



Athletic Handbook  
2024-2025

Highland Christian Academy exists to partner with families in seeking to develop discerning, articulate, and biblically rooted young men and women who are equipped to go into the world as salt and light.

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Participation in an athletic program offered at HCA is both an honor and a privilege. Students who wish to belong to any athletic team make themselves subject to additional responsibilities, not only to themselves, but also to their team, school, and Lord.

## **PHILOSOPHY OF THE ATHLETIC PROGRAM**

At HCA, we believe athletics are an integral part of the educational experience. Athletics are important but should not take the place of academic, church, or family commitments. Our basic philosophy is to build Christ-like characteristics into the lives of each athlete and participant. God can operate through sports to produce desired traits of leadership, loyalty, love, and faithfulness. Athletes will learn to be under authority as well as in authority. They will be aware of their individual responsibility to each other and to the Lord. We are all one body; when one hurts, we all hurt; and when one rejoices, we all rejoice. Each team member will learn what it means to make a commitment to the Lord and to their team/organization.

Participation in athletics is a great way for students to build a relationship with God and be a witness to teammates and opponents. The benefits of participating in athletics and extracurricular activities are innumerable and can be a tool to spread God's word.

Athletic competition was in the apostles' thoughts as they penned the Scriptures. Biblical references to physical training, competition, boxing, wrestling, and running a race imply that athletic competition is not off-limits to followers of Christ. In fact, it can be legitimately included in a believer's life. "Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come." (1 Timothy 4:7-8).

## **PURPOSE OF THE SPORTS MINISTRY**

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. - Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV)

Our purpose is to guide associated sports teams in glorifying God by representing Highland Christian Academy through athletic excellence, developing spiritual growth, developing servant leaders, and promoting school spirit. We strive to provide a safe and caring learning environment where students are challenged to reach their maximum potential.

Athletics are a "classroom" where life's lessons (discipline, respect for authority, competition, teamwork, sportsmanship, etc.) are taught and learned. Through the use of athletics, we are able to worship our Creator by using our minds and bodies in a way that demonstrates our uniqueness (Gen. 1:27). The goal of HCA is to compete in a manner, which will glorify God through our thoughts, actions, and attitudes (Romans 12:1). "Humble winning and gracious losing" must characterize the Christian school athletic team at the end of every contest.

## **Memberships**

HCA belongs to the Georgia Independent Athletic Association (GIAA). The school follows all policies and bylaws set forth by the association regarding eligibility, transfer requirements, contest limitations, etc.

## **Athletic Volunteer Service**

Volunteers are essential to HCA's athletic program. During home games, parents/ guardians are required to volunteer for **2 games or competitions per sport season that their child(ren) participated in**. The athletic

department understands that this may be a challenge for some families, but the athletic department cannot run without volunteers. **Parents who do not want to volunteer may opt out for a fee of \$50 per sport played. Please let AD Megan Tovar know if you plan to do so.** Volunteer opportunities include: concessions, gate, and score table needs (books, game clocks, score board, etc.). A schedule will be sent out prior to the season starting. Student service hours available for high school only. Please see the athletic director for more information. If you sign-up to volunteer and an emergency arises, please contact the athletic director in advance so that we can coordinate for other volunteers to take your place. ***If there are not enough volunteers to host a home athletic event, then the event could be canceled.***

### **Athletic Fee(s)**

Each student who participates in the athletic program at HCA is required to pay an athletic fee per sport. These fees are determined by the HCA administration and will be billed at the start of each season and are non-refundable (unless the HCA administration allows the exception). These costs are used to help offset the costs of our coaches, officials, transportation, etc. **Athletic fees are due by the first date of competition.** If the fee is not paid, the student will not be allowed to compete in any further activities until the payment is made.

For the 2024-2025 season the fees are as follows for 1 sport:

- Middle School: \$100
- High School: \$150
- Homeschool Middle School: \$200
- Homeschool High School: \$300

*If your athlete plays more than one sport, we are offering a discount for the additional sports played throughout the year.*

Fees for the 2nd sport:

- Middle School: \$80
- High School: \$135
- Homeschool Middle School: \$180
- Homeschool High School: \$285

Fees for the 3 or more sports:

- Middle School: \$75
- High School: \$125
- Homeschool Middle School: \$170
- Homeschool High School: \$270

### **Physicals/ Consent Form**

In accordance with the bylaws of the GIAA, each student must have a current physical examination, which is good for one calendar year. No student may try out for a sport or participate in any way until he or she has had a physical examination. Parents must take the “Pre-participation Physical Form” to a physician. Players and parents also need to fill out a “Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness Form,” “Heat Policy Awareness Form,” and “Concussion Awareness Form.” *These forms are due the first day of practice. Students will not be able to participate until all forms are turned in.*

### **Home-School Athletes**

Qualified home-school athletes may participate in the athletic program at the discretion of HCA. There will be an application and interview process that the families must complete before the student is allowed to participate on a team. Once an athlete is approved by the administration, the home-school student may be allowed to tryout. Teams are allowed a limited number of home-school students per team. In the event there is more interest than the allowed amount, a tryout will be held for the home-school athletes only. If selected for an HCA team, the home-school athletes must comply with the rules and standards of HCA and GIAA regarding eligibility. HCA will require additional paperwork on file for eligibility purposes. Please work with the athletic director and registrar to complete these processes.

### **Try-Outs**

Exact dates and times will be announced and posted for each try-out. Tryouts are mandatory unless the Athletic Director approves otherwise due to extreme situations. There are some sports where larger numbers may require us to cap the size of the team. Choosing the members of any athletic team is the sole privilege and responsibility of the head coach for that team. An athlete's membership on any team is always subject to proper behavior and academic requirements.

Moving Athletes "Up": Head varsity coaches for a given sport have the sole privilege and responsibility to determine which student athletes will play at which level and which ones will be moved "up" and "down."

### **Practice**

Middle school athletes that are absent from school in the morning must sign in by 12:00pm to be allowed to practice or play on that day. High school students must attend half of their classes in order to practice or play on that day. Students that come to school and sign out due to sickness will not be allowed to practice or play in games on that day. A student will not be kept from playing or practicing due to missing school for doctor's appointments, dentist appointments, funerals, etc.

Practices are mandatory. If a student is going to miss a practice, it must be communicated to the coach by the parent or athlete. Any athlete that is late or misses practice without an excused reason, or due to detention, should expect to encounter some form of discipline from the coach. Make-up tests are excused but should be made up with practice schedules in mind. Players should bring a signed note to the coach with the teacher's signature and time dismissed.

### **Wednesday Practices**

All HCA athletic practices or games should conclude by 5:30pm because of Wednesday night church services. This does not include games or tournaments set up by the GIAA.

### **Playing Time**

Each coach should be focused on the development of all athletes. Varying skill levels in each discipline make it difficult to play all athletes equally. Therefore, the coach must use his/her discretion when making personal decisions during a contest. Coaches cannot nor should not guarantee an equal amount of playing time for all athletes. However, it should be the goal of the coach to find opportunities suitable for all athletes to play when the situation presents itself.

Since playing time depends on so many variables, we cannot guarantee every athlete will play in every game. Playing time depends on the following factors: 1. The God-given ability of the athlete 2. Time spent practicing prior to season 3. Attitude of the athlete in practice and in games 4. The strength or weakness of the opponent 5. The

athlete's work ethic in practice 6. The number of practices attended or missed 7. Injuries to oneself or to a teammate 8. The number of players on the team eligible to play in a given game 9. Academic and behavioral issues of the athlete.

### **Dual Participation**

It is acceptable for athletes to participate in multiple sports at HCA simultaneously during the same season as long as the Athletic Director AND both coaches approve. In this situation, a schedule for the athlete that mutually benefits both teams will be determined and the athlete will "declare" which sport is primary.

In the situation where seasons overlap and team activities begin for a later sport before team activities for the first sport are completed, an athlete will be required to complete the first season before they may begin activities for the later season. Coaches for the first sport may allow the student athlete to attend activities for the second sport, but the athlete must be committed to the first sport until its completion.

### **Academic Requirements**

All athletes at HCA will be governed by the school and GIAA policy on academic eligibility. Students who are removed from a team for academic reasons will be removed from the team roster. If they are not able to return to that team before the end of the season, they will be considered to have not finished the season with that team in good standing and will therefore not be afforded the same rights and privileges as athletes who do finish a season in good standing. Students that have been removed from a team for academic reasons may not practice or participate in any team activities during the term of their suspension.

**HCA Academic Eligibility:** Students in grade 9-12 must have a cumulative 2.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale to remain eligible. Students in grades 6-8 must have been regularly promoted from the previous grade, carrying a normal class load, and maintaining a 2.0. Grades will be assessed every deficiency and report card period. If a student is falling below a 2.0 during these times, they will be placed on academic probation for a 4 week period.

**GIAA Academic Eligibility:** To be eligible to participate, practice, and/or try out in interscholastic activities, a student must be academically eligible. A student is required to pass classes that carry at least 5 credits (per semester) counting toward graduation the semester immediately preceding participation. EXCEPTION: First-semester ninth-grade students. Passing in all GIAA member schools is determined by the school by awarding a credit.

For schools offering courses with year-long grading, eligibility will be determined at the end of each individual semester. Yearly averages will not be used for determining eligibility unless half credits are issued each semester.

Students gain or lose eligibility on the first day of the subsequent semester. The first day of the Fall semester will be interpreted as the first date of practice for the first sport. Exception: Students who successfully complete **summer school** to maintain eligibility become eligible on the last day of summer school. **Summer school** is an extension of the previous semester and courses may be: Remedial in nature where a previously-taken course is repeated in its entirety with a new grade being given. Enrichment in nature where a new course is taken that results in new credit being earned.

A maximum of two (2) unit credits earned in summer school may be counted for eligibility purposes. NOTE: Additional credits may be earned.

Summer school credits earned in non-accredited home study programs or non-accredited private schools may not be used to gain eligibility. Accreditation recognized under the rule will be from the Georgia Independent School Association (GISA), Georgia Accrediting Commission (GAC), or a regional accreditation agency (such as COGNIA or SAIS-COGNIA).

An independent study course taken in summer school must be regionally accredited and accepted by the school for graduation credit. Courses completed after the beginning of a new semester may not be used to gain eligibility for that semester. Example: night school classes, correspondence courses, etc. Independent study courses taken during the school year must meet the criteria above.

A student who has passed 5 unit subjects for the first semester (approximately one-half of the academic school year) is eligible for the second semester. A student who passes in 5 unit subjects, or their equivalent, for the second semester or for the year is eligible for the following year. If a school is on the quarter system, a student must pass 5 unit subjects, or their equivalent, for the first quarter (approximately one-third of the regular academic year) in order to be eligible for the second quarter. A student must pass 5 unit subjects, or their equivalent, for the second quarter to be eligible for the third quarter. A student must pass 5 unit subjects, or their equivalent, for the third quarter or for the year in order to be eligible for the first quarter of the following year.

Of the 5 unit subjects, 3 units MUST be in the following subject areas: English, Foreign Language, Science, Social Science, Mathematics, Religion, and Business Education. Excluded from any credit is teacher's aide, office aide, or their equivalent.

Students failing to pass the required 5 unit subjects for the first semester may be allowed to become eligible at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> nine weeks grading period if they are passing the required 5 unit subjects at that time. Students must have passed at least three (3) subjects at the semester to be eligible to gain eligibility in this manner.

All Students must be currently taking 4 or more classes to be eligible.

Probationary Status: Athletes who do not meet the prescribed academic requirements at either of the grading period checkpoints will be placed in a probationary status until the next checkpoint. While in this status, the athlete will be required to: 1. Report academic progress to the athletic director at least twice per week (including completion of required assignments and homework assignments). 2. Attend all practices and games, sit in the designated area only, and must wear the HCA school uniform as approved by the coaching staff. They will not be able to participate in the competition (except during practice).

If an athlete does not successfully complete his/her probationary period, or does not meet the required academic standards for 1 grading period, he/she will not be able to participate for the current season. If an athlete wants to participate in another sport during the academic year, he/she must meet the required academic standards at the end of the next grading period, and maintain a satisfactory academic record for all other checkpoints in the future. The athlete's grades will be closely monitored by the registrar or athletic director, in conjunction with affected instructors and coaching staff.

Upon the advice of the instructor, principal, athletic director, or parent, an athlete may be removed from a sport if academic difficulties persist. If the athlete is dismissed from one or more sports during the academic year, he/she will be removed from the sports program for the remainder of the academic year.

### **Student Team Managers**

Student managers (not exceeding two) can be kept on a team at the coach's discretion. Student managers may be responsible for handling equipment, keeping statistics, running the scoreboard, and/ or setting up practices or games. Student managers may participate in practices (physical required) as the coach sees it as beneficial to the manager and to the team. Student managers must follow the same academic policies student athletes are required to follow. Student managers can also receive hours towards their community service requirements.

### **Quitting/Dismissal from a Team**

All student athletes will be given a "trial period" for each sport they begin so that they may try a sport but will not be penalized if they do not like it. This trial period will be up to the start of the first interscholastic contest for that sport that is played after the student athlete joins the team.

If a player quits a team or is dismissed for disciplinary or academic reasons before the end of the season, they will not be eligible to participate with another team until they have been cleared by school administration.

If an athlete is assessed a suspension from the GIAA, HCA coaches, or administration that carries over past the end of the season that athlete will be removed from the roster, will be considered to have not finished the season in good standing, and will be suspended from any interscholastic athletics at HCA until they are cleared by school administration to return.

Students that are suspended from a team for any reason may not participate in any team related activities during the term of their suspension. This includes practices, games, etc.

### **Athletic Dress Code**

**Game Day: HCA Coaches and Athletic Director will determine game day attire for each separate team.**

**Home Games:** students will wear business casual attire. Boys can wear dress pants with a button down shirt or polo. Girls can wear dresses or skirts (knee length) or a blouse and dress pants.

**Away Games:** students will wear our sponsor t-shirts or HCA spirit shirts along with jeans, sweatpants, or school appropriate shorts.

Practice: Coaches (under the guidance of the athletic department) determine the athletic apparel to be used for practice. Student athletes should dress in such a way that is appropriate and modest. Size, fit, and length should all be considered when determining shorts and shirts for practice. Coaches may require practice uniforms.

### **Uniform and Team Wear**

A player who loses, misplaces, ruins, or fails to turn in their uniform will be required to replace that uniform. It is the responsibility of the player to wash and maintain his or her athletic uniform throughout the season. Jerseys should not be worn to school or be worn by family members, girlfriends, boyfriends, or any other friends or acquaintances (unless approved by the athletic director). Athletic teams may purchase team shirts, sweatshirts, polos, etc. Days are designated by HCA to wear this attire. When the season is over, **the player (athlete) has 10 days to return ALL athletic gear or they will be charged for it.**

### **Schedules/ Directions**

Practice and game schedules will be provided to families in the weekly athletic reports and by the coaches.

### **Parking/ Pick-up**

Athletes who drive must adhere to the driving policies of HCA. This includes home-school athletes. Parents, please be sure to pick your child up on time after their practice or game. Be sure to park in an area that will be safe from foul balls or home runs during baseball games and practices. HCA is not responsible for damaged vehicles. If pick-up after a game becomes a problem, your athlete may be exempt from future games. This will be determined by the HCA administration. Be on time!

### **Awards and Recognition**

Each athlete that participates on a team, finishes the season, and is in good standing with the team, will receive a participation certificate to honor their accomplishments.

Each team will also award: Most Improved Award, MVP Award, and a Coach's Award.

Varsity athletes may receive an All-State, All-Region, or Academic Honors if eligible. Athletes may also purchase a letterman jacket at the expense of each individual family.

### **Discipline of Athlete**

HCA seeks to follow a Biblical approach to discipline. The Bible teaches that the quality of these relationships depends on the student's view of himself/herself and ultimately on his/her relationship with God. It also teaches that the student will be held accountable for his/her attitudes and actions in each of these relationships. As a school, we are committed to helping students understand God's pattern for living and to assisting them in correcting deviations from that pattern of living. "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." (Proverbs 22:6).

Students participating in extra-curricular activities must abide by all policies in the HCA student/ parent handbook. With permission from the athletic director, coaches may suspend players from practice, a game, or from the team if it is deemed necessary.

A team member must maintain the approval of the faculty. Students who have difficulty with classroom conduct or behavioral issues will be required to participate in practice sessions but will be required to sit on the bench during competition until the problem is corrected. An athlete who fails to correct the problem in two weeks may be dismissed from the team at the discretion of the HCA administration.

Disrespect of any kind will not be tolerated. Any student/ athlete found to have violated the HCA Code of Ethics (including or lying to a teacher or coach) will be suspended from practices and games for 1 week and must provide a written apology to his/ her teacher or coach. He/she must attend practices and games scheduled for during that time, sit in a designated area as appointed by the coaching staff, and must wear the HCA school uniform as approved by the coaching staff.

### **Student Athlete Code of Conduct**

While associated with the Athletic Department of HCA, athletes are expected to adhere to the following set of guidelines and remember they are the face of the school and representatives of HCA.

Student athletes will follow the bylaws and policies set forth by HCA and the GIAA regarding eligibility, compliance, and participation in interscholastic athletics. Student athletes will display the highest level of



sportsmanship at all times before, during, and after a contest. They will treat teammates, coaches, game officials, opposing team members, and parents with the utmost respect at all times, and will refrain from participating in any activity that may be considered demeaning and/or critical. Athletes will commit to maintain adequate grades and behavioral standards in the classroom and will refrain from any academic impropriety such as cheating, plagiarism, etc. Student athletes will commit to attend all team activities on time.

Student athletes will display Christian character both on and off the court/ field. Athletes will be held responsible for public behavior including social networking, websites, and other public forums. Student athletes will avoid and help prevent the intentional destruction of athletic equipment and school property. Student athletes will refrain from using profane, foul, lewd, or suggestive language or conduct. Student athletes will not use or possess any illegal drugs, alcohol, weapons, or tobacco products. Student athletes will refrain from any form of hazing, bullying, or sexual harassment. Committing any of these actions will result in a consequence or, ultimately, result in the student athlete being dismissed from the team. The consequence will be made by the HCA administration.

Athletes will accept full responsibility for, and adequately maintain, all uniforms and equipment issued to them at the beginning of the season and will return it in satisfactory condition at the end of the season. Failure to do so will result in the athlete's school account being charged to replace the lost or damaged equipment.

The privilege of participating in athletic events can be revoked at any time by the HCA administration (in accordance with the rules and regulations of HCA and GIAA) if these codes are not followed. If a student does not abide by these policies, it could result in an immediate dismissal from the team for the season.

If a student athlete is ejected or dismissed from an event, he/she will be under a temporary ban following the ejection/ dismissal. In addition, fines will be charged to the student's FACTS account. Further disciplinary action may be taken at the discretion of the HCA administration depending on the severity of the offense.

### **Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct**

Like the athletes, parents should understand and acknowledge that participation in athletics at HCA is a privilege, which demands that certain expectations should be met in order to be involved. Parents are expected to help the administration and coaches of HCA to hold the student athletes accountable for their actions while associated with a sports team. In order to do this, they must first model the character and behavior that is required of our athletes.

Parents play a vital role in the success of an athlete. It is our expectation that all parents are positive, supportive, and encouraging to all players, coaches, and opponents. Parents should cheer not only for the goals and shots made, but also for the successes of all players no matter how big or small.

Parents should be a support system to the coaches and frequently ask how they can help. Parent/ coach conflicts should be handled gently, privately, and with a prayerful heart. Gossiping with other parents about the faults of the coach and/ or other players and students is beneficial to no one and will not be tolerated. Parents, focus on encouraging your own team and refrain from any critical, sarcastic, inappropriate, or negative words. Refrain from booing or taunting any player, coach, or official.

If there is a disagreement with a coach, we highly encourage these steps to be taken before getting the athletic director involved. 1) Student must approach the coach for a resolution. 2) If the issue is not resolved, a parent may schedule a meeting with the coach and the athlete for a resolution. 3) If the issue is still unresolved, then a meeting with the athletic director, coach, student, and parent may be scheduled. If there are any questions regarding playing time, players and parents must not approach the coach immediately after a game. **It is most appropriate to wait 24 hours to discuss playing time with a coach.**

Parents will display the highest level of sportsmanship and Christian character at all times before, during, and after a contest. They will treat game officials, student athletes, coaches, and opposing team members and fans with the utmost respect at all times, and will refrain from participating in any activity that may be considered as demeaning and/ or critical toward them. Parents are expected to exemplify Christian character and good sportsmanship through their presence in the stands. We must treat our guests as we would want our teams to be treated. *The administrator or game manager on duty will handle all behavioral situations, and has the right to ask the disruptive patron(s) to leave.* Parents will commit to making sure their student athlete attends all team activities on time, and will give their coach plenty of advance notice and adequate reasoning for failure to do so. Parents will agree to pay all fees associated with their child's respective team. Parents will hold their student athletes accountable to adequately maintain all uniforms and equipment issued to them at the beginning of the season and to return it in satisfactory condition at the end of the season. Parents agree that failure to do so will result in the student athlete's school account being charged to replace the lost or damaged equipment.

The privilege of participating in athletic events can be revoked at any time by the HCA administration (in accordance with the rules and regulations of HCA and the GIAA) if these codes are not followed. If a parent is ejected or dismissed from an event, he/she will be under a temporary ban following the ejection/ dismissal. In addition, any ejection fines will be charged to your student's FACTS account. Further disciplinary action may be taken at the discretion of the HCA Administration depending on the severity of the offense.

Talk with the Athletic Director before taking athletics away from your son/daughter for discipline reasons. The team is counting on him/her and the decision affects more than one person.

### **Spectator/Alumni Code of Conduct**

HCA strives to maintain a high level of respect for our opponents and their ability to perform in an athletic contest, as well as for the officials and their ability to call a fair contest. Thus, we do not condone derogatory comments/ chants or actions which intend to harass or humiliate the opponents or officials. HCA fans are expected to exemplify Christian character and good sportsmanship through their presence in the stands. We must treat our guests as we would want our teams to be treated. *The administrator or game manager on duty will handle all behavioral situations, and has the right to ask the disruptive patron(s) to leave.*

The privilege in participating in athletic events can be revoked at any time by the HCA administration (in accordance with the rules and regulations of HCA and GIAA) if these codes are not followed. If a spectator/ alumni is ejected or dismissed from an event, he/she will be temporarily banned for subsequent events. In addition, fines will be charged to the individual that has been ejected. Further disciplinary action may be taken at the discretion of the HCA Administration depending on the severity of the offense.

### **GIAA Code of Behavior**

“While the preponderant majority of schools, and all associated with each school, clearly and consistently exhibit appropriate sportsmanship year-in and year-out, it is incumbent upon each to continue to ensure that all are aware and attempt to stimulate fair play, friendly rivalry, and good sportsmanship among contestants, schools, and communities. Toward that end goal, the Georgia Independent Athletic Association (GIAA) provides the following guidelines to help each school attain these goals, especially with respect to establishing norms of exemplary sportsmanlike behavior during all association events.

All school personnel (i.e. coaches, assistants, students, teachers, etc.) are expected to set a positive example of good sportsmanship by both their demeanor, personal example, and leadership at all times.

Each year (and more often, if necessary) students and all other fans (especially parents) should be informed what behavior is acceptable and that which is not acceptable during all competitive school events.

Each student-athlete, coach, and official are to be treated with honor, dignity, and respect before, during, and after each association event.

Fans (including students) are encouraged to cheer and applaud the accomplishments of their favorite team. This can be done in so many wholesome ways without the use of profanity or other improper language, harassment, gestures, or other actions which can cause embarrassment to the school.

When the contest is over, it is over. Period. Any complaints must be filed according to the association rules and regulations.

It is the host school's responsibility to provide and ensure that all participants, fans, and officials can attend any event in safety without undue or improper harassment, etc. from the opposing school fans, etc.

Those who do not behave properly, who have violated this code, or broken laws, are to be warned and asked to leave the premises. In case of law violations, these matters need to be handled by the security personnel, taking appropriate action as may be deemed necessary.

Ultimately, the Head of School is at all times (home and away) totally responsible and accountable for all actions of his/her teams, coaches, students, and fans. With proper leadership, all associated with the school are expected to know and exhibit good sportsmanship, proper and acceptable behavior, and manners becoming a host or guest at any event.”

### **Conflict Resolution**

One of the things that is unique to a Christian school is Biblical problem solving. The Bible provides clear principles for a Christian seeking to resolve differences with others. At HCA, we follow the Matthew 18 principle. It teaches us that there is a process for solving problems with others. Galatians 1:6 tells us that our motive in confrontation should always be the restoration of the relationship, if that is possible.

Parents, if you have a dispute or disagreement with a coach, we ask that you go to him/her with an attitude of appeal. Be respectful and understanding of his/ her response. Most situations are misunderstandings and can easily be resolved. If you are not satisfied with the resolution, please contact the athletic director to schedule a meeting with all parties involved.

If your son/daughter has a disagreement with the coach, please send him/her back to the coach to work it out. If it cannot be worked out, then you as the parent should set up a meeting with the coach to work it out. If the problem still can not be worked out, please bring the concern to the athletic director.

### **Admission Price**

Entrance to regular season home games are set by the GIAA and the region's athletic directors. Admission prices for the region and state tournaments/meets are set by the GIAA.

### **Medical and Safety Policy**

In order for a student-athlete to participate in athletics at HCA, they are required to have medical insurance and must supply information verifying such before participating in practice and/or competition.

Treatment at HCA is basic first aid designed to patch up minor injuries to help a student athlete remain in competition. If an athlete needs greater care than we are able to provide, emergency personnel will be contacted or the student athlete will be released into the care of his/her guardians. HCA coaches will be certified in CPR and First Aid as well as trained to use the AED and concussion protocols.

*If a trainer or doctor does remove an athlete from participation that athlete must submit a written note from that doctor to the athletic director. The student athlete will not be allowed to return to athletic participation until they have been fully cleared in writing by a physician.*

It is the responsibility of the student athlete to inform, in writing, any head coach of a team on which they participate of any medications they are taking and the potential risks and side effects from taking that medication. They are also required to alert the coach, in writing, of any allergies, illnesses, and/or injuries that may hinder them from participation. Students that are diabetic, asthmatic, dangerously allergic to certain items, or that require the use of other frequent medications must alert the head coach in a written letter along with permission for the student athlete to carry their own medication with them in case of an emergency. However some injuries are unable to be prevented. It is the responsibility of the athlete to be in the proper physical condition to begin a given season and be properly hydrated for practice each day. HCA will attempt to take every precaution to reduce the risk of injury or accidents and take the proper steps in case of an emergency.

For information on protocols for cardiac arrest, heat policy awareness, and concussion protocols, please visit <https://giaasports.org/forms/>. Once you have put in the URL, select “Sudden Cardiac Awareness Form,” “Heat Policy Awareness Form,” and/ or the “Concussion Awareness Form” for more details. Each student athlete and their parent/guardian must fill out these forms and turn them in with their annual physicals to participate. Please read these forms carefully.

Athletes are asked to report all injuries to their coaches immediately. Accident reports will be filled out and filed in the athletic director's office.

### **Insurance**

HCA is not responsible for any medical bills or other costs arising from injuries due to athletic participation. Costs for athletic injuries are the sole responsibility of the athlete and their parents or guardians.

### **Travel and Transportation Policy**

All athletes are to ride to and from all interscholastic practices and contests on the transportation provided by HCA. Exception #1: there may be times where the bus(es) are unavailable and volunteer parents may be asked to drive the team. Exception #2: any student may leave a game with his or her parents provided the parent talks to the coach personally. Due to liability, no student may leave with another player's parent unless previously set up with the coach or athletic director, by verbally or written permission from the parent. Students that would like to request permission to drive to a game, ride with their parents or someone else to a game, need to talk to their coach or athletic director. Please do not make plans and then ask permission at the last minute. Anybody other than players or team personnel may not ride with the team to any contests without

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

When weather forces the school to close early or be canceled, practices may still occur. However, a school closing usually dictates that the interscholastic contest will be canceled. After conferring with the HCA administration, the athletic director determines cancellations regarding a game. Students participating in sports should contact that school's office to confirm practice and sporting events have been canceled. On rainy days, decisions on outdoor practices and games will be made as soon as possible to ensure everyone involved can be notified. Unless there is an official announcement made or posted, students should assume that practice and/or games will be held.

### **Lightning Policy**

Once a contest has begun, it is up to the discretion of the contest officials to suspend/ and or restart a game due to lightning. If there is no contest official present (e.g. practices, scrimmages, or non-officiated contests such as cross country, golf, tennis, etc.) the head coach is responsible to determine if lightning is posing a threat. HCA will follow the guidelines set forth by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and the GIAA once thunder is heard or cloud-to-ground lightning has been seen. In this situation immediate cover should be taken. Once activities are suspended they will not resume until 30 minutes after the last lightning strike is seen or thunder is heard.

### **Pictures**

Athletic team and individual pictures will be taken by a photographer selected by the school. All team members should be present for picture day. Each player will receive information regarding ordering and payment beforehand. Exact dates and times will be communicated by the coaches and athletic director.

### **Athletic Advertising**

Advertisement signs can be placed indoors (gymnasium) or outdoors (fields or fence). If you are interested in purchasing a sign and advertising your business, please contact the athletic or finance office for more details.

### **Recruitment of Athletes by Colleges/Universities**

The HCA athletic department and registration office will play an active role in supporting our students with aspiration to play sports at the collegiate level. The athletic department, coaches, and registration office will assist families in several areas. They will inform families of the process of establishing contact with college coaches. Educate them on NCAA rules and regulations governing the recruiting process. Aide in the assessment of suitable matches from the abundance of college athletic programs. Serve as the primary contact point for college coaches interested in recruiting HCA athletes. The athletic department will work with students to open the lines of communication with college coaches. Any athlete can always speak with the athletic director about his/her interests, but the registration office is the lead resource for all

Students must: Communicate his/her interests to the coach of their sport. Work with the athletic director or coaches to contact potential school coaches. Work with the athletic director to make phone calls, send emails, or send pertinent information. Inform the registration office of his/ her interests so that they can assist in communicating with coaches and college admission officers. Attend team or individual development camps to be seen by college coaches who might attend.

### **Name, Image, & Likeness (NIL)**

HCA follows the guidelines of the GIAA in regard to NIL. GISA/GIAA do not prohibit student-athletes from engaging in selected commercial activities for financial gain. Such activities, now known as Name, Image &

Likeness (“NIL”), will not place a student-athlete’s eligibility or amateur status at risk should the student-athlete meet the requirements recognized in GIAA Rules & Regulations, Section 7: Student Eligibility – CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY. Moreover, student-athletes entering NIL deals must also fully comply with GIAA Rules & Regulations, Section 7: Student Eligibility – TRANSFERS.

Student-athletes are permitted to enter deals that allow the student-athlete to benefit financially from NIL provided the following requirements are satisfied: (1) Compensation from NIL is not contingent upon specific performance or achievement; (2) Compensation from NIL is not an incentive to enroll or remain enrolled at a specific school; and (3) Compensation from NIL is not at the direction of the school or any individual acting on behalf of or as an agent (apparent, implied, or otherwise) for the school.

Student-athletes engaging in NIL activities are prohibited from: (1) Using any “marks” associated with their school, and such “marks” include, but are not limited to, school logos, school name, school uniforms, school mascot, or any trademarked GISA/GIAA logos or acronyms; (2) Advertising school apparel or equipment, which includes school name, school uniforms, school logo, school mascot or any apparel displaying trademarked GISA/GIAA logos or acronyms; (3) Utilizing school facilities and/or properties; and (4) Engaging in actions which conflict with the student-athletes school’s policies concerning tobacco and/or alcohol products and/or controlled substances.

Student-athletes and their families and/or representatives (guardians) participating in NIL: (1) Must notify the Principal or Athletic Director of the student-athlete’s school within ten (10) calendar days of entering any NIL deal; and (2) To the extent possible, maintain a fully executed copy of any NIL deal.

\*\*\*\*\*Member Schools are required to notify a GISA Team Member in writing within seven (7) calendar days of any student-athlete and their family and/or representative (guardian) reporting an NIL deal.\*\*\*\*\*

The following are recommendations, not requirements, set forth by GISA/GIAA: (1) Student-athletes and their families and/or representatives (guardians) are encouraged to seek professional guidance regarding NIL and its impact on future athletic endeavors. (2) Student-athletes and their families and/or representatives (guardians) are encouraged to seek professional guidance concerning the potential impact of NIL on, including but not limited to, future financial aid and/or tax implications.

### **Headphones**

Headphones may be worn on the bus or in the locker room. All music should be Christ-honoring. Administration and coaches have the right to take away this privilege.

### **Personal Items/ Valuables**

Student athletes are strongly encouraged to lock up their personal items in their locker. HCA cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items.

### **Cell Phones**

Cell phones may be used before and after practices. Cell phones should be put in the students backpacks or lockers through the duration of practice. If an emergency arises and you need to get in touch with your athlete, please contact the coach as the school office will be closed after hours.

Students may also use their cell phones when traveling to games and during appropriate breaks. Students should not be checking their phones in the locker rooms or during games.

### **Tattoos and Body Piercing**

Visible tattoos are not permitted. Body piercings are not permitted during games.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

It is the policy of Highland Christian Academy athletic program to not discriminate against players or coaches on the basis of race, color, sex, or national/ethnic origins.

### **Cautionary Statement**

Athletic activities involve an inherent amount of risk. It is necessary that protocols are followed to reduce that risk, including, but not limited to: Proper conditioning and hydrating to be prepared for all practices and contests. Obtaining and properly wearing all necessary equipment, braces, and supportive undergarments for your respective sport and ensuring that it fits and functions properly. Players with visual impairments that require corrective eyewear must use shatterproof lenses or contact lenses. Removing all jewelry and metal hair fasteners. Players with medical conditions that may result in further injury up before all athletic participation; reporting any injuries or conditions that may result in further injury up before all athletic participation. Reporting any injuries or conditions that may result in further injury to your head coach. Not using any facilities or equipment without the supervision of a coach. Remaining in areas designated for student athletes. Knowing who to contact in case of an emergency. Keeping floors clear of debris. Keeping belongings in the locker. Refrain from horse play while in athletic facilities. Not wearing cleats inside buildings in lockers. Refrain from horse play while in athletic facilities. Not wearing cleats inside buildings as well as anything else deemed unsafe by the HCA administration.

Athletic Handbook

(Acknowledgement Page)

By signing below, you acknowledge that your family has received the latest version of the Highland Christian Athletic Handbook. You understand that you are responsible for knowing and complying with the policies and procedures contained herein (these may not be an exhaustive list of policies which govern student athletes).

You further acknowledge that Highland Christian Academy is a member of the Georgia Independent Athletic Association (GIAA) and must comply with rules and regulations of the GIAA. Student information, including academic and personal (such as birth dates, etc.) may be provided to the GIAA in order to participate in GIAA sanctioned games.

You also acknowledge that should you have any questions regarding this handbook, you may contact the school office at (229) 245-8111.

**\*\*\*Please note: YOUR SIGNATURE OF THE ATHLETIC HANDBOOK VERIFIES THAT THE STUDENT ATHLETE AND PARENTS ARE IN AGREEMENT WITH THE SUBMISSION OF STUDENT INFORMATION.**

Parent's Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Print Parent's Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Print Student's Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date