



Athletics Handbook

Revised 10-9-19

I. Introduction

Purpose of this manual

The purpose of this manual is to provide an easy reference for policies, procedures, and guidelines for the athletics coaches of Gospel Haven Academy (GHA).

This manual is not exhaustive, nor does it encourage a mindless uniformity. You are a professional, Christian coach whose gifts are unique. We expect you to use them in creative ways within these guidelines to disciple the student-athletes of GHA.

One of the primary goals of athletics at GHA is for students to demonstrate the ability to work with and contribute to a team and understand that discipline, sacrifice, and healthy relationships built on trust create effective teams.

II. Qualifications & Expectations Coaches

QUALIFICATIONS

- A faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of your life
- Demonstrated ability to coach athletes well at a the level for which you volunteered
- A demonstrated character, behavior, and lifestyle that honors Christ and serves as a role model to students. We expect the same character, responsibility, and trustworthiness of coaches that we do from classroom teachers. Anything less is a disservice to our students.

EXPECTATIONS

A. In faithful living you are expected to:

- Be committed to obeying Christ
- Have a regular and active devotional life,
- Practice the fruits of the Spirit
- Model Biblical principles in making choices
- Be humble in spirit but bold in Christ-like practice
- Be conscientious and responsible

B. In relating with students you are expected to:

- Establish a climate of love and care
- Define responsible Christian behavior for students, including guidelines and consequences for good and bad behavior in team activities, practices, and games

- Help students learn self-discipline through appropriate correcting, chastening, and counseling
- Conduct yourself as a Christian adult whose life—both in the school and in the community-- is worthy of emulation by your students

C. In Professional Growth you are expected to:

- Take responsibility for all tasks related to the team, parent communication, and to some extent, the broader school community.
- Work constructively with colleagues and administration by contributing ideas and listening to the ideas of others.
- Accept your share of responsibilities for the Christian education through the platform of athletics.

D. In community relations you are expected to:

- Communicate regularly with parents about their student's practices and games
- Celebrate and promote Christian education in the broader community
- Participate actively in the community, especially the church community

III. Relational Policies: To students, co-staff, and parents

3.1 Students

3.1.1 General Treatment

Coaching staff should use the following principles when relating to students

- A. Promote and maintain an atmosphere in which students can be disciples—ones who learn.
- B. Help students take personal responsibility for behavior.

3.1.2 Discipline

- A. Set clear expectations for student behavior at beginning of season—a few simple rules, and the consequences for breaking them.

- B. Show no favoritism; be as fair, firm, and consistent as you can be in both encouraging and correcting students.
- C. Except when public reprimand is clearly necessary, correct students in private. Similarly, do not argue in public the suitability or application of a rule.
- D. Communicate with parents quickly with student behavior problems.
- E. Refrain from striking a student in any way.
- F. Seek to model respect for authority.

3.1.3 Counseling

Give counsel according to the following guidelines:

- A. Offer to listen to your students as you can arrange it in private, but in the view of others.
- B. Hold personal revelations of students in confidence unless you think what they say will be harmful to themselves or others. In that case, inform them whom you plan to reveal the information to.
- C. Avoid communicating personal comments of your students to others, including colleagues.
- D. Whenever you suspect child abuse or neglect, you must follow the mandatory reporting procedures in Section 3.14. This is the law.
- E. Given the often-perverse sexual climate in the general culture, avoid situations others might construe as sexual offense. Meet students in the view of others, refrain from touching students inappropriately, and communicate with parents as often as possible while guarding confidences.

3.1.4. Mandatory Reporting of Known or Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect.

Policy Statement:

Staff members are required by law to report known or suspected child abuse, whether or not said abuse or neglect is suspected to have been committed at school or outside of school. Staff members must immediately report known or suspected abuse or neglect of the school's students to the principal. Additionally, staff members must immediately report the suspected abuse or neglect to either law enforcement or the local public children services agency, as it detailed below.

Definitions:

“Neglected child” includes any child:

- Who lacks adequate parental care;
- Who is abandoned;
- Whose parents neglect the child or refuse to provide proper subsistence, education, medical or surgical care or treatment to the child;
- Whose parents neglect the child or refuse to provide the special care made necessary by the child's mental condition;
- Whose parents have placed or attempted to place the child in custody of an institution or foster home without following the proper legal protocol;
- Who, because of the omission of the child's parents, suffers physical or mental injury that harms or threatens to harm the child's health or welfare;
- Who is subjected to out-of-home care child neglect.

“Abused Child” includes any child who:

- Is the victim of “sexual activity”, which is defined as:
 - Vaginal intercourse between a male and female; anal intercourse, fellatio, and cunnilingus between persons regardless of sex; and, without privilege to do so, the insertion, however slight, of any part of the body or any instrument, apparatus, or other object into the vaginal or anal opening of another. Penetration, however slight, is sufficient to complete vaginal or anal intercourse.
 - “Sexual activity” also includes any touching of an erogenous zone of another, including without limitation the thigh, genitals, buttock, pubic region, or, if the person is a female, a breast, for the purpose of sexually arousing or gratifying either person.
- Is endangered;
- Exhibits evidence of any physical or mental injury or death, inflicted other than by accidental means, or an injury or death which is at variance with

the history given of it. A child exhibiting evidence of corporal punishment or other physical disciplinary measure by a parent, guardian, or other person having custody or control of a child is not an abused child;

- Because of the acts of his parents, suffers physical or mental injury that harms or threatens to harm the child's health or welfare.
- Is subjected to out-of-home care child abuse.

Procedures to follow in making a report:

If a student tells you about abuse or neglect or if you suspect abuse or neglect:

- Write down what the student says. Write down as much of the student's actual words as possible so that you can share those words with the appropriate agency. Describe in writing any signs of abuse/neglect you observe.
- Keep in mind that you only need to have reasonable cause to believe that a student is being abused or neglected for you to make a report - you do not need proof. You must report suspected abuse even if the child does not tell you about it.
- It is not your responsibility to conduct an investigation, and you must not seek to remedy the situation yourself.
- Take every complaint or report seriously.
- You must report abuse or neglect even if someone tells you that it has already been reported. You may have additional information that was not previously reported to the child protective services agency.

Reporting procedures:

When to report:

- You must report immediately by telephone or in person.

Where to report:

- To the public children services agency or a law enforcement officer in the county in which the child resides or in which the abuse or neglect occurred.
 - In Holmes County, you may make the report to the Holmes County Department of Job and Family Services. Their address is 85 North Grant Street, Millersburg, Ohio 44691. Their phone number is (330) 674-1111.
 - You can also call the Holmes County Sheriff's Office at (330) 674-1936.

What to include in the report:

- The names and addresses of the child and the child’s parents or guardian (if known);
- The child’s age and the nature of the child’s injuries, abuse, or neglect that is known or suspected to have occurred, including any evidence of previous abuse, or neglect; and
- Any other information that might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injury, abuse, or neglect.

3.2 Faculty and Support Staff

3.2.1 Support

The following standards govern your relationship with your colleagues:

- A. Follow the Matthew 18 principle of going directly to the person whenever you have an objection or disagreement with his or her words or practices.
- B. Support in public, private, and in practice any decision arrived at by the administration or the school despite your personal objections.

3.3 Parents

3.3.1 Calling, emailing, or texting parents

GHA has established this policy to guide its staff and coaches’ telephone, email, and text conversations with parents, as well as informal face-to-face meetings.

- A. Make a call to parents if a student is frequently showing a disruptive attitude, refusing to obey, or showing uncommon emotional stress.
- B. Be truthful, direct, and clear in describing why the call or communication is being sent.
- C. Recommend a plan of action for solving the problem, but be ready to modify the plan based on the parent’s input.
- D. Make no comparisons of students—theirs or others—on the team.

- E. Ask questions of, listen to, and offer support to parents about their student, always conveying the fact that the parents are the child's primary caretakers and that you are their servant.
- F. Be quick to commend parents for their student's efforts or achievements.
- G. If the parent initiates a call, take the needed time to think about your response or recommendations. Ask parents if you may call them back after you've had adequate time to think, if necessary.
- H. In general, do not bring a serious issue to parents via an email or text without a prior phone call or face-to-face conference.

IV. Procedural Policies

4.1 Athletic Apparel

GHA expects its coaches to:

- A. Encourage support and hold athletes accountable for the athletic dress code (see excerpt from school handbook below).
- A. Boys athletic apparel
 - a. Athletic warm-up pants are to be worn to and from all games. Shorts are only permitted for the game and during practices.
 - b. Sleeveless shirts (no cutout shirts) are permitted during practice only.
 - c. For games, team uniforms are worn, with sleeved shirts.
 - B. Girls athletic apparel
 - a. Knee-length "skorts" are to be worn for all athletic activity, including practice.
 - b. Cut-out shirts and tank tops are not permitted at any time, including athletic practice sessions.
 - c. High school ladies are expected to wear their hair up and be veiled for all practices and games, as well as to and from games and tournaments.
 - d. Skirts or skorts must be worn to and from all games and tournaments.
- B. Dress as adult role model for children and young people do not ignore the effects of your clothing on students. Coaches should aim to be dressed more professionally than athletes. Because we believe it is unreasonable to expect more of our students than we do our coaches, we expect the following athletic dress code from our coaches:

Ladies: At the *minimum*, knee-length skirts for games, and t-shirt and skorts for practice. Hair should be veiled in any style deemed practical and appropriate.

Men: At the *minimum*, a sleeved t-shirt or polo for games, long pants recommended. If shorts are desired during games for outdoor sports in warm weather, khaki or dress shorts should be worn.

4.2 Game Nights

On game nights, coaches are responsible to communicate with athletes for meeting/departure time. If additional transportation is needed besides the church van, please contact the athletic committee to assist you.

Upon return to school, it is the coach's responsibility to remain at school until all students have been picked up by parents, or are under the care of another adult who is on the property. If for any reason you have other obligations and need to leave, you should make prior arrangements with a parent to provide supervision. **Under no circumstances should students be left unsupervised at the school. Other adults who may happen to be on the premises are not to be assumed as taking responsibility.**

Social Policies

4.3 Human Dignity

GHA intends to provide its staff members and students with a safe Spirit-filled environment, one that is free from offensive kinds of behavior. Conduct—whether intentional or unintentional—that subjects another person to unwanted attention, comments, or actions because of race, national origin, age, sex, physical characteristics, or disability is not permitted. Instead, we expect all persons to treat each other with respect because they are created to reflect God Himself.

- A. We do not condone or allow harassment or bullying of others by teachers, administrators, support staff, students, or other persons both at school or school events.
- B. Any person who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment should report it immediately to an appropriate superior. Students may report to a teacher, administrator, or counselor. Teachers should report an offense to their administrator, or if it is the administrator he or she is reporting, to the

chairperson of the board of trustees. Each report will be given serious consideration and investigated appropriately.

- C. Reports of harassment and subsequent investigations will be handled discreetly to avoid embarrassment of the person making the report or a person who may be unjustly accused.
- D. Any person who is determined to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action including possibility of employment termination.
- E. Sexual harassment includes:
 - a. Making unwelcomed sexual advances
 - b. Engaging in improper physical contact
 - c. Making improper sexual comments
 - d. Writing a note to someone else, either electronically or by hand, with content that may be construed as sexual.
 - e. Using words (written or spoken), pictures, objects, gestures, or actions relating to sexual activity to create a sexually intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning or working environment.
- F. Any other form of ridicule of others based on race, physical characteristics, ability, family background, or similar feature is harassment. Persons engaging in this misbehavior will be disciplined
- G. All students and school employees are expected to conduct themselves with respect for the dignity of others.

4.4 Guidelines for Coach-Athlete Interaction

GHA expects its coaching staff to caringly assist students, but always appropriately. In accordance with the “Human Dignity Policy” the following guidelines help define what is appropriate behavior for all staff members coming in contact with students. Although every staff member’s contact with students is within a specific context, the following acts are judged by GHA as being inappropriate, regardless of whether or not they occur within school hours:

- A. Using vulgar, profane, belittling, snide, or intimidating language to students or in their hearing;

- B. Making sexual innuendo to students or dressing in ways that might readily be construed as sexually provocative to students;
- C. Meeting a student of the opposite gender at a location in school or outside of school (restaurant, home, etc.) that is not easily observed by another adult;
- D. Touching a student's body in a place or in a lingering manner that could readily be interpreted as a sexual advance by the student or others who may be observing.
- E. Grabbing, pushing, slapping, poking, or physically touching a student in a manner that could be readily construed as violent or motivated by anger.
- F. Being in a car alone with a student of the opposite gender without the expressed consent of the student's parent immediately prior.
- G. Using controlled substances (alcohol, tobacco, or drugs illegal for underage students) or speaking favorably to a student about the use of these substances.
- H. Encouraging/teasing students to pursue special relational interest with other students.
- I. Any behavior toward a student that does not respect their bearing as God's image.

