



ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

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VIERA CHARTER SCHOOL ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to establish consistency and appropriate documentation protecting our coaches, athletes, volunteers, and athletic relationships. Any questions regarding policies and procedures pertaining to the Athletic Department, its staff, volunteer, or guidelines should be directed to the Athletic Director. This handbook is posted on the school website. Any changes will be updated upon approval of the school administration.

PHILOSOPHY OF VIERA CHARTER SCHOOL ATHLETICS

Education has the important responsibility of preparing young people to be well-rounded individuals who are capable and willing to take their place in our society as responsible citizens. Extra-Curricular activities, such as athletics, offer ideal venues in which to promote the development of our students. Viera Charter School will strive to use the athletic experience to enhance the mental, physical, moral, social and emotional development of our students. The staff will strive to provide students with experiences from which they can learn and grow. Viera Charter School acknowledges the importance of our role in collaborating with families and community agencies in support of developing habits of mind and attitudes that contribute to an increased quality of life.

- Students will have fun, feel included, and develop a love and appreciation for their sport and teammates.
- Students will strive to be productive and contributing members of our community.
- Students will increase their understanding of the ideals of ethical conduct, integrity, fair play, and good sportsmanship that make for winning and losing graciously.
- Students will participate in the process of group decision-making, problem-solving, and have opportunities to demonstrate leadership and initiative as they strive for the achievement of group goals.
- Students will develop self-discipline, self-motivation, and concepts such as commitment, excellence, loyalty, cooperation, and other desirable traits
- Students will learn and refine the cognitive and psychomotor components of the interscholastic athletic activity in which they participate.

- Students will understand and practice the principles of sound health, safety, and physical fitness.
- The athletic program will promote a positive image of the Viera Charter School and the community, which will reflect the departments goals.
- The athletic program will provide competition that is appropriately based on skill and development rather than on students chronological age or grade.

EXPECTATION OF THE ATHLETE

All athletes participating in the Athletic programs of Viera Charter School are expected to uphold the highest degree of discipline, sportsmanship, and academic standing. Athletes are expected to represent Viera Charter School in a positive manner in accordance with school spirit and mutual respect for their opponents. Participation in athletics at Viera Charter School are a privilege. All who participate should strive to conduct themselves as good citizens and representatives of Viera Charter School. Those who choose to participate make sacrifices, both as individuals and teammates.

Our athletes are expected to adhere to the following guidelines when participating in our athletic program.

- TO BE A GOOD CITIZEN – our athletes are expected to adhere to team and societal rules and expectations before, during and after a specific season the athlete is participating in. This would include, (but not limited to) treating all school employees and students with respect and to follow the rules set forth by Viera Charter School.
- TO BE A GOOD TEAMMATE – Our athletes are expected to adhere to team rules, and treat our coaches, and other teammates with respect. Being part of a team brings with it certain responsibilities for all team members to follow in order to ensure the team progresses during the season. This is important for all team members to understand that, whether you are a high-level athlete or an athlete just learning the game, you are an important part of that team.
- TO BE ON TIME AND ATTEND ALL PRACTICES AND EVENTS – it is important that all team members attend all practices and contests unless excused by the coach. The exception would be if you are sick or have not attended school for the whole day. The coach should be communicated with if you are unable to attend practices or games. This allows for practice or game planning for coaches and other team members.
- HAZING POLICY - Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with and disruptive to the educational process, and prohibited at any time in school facilities, on school property, and/or off school property if the misconduct is connected to activities or incidents that have occurred on school property. No administrator, faculty member, or other school employee shall encourage, permit, authorize, condone, or tolerate any hazing activities. No student shall plan, encourage, or engage in any hazing.
 - DEFINED AS - Hazing is defined as performing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to perform any act that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm. "Hazing" includes, but is not limited to, pressuring or coercing the student into violating State or Federal law, any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug, or other substance, or other forced

physical activity that could adversely affect the physical health or safety of the student, and also includes any activity that would subject the student to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment, or other forced activity that could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the student. Hazing does not include customary athletic events or other similar contests or competitions or any activity or conduct that furthers a legal and legitimate objective. Permission, consent, or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to hazing shall not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.

- REPORTING - Administrators, faculty members, and other school employees shall be alert particularly to possible situations, circumstances, or events that might include hazing. If hazing or planned hazing is discovered, the students involved shall be informed by the discoverer of the prohibitions contained in this policy and shall be ordered to end all hazing activities or planned activities immediately. All hazing incidents shall be reported immediately to school administration. Students, administrators, faculty members, and other employees who fail to abide by this policy may be subject to disciplinary action and may be held personally liable for civil and criminal penalties in accordance with law.
- School administration shall distribute this policy to all students and staff and shall incorporate it into staff and student handbooks.

THE ROLE OF A VIERA CHARTER SCHOOL ATHLETE

Over the years, Viera Charter School has developed a great athletic tradition through the hard work of many people. Being a member of a Viera Charter School athletic team is a privilege and honor, that carries with it certain traditions and responsibilities that must be fulfilled. Your actions reflect not only on those with whom you are now associated, but also on those who have contributed so much to our school in the past and those who are yet to follow you. Many of our students have established league, section, and state records and others have gone on to collegiate fame. Viera Charter School's rich athletic tradition sets a challenge for you to work hard and to make sure that your actions reflect the standards and expectations of Viera Charter School.

The pressure of peer groups is real. In today's society you will be asked to make sacrifices that will benefit yourself, your team and, your school. In the long run, you and your family will be proud of the sacrifices and dedication that you have put forth to be a member of our athletic teams. The experience of athletic competition are the result of hard work, dedication, and discipline, and are rewarded with the accumulation of fond memories and personal achievements. If you take this opportunity to grow and develop, it will be a gratifying and educational experience.

One of the most important responsibilities of a Viera Charter School athlete is to broaden yourself and to develop strength of character. Get the most from your experiences. Your studies, your participation in other school activities, as well as in athletics, prepare you for life as an adult. Another responsibility you assume as a team member is to your school. Viera Charter School cannot maintain its position as an outstanding school unless you do your best in whatever activity you wish to engage in. By participating in athletics to the maximum of your ability, you are contributing to the reputation of our school.

In addition to your responsibilities to yourself and your school, you also have a responsibility to your

families, to always do the best you can. When participating in athletics, we sometimes feel that we have failed if we have not won. By trying the best that you can and following all the rules set up by your team, you can feel justifiable proud of yourself no matter what the win-loss record is. Younger students and peers will look up to you. It is your responsibility to set a good example for them. Take time to encourage and be a role model for your peers.

- **Team Responsibilities** – Students will be considered officially on a team once notified by the coach, either after tryouts or during the first week of official practice. The time frame could be extended if the coach decides there needs to be more time to decide on his/her team. If a student is removed or leaves a team, they will not be allowed to participate in another school sport or practice until the previous season is completed.
- **Return To Play After Injury** – If a student is injured before or during the season, and a doctor has declared them unable to play, then the physician's clearance is needed before the student can participate in any sport activity. We will need a written note from the physician declaring the student eligible to return to physical activity with the team.
- **Student Discipline and Attendance** – Students that are suspended from school may not practice or compete on the days of suspension. Athletic discipline actions deemed by the school administration, coaching staff, or school staff to be disrespectful, unsportsmanlike or malicious may result in player consequences. A student that has been suspended twice during a season shall not be allowed to continue to participate in that season and may not be allowed to participate in any other athletic team for the duration of that school year.

While this list certainly cannot cover every issue that might occur, it is a general guide for participation in our athletic program. Any violation of these guidelines could result in disciplinary action.

EXPECTATIONS OF COACHES.

- The leadership of coaches should reflect the proper character, based on example and attitude. Strategies for winning contests as a team and performing at our highest level possible for individual performances will always be stressed, but not at the expense of teaching the game properly or lowering any moral, legal, or academic standard established by the school. Coaching can be a very difficult but rewarding experience. Involving experienced and knowledgeable individuals in our athletic programs is essential to the success of each team. Head coaches, and their assistants are representatives of Viera Charter School. Their behavior, attitude, and approach to teaching the sport should always reflect the mission and goals of Viera Charter School.
- The coaching staff should take advantage of every teaching moment in a positive and productive manner.
- All coaching staff members are expected to treat referees, officials, opposing coaches and players, and their own coaching colleagues and players with respect and dignity.
- All coaching staff will communicate early and effectively with players and parents when behavioral/personal problems are identified.
- All coach staff will adhere to the highest ethical standards. Fair play and sportsmanship are not optional; they are required.
- At the start of the season, head coaches should communicate to their teams and parents their goals

and the expectations of the program and players.

- All head coaches will make sure all record keeping is done with fidelity. Examples are day to day attendance, required physical form, gameday requirements.
- A member of the coaching staff must be present with students after practices or contests until the last student is picked up.
- The Coach is responsible for all equipment and uniform needs and collection.

It is an unfortunate fact that in certain situations tryouts and cuts must be made at the start of the season. It would be ideal to be able to keep all who try out for the teams, and guarantee everyone playing time, but in some sports, that is impossible. In general, the decision to cut a student is based on the following factors.

- The sport is such that only a limited number of students can be assured playing time.
- The individual's skill level at the time of tryouts.
- When cuts need to be made coaches will use the following guidelines:
 - Communicate that to the team at or before the first practice
 - The number of players that will make the team.
 - How many tryout practices will be held before cuts are made
 - What criteria will be evaluated over the tryout period

Coaches will weigh each category according to its importance in their sport, and assign points to each criterion

Players are chosen objectively

Coaches inform students that made the team and those who did not. Please contact the Athletic Director if you have a question about a particular method of informing students and families.

When students are not selected to be on a team, they may be offered opportunities to be involved with the team in other ways, at the coach's discretion.

PARENT/GUARDIAN AND SPECTATOR EXPECTATIONS

Parent/Guardians should encourage athletes to keep their priorities in order. Once a student is considered on a team, the team counts on the student to attend all practices and competitions to the best of their ability. Without practice, a team can never achieve a better skill level. Therefore, it is the family's responsibility to ensure a student's attendance. Parents/Guardians are expected to support the coaching staff and their decisions. If there is a situation that you are having with a coach, then a good faith effort must be made to resolve the issue with the coach. If the situation is not resolved, then you may contact the athletic director for assistance in resolving the issue. Undermining a coach's authority is detrimental to the success of the team. Parents/Guardians will treat opposing coaches, referees, officials, and players with respect always. Proper care should be given to the Athletic Department equipment/uniforms. Lost item is the financial responsibility of the parent/guardian.

- Visiting team member, students, and adult spectators are guests to be accorded all the courtesy and consideration that a friendly, well-mannered, and well-intentioned host would normally give. The visitors, in turn are to act as invited guests, using the home school's facilities with care and respecting the rules and customs of the home school.
- Officials are the proper authorities to make decisions regarding rules and their interpretation; These decisions should be accepted.
- Spectators and students must recognize that their conduct plays an important role in establishing the reputation of their school, and that their positive actions can relate directly to the success of their teams.
- Viera Charter School recognizes the role of athletics in defining ethical behavior and developing personal character of our students. Therefore, we ask that all spectators become active participants by:
 - Demonstrating a high degree of sportsmanship by modeling appropriate behavior and by monitoring the behavior of our crowd.
 - Showing team support by making only positive comments and by using appropriate language.
 - Showing respect for the judgment of coaches, officials, and referees.
 - Acknowledging that fields, courts, benches, and equipment are the players domain during a contest. Spectators should remain within the designated areas.
 - Monitoring the safety of children at all times.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCHOOL

Parental Concerns

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to address concerns about their child with the head coach in a timely and appropriate manner. It is never acceptable to address issues with the coaching staff prior to, or immediately after a contest. These can be emotional times for all. Meetings, done at those times, usually do not work well. If a parent has a concern, the parent should encourage the student to talk to the coach. If the matter is not settled, the parent should contact the coach to set up a time to discuss the situation. If this discussion does not provide a satisfactory resolution, the parent should contact the Athletic Director. Following the chain of command is important to maintaining transparency and due respect.

COMMUNICATION YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM YOUR ATHLETE'S COACH

Philosophy of the coach.

Expectations the coach has for your child, as well as all players on the team

Locations and times of all practices and contests.

Team requirements (i.e. rules, and special equipment).

Procedures taken should your child be injured during participation.

Discipline that results in the denial of your child's participation.

COMMUNICAITON COACHES EXPECT FROM FAMILIES:

Concerns expressed directly to the coach.

Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance

As your children become involved in the Viera Charter School Athletic Program, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments in their lives. It is important to understand that there are also may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged.

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES.

The treatment of your child, mentally and physically.

Ways to help your child improve.

Concerns about your child’s well-being-academic performance and/or behavior.

INNAPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES:

Playing time.

Team strategy.

Play calling.

Other students.

The above two lists are not all inclusive. There could be other concerns that can/or cannot be discussed with parents. The coach will make that decision or if they do not feel comfortable the Athletic Director could be involved.

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the family. This is the first step. Always start with the coach. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the others’ position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern:

Person requesting the conference state the concern and specify desired outcome if possible.

Other party responds to the concern/outcome

Discuss the issues and attempt to understand each other’s perspective.

Both parties summarize what they heard the other say during the conference.

Please do not confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both you and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution and will not be tolerated.

PRESEASON REQUIREMENTS

Prior to any preseason or in season activity all students must fill out an athletic packet, which includes an EL2 and EL3 form, and an assumption of risk statement , recent physical, an ECG screening (or waiver) all of which are to be signed. These forms are available online on our website or the Athletic Director. These packets are good for 1 year and are not seasonal. If the one-year date of the packet runs out, (even during the season), then the athlete will not be eligible to participate in the activity until a new packet is completed.

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT STUDENT/ATHLETE ASSUMPTION OF RISK STATEMENT

Please read the assumption of risk statement here or on the appropriate form (to be signed) in the Athletic Participation Packet.

Because participation in Interscholastic/Club/School sports activities can be dangerous, Viera Charter Schools Inc. d/b/a Viera Charter School Requires all participants and their adult parent(s) or guardian(s) to be informed of, acknowledge, and assume all risks associated with participation in interscholastic sports activities by signing the Informed Consent and General Release from Liability.

Acknowledgment and Assumption of Risks: I acknowledge and understand there are inherent risks and dangers associated with playing interscholastic sports which include, but are not limited to, personal injury, death, permanent disability, disfigurement, disease, sickness, and other similar dangers which could result and which my child could suffer as a consequence of his/her participation in sports activities. I further acknowledge and agree that Viera Charter School is not the guarantor of my child's safety. I expressly assume any and all risks and dangers associated with my child's participation in sports activities and assume full responsibility and liability for any and all injury and loss resulting from such participation.

Consent and Release from Liability: For and in consideration of my child being permitted to participate in the Viera Charter Schools, Inc. d/b/a Viera Charter Schools interscholastic sports activities. I hereby voluntarily release, discharge, waive, and relinquish any and all claims or actions for damages for personal injury, permanent disability, death, or property damage which I or my child may have, or which may hereafter accrue to me or my child, as a result of my child's participation in interscholastic sports activities during play and while I am/my child is at the facility while others play or for any other reason. This release is intended to discharge, in advance, Viera Charter Schools, Inc. d/b/a Viera Charter School, its officers, employees and agents, and the owners and maintainers of any facility used for the activities, including sports camps or clinics, even though that liability may arise out of negligence or carelessness on the part of Viera Charter Schools, Inc. d/b/a Viera Charter School, its officers, agents or employees. I agree to assume all risks and dangers associated with my child's participating in sports activities, and I hereby release and hold harmless Viera Charter Schools, Inc. d/b/a Viera Charter School, its officers, employees and agents for any loss, liability, damage, cost or expense which they may incur as a result of any injury or property damage I or my child may sustain while participating in the activity. I further understand and agree that this release, discharge, waiver, and assumption of risk is to be binding on my and my child's

heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns.

Voluntary Participation: Fully informed and knowing of the risks, I have voluntarily applied for my child to participate in the Viera Charter Schools, Inc. d/b/a Viera Charter School interscholastic sports activities. I agree to comply with the programs stated and customary terms and conditions for participation according to Advantage Viera Charter Schools, Inc. d/b/a Viera Charter School. If I observe any significant changes with regard to my child's readiness for participation in the program, I will remove my child from the program immediately.

I have read this Informed Consent/General release from Liability and agree it is a full release from liability and waiver of any and all claims on behalf of myself and my child, and I am relinquishing rights by voluntarily signing this document.