The 2026-2027 Flight Plan

Falcon Athletics Handbook
for Students, Parents, and Caregivers

Newton Country Day School of the Sacred Heart
785 Centre Street
Newton, MA 02458
www.newtoncountryday.org

Parents, Caregivers, and Student-Athletes,

Welcome to the 2026-2027 athletics year at Newton Country Day School of the Sacred Heart. I am excited you have chosen to be a Falcon and look forward to helping you achieve success and gratification through our sports programs.

Athletics are an integral part of the experience at Newton Country Day School. We view athletics as an extension of the classroom, where girls have the opportunity to compete at different levels while experiencing personal growth. Our coaching staff believes in our mission and seeks to develop the whole child through athletics.

This manual is built on standards, not just rules. While rules may be followed when someone is watching, standards are upheld even when no one is. They reflect a shared commitment to excellence, accountability, and alignment- fostering environments where individuals and teams consistently grow, lead, and perform at their best. Rules are imposed; standards are embraced. Rules define limits. Standards elevate expectations.

At Newton Country Day School, interscholastic sports begin in Grade 5, with opportunities for students of all abilities, from beginners to recruited athletes. Newton Country Day is a member of the Eastern Independent League (EIL) and the New England Preparatory School Athletic Council (NEPSAC), with 39 teams in 15 sports. For specific team information, please visit our website and select a sport from the Teams page.

At the heart of Newton Country Day School Athletics are three pillars that align our school's values with our sport mindset. Our athletics programs are Formational, Fun, and Fierce. These pillars are designed to guide our work while elevating the overall student-athlete experience. They align closely with the Goals and Criteria of Sacred Heart education, affirming our belief that sport is formational, joyful, and transformative. Together, we strive to create a program that develops each girl's gifts and empowers her to make an impact far beyond the game.

Cheers to a great year ahead- *Go Falcons!*

Yours in Service,

Warren Perry
Director of Athletics

MISSION

At the heart of our Sacred Heart philosophy is the belief that each child possesses unique gifts. Our mission is to unearth those gifts, nurture them, and empower each child of the Sacred Heart to share those gifts with the global community.

We are committed to the Goals and Criteria shared by all Schools of the Sacred Heart.

- **Goal I:** Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to a personal and active faith in God.
- **Goal II:** Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to a deep respect for intellectual values.
- **Goal III:** Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to a social awareness which impels to action.
- **Goal IV:** Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to the building of community as a Christian value.
- **Goal V:** Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom.

Grounded in our mission, we strive toward higher excellence with a bold vision for the future.

ATHLETICS PHILOSOPHY

At Newton Country Day, athletics plays a vital role in fulfilling the school's mission to nurture the whole person. In alignment with our commitment to students' academic, socioemotional, and spiritual growth, we strive to foster their physical development through comprehensive recreation and sports programs.

Our approach focuses on instilling each student with a lifelong appreciation for health, wellness, and fitness. We aim to celebrate and develop each student's unique gifts, interests, and abilities by offering a diverse range of activities. Through skill-building and confidence-boosting experiences, we empower students to lead active, healthy lives.

Here are four foundational goals that guide our principles:

- **Cultivate a Love of Movement:** We believe in the lifelong impact of physical activity and sport. By offering diverse and engaging athletic experiences, we inspire students of all ages and skill levels to develop joy, confidence, and enthusiasm for movement, health, and vitality.
- **Promote Holistic Well-Being:** Our programs support the full spectrum of student wellness—physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual—rooted in the mission and values of the Sacred Heart. We prioritize balance, reflection, and care for self and others.
- **Foster Personal Growth and Belonging:** Through challenge, teamwork, and goal-setting, we help students discover their strengths and develop resilience. Our

inclusive programs honor individual journeys while building community across all abilities and backgrounds.

- **Pursue Excellence with Integrity:** We believe sport can be a vehicle to teach ambition, grit, and a drive to succeed. We encourage athletes and teams to compete with focus and pride, embracing the pursuit of winning as a worthy and values-aligned goal.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

There are three essential elements of Newton Country Day Athletics programs: Each sport strives to be Formational, Fun, and Fierce.

- *Falcon Sports are Formational.* We believe in the holistic development of every young woman. Athletics is more than just physical activity; it's an essential component rooted in our Sacred Heart mission, especially regarding Goal V. Participation in competitive sports allows students to practice wise decision-making, develop discipline, and grow into responsible leaders who take ownership of their health, well-being, and character. We aim to foster spiritual, intellectual, physical, and emotional growth through athletics, teaching our athletes to succeed and navigate life's challenges with grace, courage, and integrity. Students will learn valuable skills and gain experiences to enhance their self-advocacy, hard work, and collaboration abilities. Athletics is where the formation of the whole person can and should happen, preparing our students to make positive, impactful decisions long after they've left the playing field.

- *Falcon Sports are Fun.* At its core, sport is meant to be joyful. While competition is serious, it's also vital that we remember why we play in the first place – because it's fun. Sports, games, and competition should be experiences that light up our students' lives, bring them together, and create lasting memories. Our philosophy is that fun isn't the opposite of discipline or competitiveness; it's the fuel that drives both. When our athletes enjoy what they do and embrace the excitement of the game, they bring their best energy, creativity, and enthusiasm to every practice and match. This joy in sport fosters camaraderie and strengthens the bonds between teammates, coaches, and the school community. When athletes enjoy their experience, they're more likely to remain engaged and grow as competitors and young women.

- *Falcon Athletes are Fierce.* Finally, we aim to cultivate a spirit of fierceness in our athletes and coaches. This fierceness is scaffolded by program level (i.e., Middle School to Varsity). Still, the aim is for Falcons to be determined, resilient, and relentless in their pursuit of excellence. Whether on the field, in the gym, or during practice, we will embody a fierce competitive spirit that refuses to settle for mediocrity. Fierce athletes aren't just physically strong; they are mentally tough, embrace challenges, and are unafraid to push themselves and their teammates toward greatness. We want our teams to be known for their grit, heart, and refusal to give up, no matter the odds. This fierceness will make us stronger athletes and individuals prepared to face the world beyond our school walls.

COMMUNITY & PROGRAM LEVELS

In the Middle School (grades 5-8), students can try a variety of activities and sports, regardless of skill level or experience. Here, we foster a basic level of respect for the game, understanding of sport-specific skills, and the joy of competition. Our programs emphasize promoting physical activity and developing life skills like time management, collaboration, and work ethic through participation. As students progress through Middle School from 5th to 8th grade, the aim is to help them develop their competitiveness and confidence in athletics. Adjusting for the range of talent, beginner-level teams focus on technique and skill development, where playing time is equally balanced, while A teams are coached for competitive gameplay, situational awareness, and preparation for higher-level competition, where playing time may not be equal, but everyone will play.

The Upper School (grades 9-12) sports programs at Newton Country Day are designed to be the pinnacle of competition. The ultimate goal is cultivating individual and team skills while consistently striving for championships. Varsity programs aspire to be elite and competitive, where playing time is determined by skill and competitiveness. A Junior Varsity program may exist to give more athletes time and attention in that sport while also acting as a preparation stage for the varsity team. Playing time on the JV level will be given to all players, but may not be equal.

It is a graduation requirement that students complete at least 6 credits of seasonal sport or fitness programming. One credit equals one school sports season (fall, winter, spring) or participation in a seasonal Fit Club. In the Fit Club, students will commit to completing three sessions of physical activity each week during the fall, winter, or spring seasons. Two of those must be done through The Martin Center program run by a Sports Performance Coach, and the other may be done at an approved activity outside of school (e.g., a cycling class, boot camp, or club sport).

As of Fall 2025, we field interscholastic teams in the following sports:

- **Middle School**
    - **Fall:** Cross Country, Field Hockey, Soccer, Volleyball
    - **Winter:** Basketball, Ice Hockey, Squash
    - **Spring:** Lacrosse, Novice Crew, Softball, Tennis
- **Upper School**
    - **Fall:** Crew, Cross Country, Field Hockey (V/JV), Soccer (V/JV), Volleyball (V/JV)
    - **Winter:** Basketball (V/JV), Dance, Ice Hockey, Squash
    - **Spring:** Crew, Golf, Lacrosse (V/JV), Sailing, Softball, Tennis (V/JV), Track & Field

AFFILIATIONS

Newton Country Day is a proud member of the Eastern Independent League (EIL), a competitive athletic conference composed of independent schools committed to sportsmanship, character, and spirited competition. In addition, we participate in the New England Preparatory School Athletic Council (NEPSAC), which governs regional postseason play and upholds high standards of excellence in independent school athletics throughout the Northeast.

OUR TEAM

The heart of our Athletics program is our people. In addition to a talented and passionate coaching staff, our full-time athletics department includes the Director of Athletics, the Assistant Athletic Director, the Athletic Trainer, and the Director of Rowing. We also employ a part-time strength coach to support our varsity athletes and part-time fitness instructors who lead classes and programs in The Martin Center.

Each sport is led by a **Varsity Head Coach**, who oversees the overall program and shared curriculum for that sport, including the JV and Middle School squads. These program leads set the tone and expectations for their sport, fostering continuity, a shared culture, and high standards for performance and personal conduct.

We expect all coaches to:

- Serve as positive role models, prioritizing character, integrity, and development.
- Create inclusive, supportive team environments where every student-athlete feels valued.
- Promote our core values of teamwork, perseverance, sportsmanship, and excellence.
- Communicate regularly and clearly with student-athletes, families, and athletics staff.
- Collaborate with fellow coaches, trainers, and teachers to support the holistic growth of each student-athlete.
- Approach their work with a growth mindset—coaching is teaching, and we expect lifelong learners.

We believe great coaching begins with relationships. By building trust and investing in each student-athlete's journey, our coaches help young people become confident, capable, and compassionate leaders both on and off the field.

New this year is our partnership with the **Coaching HER** curriculum, a research-based program that helps train and support coaches of women's sport specifically. More information about this partnership can be found on the athletics website.

A separate **Coaches Handbook** outlines hiring processes, role expectations, and department policies, but the commitment to leadership, care, and excellence begins with every coach's presence and example.

STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS

Participation in Newton Country Day athletics is a privilege that carries both academic and personal responsibility. Student-athletes are expected to uphold the school's Code of Conduct and meet the academic standards required for good standing in order to represent our teams.

Academic Commitment & Balance

Participants in Falcon sports are student-athletes. It is important for participants to adhere to their commitments towards success in both the classroom and on the sports platform. Open lines of communication among the families, athletics, and academic administrations are critical to ensure balance here. If a student-athlete is experiencing significant academic challenges, Division leadership will work with the student-athlete, her family, and the coaches to determine the best approach to obtain balance. Student-athletes are expected to prioritize academics as well as athletics, and schedule make-ups outside of practice time. Missing practice for academic reasons without communication will result in an unexcused absence.

Team Selection and Placement

Tryouts are held each season to provide all student-athletes a fair opportunity to earn a position on a team. Team placements are based on skill, effort, understanding of the game, attitude, and potential—not grade level or outside experience - and are determined by the coaching staff. There are three guaranteed days of tryouts for every student-athlete, with certain accommodations made for school-approved conflicts or injuries. Within those three days, a student-athlete may choose to try out for a different sport with openings on the roster. Once teams are set, students may not switch to a different team.

Some sports with limited roster capacity may redirect students to more inclusive options (i.e., teams with open rosters) to ensure a safe and productive experience for all. In a season when all sports have limited rosters, some student-athletes may not be selected for a team. In those situations, the student-athlete may see the Director of Athletics for other ways to be involved in athletics that season.

Roster Size Guidelines (Core / JV / Skills Squads)

To balance competitive success with developmental access, each sport aims to field:

- **Elite Squad**: Primary competition roster for Varsity and Middle School-A.
- **Junior Squad**: Competitive rosters but more developmental (Junior Varsity and Middle School-B); expands opportunity for play and prepares athletes for higher levels of competition.
- **Skills Squad**: Non-competitive; practices 1–2x weekly to build fundamentals.

Healthy team sizes which help guide roster selections are below.

Fall

- **Crew**: 32–40
- **Cross Country**: No roster cap
- **Field Hockey**: Elite 16–20 / Junior 16–20 / Skills up to 18
- **Soccer**: Elite 18–22 / Junior 18–22 / Skills up to 18
- **Volleyball**: Elite 10–12 / Junior 10–12 / Skills up to 10

Winter

- **Basketball**: Elite 10–12 / Junior 12–14 / Skills up to 8
- **Dance**: Performance company 12–18 / Skills up to 12
- **Ice Hockey**: Elite 18–22/ Junior 20-24
- **Squash**: Elite 10-12 / Junior 7-10

Spring

- **Crew**: Elite 32-40/ Novice up to 10
- **Golf**: Elite 8-12 / Skills up to 8
- **Lacrosse**: Elite 20–22 / Junior 16–20/ Skills up to 12
- **Softball**: Elite 12–15 / Skills up to 12
- **Tennis**: Elite 10-12 / Junior 10-12
- **Track & Field**: No roster cap

This structure ensures that every sport has (1) an elite/competitive roster that allows for proper practice and substitution, (2) a junior roster which serves as a meaningful stepping stone, and (3) a skills group that gives students a low-stakes way to stay active, learn fundamentals, or transition into new sports.

Commitment and Conduct

Once a student-athlete accepts a spot on any team - Middle School through Varsity - she commits to that team for the season. This includes regular attendance at practices and games, consistent effort, and a team-first mindset. Students on exchange or with extenuating circumstances should consult the coaches before tryouts begin to discuss alternative tryout plans. Switching sports after tryouts is not permitted. Being a student-athlete means balancing academic and athletic responsibilities while embracing the values of dedication, accountability, and respect. Student-athletes are expected to model sportsmanship and contribute positively to the team culture throughout the season.

ATTENDANCE

It is the expectation that all student-athletes will attend all practices and competitions. Attendance directly impacts individual development, team cohesion, and competitive success.

Student-athletes are expected to be present, punctual, and prepared for practices, games, and team events.

Daily Attendance & Eligibility

Student-athletes must attend academic classes to be eligible to participate in athletic practices or competitions on that same day. Student-athletes who miss school due to illness or unexcused reasons may not practice or compete that day. If a student-athlete must miss school for an excused reason and plans to return in time for a game or practice, she must obtain clearance from the School Nurse and notify the coach.

A student will be considered late but present if she arrives at practice within 15 minutes of its start. Any student who arrives 15 minutes after practice starts is considered absent. Students may not leave practice more than 15 minutes early without it being considered an absence. For extenuating circumstances related to academic or medical reasons, families should meet with coaches ahead of any late arrival or early departure to discuss the situation.

A student who arrives after 10:00 am with an unexcused absence is expected to attend practice but will not be able to participate.

A student must attend 60% of the season's activities to receive sports credit. For Varsity teams, an athlete must attend 90% of practices to earn a letter, unless there is prior medical approval.

Absences

All absences—whether from practices or competitions—must be communicated in advance by the student-athlete directly to the coach. In cases of emergency or illness, notification should occur as soon as possible. Missing a practice or game without prior communication is considered an unexcused absence.

- If a student is in school, even if she is injured, she is expected to attend practice, though she may not participate. The exception to this is if the student is receiving rehab treatment during practice times.

Examples of unexcused absences include: leaving early for vacation, attending social events (e.g., dances), scheduling more than one outside lesson or appointment during team time, or missing practice to complete academic work.

Examples of excused absences include: personal illness or injury, major family events, religious holy days, cultural holidays, academic obligations approved by the School (e.g., retreats, exchanges, class trips), or verified emergencies.

Consequences for Unexcused Absences

While attendance expectations apply to all teams, competitive and playing-time consequences vary slightly by sport. Coaches will reinforce team-specific standards at the start of each season.

For all sports:

- **First unexcused absence**: Coach-led conversation and playing-time impact.
- **Third unexcused absence**: Director of Athletics leads conversation with the coach and student-athlete. Student-athletes may lose their starting position or game eligibility.
- **Fourth unexcused absence**: Director of Athletics-led conversation with the coach, student-athlete, and parents/caregivers. The student-athlete may be dismissed from the team and will be ineligible for team awards or to serve as captain.

Additional Guidelines:

- Student-athletes absent (excused or unexcused) from practice the day before a game, match, or competition may not start or compete.
- Chronic lateness, patterns of poor attendance, or prolonged absences for other reasons will result in a formal meeting with the Director of Athletics and Coach, and may lead to suspension from competitions or dismissal from the team.

PARENT/CAREGIVER EXPECTATIONS & CODE OF CONDUCT

A successful athletics program thrives on shared trust and collaboration among coaches, student-athletes, and parents/caregivers. We value parent/caregiver engagement and encourage support in fostering a positive, development-focused experience for every student-athlete.

While coaches are committed to each student-athlete's growth, they are also responsible to the team as a whole. Likewise, we understand that parents naturally prioritize your child's well-being. With mutual respect and clear communication, we can work together to support your daughter's experience.

Please keep the following in mind:

- **Be patient**: Every athlete improves at her own pace.
- **Provide support, not performance feedback**: Coaches offer constructive critique; we ask parents and caregivers to provide encouragement, love, and perspective.
- **Model good sportsmanship**: Behavior on the sidelines should reflect the values of the school and honor your child, the team, and the sport.
- **Respect the competition space**: Games and practices are for student-athletes and coaches. Avoid sideline coaching or distractions. If needed, schedule time to speak with the coach outside of practice or game times.
- **Let coaches coach**: Support your child's growth by allowing coaches to lead and manage the team environment. Practices (and tryouts) are for student-athletes and coaches only.

- **Let officials officiate**: Let the referees do their job. Complaints and comments directed at officials for any reason will not be tolerated.

In return, our coaches commit to positive reinforcement, clear communication, individual skill development, and a safe, structured training environment.

Parents/caregivers interested in coaching are welcome to apply through our standard hiring process but may not coach a team on which their child plays.

Cheering should only be done in support of athletes. Comments directed at opponents/officials will not be tolerated and are grounds for removal from the athletic competition and future contests.

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Clear, respectful communication is vital to the success of our athletics program. We believe that coaches, student-athletes, and parents/caregivers share responsibility in fostering open dialogue and resolving concerns promptly.

Expectations for Communication from Coaches:

- Regular updates on schedules, practice plans, and (for Upper School teams) team news via **SportsYou**.
- Weekly emails every Sunday for Varsity and JV teams outlining the week ahead.
- Timely responses to questions and concerns submitted through approved channels like **SportsYou** or school email.
- Opportunities for student-athletes to discuss questions or issues directly with coaches in a respectful and supportive environment.

Expectations for Communication from Parents/Caregivers and Student-Athletes:

- Student-athletes should first bring questions or concerns to their team captains (Varsity) or to their coach, practicing self-advocacy.
- When not able to speak in person, student-athletes should communicate with coaches only through **SportsYou** or school email; *texting between coaches and players is prohibited*.
- Parents and caregivers are encouraged to support this communication process by allowing student-athletes to speak with their coaches first. If further discussion is needed, parents/caregivers should schedule a meeting with the coach at a mutually convenient time. If further discussion is needed, the Director of Athletics may be looped in.
- All parties are expected to communicate respectfully, focusing on solutions and the student-athlete's best interests.

By maintaining these clear communication pathways, we build trust and ensure a positive experience for student-athletes, coaches, and families alike.

ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION POLICIES

Club Sport Participation

We support student-athletes who wish to continue training or competing with club teams during the school season. Student-athletes who play the *same sport* for both their club and Newton Country Day may do so, provided they attend at least 80% of school practices and competitions, with the remaining 20% at the club activity.

If a student-athlete participates in a *different sport* outside of school and may miss some school practices/competitions for that sport, she may join the school team only if that participation does not conflict with the school sport. In other words, a student-athlete may not displace another student-athlete for a roster position if she cannot fully commit to the school sport due to a conflict with an outside sport. A one-time, pre-approved absence for an outside club event may be permitted with prior approval by the coach and Director of Athletics.

In all cases, the coach reserves the right to determine playing time for all team members.

Safety & Boundaries

Middle and Upper School students should not use or possess cell phones during after-school activities, including all sports practices and games. In rare circumstances, an Upper School coach may approve the use of a cell phone for specific sport activities. This policy prioritizes the psychological and physical safety of our student-athletes, coaches, and staff by fostering a distraction-free environment focused on teamwork, communication, and personal development. If a parent or caregiver needs to contact a child, specifically in an emergency, call the Director of Athletics (617-559-4730) or the Front Desk (617-244-4246), and the information will be relayed to the coach and student-athlete.

The school manages the only approved social media accounts representing teams or programs. Individual teams or coaches should not create separate social media accounts. Student-athletes are expected to adhere to the school's policies on responsible online behavior, ensuring that any posts, comments, or interactions reflect the values of our community, including maintaining respect and good sportsmanship when engaging with student-athletes, teams, or schools we compete against. Coaches and student-athletes may not interact on social media. Any inappropriate online behavior that reflects poorly on the school may result in disciplinary action.

Middle School Student-Athletes participating in Upper School Sports (APP)

The Athletic Placement Process (APP) is a Newton Country Day program for evaluating Grade 8 students who want to participate in varsity sports. This plan is in place to ensure student-athletes have the necessary knowledge and skills to establish and maintain physical fitness, participate in physical activity, maintain personal health, and acquire both the knowledge and ability to create and maintain a safe and healthy environment.

The APP has been created to assess each student-athlete's physical and emotional maturation, physical fitness, and sport skill, so that a student-athlete may be placed at a level of competition that should result in increased opportunity, a fairer competitive environment, minimized risk, and greater personal satisfaction. The APP is to be used only when an individual student-athlete's athletic skills warrant moving to the commencement or intermediate sport competition level, and therefore, ideally, it should be initiated by the Head Coach of the sport and/or Director of Athletics, who recognizes the student's skill. The APP should be used before the start of the season so the student-athlete can participate in the tryout period.

To learn more about this program, or if you believe a student-athlete qualifies for this process, contact the Director of Athletics.

Uniforms & Equipment

Student-athletes are expected to wear appropriate athletic attire and to participate in practices with proper equipment. Upper School athletes are required to wear the school Nike warm-up to games and competitions. For competition, student-athletes must wear school-issued uniforms and gear.

Student-athletes are expected to return all school-issued equipment and uniforms promptly by the end of their season. Each student-athlete must turn in their uniforms/equipment within one week of the final competition. Student-athletes must return their uniform from the prior season before receiving the next season's gear. Families will be notified if students fail to return their uniforms.

Travel & Transportation

The school will provide transportation from the school to off-campus facilities for all teams. Senior student-athletes with driver's licenses and written pre-approval from parents/caregivers may drive to off-campus practices. These approved student-athletes may drive themselves to practice - no one else. All other student-athletes must ride the school-provided bus or van. All Middle School student-athletes will ride the buses to practices. Parents and caregivers may pick their children up after practices, or student-athletes may ride the bus back to campus.

Student-athletes will travel to all home and away competitions on school-provided transportation. A student-athlete may be released into the care of a parent, caregiver, or another adult after the competition. , with approval. See Appendix B for more information regarding school travel for sports.

It is important for student-athletes to be picked up by parents/caregivers or depart campus in a timely manner after athletics activities. If pickup will be delayed or plans change, parents/caregivers should communicate directly with the coach.

Early dismissal from classes may occasionally be necessary for athletic travel to away contests. Although the Athletics Department works to limit these occurrences whenever possible,

student-athletes are responsible for all academic work missed as a result of participation in athletics. Faculty will be notified by the Athletics Department, and students are expected to proactively obtain assignments and complete make-up work promptly.

Summer/ Offseason

While the formal season for each sport is defined by NEPSAC and EIL regulations, student-athletes are encouraged to stay active and continue developing their skills during the offseason. Participation in summer training programs, sport-specific clinics, skills camps, or club teams can offer valuable opportunities for growth, provided they are not organized or mandated by Newton Country Day coaches during restricted periods. These experiences should be student-initiated and aligned with individual goals for athletic development.

ATHLETIC TRAINING & SAFETY SERVICES

Newton Country Day provides certified and licensed Athletic Trainer (AT) coverage for all home practices and games, including those at designated off-site “home” facilities. Our Athletic Trainer works closely with coaches, the Health Office, and outside medical providers to ensure student-athletes receive timely, expert care. Attempts should be made to meet with the AT outside of practice time. When a student needs to meet with the AT, she must let the coach know prior to practice.

Medical Requirements for Participation:

- A current physical exam, updated within the last 13 months, is required annually.
- All health records and consent-to-treat forms must be submitted via the MAGNUS Health platform before student-athletes can participate.
- Every student-athlete must complete pre-season health and permission forms.

Injury Reporting and Care:

- Coaches must report all injuries, illnesses, and health concerns promptly to the Athletic Trainer.
- The Athletic Trainer collaborates with medical professionals and manages injury follow-up and rehabilitation recommendations.
- Incident reports are completed by the Athletic Trainer for on-site facilities and by both coaches and the Athletic Trainer for all off-site injuries.
- Student-athletes must provide written documentation from their healthcare provider outlining diagnosis, treatment, and clearance before returning to play.
- Return to play after injury or illness requires a gradual progression supervised by the Athletic Trainer, including at least one full practice and, for head injuries, a 5-step protocol with physician clearance and no academic accommodations.
- When returning to play, a minimum of 1 practice is required before gameplay.

Safety and Conduct:

- Parents/caregivers and spectators must stay off the playing surfaces during practices and games; they will be promptly notified of any significant injuries involving their child.
- Student-athletes should have their personal EpiPen and inhaler on them at all times.
- Teams traveling off-campus must bring water, a first aid kit, and use the MAGNUS Health Application.
- Only parents/caregivers or the school nurse may administer medications; coaches and staff do not provide or recommend medications or supplements, in line with league policies.

If you have questions or concerns about your student-athlete's health or injury status, please contact our Athletic Trainer directly for support.

USE OF THE CAMPUS ATHLETICS FACILITIES

Athletic spaces at Newton Country Day are intended for current students participating in school-sponsored sports, fitness, and training programs. Any use of athletic facilities outside of regular team practices or games requires prior approval and adult supervision by a Newton Country Day employee. Parental supervision is not permitted in lieu of school staff.

The Fitness Center is available to Upper School students on weekdays only during afternoon WIN periods and between 3:00 and 6:00 PM, subject to space availability and only under the supervision of a Newton Country Day School employee. Priority for the weight room is for in-season varsity teams training with the Strength Coach, as well as active participants in a school Fit Club class. Appropriate footwear and clothing are required.

Middle School students may request permission to use the fitness center beginning in the second semester of Grade 8, pending administrative approval and successful completion of a safety orientation.

CELEBRATIONS & AWARDS

Falcon Athletes of the Week
This weekly honor celebrates not only athletic excellence, but also the leadership, character, and teamwork that define a true Falcon. Student-athletes and coaches may nominate an athlete who has made a meaningful impact both on and off the field. While standout performances in competition are considered, nominations should also reflect our core values—resilience and integrity (Faith), smart play (Intellect), uplifting teammates (Justice & Service), building team spirit (Community), and making wise, thoughtful decisions (Wise Freedom). Nominations will be collected weekly, and winners will be selected by the Athletics Department leadership. Recipients will be recognized with a photo spotlight on school monitors and shared through various digital platforms.

Managers
Managers are for Varsity teams only and are expected to attend all games, home and away. Depending on the team, a coach may also request that managers attend practices too.

Post-Season Awards
At the conclusion of each season, teams and individual student-athletes are recognized for their growth, leadership, and contributions. The EIL and NEPSAC name all-star athletes, who are honored at a school-wide sports assembly. Each team also votes to recognize two peers with season awards: *Most Improved Player* and *Most Valuable Player*. The *Most Improved* award honors a student-athlete who has shown significant growth through hard work, a positive attitude, and responsiveness to coaching. The *Most Valuable* award celebrates a teammate whose contributions—through skill, leadership, and sportsmanship—have had the greatest impact on the team. Coaches review and confirm the final recipients, and coaches serve as the tiebreaker for any ties. In addition, each coaching staff selects a recipient for the *Coaches Award*, given to a student-athlete who consistently models teamwork, dedication, and integrity.

End-of-Season Reflection
Reflection and feedback are essential components of the athletic experience. After each season, Upper School student-athletes complete a self-assessment and team evaluation to recognize individual and collective growth, celebrate successes, and identify areas for improvement. This feedback supports program development and helps ensure our athletics remain formative, fun, and competitive. Coaches also participate in reflection and review processes, reinforcing a shared commitment to continual growth.

Varsity Captain Selection
Captains play a critical leadership role on varsity teams and are selected each season by underclass team members and the head coach, with final approval coming from the Head of Upper School. Before the end of the season, nominees are named and may speak to their teammates about their leadership goals. Nominees for captain must have participated in at least two seasons of the sport, on the Varsity or JV level. Students serve for one season. Students who serve as captain during their junior season must put themselves forward again and be re-elected for their senior season.

Anonymous voting is conducted online and reviewed by the Athletics Director and coaching staff. In the case of a tie, the coaches and Athletics Director provide the tiebreaker. Two Captains are named at the end of the previous season to serve as organizers and point people for the next one. Captains are expected to model maturity, accountability, inclusivity, attend all practices and games, and participate in seasonal leadership training sessions with the Director of Athletics. Weekly check-ins with coaches are also required.

CONCLUSION

Gold isn’t the prize or the medal- it’s a standard: the standard of behaviors, effort, and expectations that drive excellence, regardless of the outcome. It’s not limited to those on the podium; in championship-capable teams and systems, it is visible within everyone involved.

The best teams don’t wait for results to set their standard—they establish it first, and the results follow. Consistently living the gold standard reinforces a collective identity, creating an environment where excellence becomes second nature. When a team knows what it stands for and consistently lives up to it, performance follows. Gold medals are won in a moment, but gold standards are like a distributed medal that everyone wins.

We hope these enhancements and clarifications on standards in Newton Country Day Athletics are helpful, so everyone can find that gold both internally and externally.

APPENDIX A
The College-Bound Student-Athlete Guide

If you're a serious athlete passionate about continuing your sport beyond NCDS, you are likely exploring the recruiting scene by your freshman year. Whether you're a multi-sport athlete or focused on one, 9th and 10th grade is the time to begin actively identifying colleges that are a good fit for you academically, personally, and athletically. With guidance from the College Counseling Office, your family, and coaches, begin researching schools and reaching out to college coaches at those institutions. Remember, while it's important to be proactive, NCAA rules govern when and how college coaches can respond—visit this NCAA site to learn more. Younger student-athletes can review the following page for a year-by-year roadmap to stay on track.

When constructing a letter to a college coach, keep these five tips in mind:

- Use electronic communication. Almost every coach now relies on e-mail to both contact and receive contact from potential recruits, making it the preferred method of communication. To find out the email addresses of the coaches you want to contact, go to the college's athletic website and look for a staff listing of names and emails.
- Be concise and focused with your message. Coaches at all levels receive dozens and dozens of emails/letters from high school-aged athletes. You are trying to show interest, pass along all your contact information, share your sports resume (accomplishments and even video highlights where appropriate), and provide each coach with the upcoming schedule of your games so someone can see you play.
- Do not have one of your parents write to a coach. You are the one the coach might be recruiting, so they want to hear from you.
- Provide contact information for your club/HS coaches. Providing an email address and a phone number allows the college coach to contact your club and/or high school coach for more information.
- Do not send a form letter that starts with "Dear Coach" and does not mention anything specific about their program and school. The highlight will be the same for each email you send to various coaching personnel and institutions; however, be sure to research the school and program before reaching out, and put some of this school-specific detail into a section of each email.

NCAA Rules & Resources

- Review the academic requirements to be eligible to play DI athletics here.
- When you've decided to pursue college athletics, create a *free* NCAA profile here.
- Learn more about the rules of the recruiting process and approved coaches communication here.

APPENDIX B
Athletic Travel Policy: Out-of-Region Competitions

Upper School teams may occasionally travel beyond New England for competitions or showcases. When this occurs, families are responsible for the costs of transportation, lodging, and meals not provided at the event. The school will share trip details in advance, suggest group travel and accommodations, and provide chaperone support.

Financial assistance is available to ensure all student-athletes can fully participate, including those receiving tuition assistance.

Student-athletes must uphold Newton Country Day conduct and sportsmanship expectations while traveling and should coordinate with teachers about any missed classwork. All travel should reflect the values of teamwork, growth, and leadership central to our athletics program.

Falcon Athletics Handbook
Acknowledgement & Receipt Form
2026-2027 School Year

We hope the information provided within this document helps to facilitate your participation in athletics at Newton Country Day School of the Sacred Heart. Acknowledgment of this handbook is required before participation in a school sport. Please click here to acknowledge your receipt and agreement.

Student-Athlete's Name: _____