

LIBERTY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

2026-2027 ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

PHILOSOPHY

The athletic department of Liberty Christian Academy is dedicated to enriching the lives of its student-athletes through sports and leadership. LCA athletic teams continue to prove that hard work and dedication translates to success. Beyond athletic achievement, the focal point of the program is seeing our student-athletes represent the character of Christ. As we compete throughout the state, we want everyone watching to witness our children who play with passion and purpose.

The purpose of the athletic program is to provide an avenue for developing Christian character through organized athletic competition. The program strives to promote the image of the school in the community through excellence in the sports program and being a positive Christian witness.

We have expectations at LCA that rival those of larger schools. We do not use our school size as an excuse, but as an opportunity for our students to play a sport they love with people they respect.

Our student athletes not only excel in competition, but also and more importantly in the classroom. We have athletes that have attended Indiana Wesleyan, College of the Ozarks, Oklahoma Wesleyan, Lindenwood University, Missouri Baptist, Missouri State, Rhema and Missouri University.

Liberty Christian Academy is a member of the Metro Athletic Conference (MAC) and Missouri Christian Schools Athletic Association (MCSAA) and is a Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) affiliate.

POLICY AND REFERENCE GUIDE

The purpose of this manual is a small reference guide for student-athletes and parents concerning the policies that govern the athletic program at LCA.

The coach of the team is primarily responsible for compliance by his/her squad members to the rules, regulations and policies governing athletics at Liberty Christian Academy. The Athletic Director will administer these rules and regulations as they relate to inter squad and coach relationships.

Interscholastic athletics is a voluntary program. Students are not obligated to participate and participation is not required for graduation. Thus, competition in high school athletics is a privilege and not a right. Accompanying this privilege is the responsibility to behave in a manner, both on and off campus that is consistent with Christian values and policies of LCA. It is also an expectation that parents/guardians of each student follow these same standards of conduct. When a student does not meet these standards, the student may be suspended for a time and/or removed from the activity, per review from the Director of Athletics. When a parent does not meet these standards, the parent may be prohibited from attending games/events; and in extreme cases their child may be removed from an activity.

Please be cognizant that the Metro Athletic Conference (MAC) and the Missouri Christian Schools Athletic Association (MCSAA) are the governing bodies for its member schools. The rules and regulations set forth from these organizations are included with all rules of the school and policies of each sport. Issues of eligibility due to grades, transfer status and/or age are handled by Liberty Christian Academy and the Metro Athletic Conference.

PRESEASON MEETING GOALS

1. Introduce students, their parents, coaches, and athletic trainers.
2. Provide information about activities, insurance, physicals, program philosophy, eligibility, etc.
3. Provide information on state high school athletic association, school and team rules.
4. Provide specific guidelines, rules and consequences of rule violations.
5. Provide information concerning practice, game and tournament schedules.
6. Promote the importance of ongoing honest communication.
7. Review ethics and sportsmanship.
8. Clarify there is severe punishment for tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and inappropriate behavior (this is their only warning).

PARENT/COACH RELATIONSHIP

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to children. As parents, when your child becomes involved in our program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program. The athletic department will provide an informational packet at the beginning of each sport, at a required parents' meeting, so you are fully informed of the season expectations.

COMMUNICATION YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM THE COACH

1. Philosophy of the coach.
2. Expectations the coach has for the season.
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests
4. Team requirements, i.e., fees, special equipment, off season conditioning.
5. Procedure should your child be injured during participation in the sport.

COMMUNICATION COACHES EXPECT FROM PARENTS

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach
2. Notification of any scheduling conflicts well in advance
3. Specific concerns regarding a coach's philosophy and/or expectations
4. Medical or physical limitations of your child

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES

1. The treatment of your child, mentally and physically
2. Ways to help your child improve
3. Concerns about your child's behavior
4. Concerns about your child's grades/studying habits

It is very difficult to accept your child not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can be and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things must be left to the discretion of the coach.

ISSUES NOT APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES

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

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue.

IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN TO DISCUSS WITH A COACH, PLEASE FOLLOW THESE PROCEDURES:

1. Call and schedule an appointment
2. If the coach cannot be reached, call the Athletic Director. He/She will schedule the meeting for you.
3. Please do not attempt to confront a coach before, during, or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both parents and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.

WHAT CAN A PARENT DO IF THE MEETING WITH THE COACH DOES NOT PROVIDE A SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION?

1. Call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.
2. At this meeting the appropriate next step can be determined.
3. Every effort should be made to resolve the problem before addressing your concerns with Administration and the School Board Athletic Liaison.

SPORTSMANSHIP

As members of the LCA program, students, coaches and parents are expected to demonstrate proper respect for each other, opponents, opposing coaches, teachers, officials and spectators. Student athletes and coaches are expected to exhibit the highest level of conduct, both on and off the field, as they are at all times representatives of God, their team, school, and community.

Coach or athlete ejections come with sanctions from the Metro Athletic Conference. The Athletic Director is the only person allowed to appeal suspensions. (See MAC constitution)

REQUIREMENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN ATHLETICS:

A new physical must be obtained and returned prior to the first official day of practice. Students are expected to maintain a minimum of 70% average with no failing grades.

ELIGIBILITY OF TRANSFER STUDENTS IN THE MAC:

Any student that plays a sport at another MAC school is not eligible to play for a period of 12 months once that sport season has ended.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

Students are expected to have and maintain a minimum of 70% average with no failing grades to maintain ongoing eligibility for sports. If a student fails to maintain academic eligibility, s/he may be suspended from further practices until grades meet the minimum academic requirements. While under academic suspension, student-athletes are still required to attend all home games, fully dressed, and support the team; these students will not be eligible to travel for road games. Students may regain ongoing eligibility any time their course average meets the minimum requirements.

Note: Initial eligibility requirements for sports will align with those from the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA), while ongoing eligibility is at the discretion of the school. School administration and the Director of Athletics have the right to amend suspensions and may evaluate situations on a case by case basis. Students on Academic Probation might have stricter guidelines as outlined by the Administrator.

The goal of athletics is to give students an incentive to remain eligible and not to punish them. However, academics will always be our top priority at LCA.

As for behavior, "Unsatisfactory conduct" is not tolerated, whether it is in the classroom or in competition. The Administrator, Athletic Director, and Athletic Board Liaison all have the right to suspend or terminate a player's involvement in a sport for repeated instances.

INJURY PROTOCOL

Students under a doctor's care for injuries on or off the field, including concussions (see concussion protocol) will not be able to play or practice, unless released by the physician.

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, OR DRUGS

Liberty Christian Academy has a zero-tolerance policy for alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

DUE PROCESS FOR ACADEMIC, ALCOHOL/DRUGS, & TOBACCO

Any student-athlete disciplined for not meeting academic and/or conduct standards, or a violation of either the alcohol/drug or tobacco policies may appeal their disciplinary action to the Director of Athletics/Athletic Board Liaison and Administration through due process. A parent should submit a request for an appeal with supporting materials to the Athletic Office. The Director of Athletics and/or the Board Liaison in conjunction with Administration will review the information submitted and render a ruling in a timely manner, not to exceed 48 hours in the school week.

INDIVIDUAL COACH STANDARDS AND RULES

The athlete must abide by any additional rules set by an individual coach for their particular sport. These expectations, approved by the Director of Athletics, are told to the student athlete at the beginning of each season.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Students leaving school early for ATHLETIC EVENTS must:

1. Be responsible for any work, lecture material, or assignments given after the early dismissal.
2. Inform your teacher before class starts that you will be leaving early and ask for the day's assignment.
3. Submit any assignments due for the classes you will be missing before leaving early.
4. If you know that you are going to have a test on the day of early dismissal, contact the teacher as early as possible to see if different arrangements can be made.
5. Uniforms should be in the locker room at the time of early dismissal. You should NOT go to your car at this time.
6. We expect you to display proper behavior leaving the classroom, hallways, and locker rooms.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT

If a student misses class on the day of a practice or game without being excused, the student shall not be considered eligible on that date. Doctor's appointments must be pre-approved by the Administrator or Athletic Director for eligibility that day. There will be zero tolerance for unexcused absences.

TRANSPORTATION

We do not always have a volunteer to drive the athletes to athletic events. Coaches, athletes, managers, and statisticians will travel to and from games in transportation provided by the school whenever possible.

1. The athletic department will communicate the transportation plans with athletes and parents before the first game. Parent cars and vans may be used in certain circumstances.
2. Athletes are required to check the bus for personal items and team equipment before exiting the bus.
3. All team members are expected to ride with the team **TO and FROM** contests. Parents may drive their child home after a contest, but confirmation of that is required from the parent, not the student.
4. **COACHES, ATHLETES, MANAGERS and STATS PERSONNEL** are permitted to ride the school vans.
5. Students are not permitted to drive to games or practices.

ATHLETIC FEES & FUNDRAISING

There is an athletic fee of \$225 per sport for students on Varsity teams, \$150 for JV teams, and \$75 for middle school teams. Arrangements for this fee must be made before students are allowed to participate in that sport. Parents can pay the fee in full before each sport begins, or they may choose to break it into 3 equal monthly payments. These fees do not

include overnight trips the teams may take. The athletic department will work with parents on approved fundraisers to help offset their athletic fees. Fees for elementary students will be determined.

In addition, we use funds generated through the gate and concession stand to help offset the costs of our athletic programs. As part of their athletic requirements, parents will be expected to work **two shifts** at the gate, concession stand, or gym cleanup during the sports season.

PRACTICE

Athletic participation requires commitment from coaches, student athletes and parents. If an athlete misses three (3) unexcused practices, during a season, we have the right to remove the athlete from the team. Athletes must also recognize that being late to practice is unacceptable. Frequent tardiness is grounds for reduced playing time and eventual removal from the team.

UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

Athletes are issued uniforms and equipment for each team from the athletic office. All equipment and uniforms must be returned to the athletic office within seven days of the last game/competition. **If playing back-to-back sports, uniforms for the next sport will not be issued until the previous uniform is returned.** A student will be charged for the replacement/damage cost of unusable or unreturned uniforms and grades will not be released until all obligations are met.

SENIOR NIGHT

During your son or daughter's sport season, his/her coach will organize a night honoring senior players and parents. Seniors suspended from school or the team at the time of senior night may not participate.

ATHLETIC AWARDS

The student, to be considered for an athletic letter, must have displayed good sportsmanship in competition and have been regular in attendance at practices and games. Awards will be presented at our athletic awards banquet after each sport.

******Since research indicates a student involved in extra-curricular activities has a greater chance for success during adulthood, these programs have been established. Many of the character traits required to be a successful participant are exactly those that will promote success after high school. We hope the information provided within this pamphlet makes both your child's and your experience with LCA's athletic programs less stressful and more enjoyable.

Butch Clark
Director of Athletics
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