

# Grace Lutheran School Athletic Handbook



*“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.”*

**Hebrews 6:19**

Grace Lutheran School  
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Principal: Paul Ihde  
Athletic Director: Alex Vandenberg  
**Revised:** Fall 2025

## I. School Mission Statement

*The mission of Grace Evangelical Lutheran School is to assist parents with the Christian training of their children for life and eternity, while providing academic excellence in the light of God's Word.*

## II. Athletic Mission Statement

As an extension of our school's mission, we provide an athletic program at Grace Lutheran as an opportunity for our students to use their God-given talents in competition in order to give glory to God. **1 Corinthians 10:31, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."**

## III. Objectives

The goals of our interscholastic athletic programs are the following:

- To lead athletes to recognize their physical skills, talents, and abilities are gifts from God to be used in His service. **(1 Cor. 10:31)**
- To aid athletes in using their physical skills, talents, and abilities to the best of their ability and to the honor and glory of their Savior. **(1 Cor. 10:31)**
- To promote Christian sportsmanship and attitudes among fellow teammates, fellow athletes, coaches, officials, and fans.
- To give athletes the opportunity to compete in interscholastic team sports.
- To equip athletes with a higher skill and knowledge of various sports that may better prepare them for future interscholastic or recreational competition.

## IV. Sports Offered

Grace Lutheran School offers a variety of athletic opportunities throughout the school year. Students in grades 3-8 (in some cases K-8) are eligible for our sports programs.

- **Fall Sports:** Co-ed Soccer (Grades 3-8); Girls Volleyball (Grades 5-8); WLA Cross Country Meet (Grades K-8)
- **Winter Sports:** Boys Basketball (Grades 3-8); Girls Basketball (Grades 3-8); Girls Cheerleading (Grades 5-8)
- **Spring:** Track & Field (boys and girls K-8); Co-ed Softball (Grades 7-8)

## V. Winnebago Area Lutheran League (WALL)

Grace Lutheran School is a member of the Winnebago Area Lutheran League (WALL). It is the mission of the WALL to:

1. Provide opportunities to glorify God through sports activities.

2. Provide opportunities for Christian sportsmanship, teamwork, and cooperation.
3. Provide opportunities for Christian fellowship among conference schools.
4. Provide opportunities to develop spiritual, physical, social, and mental characteristics of the children.
5. Provide opportunities for exposure to sports in the interscholastic setting.
6. To promote WLA as the primary opportunity for secondary education.

The following area Lutheran schools are members of the WALL:

1. St. Matthew's Lutheran, Iron Ridge, WI
2. St. John's Lutheran, Lomira, WI
3. Grace Lutheran, Oshkosh, WI
4. St. Paul's Lutheran, Mt. Calvary, WI
5. St. Luke's Lutheran, Oakfield, WI
6. Faith Lutheran, Fond du Lac, WI
7. St. John's Lutheran, Fox Lake, WI
8. Peace Lutheran, Green Lake, WI
9. St. John's Lutheran, Montello, WI
10. St. Paul's Lutheran, North Fond du Lac, WI
11. Redeemer Lutheran, Fond du Lac, WI
12. St. Stephen's Lutheran, Horicon, WI
13. St. John's Lutheran, Mayville, WI
14. St. Peter's Lutheran, Fond du Lac, WI
15. Waucousta Lutheran, Campbellsport, WI

## **VI. Participation Requirements**

**1 Corinthians 10:31, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."** With these words as our motivation, we expect the following of all those students that wish to be a part of our athletic programs:

- Participation in our athletic programs is not to be considered a right, but a privilege.
- Students must be able to commit to attending both practices and games, including tournaments. Planned absences should be clearly communicated to coaches as the season gets underway.
- Students that receive a behavioral detention during the school day will miss the following game or meet.
- Students must maintain a C grade average or better and may not have any F's on a mid-term or quarter report. A student declared ineligible at the end of these marking periods will be ineligible for 5 school days after the family is notified. The student's progress will be reviewed by the principal and the classroom teacher. If the student has demonstrated satisfactory improvement, the student will be reinstated for athletic activities.
- The school recognizes that students are individuals, each one possessing different gifts and abilities. Because of this, there may be times when these eligibility

guidelines are tailored to the needs and abilities of the individual. The classroom teacher and principal are responsible for tailoring guidelines when necessary.

- Students must be in school by the end of their classroom lunch period in order to participate in practice or a game *on that day*. Extenuating circumstances will be taken into account. (i.e. significant family events, doctor appointments, etc..)
- Behavior which will cause removal from the team includes fighting, stealing, vandalism, and use of alcohol, drugs or tobacco.

## VII. Expectations of Players

**“Let your light shine before men so that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)** When joining a team, the student makes a commitment to which they are expected to follow through. Specific expectations include but are not limited to the following:

- Listen to coaches, give their best effort, and accept feedback with a positive attitude.
- Display Christ-centered respect and sportsmanship at all times to all players, coaches, officials, and spectators.
- Maintain all participation requirements of Grace Lutheran as detailed in this athletic handbook before having the privilege to participate in our programs. (*see participation requirements*)
- Respect all property when playing at home or the opposing team’s facility.
- Report all injuries to the coach of their sport, whether the injury was incurred at practice, in a game, or elsewhere.
- Players are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities outside of team practices to develop their skills: summer camps, working with parents, open gyms, and the like.
- Due to new guidelines set forth by the Department of Public Instruction and Statute 118.293 (as of 2012) all players are required to sign the athlete agreement form in an effort to recognize and prevent athletic concussions. This form **MUST** be signed and returned before participating in each sport season.

## VIII. Expectations of Coaches

- Head coaches must be members of a WELS/ELS congregation.
- Coaches, whether lay persons or called workers, are to follow the example of our Lord as described in *Isaiah 40:11*, **“He tends his flock like a shepherd; He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.”**
- Coaches should love as Jesus loves us first. Teaching skills and fundamentals should be taught and modeled in the light of Jesus’ love. The coach must understand that they are responsible for their behavior at all times and their conduct reflects on our school and our Savior.

- Coaches should have a general knowledge of the sport they are assigned to coach. At Grace Lutheran, coaches are to develop and encourage athletes at all skill levels.
- The coach needs to show organization, a willingness to improve as coach, and a commitment for teaching the fundamental skills of that particular sport. The coach must understand that they are responsible for their behavior at all times.
- The coach is responsible for the care and discipline of the athletes during the practices and games. At the end of practice and game activities the parent will assume responsibility for the post-game care and discipline of their child(ren).
- The coaches are encouraged to pray with the players before each athletic contest.
- Due to new guidelines set forth by the Department of Public Instruction and Statute 118.293 (as of 2012) all coaches are required to view the "Concussions 101: A Primer for Kids and Parents" video and sign the coaches agreement form in an effort to recognize and prevent athletic concussions. This video **MUST** be viewed and form **MUST** be signed and returned before the coach participates in each sport season.
- It is the Policy of the School Board that all Grace's coaches go through a background check.

## IX. Expectations of Parents

- All families with students involved in athletics are required to attend the Grace Athletics meeting before the start of each season.
- Students must be able to commit to attending both practices and games. Planned absences should be clearly communicated to coaches as the season gets underway.
- Parents are expected to set a positive Christian example for their children, fellow Christians, and the unchurched. This will follow the philosophy based on **Colossians 3:17, "do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."**
- Parents should respect the coaches and officials who give of their time to assist the development of their children. If problems arise, please follow the proper lines of communication in accordance with Matthew 18.
- It will be the responsibility of the parents to watch, care for, and discipline their children before and after all home and away games. If the child's own parent is not able to attend the athletic contest, the parent will be responsible for finding a "care-giver" when the child is not under the direct control of the coach.
- The parent will be responsible for getting the child to and from practices and games in a timely fashion. This includes transportation for soccer practices and games, which are held off-campus (See Section XVI). Parents are encouraged to volunteer wherever the need arises. Areas in need may include volunteering to work at home games and hosting WALL tournament games we are responsible for operating.
- Due to new guidelines set forth by the Department of Public Instruction and Statute 118.293 (as of 2012) all parents are required to sign the parent agreement form in an effort to recognize and prevent athletic concussions. This form **MUST** be signed and returned before their child participates in each sport season.

## X. Expectations of Spectators

- The behavior of Grace Lutheran spectators will follow the philosophy based on **Colossians 3:17**, **“And whatever you do , whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him”**, and our Mission Statement as based on **1 Corinthians 10:31**, **“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”**
- We would ask that the spectators act only in a positive Christian manner showing courtesy to players, coaches, and referees. Besides modeling proper conduct, Grace spectators should be willing to remind others of proper conduct.
- Spectators who fail to conduct themselves in a Christ-like manner will be asked to leave the premises. Referees have the authority to end the sporting event due to the conduct of fans.

## XI. Volunteer Procedures

- Parents of students in our athletic program are required to assist at least once during the winter sports season. Volunteer sessions include: concessions stand, scorebook, score clock, or hallway monitor.
- The Parents, Teachers, and Friends of Grace (PTF) will manage the concession stand and will provide sign-ups for volunteers to participate.
- Volunteers are needed for all home basketball games, Grace-hosted tournaments, and any WALL tournament events that we may host.

## XII. Levels of Teams/Playing Time

We do not cut players from our athletic teams. However, we do have different levels of competition. All third and fourth graders will have a chance to compete at the C-team level for basketball only **for basketball, soccer, and cheer**. All fifth and sixth graders will have the opportunity to compete at the B-team level. All seventh and eighth graders will have the opportunity to compete at the A-team level. **In the situation where a level has multiple teams, grade level teams may be used**. We have the following beliefs about the different levels of competition in primarily soccer, basketball, and volleyball.

- **C-TEAM:** Practice is the main goal at this level. All players will receive equal attention from the coach in practices and games. A minimal number of games will be scheduled in order to put practiced skills in competition. Coaches will place equal playing time for all players high on their list of priorities.
- **B-TEAM-** Practice is still the main focus. The game competition is stronger than for the C-team. All players will get playing time in every game, but equal playing time cannot always be guaranteed.
- **A-TEAM-** The goal is to field the best team on the playing field, but still seek to play all players. However, this may not always be possible in closely contested games. **A**

team: We consider this to be our competitive level. The goal is to make each player and the team better during the season. The playing time will not be equal because we will be more aggressive to win games. While the intent is for every student to play in each game, situations may arise in which a student does not play in a particular game. In tournaments at this level, playing time is not guaranteed.

- We believe practice is vital to our program. Playing time for a student at any level will be affected if he/she consistently misses practice.
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Coaches are given the right to make judgmental decisions on which players play and how much based on what they see in practice and in the game. Players who do not work hard in practice or fail to attend practice should not expect the same playing time as those who work hard and attend practices consistently.

### **XIII. “Playing Up” Process**

Grace Lutheran School is committed to providing athletic opportunities for its students, and is also committed to ensuring the smooth operation of the Winnebago Area Lutheran League. When our upper level teams are in need of players, we may ask families of students in the grade level below to “play up”. This will only happen if there is agreement between the athletic director, coach, parent, and player. Below is an outline of how this process will take place:

- Co-ed Soccer (Grades 4-8): A and B level teams will practice together. Many schools within our conference only have one soccer team. When competing against schools with only one team, grades 4-8 will play together. Otherwise, we will divide into two teams and play separate A level and B level games.
- Volleyball and Basketball: Our goal is to have at least 3 players on the bench for athletic contests. When a team is projected to have fewer than the required number of players, the athletic director will contact families of students in the grade level below (6th grade for A-team, 4th grade for B-team) and invite these individuals to “play up”. Students may refuse and remain at their level. If they would like to participate, students may play on both their current level and the level above. Details will be worked out between the family and the athletic director.

### **XIV. Uniform Care**

Uniforms should be kept in the best condition possible. In order to help prolong the use of our uniforms, the uniform should be washed according to the washing instructions. These instructions will be given to parents prior to the start of each season.

If a uniform is not returned or is returned in non-satisfactory condition, the student will be charged the cost of the uniform. If students lose a uniform, they will pay for it. Uniforms

must be cleaned and turned in by a deadline. These deadlines will be communicated in the Grace Update regularly at the close of each season.

## **XVI. Descriptions of Other Athletic Seasons at Grace**

### **Soccer**

Many of the schools we play field soccer teams with younger players. Therefore, Grace's soccer program is comprised of students in 4-8 Grade. All students will practice together, dividing by age during portions of practice for specific drill work. Games will be played either as one team, or as an A-team and a B-team, depending on the needs of the school we are competing against. When playing as two teams, our B-level will consist of 4-5 graders and A-level will include 6-8 graders.

- Practices are held at Quarry Park in Oshkosh (925 Florida St.)
- Home games are held at Winnebago County Park (625 E County Rd Y, Oshkosh; follow County Park Drive to fields)

### **Cheerleading**

Cheerleading at Grace Lutheran School will provide girls in 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade the opportunity for meaningful participation, teamwork, sportsmanship and skill building. Since cheerleading is unique in formations, stunts and space, the following guidelines will be used when forming cheer teams at Grace.

1. There will be an effort to make an A and B team depending on numbers and coaches.
2. To ensure that our A Team remains competitive, safe, and continues to grow in skill level, it is sometimes necessary to consider moving athletes up from other teams. Our goal is to provide all cheerleaders with the opportunity to learn and perform more advanced skills in a structured and supportive environment. In order to safely execute stunts, formations, and routines at the A Team level, we must field a sufficient number of athletes with the appropriate skill sets. When needed, we may invite athletes to move up to help maintain the integrity of the team's performance and to ensure a fun, challenging, and rewarding experience for all participants. These decisions are made thoughtfully, with input from coaches and the Athletic Director, and always with the best interest of the athletes and the program in mind.

### **Softball**

The softball program at Grace will consist of one or two teams (depending on numbers) of coed players in 5-8 grade. The season will start in April and run until mid May.

- Practices and games will be held off-site, the location to be determined. We work with the Oshkosh Park and Rec. department to secure a local field.

### **Cross Country and Track**

Grace will participate in the cross country run at WLA in the fall. This is open to all students in K-8.

### **Track and Field**

Grace will also participate in the track meet at WLA in May. This is open to all students in K-8. Schedules and information will be released several weeks prior to the meet.

## **XVII. Chain of Command Reference**

Our Lord Jesus Christ has established an orderly guideline to follow when dealing with conflict between Christians. In order to follow the guidelines established in **Matthew 18:15-17**, a chain of command has been developed for our use.

*Order from top to bottom:*

1. Principal
2. Athletic Director
3. Coach
4. Parent

In all cases, if a parent has a concern that needs to be discussed, he or she should go to the source of that concern. If that source is the coach, then steps should be taken in order to resolve the problem. The parent and coach should then make an appointment with each other to discuss the problem.

If no resolution can be made at that time there will then be a need to involve the Athletic Director. If no resolution is made with the Athletic Director, then the Principal will also become involved. The parent should not come immediately to the Athletic Director or Principal if there is a concern with the coach. If the parent would happen to contact the Athletic Director or Principal about a coaching issue, they would be directed back to the coach to resolve the matter.

If a coach has difficulties with a child or coaching issues, it is recommended to address the matter with the Athletic Director. In all cases, coaches should be in regular communication with the Athletic Director so he is aware of all matters. Minor issues are left up to the judgment of the individual coach. Major issues and discipline will include the coach, Athletic Director, and Principal if needed.

## **XVIII. In Closing**

Any child that participates in the athletic program does so as a student enrolled at Grace and is therefore subject to all the philosophies, policies and guidelines spelled out in this handbook as well as the Grace School Handbook. It is expected that all things be done decently and in order, and that all words and actions may glorify our Savior, Jesus Christ.

It is indeed a great privilege to offer God's children the opportunity to grow through the means of an interscholastic athletic program throughout their grade school experience. Regard this opportunity as a blessing from God, and never underestimate the impact that you as a parent or an athlete might have on the faith life of those around you. Use this avenue as an opportunity to witness your love for your Savior. God bless you as you go about His work!