

Athletic Handbook



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I. Athletic Department Structure

Vision Statement of Granger Christian School-

GCS seeks to be Christ centered, Academic minded, Relationally focused and Excellence driven, in all we do.

Mission Statement of Granger Christian School

Granger Christian School prepares students to impact the world through a Christ-centered education.

Philosophy of Athletics at Granger Christian School

The focus of the athletic program is that students, first and foremost, attend Granger Christian School (GCS) to receive an education and to grow in their relationship with Christ.

While athletics is a major part of American culture, participation in athletics is only a secondary aspect of the entire GCS experience. Competitive sports can be a valuable tool, which may be used to enrich the lives of GCS students. However, membership on a GCS athletic team is a privilege, not a right.

“For physical training is of some value but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.” I Timothy 4:8

GCS desires that student athletes possess Christ-like characteristics and are able to express them openly through the medium of sports. Our goal is to build eternal values in the students, while at the same time be a testimony of the power of Jesus Christ to all of those that we come in contact with during athletic events. Winning is important, but it is secondary to the Godly principles that the program is striving to instill into the student athletes:

- **Glorifying God:** We are called to glorify God in everything we do. (1 Corinthians 10:31) Through athletic competition, GCS athletes will have to make difficult

choices as to whom they will bring glory, themselves or the one from whom their talents and abilities have come, God.

- **Team work:** As our athletes prepare for life after high school, the ability to work effectively with a team will become invaluable. (Philippians 2:1-11) Therefore we strive to instill the importance of teamwork to all of our athletes.
- **Work ethic:** Talent alone will only take an athlete so far. However, learning a solid work ethic will be a game changer in both athletics and life. Therefore, GCS athletes are challenged to work their hardest, both in practice and games to help them develop their ability to play their respective sport at the highest level for the glory of Christ (Colossians 3:23-24).
- **Self-control:** How we conduct ourselves as GCS athletes reflects on our team, school and most importantly Christ. Therefore, we strive to instill a heart desire in each athlete to reflect Christlikeness on and off the field/court.(Ephesians 5:1-2)

Coaching Philosophy at Granger Christian School:

The coaching staff of GCS is a caring group of dedicated professionals who strive to exemplify the personal and professional characteristics that we are attempting to teach the student athletes.

Their number one goal is to develop athletes spiritually, academically and physically for the glory of God.

- **Spiritually:** We desire to see each athlete's relationship with Christ deepen over the course of each season. Sports are a great tool given to us by God, and we strive to utilize the various sports at GCS to spiritually impact our athletes.
- **Academics:** Every athlete at GCS is a "student athlete", meaning academics come first. As coaches, we will help the athletes on our teams to work hard on the field/court as well as in the classroom. We will push them to be successful in both academics and athletics.
- **Physically:** We commit to using our knowledge of our different sports to help the athletes of GCS improve. We will challenge the players to improve their individual ability to play their sport.

Facts of Granger Christian School Athletic Program

Mascot: Knight

Colors: Red, Black, and White

**Affiliations: Indiana Christian Schools Athletic Association (ICSAA)
Hoosier Plains Conference(HPC)**

The interscholastic sports currently being offered at the **High School** level at **GCS** are:

Fall

Girls' Volleyball
Boy's soccer

Winter

Boys' Basketball
Girls' Basketball

Spring

Girls' Soccer

The interscholastic sports currently being offered at the **Junior High** level at **GCS** are:

Fall

Coed Soccer
Girls' Volleyball

Winter

Boys' Basketball
Girls' Basketball

Team Levels, Goals, and Objectives

Elementary/Junior High Level

The Elementary/Junior High level is designed to familiarize the student athlete with interscholastic athletics. The main emphasis is developing the fundamental skills of the sport and gaining experience playing the sport. Elementary/Junior High athletes should begin to understand what it takes to earn a spot on a roster of a Junior Varsity and Varsity team. While winning is a goal, it is not as important as the development of the skills

necessary for promotion to a higher-level squad. The athlete will learn personal responsibility, teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship.

Junior Varsity Level

The Junior Varsity level is the last “preparatory” level for the Varsity team in each respective sport. It is designed for students to continue to sharpen their skills and fundamentals, while increasing the emphasis on playing time, as well as winning. Athletic skill, commitment, team chemistry, attitude, and effort are some of the determining factors of playing time for an athlete.

The number of games, practices, and overall time commitment will be more than the amount of commitment at the junior high level. Because of that, it is expected that athletes are learning more responsibility and discipline to cope with this increased time commitment and other academic pressures.

Varsity Level

The Varsity level is the highest level of competition at GCS. It represents the best-skilled athletes of the school in each particular sport. The criteria for selection to a varsity level team are based primarily (but not entirely) on skill. This means that there may be times when a younger athlete will be selected over an older athlete. Playing time will be at the discretion of the head coach and/or coaching staff, and will be based on several factors, some of which are skill, team chemistry, player effort and attitude, and how the coach(es) feels each player will impact the game.

While the goal of winning is at its highest peak at the varsity level, the ultimate goals of the athletic program and Granger Christian School supersede winning games. It is expected that varsity athletes be an example of general conduct, court/field attitude and behavior, hustle, discipline in athletics, academics, and spiritual maturity.

Athletic Program Objectives

1. To glorify God through the vehicle of athletic competition.
2. To develop and maintain a positive testimony for Jesus Christ, Granger Christian School, the individual athletes, coaches and spectators, and to those with whom we come in contact.
3. To instill an early understanding that participation in athletics is leadership training, which is a privilege that also carries responsibilities. Some of the leadership training

includes, but is not limited to the following:

- a. Strive for excellence with enthusiasm and desire as unto the Lord.
 - b. Provide an opportunity for goal setting and the achievement of their highest potential in both academics and athletics.
 - c. Provide an opportunity for athletes to place team above self and to practice self-discipline for the overall benefit of the team.
 - d. Learn the benefits of following the rules in easy and difficult circumstances.
 - e. Learn crucial Christ-like character traits such as teamwork, sportsmanship, loyalty, obedience, submission to authority, love, desire, hard work, etc.
4. To teach new skills and offer opportunities to improve those already possessed.
 5. To provide an opportunity for physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual growth and development, while having fun.
 6. To provide opportunities to develop lasting friendships with teammates, coaches, and opponents.

II. Athletic Department Policies

The Parent/Student Handbook clearly states Granger Christian School's policies, rules, and guidelines. However, the uniqueness of athletics creates the need for the following rules, which apply to all students who are members of any athletic team which represents GCS.

Requirements for Interscholastic Eligibility

- A physical examination form and parental consent form are required at the beginning of the season, before your student will be allowed to participate in practice or games. Transportation forms and Handbook agreement forms need to be turned in before the first game. All forms should be turned in to the athletic director.
- Every student who participates in interscholastic sports at Granger Christian School is expected to maintain a high standard of conduct. Any student who fails to do so will be declared ineligible.
- Grade Point Averages of all athletes will be checked every Tuesday morning to assess academic eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities. Tuesday's Academic Eligibility Report will be based on the previous week's work. Eligibility will be determined by no "F"s and no more than two D's at the time of the assessment. Each week starts and ends on Tuesday. The athletic director, academic advisor and teacher may make an exception if special circumstances warrant, but this would not be a common occurrence.
- Ineligible athletes will not be allowed to participate in practices or games. Athletes who are ineligible will be expected to attend and observe practices to hold their place on the team, with the coach's approval. Homework/academic help may take

place during practice with a teacher or athletic director and approval from the coach. It is important that players demonstrate great effort to get themselves back on the eligibility list. Chronic ineligibility could result in a student being removed from the team to focus on academics at the discretion of the athletic director and academic advisor. Ineligible athletes are expected to sit the bench at all home games in street clothes. Traveling with the team is not allowed.

- Ineligible athletes will be checked on Tuesday morning of each week to determine if the student has become eligible for the week. Each week starts and ends on Tuesday. Teachers will be notified of ineligible students and will need to notify the athletic director immediately if the student should remain on the ineligibility list.
- As with any policy, adjustments may become necessary as special situations arise. We will always strive to improve our policies and communication.

Additional Requirement for Homeschooled Athletes

- Athletes must have an enrollment form filled out for the first year with the athletic season fee. A re-enrollment form must be filled out each year after the first with the athletic season fee to offset additional athletic costs covered by GCS student's fees. Arrangements for a payment schedule can be made with the athletic director.
- Homeschooled athletes are expected to follow the same academic guidelines as GCS students and to self-report if they become ineligible..

Athletic In- and Out-of-Town Trips

- Due to the limited number of buses and certified bus drivers, it is necessary that parents assist in meeting this ministry need. Regulations regarding minimum insurance for cars and drivers will be explained and enforced by the GCS representative planning the event.
- Whenever GCS students are transported for a GCS function, they must be in an enclosed vehicle and wearing a seat belt. All drivers must have a copy of their driver's license and proof of insurance on file. Additionally, a current background check needs to be on file.
- A student shall travel to and from the game or contest with the rest of the team unless his parents notify the coach. Permission may be granted to allow a student to travel with his parents.
- All music that is played must fit the mission and vision of GCS.

School Attendance

Any student absent after the beginning of the fourth period the day of an athletic event will not be allowed to participate in the event unless his/her absence during the day was pre-arranged with the Administration. Exceptions may be requested for unavoidable absences that do not fit the minimum attendance criteria.

It is sometimes necessary to dismiss athletes early from school to attend away games and tournaments. In this event, it is the responsibility of the student athlete to contact his/her teachers ahead of time to arrange for assignments, quizzes, and tests to be handed in, explained, or completed.

GCS athletic events, which require an early leave from school or an absence from school, are considered an excused absence and are not recorded in the student's record as an absence. These absences **DO NOT** count toward the school absence policy.

Students serving an out-of-school or in-school suspension are ineligible to participate in athletic activities during the day(s) of suspension. Students who have been placed on disciplinary probation may not participate in athletic activities during the period of disciplinary probation.

Assumption of Risk

Although Granger Christian School desires to provide a safe and enjoyable time for all students, accidents can happen. Parents must understand that there are risks/dangers involved with participation in any athletic contest or practice and its associated activities. In consideration of their children being allowed to participate in the events, they must assume responsibility for reasonable risks associated with travel and activities. Parents must agree to hold harmless Granger Christian School, its affiliated organizations, employees, agents, and representatives, including volunteer and other drivers, from any and all claims arising from their children's participation. Parental assumption of risk does not apply to claims of intentional (criminal) misconduct or gross negligence by the School, its employees or volunteers.

Miscellaneous

1. EQUIPMENT

- a. All student athletes will properly care for GCS equipment. The cost of

any lost or damaged equipment or uniforms will be charged to the student in order to replace or repair the loss.

- b. The handling of all school equipment will be accomplished through the direction of a coach, team manager, or equipment manager.

2. QUITTING A TEAM

- a. If a student athlete participates in ten practices (pre-season) for a sport, he/she cannot join another sports team until the season he/she quits is completed. Mutual consent by both coaches involved can waive this rule.

Ordering Letter Jackets

GCS letter jackets may be purchased through Paige's Lettering in Granger, IN. Award letters, numerals, or chevrons, which are placed on the jacket, must be awarded to the student by GCS to ensure that these continue to be a symbol of accomplishment in athletics. Optional emblems that are part of the letter jacket may also be purchased by the athlete. If you have any questions, contact the Athletic Department.

Borrowing Athletic Clothing

Students may borrow athletic uniforms with the athletic director's approval. Students desiring to borrow uniforms for senior pictures or other approved occasions must complete an Athletic Uniform Form and return it, along with a deposit of \$50 per uniform, warm-up suit, etc. to the Athletic Director at least 48 hours in advance.

The borrowed item(s) are to be returned to the athletic department within 48 hours of the time borrowed. The deposit is forfeited if the item(s) are not returned on time. If an item is lost or damaged, the borrower is responsible for the replacement cost as determined by GCS.

If a problem arises with returning borrowed item(s) within 48 hours, the student or parent is to contact the athletic director so that other arrangements can be made for the return of the item(s).

Length of Seasons

The length of each sport season varies from sport to sport and at different levels of the same sport. The following are the general beginning and ending times of the three seasons:

Fall	First week of August through the third week of October
Winter	Third week of October through the first week of March
Spring	Second week of March through the third week of May

Attendance at Practice

Each member of a Granger Christian School athletic team must assume the responsibilities associated with such a position. One of their obligations to this responsibility is regular attendance at practices. At times, there may be situations that prohibit an athlete's attendance at practice. This must be arranged with the coach prior to missing the practice and **NOT** after.

Acceptable reasons to miss practice — family emergency, medical issues.

Unacceptable reasons - work, haircut, participation in other activities (i.e. — music lesson, etc.)

Late/absent from practice. Consequences for tardiness/absence are left to the discretion of the coach and Athletic Director. An athlete's repeated, unexcused absence is detrimental to the team and could be cause for removal from the team.

A student may be allowed to join a team after practices have begun depending on the circumstances involved. However, no athlete who has been practicing with the team will be removed to make space on the roster for an athlete who joins after practices begin. The athlete joining late will only be permitted if roster/uniform space allows and coach and athletic director review the situation and approve.

GCS Philosophy on Playing Time

Coaches, Athletic Director, and school officials must constantly evaluate and re-evaluate athletic participation philosophy, specifically as it relates to actual playing time for athletes at the various levels of competition.

General guidelines are as follows:

Elementary/Junior High - The coach should endeavor to get every player into every game when possible as long as the athlete is academically eligible, honoring team rules and coach expectations (except for tournaments). Coaches are expected to do their best when coaching a large team and if a situation arises where a player is not played in a game then the coach shall do their best to get them into the next game. There are circumstances where a coach may choose to sit a player for the player's own benefit. This will be communicated to the athletic director and will only be employed when the coach has already addressed the athlete. All players are expected to treat all coaches with respect.

Junior Varsity — Every player on the team should see some playing time throughout the season as long as the athlete is academically eligible, honoring team rules and coach expectations (except for tournaments). There are circumstances where a coach may choose

to sit a player for the player's own benefit. This will be communicated to the athletic director and will only be employed when the coach has already addressed the athlete. All players are expected to treat all coaches with respect.

Varsity — Skill is the ultimate divider, but attitude, dedication, and a variety of other factors go into the coach's decision regarding playing time. This is the highest level of high school sports, playing time is not guaranteed. The coach will put the best squad together that he can and has control of playing time. Players need to accept this when accepting a position on the team and also understand the importance of working together with the team and coaches towards a shared goal. All players are expected to treat all coaches with respect.

Athletic Award Ceremonies

We will be holding one Athletic awards event at the end of each year. It is our hope to provide a special forum where we can present athletes with much-deserved recognition for individual and team accomplishments.

Student athletes are to be dressed neatly when attending an athletic awards night, which honors the sport they have participated in that season. Students are not to wear t-shirts, sweatshirts, jeans, or tennis shoes to the awards night. A student not in attendance at the sports award ceremony will forfeit any award or honor intended for him/her unless the Athletic Director excuses the absence. Quitting a team, or being dismissed from a team, results in forfeiture of any and all awards.

Awards

Junior High

- Certificate of participation

Junior Varsity

- Certificate of participation

Varsity

- 1st year — varsity letter
- 2nd, 3rd, & 4th year – Sport chevron

Special Awards

Special awards can be given for outstanding achievement at the discretion of the coach.

The athletic director and coaches will choose a student-athlete of the week during the regular season. The Scarlet Knight award will go to one female and one male Student-Athlete who exemplifies the qualities of L.E.A.D.E.R.S.H.I.P. as determined by the athletic director and coaches.

III. Granger Christian School Commitments

Athletic Program Commitments

In support of its athletic programs, GCS is committed to providing safe and well-maintained facilities and equipment, recruiting and supervising qualified and motivated Christian role models as coaches, and providing competition uniforms. The student athlete may be required to pay a participation fee and/or purchase shoes, warm-ups, and/or other ancillary team items.

Student Athlete Commitments

“The athlete will...

1. Experience and exhibit the love of Christ in his/her attitude and actions toward his/her fellow athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators.
2. Represent himself/herself, his/her family, GCS, and Jesus Christ faithfully and in a positive manner.
3. Be a positive factor in the classroom — behaviorally and academically (i.e. be on time, be courteous and respectful of teachers and classmates, strive for excellence, etc.).
4. Experience and exhibit sportsmanship through fellowship, competition, teamwork and fair play.
5. Strive to develop himself/herself to maximum potential (academically, spiritually, socially, physically).
6. Exercise his/her leadership qualities (see the objectives of the athletic program).
7. Understand the importance of lessons that will be learned from both victory and defeat.
8. Maintain conduct and attendance guidelines, as well as the academic standards of Granger Christian School. Serious violations of school rules (such as drugs and alcohol abuse, sexual promiscuity, etc.), whether on campus or off campus, will be handled on a case by case basis, and may result in suspension or removal from an athletic team in addition to any punishment administered by GCS administration.
9. Strive to maintain physical health of body and mind during studies and participation in interscholastic athletics.

10. Return all of the GCS uniforms and equipment on time and in good condition.
11. Attend the Sports Award Night at the end of the season.
12. Be responsible for all classroom work/activities (PE classes included), even on game days and as a result of early dismissal for an athletic contest.

Parent Commitments

“The parent will...”

1. Pray for the athletic department of GCS.
2. Each family must provide an adult to volunteer during the season as a condition of participation. The number of times will depend on the number of home games and positions to be filled. This varies by season and sport but will generally be between 3-5 times a season.
3. Support his/her child(ren)’s team and the rest of the athletic program in whatever way possible.

Note- TEAM- Together Everyone Accomplishes More

A smooth running program will be the result of everyone pulling together. Participation in a sport at GCS requires commitment on the part of the student and parents. We highly esteem commitment and expect every family to help us achieve our goals.

4. Work within the established communication guidelines with coaches and/or athletic department (see section on Parent/Coach Communication pg. 15).
5. Aid in helping his/her child(ren) attend practices and games, arriving and being picked up from practices and games on time.
6. Encourage his/her child(ren) to be involved in individual and/or off-season workouts/conditioning.
7. Abide by the following guidelines for Parent/Spectator Decorum:

Society is experiencing increased incidents of physical confrontation and unmanaged anger, often associated with youth sports. Granger Christian School is committed to keeping our athletes, coaches, and fans safe. To do this, we must insist on proper behavior, and promote our positive reputation and Christian testimony in regards to sportsmanship.

In as much as our coaches have certain standards of expected behavior, our student athletes are governed by the guidelines in this handbook, and all GCS students are subject to school rules at athletic events, it becomes incumbent upon the Athletic Department to set standards for the behavior of our adult spectators as well. We recognize that the vast

majority of our parents and fans set a behavioral example of the highest standard and we greatly appreciate that.

Granger Christian School supports the emphasis on good sportsmanship. We embrace this fully by definition and in the spirit of intent. Proper human courtesies, kindness and decorum must apply to all relationships and situations — athletics are not an exception. High school sports exist to build character, allow students to express themselves through physical exertion, and as entertainment. Poor behavior on the part of adults will only hinder the goals and objectives of GCS and its athletic department.

Granger Christian School will not condone or permit inappropriate parental behavior directed toward GCS staff or players, the opposing school and all its representatives, or the game officials. Such behavior by parents can cause the school to suffer sanctions from the refereeing committee, cause the school embarrassment, and damage the testimony of Jesus Christ. Actions such as swearing, making derogatory comments about officials, coaches, players and/or spectators from either team, and any other verbal abuse is unacceptable, and may result in disciplinary action such as removal from the premises or suspension of right to attend athletic events.

Parents must not coach their athlete or the team from the stands. The coach is tasked with game management and instruction. It is the responsibility of the Athletic Department staff to instruct and handle athletes while participating in practice or games.

The following sportsmanship statement is read at GCS home athletic events: “Granger Christian School is pleased to sponsor the following athletic contest. In keeping with the spirit and intent of Christian athletics, we ask all players, coaches, and spectators to maintain appropriate behavior at all times. Please help make the game enjoyable for all. Thank you.”

Parent/Coach Communication Guidelines

The Athletic Department, as part of Granger Christian School, recognizes its partnership with parents in helping to shape and mold student athletes to be more like Christ. Both parenting and coaching are extremely rewarding, but sometimes difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each other’s positions, it is often easier to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to student-athletes. This understanding can only be reached through open lines of communication. The following are guidelines for reaching and maintaining understanding between parents and the Athletic Department:

COMMUNICATION THAT SHOULD BE EXPECTED FROM COACHES OR ATHLETIC DIRECTOR -

- a. Philosophy of the coach
- b. Expectations of the coach for the student (i.e. the student's role on the team)
- c. Times and locations of all practices and contests
- d. Team requirements (i.e. fees/costs, special equipment, off-season conditioning, level of skill, etc.)
- e. Procedure in case of student injury during participation

COMMUNICATION THAT SHOULD BE EXPECTED FROM PARENTS -

- a. Any unhealthy mental or physical strain observed in their athlete
- b. Any behavioral changes their athlete is experiencing
- c. Any specific health concerns they have for their athlete
- d. Any schedule conflicts well in advance should be communicated by the player. The parent should inform the student who then takes responsibility to inform coaches of conflict with the understanding that the coach has final say on excused/unexcused absence from practice/games.
- e. Your commitment to the program and how you plan to make a contribution to the program through volunteerism
- f. Making sure that you are on time dropping off/picking up your athlete if they don't drive themselves. Our coaches work full time jobs and then come daily to coach our athletes. We expect parents to honor their time by being prompt.
- g. If asked, communication strategies that have worked well with your child in the past.

NOTE: These concerns should be expressed directly to the coach through email.. These concerns should not be something that leads to talking about a coach behind his/her back to students (even your own), other coaches, faculty members, and/or other parents. **Never approach a coach during a game or after a game with issues unless the coach requests the meeting.** Instead of confronting the coach in person, please email the coach and then be willing to meet if necessary. If there is some kind of conflict, please refer to section regarding conflicts below.. Please make sure your communication does not involve any of the following:

Inappropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:

1. Playing time
2. Team strategy
3. Play calling
4. Other student-athletes

NOTE: At times, it may be difficult to understand and accept that your child is not getting as much playing time as you would like. If there is something that you do not understand concerning a playing time situation, you may inquire about what the coach thinks may help your child to get more playing time. But playing time is up to the coach's discretion, and should not be an issue that is regularly discussed.

PROCEDURES FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT/CONCERNS —

As students become involved in the GCS athletic program, they will experience some of the most memorable and rewarding moments of their lives. It is also important to understand that there may be times when things do not go the way the student or the parent wishes or envisions. When concerns or potential problems arise, work with the athletic department to employ the Biblical model of resolving conflict (Matthew 18:15-17).

- a. Student athlete meets with the coach — The first step in avoiding potential conflicts is for a student athlete to meet with the coach to discuss any concerns and resolve the issue. Many times concerns that lead to conflict are the result of miscommunication or misperceptions. These can often be handled through open discussion.
- b. Parent(s) meet with the coach — If the student athlete/coach meeting has not resolved the issue, or the matter needs adult/parent attention, the parent(s) should contact the coach (either through email or through the office) to set up a time for the two parties to meet. In order to allow all involved to be the most open-minded and assure that adequate time is given to resolve the conflict, it is asked that this procedure for scheduling meetings with coaches is followed:
Call the office or e-mail the coach to request an appointment
Reminder- Do not attempt to confront a coach before, during or after a practice or game to discuss any issues. These can be emotional times for both parents and coaches, and many times will not lead to proper resolution.
- c. Parents meet with the Athletic Director — If the previous meeting(s) do not adequately resolve the issue, parents may request a meeting with the Athletic Director to mediate the conflict.

If you are unwilling to follow these procedures, we ask that you drop the matter completely and move on. This means that there should be no further comment to anyone.

Closing Comments to GCS Athletes

The athletic administration and coaching staff at Granger Christian School want to wish you the very best in your athletic endeavors this year. If we can be of help to you in any way, please let us know. The Lord has put us here to help you grow. We want athletics to be fun and profitable with the goal of building the character of Christ in you.

Covenant Agreement Signature Page

I have read and agree to abide by the policies and guidelines in the GCS Athletic handbook.

Parent/ Guardian Printed Name: _____

Parent / Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/ Guardian Printed Name: _____

Parent / Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student Printed Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____