

Athletic Handbook



Kevin Williams, Principal
Austin Betts, Athletic Director

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Table of Contents

1. Program Offerings and Schedule.....	p. 2
2. Athletic Philosophy and Goals.....	p. 3
3. Participation and Team Selection.....	p. 3
Academic Eligibility	p. 3
Attendance	p. 4
4. Parental Roles.....	p. 5
5. Athletic Physicals and Emergency Contact Forms.....	p. 6
6. Athletic Uniforms and Practice Clothes.....	p. 6
7. Guidelines for Conduct.....	p.6-7
8. League Overview.....	p. 7
9. Transportation.....	p. 7

Introduction

Grace Chapel Lutheran School is committed to nurturing the whole child—academically, spiritually, socially, and physically. Our students receive a strong foundation in both education and faith, while also engaging in meaningful social interaction and physical activity. Through our athletic program, students are encouraged to participate in sports and physical education at levels that align with their safety, skill, and development. We aim to provide every child with the opportunity for a **successful, enriching, and Christ-centered athletic experience**.

Athletic Program Mission Statement

The mission of Grace Chapel Lutheran School's athletic program is to glorify God by promoting physical health, teamwork, and Christ-like character through sports. We strive to provide a safe, inclusive environment where students of all skill levels can grow in confidence, discipline, and sportsmanship. Through participation, our athletes learn to honor God with their abilities, respect others, and represent Grace Chapel with integrity both on and off the field.

Program Offerings

Grace Chapel is a member of the Saint Louis Lutheran Athletic League, as well as Lutheran Sports Association of Missouri (LSAM). The following chart outlines the athletic offerings by Grace Chapel

Season	Sport	Grade Level	Team Name
Fall (End of August – October)	Soccer	5 th – 8 th	Soccer (boys/girls)
	Cross Country	K – 8 th	Cross Country (boys/girls)
	Volleyball	5 th -6 th	B Volleyball (girls)
		7 th – 8 th	A Volleyball (girls)
Winter A (November – January)	Basketball	Girls 7 th – 8 th	A Girls Basketball
		Boys 7 th – 8 th	A Boys Basketball
Winter B (January – mid-March)	Basketball	Girls 5 th – 6 th	B Girls Basketball
		Boys 5 th – 8 th	B Boys Basketball
Winter – Spring (November – February)	Scholar Bowl	6 th – 8 th	Scholar Bowl (boys/girls)
Spring (March - May)	Track	5 th – 8 th	Track (boys/girls)
	Volleyball	6 th – 8 th	A Volleyball (Boys)

Schedule

A calendar with practices and games will be distributed to athletes at the beginning of each season. Schedules will also be available on our school website (www.gracechapelstl.org). If there is a change to the schedule, a FACTS message will be sent to the parents of the team members indicating the change.

Athletic Philosophy & Goals

Philosophy

The athletic program at Grace Chapel refers to competitive sports between schools, as an after school extra-curricular event. Having school teams provides the student body with events beyond academics to develop school spirit.

Our athletic program is an extension of the overall school ministry at Grace Chapel. The aim of Grace Chapel athletics is to facilitate the goals of Grace Chapel Lutheran School through sports activities.

One of the major goals of the athletic program is to help students learn to apply Christian principles to their lives. Dealing with success, as well as frustrations and failure, understanding teamwork, and maintaining a proper Christian attitude in sports and in daily life is our goal.

The athletic program strives to develop technically correct physical skills, physical conditioning, commitment to team concepts, self-discipline, priority setting, the encouragement of others, perseverance, and the earning of playing time and a position on the team.

Athletic Program Goals

- 1) To teach our athletes to be thankful for their God given talents.
- 2) That all of life is worship, including athletics.
- 3) To practice Christian love among students, parents, and coaches.
- 4) To provide Christian discipline when a problem arises.
- 5) To develop character traits such as responsibility, leadership, sportsmanship, teamwork, and self-control.
- 6) To stimulate school spirit and pride without compromising respect toward others.
- 7) To develop fundamental skills and knowledge of the rules of respective sports.
- 8) To prepare our athletes for high school level athletics.
- 9) To provide a positive athletic experience for each athlete and to encourage a lifelong enjoyment of sport and recreational activities.

Participation and Team Selection

The athletic program is designed for students who demonstrate an emotional and mental readiness for

competition, and who possess a satisfactory level of physical and academic competence.

Academic Eligibility

Participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege, not a right. Students who are getting an “F” in any subject will not be allowed to try out or participate in a sport. Once a student is on a team, the student athlete’s grades will be checked every Friday morning. Students with an “F” in a subject will be ineligible for one week (see procedures below).

“Friday Grade Check” / Ineligible Athlete Procedures -

- The athletic director will do a “Friday Grade Check” each Friday morning starting with the 3rd Friday of the Quarter. If there is no school on Friday, the grade check will be done Thursday morning to determine the following weekend and week’s eligibility.
- If a student has an “F” in any subject at that time, they will be ineligible for one week until the next Friday Grade Check.
- A player who is ineligible is not to attend or dress for any practices, games, or tournaments during the week of ineligibility. The week of ineligibility includes Friday after school, weekend, and after school practices or games Monday - Thursday of the following week.
- The following Friday morning grade check will determine if the athlete is eligible again.
- Athletes who are ineligible for a week will be given a note on the Friday they are determined to be ineligible indicating the duration of the suspension. The note will be signed by the athlete, parent, teacher, and athletic director and kept on file with the athletic director.

If a student repeatedly having academic concerns (i.e., week(s) of ineligibility, low grades, missing work), parents and the student/athlete will be required to sign an “Academic Contract” along with his/her teacher(s), principal, and the athletic director outlining requirements and expectations related to their academic progress. If a student fails to meet the academic expectations outlined in the “Academic Contract”, he/she will be removed from the team.

Mid Quarter and End of Quarter Eligibility

A player must have at least a C- for their average of the core classes (English, Literature, Math, Religion, Science, Social Studies) and no F's in ANY class, at each mid quarter and End of Quarter grade report.

A student who is deemed ineligible through a weekly grade check will be ineligible for one week. A student who is deemed ineligible due to low average or an F at mid quarter or end of the quarter will be ineligible for the following six weeks, until the next end of mid quarter or end of quarter, whichever comes first.

Tryouts and Team Selection

Numbers of athletes to place on any team is an ever-present concern of coaches and parents alike. This decision takes into consideration manageable numbers for supervision and instruction, and the ability to provide quality practice and game playing time. Some sports such as soccer, basketball, and volleyball lend themselves to a limited number of players.

To arrive at manageable numbers for athletic teams, tryouts may be conducted. Team selections are made by the head coach, assistant coaches, and athletic department. Team selections are based on such criteria as emotional and mental readiness for competition, physical competence and skills, experience, attitude, coachability, cooperation, conditioning, attendance, and priority-setting. Whenever possible Grace Chapel athletics will not cut students who wish to participate on a team. In those cases where cuts are necessary, students will be informed ahead of tryouts that cuts will take place, and also wherever possible, specific, on court/field criterion for cuts will be given ahead of time.

Playing Time

Grace Chapel is involved in a very competitive athletic conference. Our A teams are NOT recreational teams guaranteeing equal play time. (B basketball is league-mandated to give as much equal time as possible. B volleyball does not have such a mandate, but strives to do so as much as possible.) At the A level, playing time, which involves both games and valuable practices, is left to the discretion of the coaches and is determined by a variety of factors including attitude, work ethic, skill level, practice/game attendance, and contest situation. It is Grace Chapel's goal to involve all team members while remaining competitive.

School and Athletic Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is important for success in school and a requirement of the state. It is the student's responsibility to make up all missed assignments and tests within a reasonable period of time.

A student who is unable to participate in physical education may not participate in any after school athletic function.

In order to participate in after school or evening activities, students must be in school **for at least one-half of the school day, morning or afternoon.** Exceptions are when a student misses school for either a family bereavement absence, or when an 8th grader has a "shadow day" at a high school which they are considering attending. Other exceptions **may** be deemed acceptable only at the discretion of the principal and athletic director who will meet to discuss the specific situation.

Practice and Game Attendance Policy

When an athlete makes a commitment to a team, he/she commits to attending all practices and games. Please make arrangements so that your son or daughter does not miss any practices, games, or tournaments. Absences for illness and funerals are considered excused. It is especially expected that when a student participates in middle school athletics, that obligation will take precedence over club, traveling or other teams a student may participate in by choice. **Absences such as forgetting practice, not having practice/game apparel, detentions/suspensions, or not informing the coach ahead of time about missing a practice will be considered unexcused and will likely drastically alter playing time.**

If your child must miss an event due to any reason besides illness or emergency, please inform the coach **ahead of time** in person, by note, phone call, email or FACTS message. If an athlete misses school because of illness, no written notification is necessary.

If a player has an unexcused absence, the following consequences will apply -

- ☐ Unexcused absence from practice – player sits out 1st half of next game or 1st game of next match
- ☐ Unexcused absence from game/match – player sits out next game/match
- ☐ Unexcused absence from tournament game – player sits out next game/match of tournament (if possible) or next regular season game/match.

The coach and athletic director will discuss each

instance on an individual basis and determine a course of action if necessary.

Again, if an athlete misses school because of illness or bereavement, no written notice is necessary.

Parental Role

Our athletic program is not possible without the support and help of the parents. Assistance is required in every area: driving to games, operating concession stands, readying fields and facilities, clean-up, coaching, supporting the individual athlete, attending sport activities, cheering positively for our teams, and reinforcing the responsibilities of the student in Christian behavior and understanding. Some of these responsibilities include:

- 1) Teach by example-a Christian attitude towards all. The school can only support and encourage the basics, as taught in the home.
- 2) Assist the student to establish proper priorities with respect to church, family, peers, academics, and play.
- 3) Encourage and participate in the development of the student athlete's abilities.
- 4) Support the student's commitment to teams and programs.
- 5) Develop within each athlete foresight, which enables him/her to accept responsibility for both individual and group actions.
- 6) Make a commitment to help the athletes by attending sporting events, driving, working concession stands, assisting in clean-up, and encouraging coaches.
- 7) Instill in the athlete good health habits toward food, sleep, and exercise. Discourage the use of cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs.
- 8) Enthusiastically support teams at athletic events without being over-zealous or critical of coaches and officials.

In general, the parent must exemplify everything that he/she wants the student athlete to be, and must participate in both home and school activities, if the student is to be successful.

In order that we may foster a God-pleasing spirit of cooperation and willingness to work together, all involved must realize that all people are sinners, full of many imperfections and shortcomings. Coaches will endeavor to train, guide, to lead, and to

discipline in a Christian manner.

At Grace Chapel we believe that all conflicts, disagreements, and misunderstandings can be dealt with in a Christian manner by following the words of Matthew 18:15, "If your brother sins against you, show him his faults, just between the two of you." The athletic program follows this model Christ gave us when concerns occur.

Follow the following "due process" procedure to handle concerns that arise:

First, wait 24 hours and allow strong emotions to be calmed.

Second, talk to the individual involved face to face at an appropriate time.

Third, follow up your meeting, and if you are not satisfied, meet one more time. At this meeting, have a brief written statement of the problem and a way to resolve it.

If the problem still exists, set up an appointment with the athletic director to discuss the issue. If the problem is still not resolved, set up an appointment with the athletic director and principal where all parties can discuss the issue.

Athletic Physicals and Emergency Contact Forms

Athletic Physicals

All parents are required to submit to the school office a Sports Physical form with doctor's signature, indicating that the athlete has undergone a recent physical examination indicating special health concerns. The Sports Physical must be done **after June 1st** to be current for the upcoming school year. This form also requests parent signature, authorizing emergency medical attention. A current Sports Physical must be on file in order for athletes to try out for any sport or participate in any practice or game.

Emergency Contact Forms

Parents will also need to complete an Emergency Contact form with phone numbers and contact information for your child for the after school time period. These forms must be on file in order for athletes to try out for any sport.

Failure to supply these forms will prevent the athlete from participating in tryouts, practicing with the team, or competing in athletic competition.

Athletic Uniforms & Practice Clothes

Athletic Uniforms

Team uniforms are issued to and become the responsibility of each team member, in terms of laundering, care, and upkeep. Game uniforms are only to be worn for games. Do not wear them for practices or for other purposes, including school PE classes. All team uniforms are to be returned by the dates indicated at the end of each sport season or face consequences such as detentions, fines, etc. Please return your uniform washed and in a bag with your name clearly marked on the bag.

If there is any damage above and beyond normal wear and tear, athletes will be assessed a fee to replace the damaged uniform(s).

As a general rule, always wash your uniform in cold water and hang dry (or very cool dry!!).

Practice Clothes

All athletes are required to wear proper fitting, sport appropriate clothing for all practices. Quality socks and footwear are a must for all sports. Do not wear game uniforms for practices.

Coaches may require PE uniforms to be worn for practices.

Guidelines for Conduct of Student/Athletes, Coaches, and Fans

As a Lutheran school, we desire to teach and encourage Christian conduct and sportsmanship among our students/athletes, coaches, and fans. To help us achieve that goal, we have developed the following guidelines to help emphasize what we feel to be proper conduct for our athletes, coaches, and fans.

THE STUDENT ATHLETE:

1. accepts referee's decisions in a proper manner; does not argue or make non-verbal gestures which indicate disagreement with officials, opponents, or fans.
2. treats the opponent as a guest and a friend-as he wishes to be treated; appreciates his opponent's good play, and encourages his opponent when he makes a mistake.
3. does not use profanity or vulgarity at any time.

4. realizes that he is representing his Lord- as well as his church, school, and team- and reflects this awareness in his conduct.
5. win or lose, thanks his Lord for allowing him to take part in the contest and keeping him safe.

THE COACH:

1. treats each player, opposing coach, parent, and administrator with respect and dignity.
2. uses the game as an avenue to minister to children, parents, and fans.
3. knows he is an ambassador for Christ, and as such, conducts himself in a proper manner when dealing with athletes, parents, and fans.
4. sets a good example for players and spectators.
5. maintains self-control at all times. The desire to win must not overcome rational behavior.
6. helps players appreciate an opponent's good performance and encourage opponents who make mistakes.
7. expects good sportsmanship from his athletes.
8. removes players using profanity from the game.
9. shows respect to his opponents; doesn't run up scores or embarrass his opponents in any way.

THE FAN:

1. attends the game to encourage and support the athletes.
2. shows respect for the judgment of the officials; does not question their calls.
3. recognizes and appreciates outstanding plays by either team.
4. doesn't use profane or obscene language.
5. does not verbally assault others or in any other way become generally obnoxious.
6. is a positive example for setting the tone for those around him so that everyone may enjoy the game.
7. shows respect for those who are hosting his school; respects the rules and expectations of his host. (EXAMPLE: does not take food or drink into the gym when it is clearly prohibited)

We ask that these guidelines be shared with athletes, coaches, and fans so that we more closely achieve the purpose of our competitions.

League Overview

Grace Chapel participates in the Saint Louis Lutheran Athletic League (SLLAL), as well as the Lutheran Sports Association of Missouri (LSAM) at the state level. The SLLAL is divided into different divisions, depending on the sport. At the beginning of each academic year, a listing of the league divisions for each sport will be printed and available at the school office, as well as listed online on the school website.

Transportation

It is the parents' responsibility to provide or coordinate rides for away games and tournaments. Coaches are happy to help with this when possible, but arrangements must be made **before** game day, except in emergency situations.