

Falls Lake Academy Athletic Handbook



2025-2026

FALLS LAKE ACADEMY ADMINISTRATION

Joey Johnson, Executive Director
Jodi Pearson, High School Director
Ashley Keith, Middle School Director

ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATION

Weston Pearson, HS Athletic Director
Karen Teague, MS Athletic Director

HEAD COACHES

FALL

, MS Cross Country
Josh Hudson, MS Boys Soccer
Morgan Newton, MS Volleyball
Lindsay Graham, HS Varsity Cross Country
Mike Graham, HS JV & Varsity Men's Soccer
Zamyiah Mangum, HS JV Volleyball
Corrinna Sammons, HS Varsity Volleyball
Jason Porter, HS Varsity Women's Golf

WINTER

Mike Crews, MS Boys Basketball
Alicia DeForge, MS Girls Basketball
Tiffany Henrikson, MS Cheerleading
Erin Rigsbee, HS Cheerleading
Tim Shedd, HS Varsity Men's Basketball
Casey Mitchell, HS JV Men's Basketball
Morgan Oakley, HS Varsity Women's Basketball

SPRING

Trey Keith, MS Baseball
Dale Mettam, MS Girls Soccer
, MS Softball
, MS Golf
Weston Pearson, HS Varsity Baseball
Jody Robinson, HS Varsity Softball
Lindsay Graham, HS Varsity Women's Soccer
Brent Ferrell, HS Varsity Men's Golf

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WELCOME

Welcome to the Falls Lake Academy Athletic Program!

Falls Lake Academy desires to help our students become better school, community, state and national citizens. Our student-athletes are held to a high standard. We hope your student-athlete's involvement in this program will provide many rewarding and worthwhile experiences.

MISSION STATEMENT

Falls Lake Academy Athletics strives for excellence by providing opportunities for student-athletes to participate in programs that are designed to develop meaningful standards of athletic performance, leadership, scholarship, community service and appropriate conduct within the educational and social environments of our school. Our programs will strive to develop individual and team potential by promoting high standards of competence, character, civility, and citizenship.

PHILOSOPHY

The athletic program should be an integral part of the overall educational process at Falls Lake Academy. Our aim is to develop competitive athletes, but not to lose sight of educational values such as sportsmanship, health, and scholastic attainment. The program should occupy a position in the curriculum comparable to that of other subjects or activities and should aid in promoting school morale.

Athletics are offered to all students who are physically able to participate, who qualify under the eligibility requirements, and who adhere to the rules set forth by the state (NCHSAA) and local school officials (Falls Lake Academy).

GOALS

- *To encourage student-athletes to achieve success by maintaining academic eligibility.
- *To develop good citizenship, honesty, emotional control, dependability, and respect for rules, property and authority.
- *To provide an opportunity to exemplify and observe good sportsmanship.
- *To maintain a high standard of positive performance and conduct on and off the field or court.
- *To teach and emphasize the fundamental skills of the various sports as a necessary ingredient in achieving individual and team success.
- *To provide opportunities to develop lasting friendships with teammates and opponents.
- *To teach athletes to work together as a cohesive unit in order to achieve a common goal.
- *To provide high quality leadership for all athletic programs so as to exemplify to students a desired behavior to be developed from each athletic program.
- *To provide opportunities for the development of a feeling of unity and belonging, team pride, school, spirit, teamwork and commitment.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The opportunity to participate on a Fall Lake Academy team is a privilege afforded to our students. With every privilege comes an inherent responsibility. The following Code of Conduct was developed for athletes with the intent to provide every athlete, parent, and coach a clear set of expectations and rules of behavior for a Falls Lake Academy athlete.

*SPORTSMANSHIP practices are of paramount importance and should be conducted at all times:

- Self-control and respect for teammates, opposing athletes, officials, and spectators at all times. Foul language, game “trash talking” and insulting remarks are not acceptable behavior. Respect the integrity, safety and dignity of others and their property.
- Cooperation- Athletes and parents are expected to follow the rules and protocol of their sport and should not intentionally violate the integrity of the sport.
- Follow the ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fair play.
- Stress the values derived from playing a game fairly and to the best of ability.
- Establish positive relations with visiting teams and hosts.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of the game officials.
- Encourage leadership, use of initiative, and good judgment by teammates.
- Recognize that the purpose of athletics is to promote the physical, moral, social, and emotional well being of the individual player.
- Remember that the athletic contest is only a game, not a matter of life or death for the athlete, coach, school, spectator or community.

An athlete may not use alcohol, tobacco or illegal substances at any time. Disciplinary action will be taken and the school policy implemented if such instances occur.

Hazing is a form of harassment and will not be tolerated. Students found to have committed an act of harassment will be subjected to disciplinary action. Team members are encouraged and expected to notify their coach if such behavior occurs. Participating in hazing is in violation of North Carolina State Law (section 14.35)

Athletes are expected to adhere to team rules and directions. Inappropriate behavior may interfere with a coach’s ability to conduct games/ practices and puts the team’s objectives at risk. (Stated on team rules and expectations contract provided by each team head coach)

Students are expected to abide by the team attendance rules established by the coach. (Stated on team rules and expectations contract provided by each team head coach)

Coaches will clearly inform students of their policy so athletes are fully aware of the coach’s expectations. Students are expected to attend every practice and competition. (Stated on team rules and expectations contract provided by each team head coach)

Spectators are welcomed and encouraged to attend. Parents, family, friends, students and community members are an important aspect of the FLA athletic program and enhance the involvement of the athletes. All spectators are expected to conform to the accepted standard and practices of sportsmanship. Lack of sportsmanship, especially from spectators, leads to negative school impressions and will distract athletes.

Please follow these guidelines:

- Respect officials, visiting coaches, visiting players, and visiting spectators. Treat all visitors as guests to our school and community.
- Booing, whistling, stamping of feet, disrespectful remarks and obscene gestures must be avoided at all times. Positive remarks are encouraged.
- Refrain from all derogatory comments toward any player, coach, official or spectator

The athletic coach will be responsible for determining the nature of any offense of this Code of Conduct and assign the disciplinary action.

The student athlete and his/her parent/guardian will be given the opportunity to discuss the charges and disciplinary action with the coach, athletic director or school administrator, if requested.

VIOLATIONS OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The student-athlete is expected to comply with existing school, athletic and team regulations. Failure to do so will result in discipline as deemed appropriate for the offense.

If an athlete violates rules, discipline up to and including suspension or dismissal from the athletic program may result. The precise period of suspension or dismissal will depend on the violation and be dealt with on a case by case basis.

School-related suspensions result in suspension from athletics as well (a 2nd OSS at any point in the school year will result in suspension from all athletics for the remainder of the school year). Repeated school violations may result in total suspension or dismissal from participation in any interscholastic athletic program. Participation in interscholastic athletics is a privilege reserved for those students who are in good standing academically and behaviorally. Athletes are expected to adhere at all times to the high standards dictated by both school and athletic department rules.

General athletic policies and consequences are covered in this handbook. Each individual sports team will also have rules. In some cases, these rules may be more stringent than the general athletic rules. The student athlete is expected to abide by all team rules and understand the consequences for any violation of these identified rules.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

A coach may immediately discipline a player for violation of athletic department and/or team rules. If suspension and/or dismissal from a team is warranted, the coach will discuss the suspension and/or dismissal with the athletic director. All suspensions and/or dismissals will be documented by the coach and put on file with the athletic director. Any suspensions and/or dismissal from a team shall be determined by a meeting between the athlete and coach. If necessary, a follow-up meeting with the athletic director shall be called. The coach must submit a written statement of the violation and contact the parent/guardian to inform him/her of the suspension and/or dismissal.

Any athletic department suspension (ejections from contests; athletic academic probation) and/or dismissal makes an athlete ineligible for any awards or postseason honors for that sport season. Any school-related suspensions result will also result in mandatory suspension from athletics, deeming the athlete ineligible for any awards or postseason honors from our school for that sport season.

*Quitting: If a student-athlete decides to quit after try-outs and makes the team they will not be eligible to play another sport, or serve as a manager, at FLA for the rest of the school year (if they quit a spring sport, this will roll over to not being able to participate in a fall sport the following school year). (if injured, you are still part of the team and should be in attendance for all practices and games)

ELIGIBILITY

Participation in athletics is a privilege and not a right. All students, grades 6-12 are eligible to try-out and participate for athletic teams at Falls Lake Academy. Middle school teams shall consist of 6th-8th graders, junior varsity teams will consist of predominantly 9th and 10th graders with some 11th graders, while varsity teams will consist of 9th-12th graders.

Students are not permitted to try-out or participate for a team without first submitting all the required paperwork found on the athletic website, which includes but is not limited to (all HS & MS student-athletes will complete these forms on Dragonfly):

- NCHSAA Student-Athlete Preparticipation Physical Evaluation (PPE):
 - PPE History Form completed and signed by the parent or legal guardian
 - PPE Physical Examination Form signed and dated by the Licensed Medical Professional who performed the examination
 - PPE Medical Eligibility Form also signed and dated by the Licensed Medical Professional
- Gfeller-Waller Concussion Statement Form
- NCHSAA Eligibility, Consent to Participate and Release Form
- FLA Player Waiver and FLA Spectator Waiver

Students in grades 6-8, must pass at least one less course than the number of required core courses each semester and meet promotion standards established by Falls Lake Academy. Students in grades 9-12, to be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics, a student must be in good academic standing and meet promotion standards established by Falls Lake Academy.

*A student shall be deemed to be in good academic standing under the following circumstances:

- The student attended at least 85 percent of the total number of instructional days in the PSU during the previous semester
- The student passed at least seventy (70) percent of the courses taken in the preceding semester; and
- The student is on track to advance to the next grade level or graduate within the next calendar year.
- A student who is promoted from grade 8 to grade 9 shall be deemed to have satisfied the requirements set forth in this Paragraph to participate in the first semester of grade 9)

GRADES

Any student with a grade below a 69.5 in any class will not be allowed to participate in athletic tryouts (includes pre/post season workouts). Student-athletes must maintain a 69.5 average or higher in all classes during the season in order to remain eligible. A grade check will be conducted by the athletic director(s) every 2 weeks (10 school days). At the time of the grade check, any student-athlete that has a grade below a 69.5 will be put on Athletic Academic Probation until his/her grade comes up to at least a 69.5 and/or until the following grade check. Any student-athlete placed on academic probation will not be allowed to participate in games or practices while on probation. (Capstone Project deadlines must be met during grade checks)

- 1st offense - Athletic Academic Probation until grade comes up to at least a 69.5
- 2nd offense - Athletic Academic Probation until the following grade check (2 weeks)
- 3rd offense - Removed from his/her team roster to help focus on academics

*GRADE CHECKS:

All grade checks will be conducted at 8:00am by the Athletic director on the days provided below:

Fall Grade Check Schedule

- Tuesday, August 26, 2025
- Wednesday, September 10, 2025
- Thursday, September 25, 2025
- Thursday, October 9, 2025
- Wednesday, October 29, 2025 (only HS Fall Sports)

Winter Grade Check Schedule:

- Thursday, November 13, 2025
- Tuesday, December 2, 2025
- Tuesday, December 16, 2025
- Tuesday, January 20, 2026
- Tuesday, February 3, 2026
- Monday, February 23, 2026 (only HS Winter Sports)

Spring Grade Check Schedule:

- Monday, March 9, 2026
- Tuesday, March 24, 2026
- Wednesday, April 15, 2026
- Wednesday, April 29, 2026
- Thursday, May 14, 2026 (only HS Spring Sports)

Practice & Game Regulations

*OFF-SEASON & SUMMER PRACTICE:

The sports season for a school is defined as that period of time that begins with the opening date of practice (as called for by each individual school) and goes through the last regular season or playoff game in a particular sport. By defining the length of each sport's season, an attempt has been made to provide balance to the athletic calendar so that students have an opportunity to compete in a variety of sports throughout the school year.

Falls Lake Academy follows NCHSAA guidelines for off-season skill development practices in all sports. Skill development sessions are allowed but shall not be held during any try-out period of an in-season sport, this includes the weight room. Sessions are not allowed during Dead Periods as defined by the NCHSAA each year. Sessions are also not allowed during the last five student days of 1st semester and the last ten student days of the 2nd semester. All skill development sessions must be voluntary and open to all eligible students. At no time may a coach require students of any off-season skill development sessions as a measure of continued participation on a team. Any coach who promotes the idea that taking part in off-season practice is required, is blatantly out of compliance with the intent and purpose of this rule.

A student must be eligible under NCHSAA guidelines to take part in out-of-season sessions, and those involved in out-of-season sessions are not covered by the NCHSAA catastrophic insurance policy. Student insurance is strongly recommended for all those involved in athletics, in-season or out-of-season.

Facilities may be used for out-of-season athletic play on a strictly voluntary basis, open to all students and required of none. For safety purposes, school administrators or other school personnel should be present as supervisors of this free play. While facilities are being used for out-of-season play, they may not be used for individual skill development sessions.

Any individual who coaches at an NCHSAA member high school, head or assistant, paid or non-paid, faculty or non-faculty, parent volunteer, etc., must abide by the skill development, out-of-season workout rules. If a high school coach, regardless of the sport he or she coaches at the high school, also coaches an "outside" or "club" team, whether head or assistant, and has any athletes from the high school on that outside team, he cannot work with any of them during a dead period, and is limited to no more than the sport-specified limit of them per day in an out-of-season workout.

During the summer, coaches are free to work with individual or multiple players, from their school or their feeder schools, conduct practices, etc. On July 30th, the fall sports season begins, and those restrictions are in place.

Note that the sports in season should always take precedence for facility use, etc., over those not in season, in keeping with the philosophy of the sports season concept.

***PRE-SEASON, PRACTICE AND GAME ATTENDANCE:**

Fall sport seasons typically begin the last week of July or first week in August. At the varsity level, teams may conduct two-a-day sessions. These practices are essential for individual conditioning and team selection. Attendance is mandatory and the only exceptions allowed are late enrollees to FLA or athletes rehabilitating injuries.

Practice and game attendance are mandatory, and it should be noted that optional and required practices or games may be scheduled on weekends and holidays. Illness and extra academic assistance are acceptable reasons for missing practices and games. Any participant who tries out and is selected for an FLA team at any level is required to fully commit to that team. FLA teams take precedence over all outside & other extracurricular programs; therefore, team members are required to attend all practices, and games. Student-athletes are responsible for punctuality and preparedness for all practice and games. Tardiness or unexcused absences will not be tolerated. Practices are also closed to spectators.

***MISSED CLASSES:**

Student-athletes and support personnel are responsible for pre-arranging with their teachers to make up work including homework, tests, quizzes, and papers due in classes missed for athletics. It is the student-athlete's responsibility to inform the teacher that he/she will miss class at least one full day before the absence so that adequate arrangements for completing all assignments can be made.

***SCHOOL ATTENDANCE & ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION:**

Students must be in school and in class for no less than half of the academic day, or in any co-curricular school activity (i.e. field trip), in order to participate in the activity. Excuses involving illnesses, doctor appointments, and family emergencies will be considered on an individual basis.

All athletes who are registered in Physical Education class must dress out & participate in that class on the day of the game. If the student-athlete fails to dress, he/she is ineligible for game participation that day. Exceptions & emergencies will be considered on an individual basis.

***ATHLETE MISSED TRY-OUT POLICY:**

Middle School & High School Teams: Injured, sick or suspended athletes unable to try-out for a team with limited roster spaces will have ten (10) days following the conclusion of the team's tryout period in which to make the team, unless determined otherwise by the coach, athletic director, and/or principal. Should the athlete be selected for the team, the roster will be expanded to accommodate the addition of that player. This does not include individuals who failed to have a physical turned in on time.

For All MS & HS: If unable to attend tryouts on the specified dates, communicate with the Head Coach prior. This is up to the Head Coach's discretion.

***CUTS:**

Coaches at both the middle school and varsity levels select teams based on student-athlete skills, abilities, and team dynamics. The process is selective and may require cuts to select student-athletes that best gel and fit within the team dynamics. This may mean that the best athlete does not always

make a team if they are unable to gel within a team framework. Clear expectations regarding school programs, team goals, and team selection will be shared openly with student-athletes, parents, and the community. However, coaches will not discuss any student-athletes with parents other than their own child. The selection process will be based on school participation/experience, and not on youth program or recreational league experience. Playing time is based on coaching judgment with a focus on the student-athlete's skills, ability, teamwork, and character. It may also be unique from game-to-game, be determined by game conditions, matchups, and competitiveness of teams.

PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION

By establishing an understanding of each position as a parent/coach, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to our student-athletes. As parents, when your child becomes involved with athletics, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This should begin with clear communication from the coach of your child's team.

***COMMUNICATION YOU CAN EXPECT FROM YOUR CHILD'S COACH:**

- Philosophy of the coach
- Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all the players on the team.
- Location and time frame for practices and games.
- Team rules and policies. Note: These team policies may be different from team to team and sport to sport.
- Special requirements including equipment, fees, off-season conditioning, etc.
- Discipline that could result in denial of your child's participation.

***COMMUNICATION COACHES CAN EXPECT FROM PARENTS:**

- Concerns expressed directly to the coach personally, not through other people.
- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
- Specific concern in regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectation.

There are many positive and rewarding benefits of being involved in athletics in middle and high school. It can, at times, become stressful. It is important to understand that there are times when things do not go the way that you or your child wishes. Being a part of a team requires that one give up some "self" in favor of the "team". It is difficult to accept that your child may not be playing as much as you or they would like. Coaches make their decisions based on what they believe to be the best for all students involved.

***APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES:**

- The treatment of your child, mentally and physically.
- Ways to help your child improve
- Academic progress
- Concerns about your child's behavior, both in class and in athletics.

***ISSUES NOT APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES:**

- Playing time
- Team strategy
- Play calling
- Other student-athletes

Please encourage your child to communicate with his/ her coach first. However, there are certainly situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, please use the following procedures to help promote a resolution to issue of concern:

- Call or email the coach to set up an appointment. This contact information will be provided to parents. Assistance with setting up an appointment can be arranged through the Athletic Director.
- Please do NOT attempt to confront a coach before or after a game. These can be stressful, intense, and emotional times for both parents and coaches.

CONCLUSION

The importance of adherence to all regulations in this book should be apparent. The community, school administrators, coaching staff, and athletic director feel strongly that high standards of conduct and citizenship are essential in maintaining a solid program of athletics. It is our intent to preserve rules that reasonably pertain to the health and safety of the individual and the orderly conduct of sports.

We are glad that you are allowing your child to be a part of the athletic program at Falls Lake Academy. We will endeavor to make this a positive experience for your child.

GO FIREBIRDS!!!