

GRACE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY **ATHLETIC PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

The following are some major items that govern participation in the athletic program at GCA. Athletes and their parents need to be familiar with these guidelines before entering into participation. The Maryland Independent Schools Athletic League (MISAL) has partnered with Positive Coaching Alliance to help develop character through athletics and promote more sportsmanship between schools. Some of those principles have been incorporated into these guidelines.

Player's section:

I, _____ (your name), agree that to the best of my ability I will adhere to the following guidelines in order to participate in athletics at GCA.

1. Testimony – Being selected to represent GCA in athletics is an honor. First and foremost, your actions on and off the arena of competition will be a reflection of Christ (through you). As athletes, you also represent your families and the school. Therefore, actions of athletes must represent high standards of Christian practice toward opponents, officials, teammates, and the game itself. This conduct is expected during the school day, as well. Failure to do so will warrant disciplinary action which could include suspension from participation.
2. Eligibility – Athletes must be academically eligible to participate in the athletic program, according to the standards in the Parent/Student Manual or by administrative approval. Failure to attain and/or maintain eligibility may warrant suspension from participation.
3. School Attendance – Athletes must be in school at least half the day in order to participate in that day's activity (practice or game), unless prior administrative approval has been given (appointments, college visit, etc.). Athletes who have Physical Education are expected to fully participate in class in order to participate in after-school athletics (practice or game). Simply put, if you are not healthy enough for PE, you are not healthy enough for athletics, either.
4. Commitment – Athletes must understand they are making a commitment to the Lord, their teammates, and their coach when participating in the athletic program. This commitment carries with it the expectation of attendance at all games, practices, and meetings unless excused by either illness or the coach's permission. Participation on teams outside of school should be considered secondary and therefore have secondary priority when there is a conflict, unless prior arrangements can be agreed upon between the athlete and coach. This commitment extends to getting proper nutrition and rest, and even to sacrificing personal activities in order to keep up with school work. This commitment also extends to quitting a team. Once selected to a team, the athlete and his or her parent/guardian have committed themselves to supporting the school and team through the completion of the sport season. Each athlete has a responsibility to him or herself and the team to finish the season unless, in consultation with the coach, early release from the team is advisable.
5. Discipline – Athletes must understand that any type of school discipline takes priority over athletics. Detentions may not be rescheduled so that an athlete may attend a game. A teacher may detain an athlete after school if required work is not completed. If an athlete is unable to travel with the team due to a school discipline issue such as detention, the student may not participate that day with the team.
6. Travel – Athletes must travel with the team in school-provided transportation. If the athlete misses the designated transportation, he or she will not be able to participate with the team. Athletes may travel home after away events with their parents, but must be signed out properly. If athletes need to travel with someone other than their own parent, a parent's note must be provided before they can be signed out. A student is NEVER permitted to travel with another student driver. (Special exemptions must be discussed with the coach and may be granted only in extreme circumstances.)

7. Personal Devices – Per GCA rules, personal electronic devices (iPods, etc.) are not permitted on game trips, in restaurants, or anywhere else while representing the school. Cell phones should not be out except to call about transportation; no texting, playing music, sending pictures, etc.
8. Attire – Athletes represent GCA in the way they dress. It is important to maintain a team appearance; no individuals should be dressed or groomed in a way to draw attention to themselves. Athletic uniforms must be worn properly and completely, and worn only for games. Varsity athletes will dress up for school on game days. Gentlemen should wear a dress shirt, tie, dress slacks and dress shoes. Ladies should wear a dress, skirt, or dress slacks, a blouse or sweater and dress shoes. Athletes must remain dressed in this fashion from arrival at school until putting on their uniform. Athletes who are not properly attired will not participate with the team.
9. Honor the Game – Athletes will “Honor the Game” by showing respect for the **ROOTS** of positive play. Respect the **R**ules of the game; do not bend them to win. Respect the **O**pponent; they are not the enemy, just the opposition to bring out your best. Respect the **O**fficials, whether you agree with them or not. Respect your **T**eammates by never doing anything to embarrass your team. Respect your **S**elf by living up to your standards no matter what anyone else does.

Parent’s section:

I/We, _____ (parent/guardian names), will do my/our best to follow these guidelines as a supporter of GCA athletics.

1. Make a commitment to “Honor the Game” (see # 8 above) yourself as your athlete participates. It is important that you show enthusiastic support in a manner that would be pleasing and acceptable to the Lord.
2. Let the coaches coach and the players play. Avoid giving “advice” during the game. Cheer good plays and effort by both teams. Let the officials officiate without your “assistance,” compliment their good calls to others, and thank them after the game.
3. Support the efforts of the coaches by recognizing their position of leadership and authority in this activity, and do so in front of your athlete. Never tear down or second guess the coach in front of your athlete. Keep an open line of communication with the coach. Talk to the coach in the proper time and setting; not right after a game.
4. As you “Honor the Game,” help the atmosphere stay positive by approaching other spectators from our program who may not be doing so, and encouraging them. We must maintain the proper testimony in the stands just as the athletes do on the field or floor.
5. Please have a clear understanding of the Player’s section and support your athlete(s) in adhering to their guidelines. Remember to sign out your athlete(s) if you are driving them home from other venues so coaches know who they should have on the bus.

We have read and understand the above guidelines, and will do our best to abide by them throughout the season/year.

(Athlete’s signature)

(Parent/Guardian’s signature)