

Rockford Christian School

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Athletic Handbook



Principal.....Eric Burgess
Athletic Director.....Jane Bouwkamp

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Overview

Statement of Foundations

The purpose of interscholastic athletics at RCMS is to provide students with opportunities for athletic competition consistent with the mission of the Grand Rapids Christian Schools (GRCS). That is, *to prepare students to be effective servants of Christ in contemporary society.*

It is the responsibility of the RCS principle, athletic director, staff, and coaches to provide the Christian leadership and training necessary for our athletics program to achieve these essential FOUNDATIONS:

1. Honor Jesus Christ in all things – this is the most important measure of our success.
2. Christian character defines who we are – in and out of school and the athletic arena.
3. God-honoring behavior, good sportsmanship, and adherence to the Athletic Code are required.
4. Good grades and school citizenship lead the way – successful athletes must first be successful students.
5. Selfless attitudes must permeate the team – what is best for the team always comes first.
6. We will seek to win in accordance with the rules – competing at the highest possible level is the goal while showing proper respect for opponents.
7. We are all in this together – student-athletes, coaches, parents, fans and administrators are all on the same page.
8. The commitment to the team is important – it takes no talent to show up on time and work hard.
9. Athletes and coaches must support other athletes and teams in order to build effective teams – we all share Eagle pride.
10. Athletes will work hard and improve in and out of season – the commitment does not end when the season ends.
11. Positive attitudes will influence outcomes – play with passion, encourage those around you, cheer with enthusiasm.

Coaching Appointments and Evaluations

Coaching appointments are the responsibility of the Athletic Director. Head coaches will make recommendations regarding assistant coaches with the final decision resting with the Athletic Director.

Appointments are for a one year period with evaluation at the conclusion of each season. Evaluation of head coaches will be made by the Athletic Director and assistant coaches will be evaluated by the head coach and Athletic Director cooperatively.

Sunday Policy

Grand Rapids Christian Schools will not sponsor curricular or extra-curricular competitions or allow teams or school-sponsored groups to participate in Sunday competitions or practices. Rockford Christian School's athletic facilities will not be used on Sunday.

Purpose:

Athletics primarily serve to prepare young people for the next level of life – not the next level of sports – that defines sports as a unique and positive force in the lives of our young people and communities.

There is nothing wrong with striving to be the best. School sports programs must strive to develop all who want to participate to be their best – their best as individuals, as students, as teammates, as members of the community – not just their best as athletes.

In school sports, we win if we develop winners. We may very well lose if all we care about is winning. This is one of the most exciting experiences of a young person's life – the privilege of participating in interscholastic sports. Our goal is to all maintain the proper perspective in our journey through this educational experience.

Interscholastic Sport – Co-curricular Conflicts

The athletic department recognizes each student's need for a wide range of experiences in his or her education. Faculty members, coaches, and administrators work diligently to minimize conflicts between school-sponsored activities. However, it is impossible to avoid all conflicts and students will sometimes be faced with difficult decisions about activities. When conflicts between school events arise, the sponsors, advisors, and coaches will work together, along with the parents and student, to arrive at the best possible solution. Students must also guard themselves from being "over-scheduled" or involved in too many in-school and out-of-school activities.

The general guideline is that competitions or performances take precedent over practices or rehearsals. If there is a conflict that cannot be resolved – a basketball game and a band concert, for instance – the student along with the parent can make a decision about which event to participate in, with no penalty assessed from either teacher or coach.

Coaches

Characteristics

1. The coach is a spiritual mentor and a Christian role model for the athletes they coach, helping the students in their Christian walk by allowing them to develop their God-given gifts, using them to glorify Him.
2. The coach is able to relate to kids, enjoys being around and communicating with middle school students, and is willing to invest in the lives of these students – in and out of the athletic arena.
3. The coach has a passion for and a love of the sport they coach.
4. The coach has the knowledge and ability to teach the technical skills required and the teamwork involved in creating an atmosphere to develop the team to play at the highest possible level.
5. The coach conducts him or herself in a professional manner and fosters healthy relationships with athletes, parents and officials. The coach is expected to be a leader in exhibiting Christian values and responsibility. As a highly visible representative of the school and the community, the coach must accept a special role in demonstrating positive and responsible leadership.

Responsibilities

We must hold our staff and coaches accountable to ensure that every student athlete understands and abides by the Student Responsibilities and Behavior Guidelines found in the Student/Parent Handbook.

Parent Meeting

Coaches are encouraged to hold an informational meeting for the parents at the beginning of the season to address issues of scheduling, expectations, conduct, discipline, and any other areas that the coach deems necessary.

Coaching Appointments

Head coaching appointments are the responsibility of the Athletic Director in consultation with the Principal and others of his/her choosing. Appointments are for a one year period with evaluation at the conclusion of each season.

Equipment and Uniforms

The coaching staff will collect any school-issued equipment and uniforms in a timely manner following the completion of the season. Inventory of items should be kept by the head coach with a copy filed in the Athletic Department Office. Coaches need to hold athletes accountable to return items in good condition.

***Please note that all non-staff coaches must submit to a background check through the Michigan Department of Human Services. www.michigan.gov/canregistryclearance ***

Rockford Christian School: Athletic Eligibility

All RCS student-athletes fall under the behavior guidelines explained in the student/parent handbook. They must remember that they represent their team, their school, their family, and God. Participation in sports is a privilege given to students who have demonstrated social and academic responsibility. *Ineligibility* is declared when a teacher(s) reports a student's performance is not meeting the acceptable standards for that class or if a student consistently makes poor behavior choices.

Social Responsibility: The student athlete's social choices and behavior is examined inside and outside the classroom. Standards for behavior are based both on the school's procedures/policies and the teachers' respective procedures and policies.

Team Responsibility: A student athlete who fails to meet the team responsibilities jeopardizes his/her participation in the next sport season.

Academic Performance: The student-athlete's performance on tests and quizzes must be at or above the expected level for the student-athlete. Homework and assignments must be handed in on time and completed at the level that is expected for the student-athlete.

Procedure: At the beginning of each athletic season, teachers will receive a list of the student-athletes. To assure that these student-athletes are performing at their best, the following procedure will be used:

Step One: Probation – If a student athlete is performing “below expectation” (students must be receiving a 71% or higher) in *all* courses. The principal will inform the student that she/he is on probation for the next week. This decision must be made by the teaching team and not just by one teacher. An athletic eligibility sheet must be filled out with specific requirements for the student to be removed from probation. The principal will give this sheet to the student-athlete. The athletic director will contact the parents and the coach of any athlete on probation. If the student has not met the standards of any one of the teachers, the student proceeds to Step Two.

Step Two: Ineligibility – The student athlete will miss one (1) full week of competition and must meet the teachers' standards within that week. The athlete is expected to participate in the practices and attend the game(s) (not in uniform) during this week. If the student has not met the standards, she/he proceeds to Step Three.

*Note of clarification: *Ineligibility* will run from Thursday morning at 8:30 a.m. (after the Weds. teacher meeting) to the following Weds. night at 10:00 pm. IF the student-athlete is reinstated by getting her/his grade(s) above 71%, the reinstatement will be effective on Thursday at 8:30 a.m.

Step Three: Dismissed from the team – If a student is declared ineligible for a second time in the same season, the athlete will be dismissed from the team for the remainder of the season.

In-School suspension removes the athlete from the team for one (1) week following the in-school suspension.

Suspension from school automatically dismisses the athlete from the team.

Expectations for Student Athletes

Participants will be expected to demonstrate the following:

1. Fundamental skills of the sport and team concepts
2. Christian sportsmanship
3. Understanding of one's role as a contributing member of the team
4. Treating teammates, opponents, and officials with respect and dignity
5. Working with all students of different skill levels to develop their talents
6. A high level of attentiveness, effort, and motivation at practices and games
7. Dignity and integrity as they represent Rockford Christian Middle School

Uniforms and Equipment

RCMS will provide team uniforms and team equipment for all athletic teams. These will be issued prior to and collected at the conclusion of the season by the coach. Personal items and equipment are the responsibility of the individual athletes. In some cases, teams will elect to individually purchase items such as t-shirts or matching sock, etc. These purchases will always be subject to the approval of the parents and the coaches. No parent or student will be obligated to purchase extra equipment in order to participate as a member of the team.

Participation on a team includes the responsibility for the equipment issued to each athlete. The cost of providing uniforms and athletic equipment is significant and each player is expected to be a responsible steward. Please take special care when washing uniforms to prevent discoloration and damage. When returned at the end of the season, the uniform and equipment should only show a season's worth of wear and tear. A player is held financially responsible for any lost or stolen equipment and will be assessed a replacement fee based on the cost of the item.

Transportation

Parents are responsible for the transportation to and from games.

Injuries

A first aid kit is provided for each athletic team for the purpose of treating minor injuries. Any injury which requires treatment by a professional medical person must be brought to the attention of the parent(s) and/or school personnel. An injury report should be filled out and filed with the main office within 24 hours.

Physical Examinations

The MHSAA athletic code requires that physicals be given for athletes to participate in interscholastic sports at the high school level but does not require them for middle school sports. Because of this, RCMS does not require physical examinations for sports participation. It is still strongly recommended that students have physical exams if they plan to join sports teams.

Attendance

Because academics come before athletics, and because the well-being of all students is of paramount importance, athletes who are ill should not participate in practices or contests.

Practices

Members of a team are expected to be at every scheduled practice unless absent from school or previously arranged with the coach. On days when school is canceled due to weather, it is up to the coach whether or not practice is canceled.

Parents

Parents are an important part of the athletic program at RCMS. The support and encouragement given to coaches and athletes are highly valued. Parents, as well as coaches and athletes, represent the school to the community.

Communication with Coach

In resolving conflicts/frustrations/etc. with coaches, the following steps of communication should be followed. The next step should occur only if the conflict is not resolved: **Please use the “24 hour cool down time” rule before contacting the appropriate person.**

1. Player → Coach
2. Parents(s) → Coach
3. Parents(s) → Athletic Director
4. Parent(s) → Principal (and Athletic Director)

Parent Guidelines for a Successful Season

1. When your child or team has a bad game, remember, “the sun will still come up tomorrow.” It’s only a game. Walk away from the game with your chin up, whether you win or lose. Life isn’t fair and neither are athletics. There are bound to be times when you’ll feel like your child gets shortchanged in playing time or has to endure bad calls by the officials. Most often, it is best to acknowledge the “injustice” and then quickly move on.
2. When you are disappointed with the way your team or your child has played, don’t embarrass yourself or your child by confronting or blaming the coach or officials. Be realistic about your child’s abilities. Sports are supposed to be fun – that’s why they call it a game! Don’t put so much pressure on your child that it is no longer enjoyable for either of you.
3. Encourage your child to speak directly with the coach if there is a problem. Empower your children to speak up for themselves – this is an important component in their Christian maturation.
4. At home, keep your conversations about the coach and other teammates positive. Your job is to help your athlete rise above adversity. When the going gets tough, don’t quit! Use the opportunity to teach your athlete about keeping commitments, working through difficult situations, doing what is necessary for the good of the team, and persevering under pressure. That’s how they’ll learn to handle other disappointments that are bound to come their way.
5. Be encouraging. A good attitude is contagious – so is a bad one. Pay attention to your comments during the game. Loud, cruel words and actions not only damage your reputation, but unfortunately, also your child’s. Act in the way you would expect your child to behave. Show our opponents, fans and those seated around you that you are a Christian by your words and actions.

League Affiliation

There will be many athletic opportunities available to RCMS students. Our students will be participating in the GRACEAC League for the sports of soccer, volleyball, basketball, baseball and softball. Other opportunities outside of the league include football, cross country, tennis, lacrosse and equestrian with the GRCMS. Before deciding to make a commitment of time and energy to the team, it is important that both parents and students understand the structure, purpose of and requirements for participation in these extracurricular activities.

GRACEAC Website: graceac.com

The intent of middle school athletics is three-fold:

1. To give students an opportunity to participate in different sports
2. To develop the proper techniques needed to play the various sports correctly
3. To develop the responsibility expected from each team member.

There are some things of which you should be aware in connection with our athletic program:

1. We here at RCMS, our goal is to have one team per grade per sport. If we are low on numbers, we will combine grades together to form a team.
2. Team members must make every attempt to be at all practices and games. The absence from practices may lead to less playing time and, in some cases, expulsion from the team. A note, email or phone call explaining the reason for the absence must be given to the coach.
 - 5th – 8th grade practices and games
 - a) 2–3 times a week; your coach will determine practice times and will communicate those times with athletes/parents via email.
 - b) Practice times will vary; practice sessions can run anytime between 3:00 and 8:00 p.m.
3. Being a member of a team is a privilege and with privilege comes added responsibilities and accountability. Detentions for behavioral infractions will result in disciplinary action. Please see the “Eligibility” section on page 5 of this handbook for the details.