

Eagle Christian Academy

Athletics Handbook

**For Players and Parents
Colossians 3:12-17**

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Eagle Christian Academy, Waco

Athletics Mission Statement

The mission of the Eagle Christian Academy athletics department is to provide competitive opportunities that cultivate servant-leaders who glorify God in all arenas of life. Col. 3:12-17

Vision

To be the benchmark of excellence in Christ-centered school athletics.

Core Values

Christ-like character

- **Be known for excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly affection and selflessness. (2 Peter 1:5-8)**

Excellence

- **Striving to reach the maximum potential of our God-given abilities.**

Commitment

- **A covenant among coaches, faculty, athletes, and parents to honor the time and effort required to compete with excellence.**

Relationships

- **A community devoted to loving and honoring each other above ourselves.**

Participation

- **Supporting broad participation in various activities while maintaining commitment and balance.**

Sports Offered

High School Boys

Basketball

Baseball

Swimming

Track and Field

High School Girls

Volleyball

Basketball

Swimming

Track and Field

Association Membership

At the high school level, Eagle Christian is a member of the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS), and all of our team and individual sports compete for TAPPS championships.

Code of Conduct

The overall behavior of an ECA athlete should model Jesus Christ both on and off the field or court of athletic competition. Scripture commands us to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Coaches, parents, and athletes are expected to demonstrate and foster an environment of respect for authority, for others, and for the rules and standards of God's Word, the school and of athletic competition.

These expectations extend into the totality of our lifestyles, and do not apply just in the context of school and athletics. We should also always remember that at every road game and in every restaurant and hotel we are guests, and at all times we should demonstrate the utmost respect for those around us (Philippians 2:3).

In the event that an athlete is disciplined for behavior issues at school, his athletic participation does not supersede his obligation to fulfill the assigned disciplinary action. The athletic director or coach may also assign extra disciplinary measures, or may remove any player from practices or games for the purpose of discipline or behavioral issues. Suspension from school automatically extends to include suspension from any athletic activities during the duration of the suspension.

Parent Expectations

Parents are encouraged to support their children and their children's teams in a vocal and positive manner that does not reflect negatively on the school or the body of Christ. Parents who become verbally abusive to officials, coaches, players or other fans may be asked to leave the event.

Parents should also refrain from talking to their children or "coaching" them from the sidelines or stands during the course of a game. Athletes need to hear one voice during athletic competitions, and that should be the voice of the coach of their team. Parents

should also refrain from talking to the coaches during the course of a game.

All parents of athletes will be called upon at various times to help out with such things as concessions, setting up for games, and performing official contest related duties such as clock or scorebook keeping at volleyball and basketball games, or timers at swim meets.

All parents are asked to help with the clean-up process after their children's games. There will a checklist posted on the bulletin board by the exit.

There will be an annual athletics fee. This amount will be determined by administration based on the budgeted needs for the year.

Commitment to Athletics

Because so many people – coaches, teammates, officials, and even our opponents – are depending on us in the world of athletics, a high level of commitment is expected from anyone who agrees to be part of an athletic team at ECA. This includes a commitment to be at all practices and games during the season, except in dire circumstances. Family vacations, doctor appointments, and other activities should be planned around all in-season schedules to which an athlete has committed. Nearly everyone will have to miss a practice or a game at some point for one reason or another. However, these absences should be kept to a minimum, and any time an athlete needs to miss a practice or a game, the coach should be notified as far in advance as possible.

Athletes involved in high school athletics should expect to be participating in a game or practice every day of the school week as well as some Saturdays during the season.

High school practices will last up to two and a half hours. Some off days from practice may be declared at the coach's discretion. There will be conditioning during the summer. While these practices cannot be considered mandatory, it is highly recommended that every effort is made to attend these sessions. They will be crucial to the beginning of the season and team building.

High school schedules will consist of two to three games per week (with the exception of tournaments, which typically run Thursday through Saturday), including some Saturday games.

Practice Apparel

ECA athletes will be required to stay in physical education dress code, as stated in the ECA Student Handbook, at practices.

Open and Honest Communication

Open and honest communication is essential to ECA and its athletics programs. Misunderstandings and other problems will inevitably arise, but it is our desire to be set

apart in the way we handle these situations.

In dealing with these types of issues, it is good to begin with the foundational knowledge and understanding that every administrator, teacher, and coach at Eagle Christian loves and desires the best for each student athlete; otherwise he or she would not hold that position of trust. Following the Matthew 18 blueprint for handling situations where one person believes they have been wronged by another, the following progression of communication should take place:

- (1) The athlete should approach his or her coach privately, express their concerns, and allow the coach to address them.
- (2) If the athlete's concerns have not been satisfactorily addressed at this point, the athlete and his or her parents should request a conference with the coach.
- (3) The next step in the process, if needed, would be a meeting involving the athlete, the parents, the coach and the athletic director.

It is important to understand that just because a coach gives an answer that is not necessarily what the athlete or parent wants to hear does not mean that the athlete is being wronged by the coach. The most typical scenario is usually over lack of playing time. It is important to remember that coaches see more than meets the eye, seeing players' work habits and attendance habits at practice, team chemistry, and other factors that can go beyond the athlete's and his or her parents' desire for them to have more playing time. The very best way to handle this type of situation is to have a conference with the coach, following the plan outlined above, and allow the coach to explain things from his or her perspective. These are usually very enlightening times for all parties involved, and lead to much stronger player/coach/parent relationships.

Academic Eligibility

TAPPS eligibility standards require that an athlete be failing (below 70) no more than one class at the end of a quarter. Any athlete who fails two or more classes at the end of a quarter will be ineligible by rule for two weeks, beginning the day grades are posted. After the two-week mandatory ineligibility period, that athlete's eligibility will be subject to the normal weekly grade checks, which begin in the fourth week of each quarter. Ineligibility precludes all participation outside the school day in practices, games or team travel.

Weekly eligibility is maintained by a student having a failing average for the current quarter in no more than one class.

Physical Forms

A physical form and a medical history form must be on file with the Athletics Office before any student may participate in practice or games for any sport. Only one physical form is required per school year, and will be sufficient for all sports in which the student

participates. Each student must have a new physical conducted, as well as a new physical form filled out by the physician, before participation in that student's first sport of each new school year. All forms are located in the TAPPS.BIZ website under athletics.

Stewardship Responsibilities

Each athlete should take special care for the upkeep and cleanliness of all uniforms and equipment they are issued, and account for each item at the end of the season by turning it back into the coach, or by paying for anything that has been lost or damaged.

Each team is responsible for cleaning up whatever facility it uses after each event or practice. All trash should be thrown away, all tables and chairs restored to their normal place and order, and all equipment properly stored. At road games, bench and team areas will be clean before our teams depart. Players, parents, and coaches work together to accomplish this task. We leave every facility cleaner than we find it.

Whatever team or group is the last to use the gym or other facility should turn out all the lights and make sure the doors are locked, and tables and chairs stored properly.

No students are allowed to use the gym without adult supervision, and the last coach to leave should see that all equipment is stored and all students leave the facility before he or she locks up.

Overnight Trips

Tournament trips and other overnight trips are an integral part of team development in athletics. Tournaments provide extra non-district games to allow teams to learn to work together, and overnight trips provide times of team bonding and "chemistry" building. ECA will sponsor safe, well-organized, well-chaperoned, and well-supervised athletics trips. Coaches will communicate details about trips to parents in advance. All of our student athletes understand that these trips are a privilege, and that anything less than exemplary behavior will jeopardize individuals' and/or teams' freedom to go on future trips.

Parents are welcome and encouraged to accompany teams on all trips, and to assist the coaches as chaperones. All chaperones must have a background check and current insurance and license on file in the school office. The head coach will assign/approve room assignments for student athletes and managers. Coaches and chaperones will room in close proximity to the students, but not actually in the students' rooms. Any parent who requests that their child room with an adult will need to go on the trip themselves and have their child room with them. If a parent chooses to accompany the team as a chaperone, there will be an expectation of supervision and assistance where needed.

If a parent is uncomfortable with any part of the arrangements for a team trip, they should notify the coach in advance of the trip. If, after talking to the coach, the parent is still uncomfortable, they should notify the coach that their child will not be going.

Athletics Bus

When available for their use, teams will travel together on the athletics bus to and from away games. When the bus is available and the coach opts to use it, all athletes will be required to ride the bus with their teammates to the contest and back to the school. For some extenuating circumstances, athletes may be released to their parents for transportation after games. Prior to game day, advance notice to the coach is to be requested.

Philosophy of Competition

The scope of competitive philosophy of team sports at ECA runs the gamut from an emphasis on instruction at the middle school level to striving to win championships at the varsity level, with an undergirding foundation of sportsmanship and Christlike character at every level.

Middle School Teams

In middle school sports, as many students as possible, within reasonable number limitations, will be included on teams.

At the middle school level, participation and instruction are the main emphasis, with winning as an important goal, but not at the expense of participation and instruction. *Equal playing time is neither a requirement nor a goal, but coaches at the middle school level will strive to see that all players get some playing time in games.* The desire and goal to win is present, however, and will naturally result in the more skilled players receiving more playing time. All players have the opportunity for skill development in practice with the chance to improve and earn increased playing time.

Junior Varsity Teams

At the junior varsity level – which would typically include 9th and 10th graders, and perhaps a few 11th graders – the emphasis shifts more toward winning and higher level skill development. The main purpose of junior varsity athletics is to prepare athletes for varsity competition.

Junior varsity teams will be formed when there are enough athletes participating in a given sport at the high school level to field a complete team of younger athletes.

Varsity Teams

At the varsity level, coaches should strive to put their teams in the best possible position to win each contest that is played. It is at this level that the school is most visibly represented, with larger crowds and even some media coverage. It is also at the varsity level that ECA's teams compete for district, bi-district, area, regional, and state championships.

Philosophy on Making 'Cuts'

"Cutting," or the exclusion of a student or students from an athletics team, may occur for any one of a number of the following reasons:

(1) Cuts may occur when the coach and the athletic director have determined what a reasonable number of athletes is for a particular team, and more athletes than that number try out for the team. This is by nature a subjective process, and athletes will be placed on teams based on the coach's evaluation of their competitive ability. "Competitive ability" may entail more than just physical skill; it may also include such intangibles as desire, persistence, "coachability," attitude, and the potential to develop as a player. All players will be notified prior to or at the beginning of tryouts in cases where a limited number of spots are available on a team and cuts will have to be made.

(2) Cuts may occur when, in the estimation of the coach, players do not possess the physical ability to experience success at that level of competition.

(3) Cuts may occur when, in the estimation of the coach, a player is at a personal risk of serious injury if he or she continues to participate in that sport.

(4) Cuts may occur for disciplinary reasons.

Lettering Policy

Any high school student who plays in a varsity competition or serves as a manager or trainer for a varsity sport, is eligible for a letter in that sport. Letter jackets may only be ordered after the student has entered high school. Ultimately it is up to the parent and student what is put on the jacket since all financial responsibility is assumed by the parent.

Conflicting Events Policy

Understanding that many of our students are gifted in multiple ways, and thus desire to grow in their God-given talents through Eagle Christian's diverse offering of activities and programs, the school's directors and coaches make every effort to ensure that major events are not scheduled to conflict with each other. When inevitable overlaps do occur, however, the following philosophy is used to determine in which event a student will participate:

A culminating event takes precedent over a non-culminating event. Examples:

- A district or playoff level athletic event would take precedent over a theater rehearsal.**
- A final theater dress rehearsal before a major production would take**

precedent over a non-district, non-playoff level athletic event.

The tougher situations to sort out are when, for instance, drama rehearsals and athletics practices overlap

Health and Safety Standards

First Aid, CPR, and Concussions

All Eagle Christian coaches receive regular first aid and CPR training. All high school coaches annually meet TAPPS training standards for health and safety, first aid, and dealing with concussions.

Dealing With Heat

Dealing with the heat in Texas, particularly during the late summer in outdoor sports and non-air conditioned gym, is something that cannot be avoided. The responsibility of the coaches is to train and prepare the athletes for safely competing in hot conditions. Common sense is the rule of the day. Hydration is the most important factor in being prepared for the heat, and athletes should be taking care of themselves by staying constantly hydrated – not just hydrating during practices and games.

Lightning

Whenever lightning is observed in the immediate area, anyone participating in an outdoor sport will immediately seek shelter inside a building or automobile, and remain under shelter until no lightning has been observed for 30 minutes. During games, the decision to play or not play is in the hands of the officials once a contest has started.

Ministering to Other Schools

ECA recognizes that athletics can be a tremendously effective vehicle for building relationships with other schools and their communities. Eagle Christian teams engage a myriad of public schools in athletic competition, and will continue to do so. These schools range in size from A to AAAAA in the UIL. In addition, Eagle Christian plays a number of secular private schools, as well as parochial schools that do not necessarily share Eagle Christian's theology, worldview, or priorities toward competition.

All Eagle Christian players, coaches, fans and parents should keep the opportunity for ministry prayerfully before them at all times, regardless of the school we are playing, and should always seek to interact with our opponents and their coaches and fans – win or lose – with an attitude of love, respect, and graciousness that points others in a winsome way toward Jesus Christ.