

WESTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Established 1965



WARRIOR ATHLETIC HANDBOOK 2025-2026

Athletic Directors: Ben Kurz / Ben Mowry

Head Volleyball Coach: Rachel Valerio

Head Basketball Coach: Ben Kurz

Principal: Bill Yanossy

Assistant Principal: Kristin Shiver

Assistant Principal: Tara Lowe-Phillips

8-12 Curriculum Coordinator: Mallory Bryant

WCS VISION STATEMENT

Westwood Christian School is committed to the education of all students by providing a biblically-based curriculum in a Christ-centered environment with the purpose of fulfilling God's plan.

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INTRODUCTION

The Westwood Christian Warriors Athletic Handbook is a reference guide for coaches, student-athletes, and parents concerning the policies that govern athletic participation at Westwood Christian School.

Warrior Athletics is made up of the principal, athletic director, the coaches, the student-athletes, and their parents. The AD is responsible for ensuring that these rules and guidelines are administered fairly and properly.

Sound reasoning, good judgment, prayer, and adherence to Westwood Christian School's Student Handbook will be the standard by which situations outside of these rules and regulations are determined and evaluated.

It is important to remember that participation in student athletics is a privilege, not a right. Accompanying this privilege is a responsibility to conform to the standards established by this handbook and any team specific requirements individual coaches may enact. Any student that fails to comply with the rules may have their sports privileges revoked.

The rules and regulations in this handbook closely follow the WCS Student Handbook. Any discrepancies between these rules and the student handbook will default to the student handbook.

Thank you for participating in Warrior Athletics. We pray that God will use the talents that He has given you to glorify Himself and advance His kingdom.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Westwood Christian Warrior Athletics is to glorify God and witness Christ to others, through discipleship, sportsmanship, pursuit of excellence, and outreach to the community and visiting teams.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

We, at Westwood Christian School, believe the concepts of a true Christian education are:

- God is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, and Source of truth.
- This truth is revealed in the Bible and personified in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- Education is a Christ-centered, Biblically-integrated process of developing the students spiritually, academically, socially, and physically.
- The ultimate aim of life is conformity to Christ.
- God has given unique abilities to each student. It is the teacher's responsibility to challenge and teach each student according to his ability and academic level.

AFFILIATIONS

Westwood Christian School is a member of the Southeastern Christian Conference (SECC).
www.southeasternchristianconference.com

Philippians 4:13 – I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION

Westwood Christian School is accredited through the Florida Coalition of Christian Private Schools Accreditation, (www.fcpcsa.org) which is a state approved accreditation agency. WCS is additionally accredited through the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA). Membership allows WCS to be exempt from licensure by the Department of Children and Families.

WCS WARRIORS MEMBER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Our Coaches



The coaches at WCS are committed to providing a safe, rewarding, and nurturing environment for the players. The coaches are committed to demonstrating Christ in all that they do. The coaches will strive to maintain effective communication between the player, parents, and additional staff to keep a positive playing and learning environment for the players. The coaches at WCS understand that sports should be first and foremost a ministry so that players, parents, and others might be drawn to the light of Christ; at the same time pushing the athletes to pursue excellence both on and off the court.

Our Athletes

Warrior athletes should demonstrate personal discipline, in preparation for play and competition, on and off the court. This discipline should shine-through during practice, competition, school, and home, demonstrating Christlike characteristics in all situations. Students should show good sportsmanship and give 100% effort, regardless of the score or playing conditions.

Our Parents

Our parents have the responsibility to uplift and encourage their athlete. Without strong parental support, athletes find it difficult to maintain the focus and discipline it takes to succeed in sports while simultaneously maintaining good grades. Our parents should always demonstrate those qualities that will uplift the athlete. This includes encouraging the athlete when things do not work out the way they want, supporting them regardless of playing time or perceived level of play. Parents should display good sportsmanship by always supporting the coaching staff and cheering for the Warriors, and not against the opposing team.

Our Athletic Director

The Athletic Director has the difficult job of making sure that the athletes, coaches, and school are supported, and always represented in a fair and Christ Like manner. The Athletic Director supports the coaches by making sure they have the necessary tools to perform at their best. The Athletic Director supports the players by ensuring that the rules are fairly enforced, and that safety is always of primary importance. The Athletic Director supports the parents by giving them a means to air grievances, make suggestions, and help them fully encourage their athlete. The Athletic Director is the school's primary representative to the conference.

Our Principal

The principal is the ultimate authority over all school related activities, including Warrior athletics. He fully supports the staff and students by praying for them, helping them with the means to purchase equipment and helping with facilities management. While giving considerable autonomy to the coaching staff, the principal is the final arbiter of any disputes, discrepancies, or problems.

WCS ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT EXPECTATIONS, PRACTICES & POLICIES

Eligibility for Interscholastic Participation

Who is Eligible – In order to be eligible to participate in WCS Warrior athletics, students must be a currently enrolled student at WCS with all fees and tuition paid; or must be a member of a sister school that does not offer the same sports as WCS. Homeschool students are eligible for sports with approval of administration. Sister school/Homeschool students are held to the same academic standards and must adhere to this handbook and the WCS Student handbook for conduct and character.

Currently, under the SECC Conference guidelines schools are only allowed to have 1/3 of their rosters made up of sister schools or homeschoolers. In the case where two athletes are of equal talent, WCS enrolled students will have priority.

Middle School Teams may consist of players in grades 6th - 8th.

Varsity Teams may consist of players in grades 6th - 12th.

Academics

All student athletes represent the student body at large. Therefore, standards of academic achievement have been adopted for student athletes to establish and maintain eligibility.

1. Academics – Westwood Christian School strives for academic excellence. The staff and coaches believe that academics takes precedence over athletic participation. Therefore, our standards are higher than those required at the conference and state level. These standards are as follows:
 - a. **Middle School** – Middle school players must have advanced to the next grade level to be considered eligible for fall sports. After the first grading period, the student must have a GPA of 2.0 or higher with no *D*'s or *F*'s to remain eligible.
 - b. **High School** – High school players must have shown satisfactory completion of all required coursework from the previous year to be eligible for fall sports. After the first grading period, the student must have a GPA of 2.0 or higher with no *D*'s or *F*'s to remain eligible.
 - I. For athletic seasons that do not extend through a regular nine-week/semester grading period, students will be evaluated at progress report and must have a GPA of 2.0 or higher with no *D*'s or *F*'s. If the student fails to meet these standards, they will be considered on **Academic Probation** for a period of 10 days. At that time, the coach will meet with the student and the teachers to determine if progress has been made to improve. If it is determined that the student has not improved, then the student will be placed on **Academic Suspension** for an additional 10 days.
 - **Academic Probation** – At the discretion of the coach, any player placed on academic probation will be eligible to practice, dress-out, travel to and from the games with the team and compete in regular season events.
 - **Academic Suspension** – A player that is placed on academic suspension **will not** be allowed to practice, dress-out, travel to or from the games with the team, or compete in any regular season event. At the completion of the suspension period the student will be returned to full privileges. If a player's period of suspension is

complete on the day of a game, at the coaches discretion, the coach may allow the player to dress out and travel to the game but may choose to not let them play until they have had at least one practice period. This allows the coach to make changes to line-ups, plays, etc. without disrupting the flow of play until the suspended player is coached or briefed on any changes. Players placed on suspension for any reason forfeit their chance at receiving an award.

c. **Ineligibility** - Once a student has been declared ineligible, that student is no longer considered a part of the team. They will not be allowed to practice, dress out, travel to or from the games with the team, or compete in any event. Players determined to be ineligible forfeit all awards.

2. **Participation Fees** – Sports fees are a necessary part of any athletic program. This money is used to pay for officials, equipment, transportation, conference fees, awards, etc. The fee is set at the beginning of the year and must be paid prior to each season's deadline established by the coaches in order for the athlete to be eligible for any awards. If a parent of an athlete finds it a burden to pay this fee, please contact the respective coach and see what arrangements can be made. God is generous and there are many people in the school willing to assist in situations like this. **Fees are non-refundable. The current fee is \$125 per year, but this is subject to change.**
3. **Physicals and Parental Consent** – Prior to participation in any event each student must have an up-to-date sport's physical (form EL2) and signed parental consent/release of liability (form EL3). These forms can be picked up in the school office or from the coach. *Recently, a Florida law was passed that required an EKG for public school athletes. It is NOT a requirement for private schools. If you feel that it is the right choice for you and your student, we suggest speaking directly to your doctor and making that decision between you and your doctor. The Southeastern Christian Conference does not require it. Westwood's stance on the EKG is that it is recommended, but not required.*
4. **Transportation** – It is expected that all athletes will ride the bus to away competitions. This promotes camaraderie and team building. This also allows the coaches to offer encouragement and discuss any last-minute changes. Transportation will be provided to and from the game. If a parent wishes to take their child home after an away game, they MUST first let the coach know, then the athlete must help take equipment to the bus, and finally they must sign the roster sheet stating that they took their child home. If a parent wishes their child to leave with another parent or adult, the coaches must have permission, either in writing or verbally, prior to the student leaving. This permission should be presented to the coaches prior to the game.

Athlete Code of Conduct and Discipline

1. Discipline/conduct – Each student athlete is expected to conduct his/her life in accordance with the standards and principles set forth in God's Word. This includes adhering to all appropriate WCS standards of student conduct. Violations of the WCS student handbook or the WCS athletic handbook will affect participation in athletic activities. It is expected that all student athletes will conduct themselves at, during, or after practices or contests in ways that would glorify the Lord in all that they do or say. As a member of WCS Warrior Athletics, it is vital that student athletes remember that they represent Christ first and foremost; they also represent the school, their team, and their families. To this end, Westwood Christian School takes student conduct both on and off the court/field seriously.

a.) Student athletes are expected to demonstrate the following qualities:

- **Respect** for self, Westwood Christian School, coaches, teammates, officials, and fans, as well as the opposing team and their fans, and the property of WCS and opposing teams.

- Integrity in the keeping of one's word, speaking the truth, carrying out responsibilities and respecting authority.
- Courtesy extended in all relationships – athlete to athlete, athlete to coach, athlete to fans, athlete to officials, and athlete to other teams.

b.) Student athletes are expected to refrain from any of the following behaviors or characteristics:

- Unexcused tardiness or absence from practice or competitions (If known in advance and discussed with the coach, exceptions can be made; however, excessive tardies or absences even if excused may result in disciplinary action or loss of award eligibility. A team cannot function if every player does not show up.)
- Careless or reckless behavior
- Inappropriate use of cellular phones, cameras, or electronic devices, this includes inappropriate use of social networks or media outlets (ie. Snapchat, TikTok, FaceBook, etc.).
- Flagrant/rebellious disrespect or attitude.
- Harassment or bullying of any kind.
- Any use of illicit drugs, tobacco, alcohol, or abuse of prescription medication, vaping, etcetera.

Please keep in mind that the above list is NOT all inclusive. Any behavior that is considered out of character for a representative of Christ and Westwood Christian School will be addressed as needed. Any violations of the WCS student handbook will also fall under this category.

Any violation or misconduct shall be subject to disciplinary action. Such disciplinary measures may be extra workouts before or after practice, suspension from play, or dismissal from the team. Each case will be evaluated based on severity and circumstances and will be determined by the coaches with support from the Athletic Director and if needed to include the principal. All disciplinary decisions will be final.

Attendance at Practice and Games

Each member of WCS Warrior Athletics must assume the responsibilities associated with that privilege. The athlete has an ethical responsibility to the team and the school. Commitment to WCS teams should come before any club or outside team. If practice or competition is missed due to outside commitments, there will be consequences. Remember, you chose to play for WCS, with that choice comes the responsibility to commit to the team.

WCS does understand that sometimes things happen that are out of the athletes hands. These may include, but not limited to: doctor appointments, illness, family emergencies, etcetera, that make it impossible for the athlete to attend a practice or game. However, absences should be few and far between and arranged with the coach as early as possible.

Absences from practice or games will be handled in the following manner:

ABSENCE FROM PRACTICE	
Excused Absence	No action / documentation required
Unexcused Absence – 1 st Offense	Conference with coach and discipline of athlete
Unexcused Absence – 2 nd Offense	Suspension of the next game/competition
Unexcused Absence – 3 rd Offense	Dismissal from the team

ABSENCE FROM COMPETITION	
Excused Absence	No Action / documentation required
Unexcused Absence – 1 st Offense	Suspension from the next two games/competitions
Unexcused Absence – 2 nd Offense	Dismissal from the team

****In case of suspension or dismissal, the student forfeits all awards. (see awards section)**

Attendance at School

FHSAA rules do not have specific attendance guidelines; however, Westwood Christian School understands that in-person instruction is the most valuable source for student success and has therefore adopted the following attendance policy.

Students must be in school on the day of any practice or competition to be able to participate in that day's activities.

If a student has an excused absence from school for that day, he/she will still be allowed to participate.

Remember any unexcused absence from school will result in an unexcused absence from practice or games (see above section - Attendance at Practice or Games).

Playing Time Policy

The coaching staff at Westwood Christian School believe that sports is an important aspect in a student's life that can build character, discipline, and integrity, and that playing time is important to broaden those traits. It must be remembered, however, that the coaching staff also has a responsibility to strive for excellence in each game, making decisions in the moment to help the team play their best. Therefore, no minimum per game playing time provisions or minimum number of athletic contests in which athletes must compete are established at the middle school or varsity level. Playing time decisions are exclusively left up to the individual coaches.

Handling Problems and Solving Disputes

All disputes at Westwood Christian School, including those related to athletic matters, should be handled in a Biblical manner. It is encouraged that the offended party talk directly to the one with whom he/she has a problem. (For example, the athlete should talk directly to the coach before parents or the Athletic Director.)

PLEASE NOTE: Lack of playing time is not considered a dispute and will not be addressed by the coach. (Refer to Playing Time Policy above).

In all situations, this order of authority is encouraged to be approached:

Student to the player or coach
 Student and parents to the coach
 Parent and coach to the Athletic Director.

If the parent and athlete do not feel that satisfaction was obtained by following the above, or they feel that proper process was not followed, they may make an appeal to the school administration.

PLEASE NOTE: At no time should a parent address a player that is not their own child. Please bring any concerns to the coaching staff.

When to address a dispute: If a dispute takes place before or during a game, please do not address the party involved until the next day. Games can be stressful for all involved, from the player and parents to the coaches

and officials. Misunderstandings and short tempers will only make the matter worse. Please take 24 hours to let all involved settle down and process what happened before disputes are brought up.

In addition, remember the coaches are volunteers and many of them are teachers as well. Please try to make an appointment to see them about a problem or concerns.

School Equipment

- Students are responsible for all equipment issued to them. Athletic uniforms are supplied for the sole purpose of athletic participation. This equipment is not to be used for any other purpose.
- When the season is over, all equipment and uniforms are to be returned to the coach who maintains an inventory of all equipment issued. Failure to return equipment may result in ineligibility for awards.
- **The parent will be responsible for dollar replacement cost for any lost or damaged school issued equipment or uniforms.**

Home Game Clean-Up Requirements

All players are required to help clean up the FLC Gym after home games. This includes putting away chairs or bleachers, checking restrooms, sweeping, taking out trash, and cleaning up the concession area. A schedule will be made at the beginning of each sport season by the coach and all players/parents will sign up for at least 2 home games. **If the student does not help clean the Gym on their assigned night, then they will not be allowed to play at the next game.** WCS strives to have clean and quality play spaces for our students, staff, parents, and guests. Student and parent help is needed to achieve this goal.

END OF SEASON AWARDS

General

Athletic awards can be earned in all sports offered at Westwood Christian School when the appropriate criteria are met. Awards are presented at the discretion of the coaches and Athletic Director.

1. To be eligible for awards a player must complete the season and have remained academically eligible.
2. The player must not have received a suspension due to conduct.
3. Player must have turned in all equipment and uniforms in good condition.
4. Player must have paid, in full, their athletic fee prior to the end of the season.
5. All players at the middle and varsity level will receive either a medallion or participation certificate.
6. The awards that are presented by WCS Warrior Athletics are as follows:
 - Christian Character
 - Most Improved
 - Offensive Player of the Year
 - Defensive Player of the Year
 - Most Valuable Player
 - Teammate of the Year



Other awards or recognition may be presented by individual coaches at their discretion.

VARSITY LETTER GUIDELINES

General Guidelines:

- **Letterman eligibility is open only to varsity players 10th grade or higher.**
- **Letters with sport specific pins will be issued one time. For subsequent seasons, each eligible player will receive a service bar or star.**
- **The player must have finished the season with high academic standards.** *The player must not have been placed on academic probation for a period longer than 10 days; been placed on academic suspension; or found academically ineligible to play during the season.*
- **The player must show good moral character both on the court and in the classroom.** *The player must not have been placed on probation for longer than 5 days; been suspended for behavior problems either on the court or in the classroom; or been benched for violation of behavior standards set forth by this handbook or the respective coach.*
- **The player must have shown dedication to their team, coach, and the sport they play.** *The player must have been present at **all** practices; unless sick, injured, or agreed upon by the coaches in advance. The player must have been present at **all** games; unless sick, injured, or agreed upon by the coaches in advance.*
- **The player must have turned in all issued equipment: uniforms, protective equipment, practice gear, balls, etc.**
- **All sports fees and other costs must be paid in full.**

The following guidelines are sport specific.

Volleyball –

- **The player must have played a minimum of 3 rotations per set.** *This will be determined by entries in the scorebook.*
- **The player must not have been taken out of any game for unsportsmanlike conduct. Character counts.** *This is valid whether the coach or the official removed them from the game.*
- **The player must have served the ball on at least three of their rotations.** *This will be determined by entries in the scorebook.*

Basketball –

- **The player must have actively played, on average, in 25% of all the quarters throughout the season.** *If a player is injured during the season, it is up to the coach's discretion as to whether they would have played enough quarters to qualify for a letter.*
- **The player demonstrated good sportsmanship during the season.** *Contributing positively to the team, representing the school and Christ well.*

STUDENT SUPPORT STAFF

Any student that fills the role of athletic support staff (i.e., equipment director, ball boy, scorekeeper, etc.) will be held to the same eligibility, academic, and disciplinary standards as the athletes. They will be eligible for recognition awards at the coaches discretion at the year-end sports banquet.

PARENTS

Please remember that participation in sports is a privilege not a right. It is the player's responsibility to ensure that adherence to these guidelines is met. Participation in athletic programs will give your child some of the most rewarding and memorable moments in their lives. It will also offer up some frustrating moments when things do not go the way the student or their parents wish. Discussion with the coach is always encouraged.

Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with the Coaches:

- The treatment of the student-athlete, both physical and mentally
- Ways to help the student-athlete improve
- Concerns about the student-athlete's behavior
- Academic support
- Bullying of the student athlete by other players.

Issues Not Appropriate to Discuss with the Coaches:

- Playing time
- Team Strategy
- Play calling
- Other student-athletes abilities, playing time, etc.

Conduct at Games

It is the coaches responsibility to ensure that the fans behave in a sportsmanlike manner, and at their discretion that they may point out behavior that they feel is distracting or not in keeping with good sportsmanship. A simple guideline to adhere to when cheering at games is to cheer for YOUR team, not against the other team.

It is a firm belief with this program that disrespect, unsportsmanlike conduct, vulgar language, or other actions against any official of a game will not be tolerated. Actions such as these by the coaches, support staff, players, or fans may result in the coach forfeiting the game. Please remember that we are representing Christ in all that we do.

Parent Volunteers

No high school sports program can be successful without support from the parents. WCS Warrior Athletics is no exception. Please do not let one or two parents take-on the brunt of the duties. They would like to enjoy watching their child participate as well. Parents are needed in the following areas every season.

- Concessions
- Gym Clean-Up
- Attendance
- Team mom or dad
- Line judges - volleyball
- Scorekeeping

Please make sure you sign up at the beginning of the season to help make Warrior Athletics the best.

Trusting The Coaches

Parents have an opportunity to display respect and good sportsmanship to their athlete by always supporting the coach during the season. This includes:

- Being respectful in discussing the coach with the player.

- Not coaching the player from the sidelines, (it distracts the player from the game and can cause them to miss important instructions from the coach.)
- Understanding that the coaches are volunteers and are doing their best. The coaches are human and will make mistakes during the season. We ask that you extend them grace and support them, even if you disagree with their decisions.
- Not speaking disrespectfully or disparagingly about the coach to other parents, fans, or players.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Westwood Christian School admits students of any race, color, disability, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, disability, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, athletic programs, and other school-administered programs.



WCS Warrior Athletic Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I have read and understand the WCS Warrior Athletic Handbook and agree to abide by the information contained therein. I will support the coaches, staff, and administration in any decisions made concerning my child. Any questions or problems will be handled according to the steps outlined in the handbook. I agree to conduct myself in the highest standards of sportsmanship to reflect the love of Christ for my team, the spectators, and my opponents. This form should be returned to the front office.

(Athlete Signature)

(Date)

(Parent/Guardian Signature)

(Date)