



Student Athlete Handbook

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* Please note this handbook is a dynamic document, with ongoing updates as needed.
Thank you for remaining aware of the most current procedures and policies for OCA.

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Introduction

Welcome to the Oakwood Christian Academy Athletic Program. The opportunity to work with your student and family is a blessing. We believe athletics is an important foundation for ministry, and we desire not only to build students physically, but to develop them spiritually. Your student is our main focus as he/she participates in school sports throughout the year. There is excitement for what God is doing through our athletic program to lead our community to Christ.

The athletic program is led by the Head of School and Administrator of the athletic department. High school teams compete in the Georgia Association of Private and Parochial Schools (GAPPS) and Georgia Christian Athletic Association (GCAA). Middle school and elementary teams compete in the Independent School Conference (ISC).

Research indicates that students who participate in extracurricular activities will have more success in the classroom. Also, these students will gain character traits that will enable them to be successful in life. Many life lessons are learned through athletics that will assist athletes in their character development.

Parental support and encouragement are needed from each parent. Parents are expected to be respectful to coaches, players, officials, and other spectators, thus being a good example for everyone.

We trust the following information will make your family's experience with Oakwood Christian Academy Athletic Program rich, rewarding, and promoting Godly character. We will partner with you and encourage your student to have a life pleasing unto God.

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OCA Sports

FALL SPORTS

Elementary Cross Country: co-ed	Grades 3-5
Middle School Cross Country: co-ed	Grades 6-8
High School Cross Country: co-ed	Grades 9-12
Elementary Soccer: co-ed	Grades 3-5
Middle School Soccer: co-ed	Grades 6-8
High School Soccer: co-ed	Grades 9-12
Middle School Girls Softball	Grades 6-8
High School Girls Volleyball	Grades 9-12
High School Bass Fishing: all year	Grades 9-12

WINTER SPORTS

Elementary Girls Basketball	Grades 4-5
Elementary Boys Basketball	Grades 4-5
Middle School Girls Basketball	Grades 6-8
Middle School Boys Basketball	Grades 6-8
High School Girls Basketball	Grades 9-12
High School Boys Basketball	Grades 9-12
Cheerleading	Grades 4-12

SPRING SPORTS

Middle School Golf: co-ed	Grades 6-8
High School Golf: co-ed	Grades 9-12
Middle School Baseball	Grades 6-8
High School Baseball	Grades 9-12
High School Girls Soccer	Grades 9-12
Elementary Girls Volleyball	Grades 3-5
Middle School Girls Volleyball	Grades 6-8
High School Softball	Grades 9-12

OCA will add sports as participation allows.

Purpose of OCA Athletics

Our purpose is to advance the school's mission. We want athletics to develop Christian Character in our student athletes. The athletic staff is dedicated to help mentor and encourage the student athletes in their endeavors - not only in the athletic area, but also in the classroom, community, at home and church. The ultimate goal is for them to attain Christian life skills.

Goals for OCA Athletic Department

The athletic department seeks to glorify God on and off the court, field or course.

1. To develop highly competitive programs and first-class facilities.
2. To develop a training system with the elementary and middle school programs that will prepare our students for varsity level competition.
3. To develop a training system beginning with elementary that will instruct our faculty, staff, parents, and students in the philosophy and expectations of our athletic department.
4. To use athletics to share Jesus Christ with those who do not know Him.

OCA Team Commitment Policy

1. Rules for any school-sponsored athletic event will be in conjunction with rules and policies in the OCA Student/Parent Handbook. We expect our student-athletes to be leaders and set good examples at all times, in every situation at school and off campus. The discipline codes will coincide with the discipline section of the OCA Student/Parent Handbook.
2. Student-athletes must maintain passing grades throughout the sports season. All student-athletes will be evaluated in the middle and end of each quarter.
3. Student athletes are expected to attend and be on time to every practice and competition. Any absence or tardiness for practice and/ or a competition should be communicated directly to their head coach or assistant coach. This teaches responsibility, commitment, and good sportsmanship towards their fellow teammates and coaches. Missing practices will also place a greater burden on those in attendance and alter the team's effectiveness during a game. **There may be scheduled practices on Wednesday. Church is a top priority for our student-athletes. Therefore, practice will end no later than 5:00 on Wednesday.** Wednesday practice may be missed without repercussion depending on the circumstance.

4. Respect toward officials, authority figures, facilities, property, and other teammates is expected at all times. These guidelines will be enforced by each coach as stated in their team rules. Any decisions for punishment will go through the Athletic Department.
5. Cursing and/or inappropriate language is absolutely prohibited. Punishment will consist of one week or a two-game suspension, as well as, placed on probation.
6. The athletic handbook must be read, and statement papers must be signed by all student-athletes and parents prior to participation in any sport. Student-athletes and parents must abide by the contents of the athletic handbook.
7. Uniforms are property of Oakwood Christian Academy. The student-athlete may not wear the uniform unless authorized by the coach. All uniforms must be returned immediately following the end of the season. If the uniform is not returned a fee will be charged to your FACTS account.
8. Athletes are scheduled to arrive at all games an hour prior to the start of the game, unless directed differently by the coach.
9. Off-season conditioning or summer camp may be offered. All student-athletes are expected to participate. The dates will be announced in advance for parents to plan accordingly.

Participation Eligibility

1. Any failing grade at the middle (progress report) or end of each quarter (report card) places the student-athlete under academic probation and a 2-week suspension from games, allowing the student to be monitored, as well as, improve grades. If a student receives 2 failing grades on a report card per quarter, the student is ineligible for the following quarter (spring quarter rolls over to the fall quarter of the next school year). If a student receives a failing grade on a progress report or report card, they will be required to have a weekly report completed for the remainder of the current sport (through the next grading period) in order to show an improvement in their class(es). This monitoring process will begin on Monday following the distribution of the grading report.
2. Any student-athlete participating in the Dual Enrollment program will be evaluated at the end of the first and third quarters for their academic progress. Any student-athlete who has a failing grade (OCA grading scale, not college grading scale) will be placed on a two-week academic probation. If the grade hasn't improved to 70 or above, after the two-week probation, the student-athlete will continue to be on academic probation until the grade has increased to 70 or above. If a student-athlete is failing multiple classes, they will be on academic probation until all grades are 70 or above. Semester

grades will be evaluated the same for Dual Enrollment classes as OCA classes when concerning eligibility for athletic participation.

3. Student-Athletes must be present at school for half of the day in order to participate in practices or games. Half of the day is 8 am - 11:30 am OR from 11:30 am until the end of the day.
4. Athletic contests are *no excuse* for late classroom work. Each student is expected to complete all homework and assignments regardless of whether the game is home or away. If the team is traveling away and has to leave school early, it is the student's responsibility to obtain all assignments for classes missed prior to leaving school.
5. Returning late from away games will not result in an excused absence the next school day. Students are expected to be in regular attendance the day following an athletic competition.
6. Sports involvement is affected by discipline referrals to administration. Students with two or more referrals to administration, during a given grading period, will be prohibited from participation in fine arts and sports competitions for a two-week period.
7. Parents must be supportive. If parents cause disunity, they risk possible suspension or termination of their child from the team.

Playing Time

1. Personal success is not based on the amount of playing time of student-athletes. Personal success is using their God given ability to contribute to the team's success.
2. Every eligible student has the opportunity to try out for a team. **However, everyone may not make the team.**
3. Athletes who make the team will be given every opportunity to demonstrate and improve their skills, and prove their abilities to the coaches, thus increasing their chances of playing time.
4. Parents must instruct and prepare their children for participation in a competitive athletic program at OCA. We are preparing students for the competition that will be encountered in the world after graduating from high school.
5. Student-athletes are expected to work hard, be committed, dedicated, self-disciplined, and determined on and off the field. We want our student-athletes to grow in their relationship with God, their athletic skill, and academic knowledge.
6. Our athletes must show leadership in all activities on and off campus.
7. Coaches will make every effort to allow each student-athlete the opportunity of

competing. However, the amount of playing time is never guaranteed and should never be expected. There will be times a student-athlete will not have any playing time. Coaches choose playing time based on ability and need at the moment.

8. If a student-athlete receives little to no playing time in a season, this does not mean the student-athlete should quit. Playing time is awarded differently every year. When an athlete puts in time and is dedicated, they will likely receive more playing time as they gain experience.

Transportation

It is the responsibility of elementary and middle school parents to provide transportation to and from athletic events. In the event the parent cannot, they must make arrangements for their child. The athletic department will not arrange rides for players. All high school athletes will be transported to events, unless otherwise designated. In order to ride in the van or personal vehicle with a coach, each student-athlete must complete a transportation permission form and give it to the coach.

Parental Involvement

Parents are an important part of success in our athletic program. Your support and assistance will be needed during the year. Parents may be asked to drive to games. We also ask for parents to volunteer in the concessions, ticket sales, and support fundraising activities. Your cooperation and support is a blessing to the program, as well as, an encouragement to the student-athletes. A parent who is not supportive of the team can have a negative effect on team unity.

Coach's Policies

Policies which include playing time, game and practice strategy, and play calling will be the discretion of the coach. Each coach will make decisions based on what is best for the team. Coaches and athletic directors have an open-door policy; however, coaches will not discuss playing time or athletes. Also, coaches will not have discussions with parents before, during or after any game.

Parent and Coach Relationship

When a student becomes involved in the OCA Athletic Program, parents have the right to know the expectations which will be placed on the student-athlete. This knowledge begins with clear communication from the coach. If a parent desires a conference with a coach or the athletic director, please call the school office (706-375-7247) to schedule an appointment. **Do not confront a coach before, during, or after a game or practice.** **Team practices will be closed to maintain team focus.**

Communication Parents Should Expect From Coaches

1. Injury of the student-athlete
2. Expectations of your student-athlete
3. Locations and times of practices and games
4. Team requirements: fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning, and camps
5. Discipline which may result in suspension from team.
6. The student's attitude, work ethic, and eligibility
7. Procedures for contacting coaches.

Communication Coaches Should Expect from Parents

1. Discussion of injuries
2. Discipline of the student-athlete
3. Notification of any schedule conflicts

Issues Not Appropriate to Discuss with Coaches

1. Amount of playing time
2. Team strategy
3. Other student-athletes

As your student-athlete becomes involved in the sports program at OCA, they will experience a sense of pride and accomplishment. Please encourage them to have a positive attitude and respect for the coach and team. There are situations which may require a conference between the coach, athletic directors, and parents. A conference is encouraged and welcomed. It is important for all parties to have a clear understanding of the positions. The results of these conferences should promote a resolution to the concerned issue.

Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with Coaches

1. Ways to help your student-athlete improve.
2. Concerns about your student-athlete's behavior

It is very difficult to accept your student-athlete not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all student-athletes involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain issues can be and should be discussed with the coach. Other issues must be left to the discretion of the coach.

Procedures to Discuss Concerns

1. Email the coach with your concern. Email addresses may be found on the school website/Athletics.
2. If the coach does not work at the school, contact the athletic director, and leave a message for the coach to contact you.
3. Please do not confront a coach before, during, or after a game or practice. At these times emotions run high and an issue will not be solved.
4. To schedule a meeting with the athletic director, you may email them or call the school office and leave a message.

Parents, please support and respect the athletic program and coaches. Support the athlete's achievements and encourage during struggles. Please refrain from criticizing the coach in front of your child or any other members of the team. By remaining positive, team unity will be encouraged.

Leaving a Team

A student-athlete who quits a team or is dismissed because of a violation of rules may not participate on any other team during that particular season. If anyone leaves the team before the final cuts are made, they may try out for another team after asking permission from the coach of each team.

Jewelry and Appearance

No jewelry shall be worn during any game or practice. All student-athletes must be neatly groomed. The coach is in charge of the team and their appearance. When student-athletes are traveling to an away game, they are expected to dress in team uniforms or school dress codes. Shirts should be tucked in and all extra clothing, books, etc. should be in a bag and carried on the shoulder. The student-athlete should exhibit respect for others, OCA, and themselves. They are not only representing OCA, but also Christ.

Medical Information

For the protection and safety of the student-athlete, a physical examination is required each year before involvement in any athletic activity. Any injury or illness which occurs during a practice or game should be reported to the coach for evaluation. If medical attention is needed, the parents will be notified immediately.

OCA provides secondary accident insurance for student-athletes. Parents are responsible for filing with their primary insurance company, for completing the school's secondary insurance claims, and for paying for any balances remaining after both insurances are filed.

Concussion Protocol

This protocol is to be used for any type of head injury.

1. Remove the student athlete from playing.

Look for signs and symptoms of a concussion if the student-athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head or body. **When in doubt, keep the athlete out of play.**

2. Ensure the student-athlete is evaluated by a healthcare professional experienced with concussions.

Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Healthcare professionals have a number of methods used to assess the severity of concussions. As a coach, recording the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the student-athlete after the injury:

- Cause of the injury and force of the hit or blow to the head or body.
- Any loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out) and if so, for how long.
- Any memory loss immediately following the injury.
- Any seizures immediately following the injury.
- Number of previous concussions (*if any*)

3. Inform the student-athlete's parents of the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion.

Make sure they know the student-athlete should be seen by a healthcare professional experienced with concussions.

4. Keep the student-athlete out of play until an experienced healthcare professional releases them.

A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)—can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in edema (brain swelling), permanent brain damage, and even death.

Oakwood Christian Academy Parent Contract

At OCA, we acknowledge that parents play a vital role in what we do at this school. Our goal for all parents and students involved in athletic programs is to understand the importance of representing Christ in everything we do. Athletics are a great opportunity to show our relationship with Christ. Also, we want anyone who is unsure of their faith to know Christ personally.

I understand the importance of the responsibility set before me and commit to conduct myself in accordance with the proceeding statements, as well as the following guidelines:

1. I will treat all coaches, officials, staff, student-athletes and other fans with respect at all times.
2. I will not make any commands or unnecessary comments to any official, student-athletes, or coach during a game or practice.
3. I will have my child on time for practices and games. I will inform the coach if my child cannot attend a game or practice.
4. I understand that coaches may decide to have closed practices (no spectators) and I will fully comply with those wishes.
5. I will NOT speak negatively of OCA, its athletic program or anyone involved.
6. I understand that any student discipline during school hours will affect athletic participation.
7. If I have a concern, I will not approach the coach before a game/practice or directly after a game/practice. I agree to follow the chain of command with a private appointment. The chain of command is first the coach, the athletic director and coach, and if needed, the school's administration.
8. I understand that just because my child is on a team it does NOT guarantee playing time.
9. I understand there are many areas that determine my child's playing time. I will support my child by teaching them to be patient and work hard for playing time. Just because they are not playing does not mean they never will.
10. I will do my best to support OCA athletics and offer my time when available. I will do my best to make OCA athletics as successful as possible. I will support my child by volunteering where my abilities allow.
11. I will always be a good supporter and cheerleader.
12. I understand that failure to comply with this agreement can affect my child's position on a team.

Parent Name (Print Please): _____

Parent Signature: _____

Student Name: _____

Date: _____