



# Athletics Handbook

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## INTRODUCTION

Washington International School's extracurricular athletics program embodies the mission, philosophy, and objectives of the School and fosters the development of character, life skills, sportsmanship, and teamwork.

Middle and Upper School teams compete in the Potomac Valley Athletic Conference (PVAC), a league composed of 16 private schools in the DC metropolitan area. League members are required to conduct all competition in a spirit of good sportsmanship.

Student athletes, parents, coaches, and members of our school community who have a vested interest in the success of the Athletics Department should read this handbook. All participants in our program should read the guidelines on the following pages.

If you have any questions or concerns about the policies and procedures as explained in this handbook, please contact the Athletics Director.

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## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the athletics program at the Washington International School is to direct and conduct interscholastic athletics in a manner that will promote friendly relations with other schools, and provide students with an opportunity to benefit from a successful and meaningful co-educational experience.

## **GOALS and OBJECTIVES**

As a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), WIS ensures its athletics philosophy is in alignment with the NAIS *Principles of Good Practice for Member Schools*. The goals and objectives below have been adapted from those *Principles*.

1. The School's athletics program embodies the mission, philosophy, and objectives of the School.
2. The School ensures coaches have appropriate training and knowledge of the School's mission, philosophy, and objectives.
3. The School promotes equity in all aspects of its athletics programs.
4. The athletics program is considered to be an integral part of the School's curriculum.
5. The athletics program helps student athletes develop an appreciation for sports, and helps them learn the values of sportsmanship, cooperation, loyalty and self-discipline.
6. The School is committed to the safety and physical and emotional health of participants in the athletics program.
7. The School's athletics program values the dignity and worth of the individual in a context of common purpose and collective achievement.
8. Coaching is teaching; coaches are teachers.
9. The School ensures coaches have an understanding of the developmental needs of the children with whom they work.
10. Coaches design and implement activities that improve the knowledge and skills of all participants, and that train and condition participants to meet the demands of the sport.
11. Coaches have a strong collegial relationship with other educators and contribute to the School's understanding of the whole child.
12. The School defines and clearly communicates standards of conduct to players, spectators, coaches, and other teams.
13. The School works directly and candidly with other schools to prevent abuses in the following areas: recruitment, eligibility, transfer of student athletes, financial aid, and admission.

## **SPORTSMANSHIP**

Athletics is an arena where we represent WIS in a public light, so participants and spectators are reminded to behave appropriately. This includes, but is not limited to, treating opponents, officials, and spectators with respect, never using improper or foul language, cheering for our team and not against our opponents, and abiding by all rules and regulations.

***Athletes who display poor sportsmanship may be suspended indefinitely. Fans who exhibit inappropriate behavior may be asked to leave the school grounds, and may be prohibited from attending future school events.***

## **SPORTS OFFERINGS**

Washington International School is a member of the Potomac Valley Athletic Conference (PVAC). A copy of the PVAC Handbook is available in the Athletics Director's office. All Coaches are expected to be knowledgeable about the by-laws in the league constitution. The following sports are currently offered to students:

### **Fall Season**

Boys & Girls Middle School Soccer  
Boys & Girls Junior Varsity Soccer  
Boys & Girls Varsity Soccer  
Girls Middle School Volleyball  
Girls Junior Varsity Volleyball  
Girls Varsity Volleyball  
Girls Varsity Tennis  
Boys & Girls Middle School Cross Country  
Boys & Girls Varsity Cross Country

### **Winter Season**

Boys & Girls Middle School Basketball  
Boys & Girls Junior Varsity Basketball  
Boys & Girls Varsity Basketball  
League Indoor Soccer  
Swim Club

### **Spring Season**

Girls Middle School Softball  
Girls Varsity Softball  
Boys & Girls Middle School Track & Field  
Boys & Girls Varsity Track & Field  
Boys Varsity Tennis  
Varsity Golf  
Ultimate Frisbee  
Intramural Basketball

## **ELIGIBILITY RULES AND REGULATIONS**

### ***Attendance***

- Coaches are responsible for monitoring daily attendance. Athletes must inform their coach whenever they are going to miss a practice or game.
- Unexcused absences or tardiness to practice may result in suspension from the team.
- In order to participate in a practice or game, athletes must attend all of their classes during the day, or be excused by a school administrator for reasons such as prescheduled medical appointments, court appearances, or unforeseen emergencies.
- Athletes who miss school because of illness may not participate in games/practices.

### ***Grades***

All students are permitted to try out for sports, but an acceptable GPA must be maintained, as noted in the Community Handbook. Failure to maintain the minimum standards will result in suspension or removal from the team.

### ***Citizenship/Attitude***

- As representatives of Washington International School, student athletes are expected to display satisfactory citizenship and good conduct on and off the field.
- Athletes who receive detention or other consequences for improper conduct may miss practices and games. If there is a pattern of misconduct, the athlete may be suspended from the team by the Coach and Athletics Director.
- Smoking, tobacco use, drinking alcoholic beverages, and the use of illegal drugs are harmful to individuals' health and well-being. The use of these substances is not permitted, and will result in suspension from participation in athletic activities.
- Team members must keep the locker rooms and facilities neat and clean at all times. Lockers will be provided for athletes, but students must bring their own lock and are responsible for their equipment and uniforms.
- Profanity or poor sportsmanship will not be tolerated.

## **PLAYING TIME AND ROSTER SELECTIONS**

Varsity, JV, and Middle School teams will require tryouts. Some teams are limited in roster size because of coaching, gym and field time, transportation, etc. Any athlete who is not selected for a team will have the opportunity to meet with the coach. This meeting should be set up through the Athletics Director. Recommendations will be made to players so they can improve their skills and/or conditioning.

At the Middle School level, we try to take as many students as possible for each team. If there are enough athletes and coaching personnel, we will form "B" teams for sports such as soccer and basketball.

Game participation time is a concern to parents and players. Our philosophy for Middle School sports is to emphasize participation. Coaches will make every effort to play everybody during games. However, this is not mandatory, and there is no minimum amount of playing time that players should expect. On the JV and Varsity level, playing time is earned and is at the coach's discretion. Coaches should explain the role of each player at the beginning of the season.

At a parent's request, a coach will be available to discuss issues regarding an athlete. If the outcome is not satisfactory, a meeting will be scheduled with the Athletics Director. If the conflict is not resolved, the next appeal will be to the Middle or Upper School Principal.

## **COMMUNICATION AND EARLY DISMISSAL**

Students are responsible for checking daily bulletin notices in the Middle and Upper Schools, and listening to homeroom announcements for any changes to game or practice schedules. Coaches will notify the team regarding any changes or cancellations. Student athletes should inform their teachers in advance when they will be leaving early for an athletic event. All classroom work due the day of an early dismissal must be turned in that day. Tests and/or quizzes scheduled for that day are to be made up in a timely manner and arranged with the teacher before the scheduled class.

Because there is a possibility that weather or other situations will arise that will result in the postponement of a game/match/meet, students who think they will miss class because of an early dismissal **MUST** be prepared to take a test that day if the game/match/meet is postponed.

Scheduled games may be canceled due to bad weather, poor field conditions, or other reasons. Updates will also be on the school's athletic web page calendar at [www.wis.edu](http://www.wis.edu), under Athletics. **In order to receive emails or texts when events/games are changed or updated, sign up for alerts via the Athletics calendar or Season Schedules pages on the WIS website.**

## **UNIFORMS**

The Athletics Department will issue game uniforms to members of most WIS teams. Some teams may be required to purchase a portion of the uniform, such as soccer shorts and socks, or tennis apparel. Teams may also place orders for items such as sweatshirts, warm-ups, jackets, etc. These items are not mandatory for participation. If a student athlete is issued any equipment/uniforms and an item is lost, the student will be billed for that item.

Coaches will distribute and collect uniforms.

## **PRACTICE TIMES AND WEIGHT ROOM ACCESSIBILITY**

Practices for fall sports typically begin prior to the first day of school. In recent years, JV/Varsity practices have begun a week and a half before the first day of school and Middle School practices have begun one week before the first day.

After school practice times are between 3:00 and 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. During the winter season, some practices may go until 6:30 PM. Occasionally, because of field space, there may be a late practice for soccer as well as weekend practices on Saturday mornings. Coaches will schedule Sunday practices as needed upon approval from the Athletics Director. Middle School teams generally will finish practice before 4:30 PM during the week.

We urge all athletes to make use of the weight room. Weight training and conditioning classes may be offered. Athletes should check with the Athletics Department for weight room hours.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

WIS will provide transportation to away games. The exceptions are games on weekends and within close proximity to the school. Players are not permitted to drive separately from the team unless they have written permission from a parent, and approval from the Athletics Director. It is imperative that players communicate to parents when and where they should be picked up. WIS will provide transportation when there is practice off campus.

## **RECOMMENDED WEATHER GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICE AND GAMES**

Air quality (ground level ozone or smog) deteriorates on afternoons when temperatures are in excess of 90 degrees, with low or no winds and clear skies. When such conditions are anticipated, a Code Orange or Red air quality alert is issued. Under such conditions, at-risk individuals who are heavily exercising should be closely watched, and, if they are experiencing any breathing difficulties, immediately required to cease activity and move indoors.

In hot, humid weather, coaches are expected to use good judgment to determine the length and type of outdoor practice. Frequent breaks and drinking water must be provided. Coaches must be aware of signs of heat exhaustion. Players who exhibit these signs are to cease practicing immediately. If there is a Code Red air quality alert, practices will be no more than one hour in length with mandatory water breaks every 20 minutes. Games will be canceled.

In extreme cold weather, coaches are expected to use good judgment to determine the length and type of practice.

Any game or practice will be suspended immediately by the officials or coach in charge at the first sight of lightning. All players and fans must leave the field immediately. No practice or game will resume until 20 minutes have elapsed since the last sign of lightning or thunder.

## **AWARDS**

The Coaches and Athletics Director will choose recipients for the following awards:

**The Kemper Scholar/Athlete Award** – presented to the most outstanding athlete(s) during the student athlete's Middle School years. Recipients must also demonstrate outstanding

leadership abilities and sportsmanship. This award is presented during the Middle School Moving Up ceremony in June.

**The Gunther Brandt Scholar/Athlete Award** – presented to the most dedicated athlete on a Varsity or Junior Varsity team who symbolized the true spirit of competition throughout the Upper School years. This award is given each year during Senior Prize Day in May.

Individual awards for each team such as MVP, coach's award, most improved player, etc. are presented at the conclusion of each season.

## **MEDICAL POLICIES**

All student athletes must have an annual physical. The DC Universal Health Certificate (the same form that must be completed and uploaded to Magnus Health for all students) must be submitted before student athletes are allowed to participate in any practices or games. The School sends out reminders to all parents about completing this form.

If any athlete has a pre-existing injury or medical condition that has required the care of a physician, written clearance for participation must be provided before the athlete is allowed to participate in any practices or games. If a student athlete requires special medical attention for a specific condition (i.e. asthma, allergies, diabetes), parents should supply a written protocol to be followed in the event of an emergency.

If a student athlete is injured, the injury must be reported to the Athletic Trainer. The Athletic Trainer will evaluate the injury to determine what course of action needs to be taken or if the athlete needs to be referred to a physician for further evaluation. The Athletic Trainer will contact the athlete's parents to discuss the best course of action. In the event an athlete requires emergency medical care, first aid will be rendered and the parents will be contacted as soon as possible.

Any athlete who has been removed from practice or games due to an injury must be re-evaluated by the Athletics Trainer before they are allowed to return to activities. Athletes who have not been re-evaluated and cleared will **NOT** be allowed to practice or play in games.

## **CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

*In order to provide a comprehensive picture of our concussion management program, we have included text for all aspects of the program below. Note that there are some aspects of the program that are not specific to athletes, but which apply to all students.*

### ***Policy***

The goal of the concussion management program at WIS is to ensure the health and safety of all WIS students. The program aims to provide information to prevent, recognize and respond to possible head injuries. The program aims to effectively manage a concussion that occurs



either at school or during a non-school event. This includes ensuring proper diagnosis, allowing adequate time to heal and providing supportive services until the student is symptom-free and eligible to return to academic, recreational, and athletic activities.

### **General Concussion Information**

A concussion, also known as a mild traumatic brain injury, is defined as: “a traumatic injury to the brain causing a change in mental status at the time of the injury, such as feeling dazed, disoriented or confused, which may or may not involve a loss of consciousness resulting from

- A fall
- A blow or jolt to the head or body
- The shaking or spinning of the head or body
- The acceleration and deceleration of the head”<sup>1</sup>

Concussions can occur in any sport, recreational activity, or as the result of an accident. All head injuries are considered serious and any WIS student who sustains a head injury will be removed from the activity and evaluated. Student athletes will immediately be removed from athletic play and assessed for signs and symptoms of a concussion. A concussion is considered serious at any severity and most will occur without loss of consciousness.<sup>2</sup> The severity of a concussion is determined by several factors: the nature of the head injury, the burden on the student, and the duration of the clinical post-injury symptoms.<sup>3</sup>

Parents, students, and coaches should become familiar with the signs and symptoms of a concussion and how to respond if a concussion occurs. Student athletes will often minimize symptoms or underreport injuries; this is often the case with concussions. Recognition and appropriate response to a head injury at its onset, regardless of the circumstances causing the injury, can prevent further injury.

Most students who experience a concussion can recover completely as long as they do not return to all activities prematurely. The conservative management of all concussions is critical to the developing brain. There is a period of time following a concussion when the brain is particularly vulnerable to further injury. A secondary head injury to a student who has not fully healed can have significant, cumulative, and possibly catastrophic consequences. Any WIS student sustaining a second head injury within a short period after having been diagnosed with a concussion will be removed from the activity. The parents will be notified of the need for an immediate evaluation by the student’s Physician and the need for a school plan for the student.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> DC Athletic Concussion Protection Act, Oct. 20, 2011, D.C. Law 19-22, § 2, 58 DCR 6506

<sup>2</sup> *Heads Up Toolkit*. Centers for Disease Control, n.d. Web.

<sup>3</sup> Sady, Maegan, Christopher Vaughan, and Gerald Gioia. "School and the Concussed Youth." *Physical Medicine Rehabilitation Journal* 22.4 (2011): 701-19. Web. 17 Apr. 2017.

<sup>4</sup> McCrory, Paul, Willem Meeuwisse, Jiri Dvorak, Mark Aubrey, Mick Molloy, and Robert Cantu. "Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport: The 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport Held in Zurich." *Journal of Athletic Training* 44.4 (n.d.): 434-48. Web. July-Aug. 2009.

Signs and symptoms of concussion vary depending on the individual student, the most common signs and symptoms that may be present at or after the time of injury are listed below.

### ***Concussion Signs and Symptoms***

#### **Signs Observed by Others**

Appears dazed or stunned  
Is confused about assignment  
Forgets instruction  
Is unsure of game, score, or opponent  
Moves clumsily  
Answers questions slowly  
Loss of consciousness (even briefly)  
Exhibits personality changes  
Unable to recall events prior to hit or fall  
Unable to recall events *after* hit or fall

#### **Symptoms Reported by Individual**

Headache or “pressure” in head  
Nausea or vomiting  
Balance problems or dizziness  
Double or blurry vision  
Sensitivity to light or noise  
Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy  
Concentration or memory issues  
Confusion  
Change in sleep patterns  
Expresses that he/she is just “not feeling right” or is “feeling down”<sup>5</sup>

### ***Recognition and Evaluation of Head Injuries***

All students suspected of having sustained a concussion, including those incurred during a non-school event, are required to be evaluated by a health care provider trained in assessing concussions. If a physician has diagnosed a concussion, all instructions and/or restrictions must be provided to the School Nurse in writing from the physician. These instructions must be provided to the School Nurse at the time the student returns to school.

If a physician has evaluated a student and the evaluation has ruled out a concussion, this information must be provided to the School Nurse in writing from the physician. The medical guidance must be provided to the School Nurse at the time the student returns to school.

Any student who is suspected of sustaining a concussion during a school-based activity, free play, or an interscholastic game or practice shall be immediately removed from the activity by her/his Coach, the Athletic Trainer, School Nurse, or Teacher/Staff Member. All students removed from play will immediately be evaluated by the School Nurse or Athletic Trainer. Components of the SAC (Standardized Assessment of Concussion) tool<sup>6</sup> will be utilized during the assessment. This assessment will occur in the Health Office or at the sidelines and if the results of the evaluation indicate signs of a concussion, the student will not be allowed to return to play on that day. Parents will immediately be contacted and will be responsible for having the child seen by a healthcare provider as soon as possible.

In cases of severe concussions that occur during school hours and activities, 911 will be called for immediate transport to the hospital. If the student’s parent/guardian is not present at the

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<sup>5</sup> *tbi\_factsheet\_nurse*. Centers for Disease Control, n.d. Web.

<sup>6</sup> McCrea, M., J. Kelly, and C Assessment of Randolph. *Standardized Assessment of Concussions (SAC): Manual for Administration, Scoring and Interpretation*. Waukesha: CNS, 1996. N. pag. Print.

time of this call, a School Administrator or designee will accompany the student to the hospital until her/his family members arrives.

### ***Prevention and Education***

On an annual basis, prior to participating in any extracurricular athletic activity or PE class, each student athlete in Grades 6 - 12 and the student's parent or guardian is required to thoroughly review the WIS Concussion Management Program document. Every parent or guardian is required to acknowledge that he or she has received, reviewed and understood the information by providing an electronic signature on the Concussion Program component of the Magnus Health File. Student athletes will also be required to provide a signature attesting to the fact that they have received and reviewed the WIS Concussion Management Program. In order to participate, a student signature will be required at the time the student begins interscholastic sports practices.

On an annual basis, parents of students in Preschool – Grade 5 are required to thoroughly review the WIS Concussion Management Program document and acknowledge that they have done so by providing an electronic signature in their child's Magnus Health Record.

All Grade 6 students receive a concussion education session at the beginning of the academic year. This session is provided by the PE Department in collaboration with the Athletic Trainer and the School Nurse.

All student athletes receive an annual concussion review session at the beginning of the athletic season. These reviews are conducted by the Athletic Trainer in collaboration with the Coaches.

### ***Training***

All coaches and PE Department faculty are required to successfully complete the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) *Concussion in Sports* online training and certification program. This CDC (Centers for Disease Control) endorsed program provides coaches with information and tools to utilize as they work with student athletes.

### ***ImPACT Testing***<sup>7</sup>

WIS utilizes the ImPACT baseline neurocognitive testing program in Grades 6 – 12. This is not a tool for diagnosing a concussion. This component of the concussion management program provides a non-invasive, computerized, pre-concussion baseline test to assess specific functions that can be affected by a head injury. The pre-test provides baseline indicators against which a comparison can be made after a concussion.

Post-concussion testing is conducted at least 24 hours after the initial injury, but is most frequently utilized after all symptoms have resolved. This program is one tool that assists in

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<sup>7</sup> "Concussion Baseline Testing." [www.upmc.com/services/sports-medicine/services/concussion/baseline-testing/pages/baseline-testing.aspx?utm\\_source=vanity+url&utm\\_medium=offline&utm\\_content=baseline+training&utm\\_campaign=sports+medicine](http://www.upmc.com/services/sports-medicine/services/concussion/baseline-testing/pages/baseline-testing.aspx?utm_source=vanity+url&utm_medium=offline&utm_content=baseline+training&utm_campaign=sports+medicine). University of Pittsburgh, n.d. Web.

individualizing the recovery program for each student. Other assessment tools include balance tests or BESS tests.

### **Return to Academics**

Each concussed student's response to the injury and the recovery is individualized. Post-concussion symptoms may interfere with the student's ability to do academic work. The goal is to support the recovery of the student by establishing a balance between the need for rest and the academic workload. An individualized plan allows for appropriate, temporary, evolving accommodations to be put into place. This plan is developed collaboratively between the student, the student's parents, the school nurse, the student's Physician(s), the student's Advisor, Teachers, and division Principal. Specific accommodations will be gradually removed in consultation with the student's Physician or concussion specialist.

### **Return to Play Grades 6 - 12**

Student-athletes who have been diagnosed with a concussion by their Physician must adhere to the WIS Return to Play protocol in order to safely return to sports participation, whether it be participating in PE class or on an athletic team. Even with written clearance from a licensed health care provider, the protocol must be completed before a student may return to PE and/or interscholastic athletics.

The Return to Play protocol will be conducted and supervised by the Athletic Trainer in collaboration with the PE Department, Athletic Director and the School Nurse. All students will begin the process when they have been symptom-free for a minimum of 72-hours post-diagnosis of a concussive episode. The following steps shall be met by a student in order complete a return to athletic program:

1. The student shall be symptom-free at rest and in activities of daily living
2. The student must be symptom-free with cognitive exertion and must have fully returned to academics.
3. The ImPACT test will be administered and the score with equal or exceed the baseline test results.
4. The student will have a physical assessment regarding balance and a VOMS test<sup>8</sup>
5. If the student remains symptom-free with progressive physical exertion, she/he will move to the next stage. If the students become symptomatic, the activity will cease and the same stage of activity will resume in 24 hours. Any concerns that arise shall be shared with the parents and immediate follow-up by the student's healthcare provider will be recommended.

All stages utilize controlled, monitored light cardiovascular activity and weight training and the process is based on the principle of "expose and recover" to exercise without incident.

The program is composed of stages, with one stage per day. Some stages may last longer.

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<sup>8</sup> "VOMS Exam." *ImPACT Test*. N.p., n.d. Web. 17 Apr. 2017.

- Stage 1 – No activity
- Stage 2 – Light aerobic exercise
- Stage 3 – Moderate aerobic activity
- Stage 4 – Non-contact, sport specific drills
- Stage 5 – Full contact practices or full return to PE activities
- Stage 6 – Normal game play

Once the student has successfully completed the Return to Play protocol, all normal athletic activities may resume.

### **Return to Play – Primary School**

The Primary School adheres to the recovery stages outlined in the Children’s National Medical Center *Safe Concussion Outcome Recovery & Education SCORE Program*, which is specifically designed to manage the recovery from concussion in children ages 4-12.<sup>9</sup> Successful advancement through the return to school and the return to play protocol will be individually determined by the child’s physical presentation at home and at school as assessed by the child’s parents, treating Physician and School Nurse, with feedback from classroom and PE teachers.

As the Primary School student advances through each of the stages, any return of active headache or other signs of activity intolerance will require a regression to the prior stage at which the student was symptom free.

- Stage 1 - Home recovery until headache free at rest.
- Stage 2 - Return to classroom, but no physical activity (may need to limit screen time and testing).
- Stage 3 - Light activity: modified recess allowing for walking and light running, but no ball sports such as soccer, basketball or football. No climbing.
- Stage 4 - Return to PE, recess play and Auxiliary Programs activities with prohibition from ball sports and climbing only.
- Stage 5 - Return to full PE, and non-restricted recess play and Auxiliary Program sports.

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<sup>9</sup> *Ace\_care\_plan\_school*. Centers for Disease Control, n.d. Web