command is in effect. If there are any questions or concerns involving some aspect of our athletic program, the athletes should first contact the appropriate coach. If there is no resolution, he or she would then go to the head coach, etc.

- Administrator
- Athletic Director
- Head Coach
- Assistant/JV Coaches
- Players

Involvement of Parents

- Parents may be asked to participate in the concession area or as a volleyball line judge during the course of a season.
- The coaching position is assigned by both the administrator and athletic director. Parents who have not been assigned this position are asked not to interrupt practices or attempt to coach during practices or games.
- In the event that a parent wishes to help coach or conduct practices, he/she must first contact the athletic director or administrator who will then decide if such a position is available.

Expectations for Spectator Behavior

- Applaud players for their efforts
- Accept the decisions of officials
- Appreciate participants for their commitment
- Support school personnel in conducting an orderly and spirited contest
- Maintain composure when things seem to go against your team
- Respect the rights of other spectators and opposing players
- Reward sportsmanlike behavior through cheering
- Focus attention on positive aspects of competition
- Encourage players by showing enthusiasm and positive recognition
- Demonstrate concern for the safety and welfare of athletes

Since athletics should be educational in nature, it is important that all parents demonstrate good sportsmanship and serve as role models for our athletes and students. Sportsmanship is an overt display of respect for the rules of sport and for all others. It also involves a commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity. HCS's attempt to encourage sportsmanship results in the following policies:

- There can be no vulgar or inappropriate language from our fans or spectators.
- Taunting or trash talking of our opponents and their cheerleaders cannot be tolerated.
- Spectators cannot enter the court or field during a contest.
- Fans should be supportive and positive. Cheering should be done for our team and not against our opponent.
- We should not impede or interfere with our opponent's cheerleaders from leading their cheers.
- In some specific sports such as basketball and volleyball, we should not yell at an opponent during a foul shot or as a player attempts to serve.
- School officials have the authority to remove a spectator from a contest for unruly or improper conduct. The individual may be removed for the duration of a particular contest or for any extended period of time depending on the severity or frequency of the improper conduct.
- Possession of intoxicants and/or illegal substances is prohibited. Smoking is also prohibited on HCS school grounds.

Responsibilities of an Athlete

Most coaches would expect an athlete to adhere to the following guidelines:

- An athlete needs to attend practice sessions consistently. This also includes weekend and holiday periods unless prior notice has been given and accepted.
- Players must be receptive to coaching.
- Team members are responsible for all issued uniforms and equipment.
- As a member of a team, an athlete must agree to and follow the team rules. Athletes need to remember that they are ambassadors and represent not only themselves, but also the coaching staff, school, and Christ.
- If injured, an athlete must report all injuries to the coach.

Responsibilities of the Coach

At HCS, a coach has the responsibility for the following:

- The selection of the team.
- The determination of the style of play, including the offensive and defensive philosophy.
- The teaching and instruction at practice sessions.
- The determination of who starts and how long an athlete plays in a contest.
- The decision of who plays in what position.
- The establishing of team rules.
- The selection of team captains.
- The communication with athletes and parents with respect to when practice sessions will be held, and when the sessions will start and finish.

PARTICIPATION AND SELECTING TEAMS

- It is important to understand that participation on an athletic team at HCS is a privilege and not a right.
- Being on and maintaining one's membership on a team means accepting all the responsibilities of an athlete. However, unlike recreation or intramural teams, equal or guaranteed playing time does not exist. In an effort to win, a coach will use players best suited to the conditions or demands of the contest at that time.
- Every coach has the responsibility and authority for selecting his or her team. The criteria for selecting the team are developed by the coach.
- It is also important to remember that there are no guarantees. Players from the previous year's JV team, for example, do not automatically make either the JV or varsity squad the following year. Having been a member of a team during the previous year or even being a senior does not ensure that an athlete will make the team.
- Parents should expect that every candidate will be treated fairly and given every consideration. Coaches are sensitive to feelings of disappointment, will handle the task as positively as possible, and will be available to answer athletes' questions. While we understand that being cut is disappointing for many athletes and even for their parents, we unfortunately cannot keep everyone. Anyone cut from a team is welcome to try out again next season or to try another sport. When parents and athletes understand and support the coach's decision, this difficult process becomes a less painful experience for all.
- Once cuts have been made, no returning HCS student may try out for the team. The only way a player is added is if a student enrolls after cuts and the coach still has space for the player. It is expected that all players are present during the try out period in order to be eligible for a team. No student may make a team unless prior approval has been given to miss the try out period.

PRACTICE SESSIONS AND GAMES

- Practice sessions are normally closed to spectators and there is a very sound reason for this. These sessions are the equivalent of a teacher's classroom and there is real, quality instruction taking place. Interruptions and interference to an athlete's concentration and focus in practice cannot be allowed any more than a disruption would be tolerated in an academic setting. Education in any setting cannot be compromised. Spectators at games, however, are very much encouraged. Positive and nurturing support of teams and athletes can be very helpful to performance in athletic contests.

At HCS, practice sessions:

- May last up to three hours.
- May start and end at different times due to the schedule of the coach or of our facilities. (Check with the coach for the specific times.)
- If the need arises to change the schedule for any reason, we will email parents as well as update our calendar on the school website.
- Will not be held when school is dismissed early due to inclement weather.
- Will not be held when school is not in session due to inclement weather.
- Will be limited on Wednesdays, Saturdays, holiday periods, during special school activities, or during Hilltop Church activities.

ATHLETIC AWARDS

Since the entire team is emphasized, all members of a team will receive some sort of acknowledgment. Each season should conclude with an awards ceremony which will be announced through the athletic department. Parents and friends are encouraged to be present.

Guidelines:

- Only athletes who finish the season still on the team roster will be recognized at the awards banquet.
- Varsity team members will receive a pin for each year of involvement. Junior Varsity teams will receive a certificate. Middle school teams will receive a certificate. Each team will also be given a limited amount of trophies to reward special accomplishments.
- An athlete who is placed on academic or behavioral probation at any point during that season will not be eligible for an individual award in that sport.
- Scholar Athletes- All athletes that maintain a 3.3 GPA are awarded a scholar athlete certificate at the end of the year. They must have played a varsity sport. They must have the 3.3 GPA at the end of the school year.
- High Scholar Athlete Award- given to the junior or senior boy and girl athlete with the highest academic grade point average. In the event of a tie, the award will be given to the athlete who has played the most seasons.
- Every year an athlete (possibly two athletes) at the varsity level is selected to receive the Charger Award. This award is presented to the athlete who best exemplifies the outstanding qualities and virtues represented in Christian testimony, scholastic achievement, and athletic ability. These athletes must not have been placed on academic or behavioral probation at any point during the year, and must be a Christian example both on and off the field.

RISKS OF ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

- In spite of protective equipment, and the supervision and sound instruction by our coaches, there are some risks associated with athletic participation. Injuries can and do occur. In extremely rare cases, death could also result. All athletes and parents need to be aware and understand this possibility. At HCS, we will do all that we can to ensure a safe and healthy environment for our athletes.

OFF-SEASON REQUIREMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

- Athletes may sometimes be given workouts or weightlifting guides to complete during the off-season. Such requirements vary by sport.
- Team or individual camps and clinics are sometimes offered by coaches during the off-season. Such events are typically funded by the parents or athletes. Fundraisers may be offered and organized by the coach to help with such expenses but usually do not cover them completely. While such events are strongly encouraged, they are not mandatory.