

# Washtenaw Christian Academy



## Athletic Handbook



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## **1. Introduction**

Welcome to the WCA Athletic Program. Through participation in our sports programs, it is our hope that every student athlete will develop a sense of teamwork, pride of accomplishment and respect for one another. The handbook is meant to be an informational guide for athletes, parents, coaches, booster club members and the school athletic staff. WCA athletics are sponsored by the school and guided by the rules of the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA).

## **2. Mission Statement**

The mission of the WCA Athletic Department is dedicated to providing a quality athletic program with a unique Christian atmosphere, which will promote a positive educational experience for the student athlete. It is our hope that participation in our athletic programs will nurture spiritual, physical, emotional and social growth while encouraging individual and team skill development.

## **3. Philosophy of Sports at WCA**

The Christian experience at WCA is centered in Jesus Christ. Our athletic program must be an extension of the educational and spiritual experience of our school. Coaches, parents and administrators have a unique and significant influence on our student athletes. The interaction of coaches, parents and student athletes in the sporting experience should have a positive effect on the way our children feel about themselves and those around them, improving self-esteem is an everlasting gift.

Exceptions to the norm necessitate such things as codes of conduct for student athletes, coaches and parents. However, we prefer to focus on the positive aspects of our program. Our immediate goals are to teach our student athletes to have fun in conjunction with their participation in athletics. We endeavor to teach them to play hard and fair, respect coaches, officials, parents, and opposing players and to win with humility and lose with grace. Our long term goal is to guide our student athletes to achieve success individually and, more importantly, as a member of a team.

Our entire athletic program must operate on all levels with common courtesy, patience, pride and respect. We embrace the following for our Athletic Program:

- The top priority of our athletic programs will always be the health, safety and welfare of our student athletes.
- We will demand that all coaches, parents, and student athletes exhibit respect and common courtesy towards each other, officials and our opponents.
- We will demand that our student athletes exhibit respect towards uniforms, athletic equipment, and athletic venues and use them exclusively for the purposes intended.
- We will strive to create a competitive atmosphere in which winning is valued but does not become the only priority.

- We will encourage our student athletes to be positive, promote the happiness of others around them, encourage others to do their best and be considerate of the weaknesses of others.
- We will endeavor to create an athletic culture that fosters appropriate competitiveness and teaches teamwork, discipline and perseverance.
- We will demand that our coaches, parents and student athletes control their emotions and tempers.
- We will strive to create an environment in which our student athletes feel a sense of pride in themselves and their team, treat others as they would wish to be treated and develop a sense that they are a part of something larger than themselves.
- We will recognize that participation in our athletic programs is a privilege, not a right, and teach our student athletes to be appreciative towards administrators, teachers, coaches, and parents whose hard work and dedication make it possible for them to engage in athletic competition.

As sports men and women with Christ as our example, we want to operate our sports programs with the highest integrity. Our programs will strive to be honorable, not just honest. Our programs will reflect that its membership is composed of “people of Christ” with convictions, with boldness to try, compassion to comfort, patience to wait, persistence to endure and the poise to compromise.

#### **4. General Policies/Primary Objectives**

The purpose and function of athletics at WCA is to encourage, model and teach sportsmanship in a learning Christian environment.

Athletic administrators, Booster Club members, coaches and parents must be dedicated leaders and teachers of our student athletes. Specifically, our educational objectives are as follows:

- To teach the game and impart an understanding of the sport including rules, positions, offense and defense, equipment, and terminology.
- To teach the importance of teamwork and to impart a feeling that the success of the team is more important than individual accomplishment.
- To teach the importance of participation in practice and the essential nature of game preparation.
- To teach that it is imperative that league, team and program rules be followed.
- To teach respect for equipment, uniforms and athletic venues.

- To teach that it is acceptable to be appropriately competitive, and that to strive for individual improvement and to endeavor to win as a team are laudable goals.
- To teach that winning is never the only goal or the most important goal.
- To teach the essential nature of sportsmanship in the context of both victory and defeat.

We believe that athletics is a microcosm of life. We believe that the lessons to be learned through participation in our athletic programs can help to instill character traits that will serve our student athletes as they move through adolescence into their adult lives. In general we believe it to be an essential part of our function to use athletics at WCA as a mechanism through which we can help teach our student athletes the value of competitiveness, teamwork, perseverance, patience, discipline, persistence, loyalty, and sportsmanship.

## **5. Sports Opportunities at WCA**

The availability of athletic programs at WCA is based on student interest, program coordinator or coach availability and funding. Programs listed may be subject to change based on input from the WCA Athletic Department and School Administration.

### **A. Fall Sports**

- a. Girls Volleyball**
- b. Boys Soccer**
- c. Middle School Soccer**
- d. Girls Golf**
- e. Cross Country**

### **B. Winter Sports**

- f. Girls Basketball**
- g. Boys Basketball**
- h. Cheerleading**
- i. Boys Wrestling**

### **C. Spring Sports**

- j. Boys Baseball**
- k. Girls Soccer**
- l. Girls Softball**

## **6. Academic Requirements**

It is the policy of the WCA Athletic Department that student athletes emphasize academics as a priority over their participation in any athletic endeavor. It is crucial that students make classroom work, homework and their academic progress the top priority. Involvement in WCA Athletic Program never exempts a student from homework or study and can never be used as an excuse for failing to complete assignments in school.

### **Sports Eligibility:**

In keeping with that principle an athlete is a student first and must maintain an overall “C” average, must not have a failing grade in any subject, and must show acceptable citizenship to participate in athletics.

Eligibility checks will take place weekly beginning the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of each grading period. Athletes must be passing all classes. In addition athletes must maintain a 2.0 GPA, which will be checked at the end of each nine-week grading period. A one game minimum ineligibility will be enforced for all athletes not meeting eligibility standards.

The Administrator has the discretion to alter the consequences of the ineligible student. A third ineligibility in a year will result in the player being dismissed from the team for the balance of the year.

For fall sports, eligibility will be based on the student’s second semester grades.

### **Other Requirements:**

1. A student must be enrolled at WCA to participate on a WCA sports team.
2. All student athletes must comply with all preliminary requirements including the submission of all registration materials including registration forms, physical/medical forms, player contracts, team contracts, parental consent forms, and release and indemnity forms.
3. All student athletes must pay any and all applicable participation fees before being allowed to play in any games.
4. No student will be allowed to drive themselves to or from a game unless prior permission is given by the AD. This practice will not be encouraged.

## **7. Tryout Policy**

It is the goal of the WCA Athletic Program to structure our teams in a manner that allows for maximum participation of all student athletes. We will strive to allow every student athlete the opportunity to be a part of a team in the sport of their choice. WCA through its administration, Athletic Director, and coaches, reserves the right to deny participation to any student athlete for "good cause". Good cause includes but is not limited to the health and safety of the individual student athlete, the health and safety of other participants and/or opponents, and the failure on the part of an individual student athlete to adhere to the requirements for participation as outlined in this handbook and/or by an individual coach.

Throughout the course of each school year every sport is reviewed to determine the number of teams that can be entered into competition at all levels of participation. Depending on the number of student athletes who wish to participate it may be necessary to divide student athletes in a given grade between an A Team and a B Team. The respective coaches are empowered to make judgments and decisions as to which players will participate on a given A Team or B Team. The head coach of each team is empowered with the authority to make a final decision as to the distribution of players. In the event there are insufficient coaches to handle the number of student athletes who try out, the head coach may require limited participation to a reasonable team roster.

Coaches are directed to make decisions as to the assignment of players to A Teams or B Teams based on merit/talent exclusively. Placement on an A Team or B Team is for the upcoming season only, and will be fairly re-evaluated annually. There will be no preference or priority extended to a student athlete because of their designation in previous years.

We recognize that there will occasionally be disagreement between coaches and student athletes/parents as it relates to assignment of players to A Teams or B Teams respectively. We also recognize that the assessment of relative merit/talent of student athletes is subjective. We request that parents respect the decisions made by the coaches and trust that those decisions have been made in good faith and with fair-mindedness.

The decisions of the coaching staff as to the distribution of players among A Teams or B Teams is final.

## **8. Practice Policy**

Practice is essential for the development of individual student athletes and to the success of the team. It is imperative that our student athletes participate regularly in formal practice sessions in order to obtain rudimentary knowledge of the game and master fundamental skills necessary to protect their safety and the safety of their teammates. Additionally, practice time and space throughout the WCA Athletic Program are always at a premium. As a result of the foregoing players in all sports are expected to attend all practices scheduled by the coaching staff. Players must contact coaches in advance if they cannot attend practice.

Excused absences from practice may or may not affect the playing time a student athlete receives in any given game. These decisions will be left to the exclusive discretion of the coaching staff.

Unexcused absences will affect playing time and may result in a student athlete being precluded from participating in a game entirely. These decisions will be left to the exclusive discretion of the coaching staff.

Because of the limited practice time available student athletes are strongly encouraged to practice on their own to enhance their development and improve their skills.

## **9. Game Policy**

Athletics are competitive. Reasonable efforts are made by student athletes and their coaches to achieve team success through victory. Winning is a goal. It is not the only goal nor is it the most important goal. However, because team success is important playing time can be dictated by the competitive circumstances of a given team in any sport.

- Junior High Sports
  - All student athletes will play an equal amount of time, as much as possible.
- Junior Varsity
  - All student athletes will be given some game time, in each game, as much as possible.
- Varsity
  - Playing time will be determined by the Head Coach.

## **10. Selection of Coaches**

The selection of all coaches is the responsibility of the Athletic Director, with the approval of the Head Administrator and the School Board.

## **11. Sportsmanship**

The WCA Athletic Program demands that all coaches, parents, and student athletes exhibit good sportsmanship at all times. All student athletes should be guided by the overriding principle that the team is of primary importance and that the good of the team will take precedence over individual goals and desires. Understanding this as the basic construct in which the WCA Athletic Program function we also require the following of our student athletes:

- To accept and understand the seriousness of your responsibility to your teammates, the privilege of representing Christ, school, community, and your family.
- To learn the skills and rules of the game thoroughly and to discuss them with teammates, parents, friends, and fellow students.
- To treat opponents in a manner that you would like to be treated.
- To refrain from making negative and/or derogatory remarks to your opponents before, during and after games.
- To congratulate your opponent in a sincere and forthright manner following the game regardless of the team's success or failure.
- To respect the integrity and judgment of the game officials. The officials are human and will make mistakes. They are a necessary part of the game you are playing and they are doing their best to officiate the contest honestly and fairly.
- To win with humility and to experience defeat with grace, and to endeavor to do both with dignity.

## **12. Physical Exam**

All student athletes participating in athletics must have a current physical examination form on file with the athletic director's office. This form must be dated after April 15 of the previous school year. This form must certify that the student athlete is able to participate in athletics.

Parents must be certain to notify respective coaches of any physical or medical issues and needs that relate to the participation of a particular student athlete.

These forms will be held on file by the athletic department during the current school year and will be returned upon request of the parents.

## **13. Uniforms and Equipment**

Student athletes and their parents are responsible for all uniforms and/or athletic equipment issued to them. Athletic uniforms are supplied for the sole purpose of participating in the WCA Athletic Program and should not be used for any other purpose.

When the season is completed all uniforms/equipment must be returned on the date established by equipment managers, coaching staff and/or the athletic director. The uniforms/equipment must be properly cleaned and returned in the same condition it was received with allowances for normal wear and tear. If the uniform/equipment is not returned or is returned in an unacceptable condition, the student athlete and his/her parents/guardian will be billed for the replacement cost of the uniform/equipment. Payment will be required immediately, and until full payment is received rewards, report cards and future participation in the WCA Athletic Program may be withheld.

Uniforms for games and practices are to be modest and loose fitting at all times. The Athletic Director and/or School Administration have the final authority on all dress code issues. (See page 50-51 of Student Handbook for Dress code policy).

## **14. Code of Conduct**

We believe that the vast majority of our student athletes, parents and coaches will conduct themselves appropriately. Unfortunately, there are exceptions that make it necessary to construct general Codes of Conduct that will serve as a guide to govern the behavior of our athletes, parents and coaches. It is our hope that all those associated with our athletic programs will pattern their behavior in keeping with the principles of our Statement of Faith.

### **A. Student Athletic Conduct**

It is expected that all our student athletes will conduct themselves in a manner that is courteous, respectful and sportsmanlike. We expect that they will strive to adhere to the following principles:

- To always place the health, safety and welfare of yourself, your teammates and your opponents above all else.

- To always treat yourself, your teammates, your opponents, your coaches, game officials, parents, teachers and spectators with respect, courtesy and sportsmanship on and off the field.
- To refrain from the use of any profane or derogatory comments.
- To always treat uniforms, equipment and athletic facilities with respect, and recognize that these items and venues are expensive and are available to you as a result of the hard work and dedication of others.
- To be responsible and accountable for your actions recognizing that everyone makes mistakes but that there are consequences for the choices you make.
- To always do your best and approach your athletic pursuits with maximum effort, recognizing that your talent and abilities are gifts from God.
- To listen to your coaches and make every effort to comply with their requests on and off the field understanding that what is demanded of you is in the best interest of the team.
- To recognize that all athletes have different strengths and weaknesses, and to be understanding and supportive of teammates who struggle to perform at certain levels.
- To recognize that your commitment to a team means that you are part of something larger than yourself, and that you have a responsibility to do all you can to contribute to your team's success.
- To always exhibit the courage and boldness to try recognizing that only those who have never played have never failed.
- To play with appropriate competitive spirit and strive to contribute to your team's success through winning.
- To exhibit patience and perseverance when it is not your turn, understanding that persistence, hard work and dedication will result in your opportunity to contribute.
- To celebrate your teammates' successes and encourage them to overcome their shortcomings.
- To always play hard, fairly and within the rules.
- To acknowledge that participation in athletics is a privilege not a right, and is permitted only if you continue to recognize that God, family and your education are higher priorities.

- To always remember that your conduct on and off the field is a reflection on your family, coaches, teammates, and school.

## **B. Parental Conduct**

We believe that parental participation and support is an indispensable component of the success of our athletic program. The WCA Athletic community is blessed to enjoy the support of hard-working, dedicated, loyal and responsible parents.

However, it would be shortsighted if we did not acknowledge that all of us can be susceptible to engaging in questionable conduct caused by our love and support of our children in the context of a heated athletic contest.

In recognition of our imperfections we offer the following as a guide and reminder of our responsibilities as adult role models:

- Always place the health, safety and welfare of all student athletes above all else.
- Always treat coaches, officials, other parents, spectators and student athletes with respect and courtesy.
- Be supportive of administrators and coaches. They are giving their time and energy for no other purpose than to provide athletic opportunity to your child.
- Always be positive. Support your child and his/her team and refrain from using profane, derogatory or negative commentary with or towards others.
- Remember that these activities are your child's athletic pursuits, not yours. Allow them to mold the experience to conform to their desires and aspirations.
- Always remember that you are a role model for your child and other student athletes in your presence. They will do as you do, not as you say.

## **C. Coaches Conduct**

**Rev. Billy Graham said:**

*“A coach can have more impact on a player, in a single season than a Pastor has in their entire lifetime”*

The WCA Athletic Program exists as a direct result of the willingness of parents and other adults to giving their time and talent to coach our teams.

However, coaches by nature are competitive individuals. As a result, we recommend our coaches periodically reassess their coaching style and methods to be certain they are on track with the following principles:

- Always place the health, safety and welfare of student athletes above all else.

- Always have a cellular phone available at all practices and games in order to contact emergency personnel when necessary.
- Never engage in profane or demeaning commentary.
- Always treat others with respect and courtesy.
- Always remember that winning is an honorable goal that should be pursued, but that it is never the only or most important goal.
- Always strive to make the athletic experience positive and enjoyable.
- Always remember that these programs exist for the benefit of student athletes and that these endeavors are not about you.
- Always be aware that you are an important role model to your student athletes.

And in addition to the above, coaches conduct must be consistent with school policy; coaches job description, and the interest of student athlete's protection.

### **15. Role of the Athletic Director**

The Athletic Director is responsible for the overall coordination and administration of the WCA Athletic Program. The Athletic Director is hired by and responsible to the Head Administrator, the School Board, and is held to the requirements outlined in the Athletic Director's job description.

### **16. Booster Club Attendance**

The WCA Athletic Department and its administrators and coaches respectfully request that all parents search for ways to dedicate their time and talent to foster a positive and educational athletic environment. The Booster Club has been organized to assist with the Athletic Programs at WCA. This organization meets once per month during the school year and we request that parents endeavor to attend these meetings in search of ways to become a contributing member in our athletic programs.

### **17. Conflict Resolution Policy**

It is inevitable that conflicts will occasionally arise among the adult participants in our Athletic Program. We respectfully request that the following principles and procedures be acknowledged and followed in the resolution of these conflicts:

- Always acknowledge the interest of our individual student athletes and our teams as the top priority in resolving conflict.
- Approach conflict resolution with poise and respect.

- Be willing to engage in reasonable compromise to resolve conflict.
- Allow 24 to 48 hours as a “cooling off period” before approaching others to resolve conflict.
- Refrain from gossip and spreading of rumors in the process of resolving conflict.
- Never engage in the use of profanity or demeaning commentary in conflict resolution.
- Speak directly with the coach or adult with whom the conflict exists as a first step in resolving differences.
- If conflict cannot be resolved on an individual basis approach the Athletic Director, then the Head Administrator, and then the School Board.

### **18. Indemnity**

A release/Indemnification Agreement must be signed by parents/guardians on behalf of student athletes prior to participation in the Athletic Program. The Athletic Director and/or coaches will distribute form approved by the school to registrants prior to commencement of the season.