

# Westminster Christian School

## Athletic Policy Handbook



## Introduction

The Westminster Christian Athletics Handbook is a reference guide for coaches, student-athletes and parents, regarding the policies that govern interscholastic athletics at Westminster Christian School. The coach of an athletic team reports to the Athletic Director and is primarily responsible for the compliance by his/her team members to the rules, regulations, and policies governing athletics at Westminster. The Athletic Director will administer these rules and regulations as they relate to relationships within the athletic department.

Interscholastic athletics is a voluntary program. Students are not obligated to participate and participation is not required for graduation. Thus, competition in athletics is a privilege and not a right. Accompanying this privilege is the responsibility to conform to standards established for the athletic program. This privilege may be revoked if the athlete fails or refuses to comply with the rules.

We are thankful for your participation in our athletic program. We will continue to strive as a department to honor God with our time, talents and ability.

### **The purpose of athletics at Westminster Christian School reflects the mission statement of Westminster:**

WCS inspires students in a grace-filled learning community to...

*Discover* God and His creation,

*Develop* their unique gifts and abilities,

*Display* Christ confidently in their lives.

This mission statement is lived out through the following objectives:

- Know and understand God more deeply
- Glorify Him through your participation
- Be committed to your team and coaches
- Develop and grow your talents and gifts
- Learn and apply positive sportsmanship
- Display a Christ-like witness to other schools, players, spectators, and officials

The athletic program is an important and integral part of the overall school program at Westminster. Students are offered the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of sports. It should be understood by players, parents, and coaches that the academic program and students success in the classroom takes precedence over athletic participation.

Through voluntary participation, the student-athlete gives time, energy, and loyalty to the athletic program. A student-athlete also willingly assumes the responsibilities and obligations that come with being a member of a team, understanding that these sacrifices are for the benefit of the community.

The athletic department, student-athletes and parents must work together to have a successful program that honors God and promotes the mission and vision of the school. We believe it is important that each group commit to these important principles in order to achieve our common goals. A full commitment from each group will provide the best experience for all athletes.

## **Commitment of Participants**

### **Responsibilities of the Westminster Christian Athletic Department:**

The Athletic Department comprised of the Athletic Director, administrative assistant and coaches commits to providing an experience for student-athletes that allows each participant the opportunity to grow in his/her faith, develop and improve individual skills, and to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for the sport.

*More specifically we commit to:*

- Maintaining and ongoing improvement of facilities
- Coaches who are committed to Christian discipleship, knowledgeable and well-trained.
- Competitive schedules
- Providing service opportunities within the Elgin community
- Developing and growing school spirit through participation

### **Expectations of a Westminster Athlete:**

- Priorities are God, family, academics, team
- Honor God on the court, field, and classroom
- Commit to your team regarding practices and games
- Communicate quickly and directly with your coach when issues arise
- Support and encourage other team members
- Abide by and support the policies of the athletic program and school
- The desire to join a team after the sport has begun is not allowed at Westminster. If a student has a desire to go out for a sport after the season has begun and there are extenuating circumstances, the student and their parents must meet with the athletic director.

### **Expectations of Westminster Coaches:**

- Serve as an Christian role model to the players in life conduct, both on and off the floor / field in attitude, speech and actions toward others
- Be in whole-hearted agreement with the school's Statement of Faith and mission
- Recognize the role of parents as primarily responsible for their children's education and be prepared to assist them in that task
- Maintain a personal appearance that is a Christian role model of cleanliness, modesty, good taste, and in agreement with school policy
- Expect players to maintain positive interpersonal relationships with opposing players
- Wisely administer discipline to players whose choices or actions are considered detrimental to the spiritual or team objectives.
- Provide information for in-house newsletters and announcements and public media regarding outcomes of games
- Must remain in supervisory capacity of all players until they have left the practice or game facility with appropriate drivers
- Responsible for control of athletic uniforms and equipment allocated for team use

**Expectations of Parents:**

We appreciate the support you are providing for your child to participate in athletics at Westminster. This is a sacrifice of finances, time, and energy which is an investment for your child individually, as well as a support for their team and the school community.

We are at our best when you:

- Encourage your child to prioritize his/her time.
- Help your child honor the commitment he/she has made to the team
- Communicate with your child and encourage him/her to speak with the coach when a problem arises
- Practice positive, Christ-like sportsmanship as a family
- Abide by and support the policies of the athletic program and school
- Volunteer and support the athletic program as you are able
- Wait 24 hours to discuss any issues or conflicts with the coaches regarding your child.
- If a conflict continues, set up a mutually agreeable time to meet with the coach to resolve issues

### **Westminster Athletic Eligibility Policy**

1. Westminster Christian School is a member of the Illinois High School Association (IHSA). We follow IHSA policies by monitoring student-athletes' academic status. Westminster is also a member and abides by the principles and by-laws of the Northeastern Athletic Conference (9-12), Mid-Northern Athletic Conference (7-8) and the Fox Valley Lutheran Athletic Conference (5-6).
2. These standards demonstrate that academic achievement takes precedence over athletic participation. Academic progress will be monitored continually, using the Westminster guidelines outlined below, to ensure that each participating athlete maintains good academic standing.
3. Each week by noon on Thursday, teachers will be responsible to report grades for student-athletes to the athletic department. The athletic director will inform the athlete and his/her parents on Friday if there is a change in the student's eligibility. Students who are ineligible will not be permitted to participate in a athletic contest.
4. Ineligibility is defined that each athlete shall be doing passing work (60% +) in 5 classes in order to be eligible.
5. If a student completes work (test, quiz, homework, etc.) that has the potential to adjust a student's eligibility status, the teacher will be given 2 full days to grade and record the work.
6. The teacher will notify the athletic director of a change in the grade status; the athletic director will then notify the parents, student, and coach.

## Game/Practice Requirements

1. **Student athletes must be in attendance by 10:30a.m.** In order to participate in an athletic practice or game. Students who have a pre-arranged appointment (i.e. doctor or dentist) must submit a signed medical note to the front desk. Extenuating circumstances must be approved by a school administrator.
2. If an athlete suffers an injury which renders him/her unable to play, a medical release must be submitted to the athletic office prior to participation in a practice or game.
3. Some circumstances which cause an absence from a game or practices are considered excused. The athlete will not suffer a consequence as long as he/she contacts the coach as soon as the absence is known. Excused absences include the following: sickness, death in the family; known pre-arranged college visits and school-sponsored mission trips must be communicated as soon as possible to the coach.
4. Other absences are considered unexcused and will have an athletic consequence implemented by the coach or athletic director. These include, but are not limited to the following: any disciplinary measure (i.e. detention, suspension, etc.), family vacation, non-school sponsored activities.

An administrator has the right to establish additional rules and has the right to enforce consequences pertaining to any co-curricular activities.

*Being a student-athlete is a privilege and is part of the larger school experience, therefore school discipline given as a result of a student's behavior, on or off-campus, may impact a student's athletic participation.*

## Team Membership Criteria

### 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade levels:

Teams at this level can be comprised of students across each grade. The focus of teams at these levels is on the continued development of the athletes' abilities so that they continue to improve their skill level and as team members. Players at these levels will be encouraged to improve on the following:

- Skill development of the fundamentals related to their particular sport
- Improve on the Individual and team concepts and strategies
- Learn how to compete and learn from your experiences

Playing time shall be equal at this level and all players will have the opportunity to participate in all games.

### **7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels:**

Teams at this level can be comprised of students across each grade. The focus of teams at these levels is on the continued development of the athletes' abilities so that they continue to improve their skill level and prepare for high school athletics. Players at these levels will be encouraged to improve on the following:

- Continue to develop and enhance the skills related to their particular sport
- Advance Individual and team concepts and strategies will be emphasized.
- Learn how to be more competitive and learn from your experiences

The coach will determine whether a player will participate if he/she has had an unexcused absence from practice in the week preceding the game. Playing time becomes earned based on mastering what is learned in practiced sessions.

At this level, the coach will work diligently to play all players in each game and the coach will try to balance playing time.

### **High School Sub-Varsity Levels:**

The focus of teams at these levels is on the continued development of the athletes' abilities so that they continue to improve their skill level and as team members. Players at these levels will be expected to have a solid grasp of the following:

1. Respectable fundamental skills related to their particular sport
2. A solid understanding of the individual and team concepts of the game
3. Good physical condition which allows them to compete at this level

If the player does not demonstrate each aspect listed above, the coach has the right to adjust playing time or cut the athlete from the team.

The coach will determine whether a player will participate if he/she has had an unexcused absence from practice in the week preceding the game.

There are no guarantees of playing time at this level. All playing time is earned through demonstrating improvement during practice time throughout the season.

### **High School Varsity Level:**

This team is generally made up of upper-classmen, but if the varsity coach determines that a younger high school player can contribute to the varsity team, the coach may include the younger player on the roster. Players at the varsity level are expected to have a solid grasp of the following:

1. Excellent skills related to the particular sport
2. A higher level of understanding of the fundamentals of the game
3. Superior physical condition which allows them to compete at the varsity level

If the player does not demonstrate each aspect listed above, the coach has the right to adjust playing time accordingly or cut the player from the team.

The coach will determine whether a player will participate if he/she has had an unexcused absence from practice in the week preceding the game.

High School roster limits per sport:

Football – No Cap	Cheerleading – 12	Baseball – 18
Boys Soccer – 22	Basketball – 12 per team	Softball - 18
Golf – 8 per team	Bowling – 8 per team	Track – No Cap
Girls Volleyball – 12 per team		Boys Volleyball – 12 per team
Cross Country – No Cap		Girls Soccer - 22

Playing time decisions at the varsity level are left to the discretion of the head coach. Priority is to development of the most competitive interscholastic team possible. In addition, the varsity roster will be determined by the head coach and staff and will cut players from the team if deemed necessary. Players who do not make the varsity roster have the opportunity to play at the JV level if there is room on the roster.

## **Uniforms and Equipment**

Uniforms and equipment issued to players must be turned in to the appropriate coach within 2 weeks of the end of the season. If a uniform is not turned in within this time period, the cost of a new uniform (or equipment) will be charged to the student's account. Uniforms must be returned cleaned and clearly marked with the athlete's name **directly to the coach**. We expect students to be good stewards of their uniforms and equipment; any needed charge for repairs, cleaning, damage, etc. will be billed to the student's account.

# Athletic Disciplinary Actions

The Athletic Director and Principal of the grade level program have the right to discipline the athlete in the event that that athlete displays inappropriate behavior during practice or an athletic contest. This includes any of the following: thefts, misdemeanors, felonies, drug use, alcohol use, immoral sexual conduct, profanity, and ejection from any athletic contest. This also includes inappropriate behavior that violates the Westminster Christian School handbook.

## Hazing

The term hazing refers to an activity expected of some joining a student organization that humiliates, degrades, or risks emotional and/or physical harm, **regardless** of the person's willingness to participate.

Hazing activities generally considered: physically abusive, hazardous, and/or sexually violating. The specific behaviors or activities within these categories vary widely among participants, groups and settings. Typical hazing practices would include: personal servitude, sleep deprivation and restrictions on personal hygiene, yelling, swearing and insulting new members/newbies, being forced to wear embarrassing or humiliating attire in public, physical beatings, binge drinking and drinking games, sexual simulation and sexual assault. Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism that subjects a student to extreme mental stress, embarrassment, shame or humiliation that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from remaining in school is considered Hazing. Any activity that causes or requires the student to perform a task that involves violation of state or federal law violations. Violation of the Westminster Lifestyle Commitment or Community Covenant will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary actions.

## Conflict Resolution

All conflicts at Westminster Christian School, including those related to athletic matters, should be handled in a biblical manner. In particular, Westminster encourages application of the "Matthew 18 Principle" when handling a problem/settling a dispute. This principle, encourages the offended party to go directly to the one with whom he/she has a problem. (e.g., student athlete should talk to the coach at an appropriate time prior to parental involvement and prior to going directly to the athletic director.) Following the biblical model, most conflicts can be resolved through ongoing communication. Conflictual situations **should not** be discussed through email, but through a mutually agreeable face-to-face meeting. NOTE: Lack of playing time at the varsity level is not considered a dispute and should not be addressed with the coach.

If the situation is not resolved, the offended person is encouraged to seek a solution by speaking to the next person in authority. In simple terms, an athlete should approach the coach first. If unresolved, the athlete and parents may approach the coach. If still unresolved, the matter may be brought to the Athletic Director. If after presenting the problem to the Athletic Director the parent or student athlete feels that the proper process was not followed then they can take the matter to the Principal or Head of School. The Head of School will ensure that the matter has been discussed first through the appropriate channels.