



**High School & Middle School
ATHLETIC POLICY HANDBOOK**

Creating Winners...In the Classroom, In Competition, In Christianity

Revised July 2022

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Athletic Statement

The Athletic Policy Handbook is designed to inform athletes and their parents of the rules, regulations and information that will help develop the complete student athlete.

Athletic Philosophy/Mission

The goal of the Athletic Department is to provide the best opportunities of student athletes to excel in teamwork, sportsmanship, self-discipline and Christian character.

Athlete – Defined

The Rockford Christian Schools Athlete is defined as and includes all young men and women who represent a team that engages in interscholastic competition and further includes student managers, trainers and statisticians.

Athletic Program Profile

Rockford Christian Schools offers a variety of sports for High School and Middle School students.

Boys' Sports

Fall: Cross Country (6-12), Football (6-12), Golf (9-12), and Soccer (6-12)

Winter: Basketball (6-12), Bowling (6-12), HS Swim/Dive (9-12), and MS Swim (6-8)

Spring: Baseball (9-12), Track & Field (6-12) (Tennis 9-12), and Bass Fishing (9-12)

Girls' Sports

Fall: Cheerleading (6-12), Cross Country (6-12), Dance (9-12), Soccer (6-8), HS Swim (9-12), and Volleyball (6-12)

Winter: Basketball (7-12), Bowling (6-12), Cheerleading (6-12), Dance (9-12), and MS Swim (6-8)

Spring: Softball (9-12), Soccer (9-12), Track & Field (6-12), and Bass Fishing (9-12)

Conference & Memberships

Rockford Christian High School is a member of the Illinois High School Association (IHSA), and Big Northern Conference (BNC). Within the BNC, Rockford Christian High School competes in Boys/Girls Cross Country, Boys/Girls Golf, Boys/Girls Soccer, Boys/Girls Basketball, Baseball, Softball, Boys/Girls Track & Field and Volleyball. All other sports participate outside of conference play.

The grades 6-8 football team does not compete in a conference. The remaining 6/7/8 sports (with the exception of Bowling and Swimming) compete in the Northern Conference, the IESA (Illinois Elementary School Association), and in many ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International) sanctioned tournaments. Middle School Bowling and Swimming compete with other areas public and private schools.

Note: Grade 6 Boys/Girls Basketball programs are under the direction of the Elementary Athletic Director. Grade 6 basketball teams participate in the Art Sadtler Basketball League and possibly Rockford Area Boys and Girls Club Leagues. Practices are scheduled at our Hemlock Campus gym or other off campus facilities.

Athletic and Academic Eligibility Requirements

Rockford Christian Schools adheres to the athletic and academic policies and bylaws of the Illinois High School Association (IHSA), Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA), and Big Northern Conference (BNC). All student athletes choosing to participate in Rockford Christian School interscholastic activities are required to adhere to all Rockford Christian Schools, IHSA/IESA and BNC rules and regulations. IHSA/IESA policies and bylaws are available online at www.ihsa.org and www.iesa.org

Athletic Eligibility

Any athlete who has not filled out and returned the required paperwork or who does not have a current on file with the Rockford Christian Athletic Department will be withheld from all athletic activities until all forms are submitted.

- **IHSA Sports Physical**

(Required for all HS & MS grade levels)

All student athletes must have a current sports physical (signed and dated by a Licensed Physician/Licensed Physician's Assistant or Advanced Nurse Practitioner) on file in the Athletic Office before they will be allowed to participate in the first scheduled practice, no exceptions. Physicals are good for one calendar year. Athletes entering grades 6 and 9 may submit their State Of Illinois required school physical. The form is available in the athletic department office or online to download from the Rockford Christian Schools Athletic Website, athletics.rockfordchristian.org.

- **IHSA & IESA Concussion Information / Acknowledgement Form**

(Required for all HS & MS grade levels)

Form must be on file in the Athletic Office in order to begin participation in the first practice. The Concussion Information and Acknowledgement Form covers the signs and symptoms of a concussion, as well as acknowledgement of understanding. The form is available in the athletic department office or online to download from the Rockford Christian Schools Athletic Website, athletics.rockfordchristian.org

- **RCS Athletic Emergency / Acknowledgement Form**

(Required for all HS & MS grade levels)

Form must be on file in the Athletic Office in order to begin participation in the first practice. The athletic emergency form covers emergency information and acknowledgement of athletic handbook understanding.

The form is available in the athletic department office or online to download from the Rockford Christian Schools Athletic Website, athletics.rockfordchristian.org.

- **IHSA Sports Medicine Consent / Acknowledgement Form**

(Required for grades 9-12)

Form must be on file in the Athletic Office in order to begin participation in the first practice. The athletic emergency form covers the acknowledgement and understanding of concussion management. The Performance Enhancing Substance Policy Form is available in the athletic department office or online to download from the Rockford Christian Schools Athletic Website, athletics.rockfordchristian.org

- **Athletic Participation Fees**

All athletes are required to pay a per sport participation fee. This fee does not cover the total cost but helps defray the expense of athletics. Sports fees are due on designated days for your child's prospective sport. If your family is financially unable to pay the fee, please have them talk to the Athletic Director to set up a payment plan. If participation dues are not paid on the respective dates that are agreed upon for the payment plan then athletes will no longer be permitted to practice or play in their prospective sport.

ATHLETIC FEE CHART

HIGH SCHOOL FALL SPORT	PARTICIPATION FEE	FACILITY FEE
Cheerleading - Football	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Cross Country - Boys	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Cross Country - Girls	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Dance	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Golf – Boy/Girls	\$160.00	Rockford Park District Junior Sports Pass
Football	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Swimming - Girls	\$160.00	Pool Rental - \$100.00
Volleyball	\$160.00	Not Applicable
MIDDLE SCHOOL FALL SPORT	PARTICIPATION FEE	FACILITY FEE
Cheerleading – 6/7/8	\$85.00	Not Applicable
Cross Country - Co-Ed	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Flag Football - 6/7/8	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Soccer - Co-Ed	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Volleyball - 7/8	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Volleyball - 6	\$ 85.00	Not Applicable
HIGH SCHOOL WINTER SPORT	PARTICIPATION FEE	FACILITY FEE
Basketball - Boys	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Basketball - Girls	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Bowling - Boys	\$160.00	NIBC- \$120.00 approximately
Bowling - Girls	\$160.00	NIBC- \$120.00 approximately
Cheerleading - Basketball	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Dance	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Swimming - Boys	\$160.00	Pool Rental - \$100.00
Indoor Track - Boys	\$30.00	Not Applicable
Indoor Track - Girls	\$30.00	Not Applicable
MIDDLE SCHOOL WINTER SPORT	PARTICIPATION FEE	FACILITY FEE
Basketball - Boys – 6/7/8	\$160.00 (6 th \$85.00)	Not Applicable
Basketball - Girls - 7/8	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Basketball - Boys - 6	\$100.00 – Art Sadtler League Fee	Not Applicable
Basketball - Girls - 6	\$100.00 – Art Sadtler League Fee	Not Applicable
Bowling - Co-Ed	Not Applicable	NIBC- \$80.00 - approximately
Cheerleading - 7/8	\$85.00	Not Applicable
Dance - 7/8	\$85.00	Not Applicable
Swimming - Co-Ed	\$160.00	Pool Rental - \$50.00
HIGH SCHOOL SPRING SPORT	PARTICIPATION FEE	FACILITY FEE
Baseball	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Bass Fishing - Co-Ed	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Soccer - Girls	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Softball	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Tennis - Boys	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Track & Field - Boys	\$160.00	Not Applicable
Track & Field - Girls	\$160.00	Not Applicable
MIDDLE SCHOOL SPRING SPORT	PARTICIPATION FEE	FACILITY FEE
Track & Field - Co-Ed	\$160.00	Not Applicable

** FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY AND PAYMENT OF ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION FEES WILL CAUSE YOUR CHILD TO BECOME INELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS.*

Parent Informational Meetings

It is **MANDATORY** for at least one parent to attend the Parent Informational Meeting(s) for any sport(s) your student(s) choose to participate in. These meetings will be held every fall, winter and spring for HS and MS sports. Dates/Times/Locations for these meetings are posted on the Rockford Christian Schools Website and Superintendent's Newsletter.

Home School Students Grades 9-12

IHSA By-law 3.011 includes provisions, which permit interscholastic participation by home schooled students at their local IHSA member school, in grades 9-12 may participate in athletics if he/she is enrolled in a minimum of 1 accredited class under specified conditions. By-law 3.011 states:

A student must attend a member school and may only represent in interscholastic competition the member school the student attends. For purposes of this by-law, the term "attend" shall mean that the student is enrolled at the member school, and is taking at, or under arrangements approved by the member school, a minimum of twenty five (25) credit hours of work for which credit toward high school graduation will be granted by the member school upon the student's completing and passing the courses. The school, which enrolls the student shall be exclusively responsible to verify the student's compliance with all of the eligibility requirements of all IHSA by-laws.

Under the provisions of this by-law, any student, including one who is home schooled, must meet five specific requirements to be eligible for interscholastic participation:

1. The student must be enrolled at the member high school;
2. The student must be taking and passing a minimum of twenty five (25) credit hours of work (the equivalent of five full credit courses) at the member school or in a program approved by the member school on a weekly and semester basis
3. The student must be granted credit toward graduation by the member school for the work taken either at the member school or in a program it approved.
4. The student must be in compliance with all eligibility requirements of all IHSA By-laws. (Residence, Transfer, Scholastic Standing, etc.)
5. The student must pay applicable tuition and fees at the member high school.

Home School Students Grades 6-8

Home school students in grades 6-8 are also required to take 1 accredited academic class for the entire semester(s) in which the student will participate. Rockford Christian Schools policy dictates that the student must also pay the appropriate registration/class and sport(s)fees.

School Attendance

- Students must be in attendance at least four class periods in order to participate in a practice or contest scheduled for that day.
- If a student is absent for part or all of the day and is granted a non-illness related excused absence (funeral, dental appointment) student may participate in the practice/game with the permission of the Athletic Director.
- Any unexcused absence from school, regardless if it is only for a partial day, will cause the student to be unable to participate in the practice/game.
- Athletes are expected to be in school for the entire day following a sporting contest. Athletes who are absent (unexcused) will be ineligible for the next contest.
- Any student who serves an in-house suspension (ISS), or an out of house suspension (OSS) will be ineligible to participate in any practice or contest on the day of suspension. Moreover, an athlete who is disciplined by the principal for isolated or repeated acts of misbehavior, is subject to immediate ineligibility, the duration of which to be determined by the principal

Attendance at Practice and Games

The student athlete has made a commitment to both school and team. Team members are expected to attend all practices and contests. The coach is responsible for setting the practice schedule, be aware that some practices may be scheduled during school breaks. Only the coach can excuse the athlete from practice. It is possible that emergency situations may arise that may cause the student to miss a practice or game.

Excused absences are

- Illness
- Death in the family
- Family Wedding
- Necessary tutoring with an Rockford Christian Schools Faculty member – must have note
- Ineligibility circumstances

Unexcused absences are

- Family vacations
- Weekend retreats
- Other after school extra-curricular activities
- Discipline related detention or suspension
- Non Rockford Christian Schools tutorial help that can be scheduled at other times

It is the responsibility of the athlete to notify the coach (**not the school or athletic office**) several days in advance if they know they are going to miss practice or contest. That does not mean that the athlete is automatically excused from the practice or contest. **The coach of the sport will use his/her discretion to determine if the absence is excused or unexcused. Consequences resulting from unexcused absence(s) will be determined by the coach of that team.**

Academic Eligibility

Grades will be evaluated on Friday morning at 8:00am. Academic eligibility starts on the 3rd week of each quarter.

Students must be passing 25 credit hours per week (equivalent of five full credit credit courses) in classes that count towards school graduation. Once the student is declared ineligible, even though the grade may improve during that week, the ineligibility period must be completed. In addition, students that are not passing 25 credit hours per week in classes that count towards school graduation will immediately be declared ineligible for the following week. Students must pass 25 credit hours towards graduation at the completion of each semester or they will be declared ineligible for the following semester.

Ineligible students are not allowed to represent the school by participating in games but are expected to attend practices unless the head coach has received specific direction from the principal. At no time should an ineligible student be allowed to miss school to practice or accompany the team on an athletic trip. Because of missed instruction, conditioning, etc., missed practice time because of ineligibility circumstances may affect playing time when a student "returns" to the team.

If a student is technically academically eligible, but drops significantly in academic performance, the principal has the authority to immediately place the student on the ineligibility list, the duration of which is to be determined by the principal.

Athletic Academic Assistance – Assistance for Co-curricular Activities

Athletic Academic Assistance has been prepared to assist athletes who are in academic trouble on an as needed basis (you must schedule a meeting with the Athletic Director and your child's coach to make arrangements for this service).

School Closings

In the event that a scheduled school day is officially cancelled due to inclement weather, or for any other reason practices or contests scheduled for that day are also cancelled and will be rescheduled if possible. Exceptions to this rule may only be made by the Principal.

Transportation to Athletic Contests

Rockford Christian Schools make every attempt to provide school bus/van transportation to extra-curricular events that are in excess of 15 miles from campus. For events where there is no school supplied transportation it is the responsibility of the parents to make sure their student has safe and legal transportation to the event.

Athletic Injuries

All athletic injuries need to be reported to the coach so that proper first aid may be given. Inform the coach of any allergies or other ailments that may need special attention during practice or game situations. The **Athletic Emergency** form must be signed and returned to the Athletic Office before participation in the first scheduled practice. This form is available in the office or online.

Insurance

Please be aware that Rockford Christian School has no liability coverage for athletic participation; in the event of an injury, you are responsible for all costs and expenses connected with examination, diagnosis, removal, or treatment of your child. Please confirm that your insurance coverage includes school-sponsored activities. Again, the **Athletic Emergency** form must be signed and returned to the Athletic Office before participation in the first scheduled practice.

Uniforms and Equipment

Each athlete is responsible for proper care of the uniform and equipment they are issued by the school. Uniforms should be kept clean and have a neat appearance for each game. (Suggested washing instructions; hand wash or delicate machine cycle in cold water, no fabric softeners or bleach and hang to dry.) At the end of the season, the athlete should return the uniform CLEAN and neatly folded to the COACH (not school or athletic office) in the same condition that it was issued.

The athlete will be fined for any damage to the uniform beyond normal wear. No athlete may keep school issued uniforms/equipment – all uniforms/equipment must be returned at the end of the season. It is RCS Athletic Department policy that coaches will not be paid their end of season stipend until all uniforms/equipment are returned.

Dress and Appearance of Student Athletes

The purpose of Rockford Christian Schools dress and appearance expectations is to enable the student to demonstrate traits of a discerning leader by making appropriate dress and appearance choices which reflect scriptural values of modesty, dignity and excellence.

Student Athletes are to be appropriately dressed for practice (indoors and outdoors). Practice attire must be clean, neat and modest. Athletes must wear shirts at practice. (exception - swimming)

ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT

Statement

The conduct of participants in athletic at Rockford Christian School, in or out of school, year round, shall be as such:

1. Not to reflect discredit upon our school.
2. Not to create a disruptive influence on the discipline, good order, moral or educational environment in our school. Any such misconduct violating these principles shall be subject to disciplinary measures.

Enforcement of the Athletic Code of Conduct

The Principal and Athletic Director shall enforce all rules and regulations described in the **Code of Conduct** for athletes. All rules regarding behavior and/or training as outlined by the IHSA apply. The **Code of Conduct** will be reinforced for every sport by the coaches during the school year. The student athlete is subject to disciplinary measures should he/she violate the **Code of Conduct**. Any alleged violation shall be reported to the coach, athletic director or principal and then is to be followed up by an investigation by one or all of the following personnel: coach, athletic director, principal, superintendent, or parents of the athlete. The Code of Conduct policy is in addition to the board policy.

Expected Standards of Conduct for Athletes .

The good of the team is first and foremost.

- No players will ever employ illegal tactics to gain an undeserved advantage. All players will devote themselves to be a good sportsman.
- All athletes will obey the specific training and practice rules of their team as given to them by the coaching staff.
- Athletes should not engage in doing negative things to their bodies. (I Cor 3:16-17) - This includes but is not limited to drinking alcohol, taking any type of controlled substance, and using tobacco products.
- Athletes shall not associate with people who are suspected of using or selling drugs.
- Athletes shall not use profanity. Any public outburst of profanity will not be tolerated. Using profanity and being disobedient are harmful to athletes and their teams.
- Athletes and support students of the team maintain eligible grades to participate in athletics. Team members should plan their time so that they devote energy to their studies to insure passing grades, which represent their true abilities.
- Athletes should be good role models for younger students at Rockford Christian Schools.
- Officials deserve courteous respect. All must realize that officials do not lose a game. They are there for the purpose of insuring both teams have a fair contest.
- Athletes must be coachable. They should appreciate that coaches, teachers and school administrators have the best interest of all athletes in mind as they equip, schedule and conduct the athletic program.
- All athletes must comply with the standards of our Code Of Conduct or be subject to disciplinary action or dismissal from a team as determined by the rules, coaching staff, athletic director and principal.

Most importantly, Rockford Christian Schools is not asking athletes to make sacrifices. Sacrifice implies giving up good things. We are asking athletes to do the opposite. Live clean, think clean and to do those things that make them keener, finer and more competent team members. Remember that participation in athletics is a privilege.

Rules of the Athletic Code of Conduct

The following rules are specific examples of the conduct that would violate the Athletic Code of Conduct set forth above. Please note Rockford Christian Schools policy consequences will also apply. Student athletes in violation of the athletic code of conduct will be subject to discipline including, suspension of games, and or suspension from the team. Repeated violations will dramatically increase the amount of penalty and may cause the student-athlete to forfeit any team recognition or awards.

1. Rule: Athletes (hereafter student managers, and student support staff are all included in the team) shall not knowingly possess, use, transmit or be under the influence of any narcotic drugs, stimulants, anabolic steroids, marijuana (use of an authorized drug prescribed by a licensed physician shall not constitute a violation of this rule).

2. Rule: Athletes shall not partake in any degree or be in possession of alcoholic beverages and/or tobacco products.
3. Rule: Felonies, misdemeanors, acts of delinquency.
4. Rule: Athletes shall not steal or vandalize.
5. Rule: Any athlete who is in violation of school rules such as truancy, suspension, classroom disruption, or any other punishable acts will be disciplined by the already established school rules. If an athlete is suspended from school he/she will not be allowed to participate in that day's practice or contest, or the next scheduled contest (if no contest is scheduled for that day)
6. Rule: Attendance at social events (parties, dances etc.) is up to the athlete and parents. However, athletes are expected to leave social events immediately where there is illegal use of chemical substances, alcohol, or tobacco. Failure to do so implies guilt and violations may be subject to athletic suspensions for up to 25% of the season.
7. Rule: Specific team rules may be set forth by the coach of each sport. These rules and the penalties for breaking them will be given to athlete by coach at the first team meeting or practice of that sport. These written regulations will be on file in the Athletic Department.

Anti-Hazing

The American Heritage Dictionary defines hazing as: "To persecute or harass with meaningless, difficult, or humiliating tasks. To initiate by exacting, humiliating performances from or playing rough practical jokes upon". Rockford Christian Schools is committed to providing the most excellent learning atmosphere for our students. No hazing activities are to be tolerated. They are not consistent with the mission and purpose of Rockford Christian Schools. The Athletic Department will not tolerate actions by athletes that recklessly or intentionally endanger the mental or physical health or safety of a student. Disciplinary action will be taken against students who plan, promote, encourage, or engage in any hazing activities. Athletic Department employees who permit, encourage, condone, or tolerate hazing will be subject to discipline.

Carry Over Suspension

If the violation of the Athletic Code Of Conduct occurs in the last part of a sport and the violation cannot fulfill the terms of his/her violation in that sport, the suspension will carry over until the suspension is fulfilled. This includes their next sport or the same sport in the next school year.

Quitting a Team

If an athlete participates in any practice or contests he/she cannot quit that sport and join another sport until the sport season he/she has quit is completed. Mutual consent by both coaches can waive this rule if the student athlete is better off for the change.