

Athletic Information and Policies

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In all aspects of life, followers of Jesus Christ are called to be excellent (1 Corinthians 9:24-27), not as a means of garnering accolades for themselves but rather for the glory of God (Colossians 3:23). We are called to humbly bring our best effort and seek excellence that focuses on “process” over “accomplishment” and this neatly applies to interscholastic athletics. Heritage Christian School strives to take advantage of every opportunity on the field and court to reinforce the pursuit of these goals through the athletic program:

Goals:

1. Compete in a God-glorifying manner

Colossians 3:16-17 - Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

2. Develop Christ-like character in student athletes

Titus 2:6-8 - Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. ⁷ Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, ⁸ and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

3. Develop and refine fundamental skills
4. Establish positive relationships

Competition:

Competition is a positive challenge and has the ability to bring about a high level of effort from team members and coaches. Diligently working hard to improve skills and grow physically with earnest direction from coaches is God-glorifying. There is value in our athletes' desire to win contests, but "the win" pales in comparison to the value of preparation, effort, and *striving* to win.

Coaching:

As Christ-like character development is of highest priority, coaches are carefully selected for their ability to disciple athletes. These men and women realize that teaching and mentoring life skills is more important than the game or its outcome, yet each expects every athlete to perform at the highest level attainable. They understand the significance of their role model responsibility as described by Jesus in Matthew 10:24-25a.

Participation:

Heritage Christian School's desire is to see as many students as possible participate in our athletic programs. Participation on a team is not a right for students. It is a privilege to represent Christ, Heritage Christian School, one's family, and oneself to the community. Earning the privilege involves more than being talented in a particular sport. Athletes are highly visible, are given a platform from which they "speak", and are, therefore, held to a higher behavioral standard (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). Athletes and families must uphold the school's mission as well as the goals of the athletic department. For further clarification on participation, see the eligibility requirements in the policy section of this manual.

Heritage Christian School Program Description:

It is the desire of Heritage Christian School to offer a Junior Varsity (5th/6th) and Varsity (7th/8th) team for the following:

- Volleyball
- Soccer
- Basketball
- Cheerleading

Track and Field will consist of one team divided into three groups: Sprinting/Jumping, Distance Running, Throwing

Team Structure:

If total level of student interest does not meet the required team minimum for any particular team, the Athletic Director will determine if that situation can be reconciled using steps outlined in the Team Structure Contingency Plan (See Team Structure Contingency Plan pp. 42).

- Soccer - minimum – 14 student athletes
- Basketball – minimum – 7 student athletes
- Volleyball – minimum – 7 student athletes
- Cheerleading * – minimum – 5 student athletes
- Track * - The Heritage Christian School Track team is developed around the coaching structure. Based on the design of the sport, the number of athletes on the team will be determined by the number of assistant coaches who step forward to support the head coach. The athlete to coach ratio must be 1:25 or better. Track and Field will be offered under the following guidelines:
 - **One coach** – Track events only – (Sprinting/Jumping/Distance Running) - All athletes will participate in an alternating practice schedule that includes both sprinting/jumping and long distance running.
 - **One coach/one assistant** – Track events only (Sprinting/Jumping/Distance Running)
 - One coach designated to oversee and develop sprinters/jumpers.
 - One coach designated to oversee and develop long distance runners.
 - **One coach/two assistants** – Track and Field events (Sprinting/Distance Running/Shot/Discus/Long jump/High jump)
 - One coach designated to oversee and develop sprinters/jumpers.
 - One coach designated to oversee and develop long distance runners.

- One coach designated to oversee and develop field event participants.

*While the desire exists to offer two teams for each sport, if only one team exists for Track or Cheerleading, participation may be restricted to 6th-8th grade students only.

Team Structure Contingency Plan:

Heritage Christian School is committed to pursuing the goals of the athletic program. Our ability to affect these goals hinges, to a large degree, on the ratio of student athletes to coaches. If one of the following scenarios comes to fruition during any given year, steps will be taken to bring the athlete:coach ratio into proper proportion:

- *Inadequate number of interested student athletes to field the desired number of teams.* If there are too few athletes from within the school to field even one team for a particular sport, homeschooling students may participate on that athletic team.
- *Inadequate number of coaches for the desired number of teams.*

If one of the above scenarios exists and cannot be reconciled, the following steps will be taken:

- Heritage will offer one team for the sport in which there are inadequate numbers to meet team structure requirements.
- The team will be comprised of 5th-8th grade students with the exception of cheerleading and track, which will be restricted to 6th-8th grade only. The 5th-8th grade team will compete against other 7th/8th grade teams.
- The Athletic Director, working with the Head of School, has sole discretion to determine if circumstances prevent the establishment of a 5th-8th grade team for a certain team/sport.

Coaching Requirements:

Volunteers interested in coaching for the Heritage Christian School Athletic Department will need to take the following steps:

- Submit an application
- Participate in an interview (if more than one qualified candidate comes forward for coaching vacancies)
- Submit to a criminal background check
- Adhere to the expectations held for coaches

Assistant coaches, when needed, will be chosen by the head coach in collaboration with the Athletic Director. Each will be required to take the same steps (listed above) to be considered eligible. It is our desire to have coaches selected prior to the end of each school year for the following year's athletic seasons. If coaches have not been selected prior to the end of the school year, they must be selected prior to the following dates. If these deadlines are not reached, the team will forfeit that year's season.

- Volleyball – July 1
- Soccer – August 1
- Basketball – October 1
- Cheerleading – November 1
- Track (with Assistant coaches) – March 1

Scheduling of Practices and Games:

It is the desire of Heritage Christian School that student participation on an athletic team not require more than three days/nights per week when counting practices and games. There are, on occasion, weeks when four days are demanded. Practice schedules are developed through collaboration between the Athletic Director and designated coaches.

Through collaboration between the Athletic Director, coaches, and parents, the possibility exists that morning or evening practices may be scheduled if gym use is limited due to multiple teams needing practice time. Voluntary weekend practices may be scheduled.

Playing Time:

While it is true that our coaches and administrative personnel believe it to be important to broaden the experience of Heritage Christian School Athletes, and that broadening is enhanced by playing time, it is also an important goal of the Heritage athletic program to strive towards excellence. Therefore, no minimum playing time per game provisions or minimum numbers of athletic meets in which athletes must compete are established for the Heritage Christian School Athletic program. Playing time decisions are left up to the individual coaches, but providing meaningful playing time is encouraged.

Athletic Fees:

All athletes, including cheerleaders, pay an athletic fee for each sport, each year. The amount paid for athletic fees is assessed each year in accordance with the financial needs of the program. Fees will be announced at the beginning of each school year.

Athletic Documentation/Paperwork

Each student must have a current physical by his/her personal physician and a signed *Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports* information sheet before participation in any practices or games. The following athletic forms are for participation:

1. Iowa Athletic Pre-Participation Physical Examination
2. Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports information sheet
3. Heritage Christian School Athletic Contract
4. Insurance Waiver
5. Emergency Medical Authorization

Concussion Protocol

In accordance with Iowa Code Section 280.13C and in an effort to create an athletic environment that promotes the health and wellbeing of all student athletes, the following concussion protocols will be used for all athletics offered at Heritage Christian School:

1. Each year, parents are required to sign and return the Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports information sheet.
2. All coaches will be required to view the Concussions in Sports education course offered through NFHS.com.
3. All athletes with a suspected head injury will be immediately removed from play and will not return to play the day of the suspected injury. They may not return to play until they have received written authorization from a licensed health care provider. The "Heads Up" 4 Step Action Plan will be used for any athlete with a suspected head injury.
4. Once athletes have received written authorization from their licensed health care provider that they may return to play, the coaches and athletes must follow the Return to Learn and Return to Play (RTP) Process.

"Heads Up" 4 step Action Plan:

When you suspect a player has a concussion, follow the "Heads Up" 4-Step Action Plan

1. Remove the athlete from play.
2. Ensure the athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional. (RED FLAGS: if any red flags present, the athlete should go to the emergency department)
3. Inform the athlete's parents/guardians about the possible concussion and give them information on concussions.
4. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury, and until an appropriate health-care professional says the athlete is symptom-free and gives the okay to return to activity.

Return to Learn and Return to Play (RTP) Process

Return to participation following a concussion is a medical decision made on an individual basis by licensed health care providers. The following must be in place prior to a student returning to play: The Student must be

asymptomatic at rest, and with exertion (including mental exertion in school), AND have written clearance from a licensed medical professional.

Step 1: Complete Physical and Cognitive Rest. No exertional activity until asymptomatic. This may include staying home from school or limiting school hours (and studying) for several days. Activities requiring concentration and attention may worsen symptoms and delay recovery.

Step 2: Return to school full-time /normal cognitive daily activities, or normal cognitive functions.

Step 3: Low impact, light aerobic exercise. This step should not begin until the student is no longer having concussion symptoms and is cleared by the treating licensed health care provider. At this point the student may begin brisk walking, light jogging, swimming or riding an exercise bike at less than 70 % maximum performance heart rate. No weight or resistance training.

Step 4: Basic exercise, such as running in the gym or on the field. No Helmet or other equipment.

Step 5: Non-contact, sport-specific training drills (dribbling, ball handling, batting, fielding, running drills, etc.) in full equipment. Weight training can begin.

Step 6: Following medical clearance, full contact practice or training.

Step 7: Normal competition in a contest.

**Generally, each step should take a minimum of 24 hours. If post-concussion symptoms occur at ANY step in the RTP process, the student must stop the activity and their licensed health care provider should be contacted. If any post-concussion symptoms occur during this process, the student should drop back to the asymptomatic level and begin this progression again after an additional 24-hour rest period.

Academic Eligibility

Any student maintaining a grade average below 70% in core curricular classes other than Bible (which requires a minimum grade average of 74%) is ineligible for all extracurricular activities for a minimum of a two week probationary period or until such time as the grades are brought up to the standard minimum. "Extracurricular Activities" are defined as any activities outside of the classroom that on a frequently, scheduled basis require all or part of a school day including participation in all Heritage Christian School athletic teams (volleyball, soccer, basketball, cheerleading, and track/field) as well as sports/teams play for the local public school district in the dual enrollment program. The probation period begins the day after grades are issued and ends, if standards have been met, at the conclusion of the second week of probation. If the student has been unable to meet the eligibility standards at the time the two week progress report is issued, they will remain ineligible for another two week period.

Students will be allowed a grace period through the first four weeks of the beginning of school. After the grace period, student's grades will be checked every two weeks. Students who do not meet the above standard will be classified as ineligible. **Ineligible students will be penalized according to the standards outlined below.** Students classified as eligible are allowed to tryout, practice, and participate during the entire season. However, if during the season, staff notices a decline in grades or behavior, the Head of School may declare the student ineligible for a specific period of time. Such a student will not be allowed to practice with the team and will be ineligible to participate in games.

Ineligibility penalties will be issued according to the following:

- Students with one (D) during a grade-check period may attend and participate in practice but may not participate in games. Students may attend games, and sit on the bench with the team, but may not participate in warm-up activities.
- Students with more than one (D) during a grade-check period or a student ineligible for more than one grade-check period may attend practice, but may not participate in practices or games. Students may attend games, and sit on the bench with the team, but may not participate in warm up activities.
- Students with one or more (F's) during a grade check period may attend practice, but may not participate in practices or games. Students may attend games, and sit on the bench with the team, but may not participate in warm-up activities.

Behavioral Eligibility

As one of the goals of the Athletic Program is the development of Christ-like character (*Titus 2:6-8*), student athletes are held to a high behavioral standard both on and off the field/court. If a student athlete earns disciplinary action in school or displays unsportsmanlike conduct during a game, the following consequences will be applied. Unsportsmanlike conduct includes but is not limited to disrespecting the coach, another athlete, spectator, and/or official in word or body language.

1. Unsportsmanlike conduct **observed by coaches – even if not called by an official –** will result in immediate removal from play.
2. Suspension for grievous reasons (as defined in the Parent-Student Handbook) will result in removal from the team for the remainder of season.
3. An athlete who earns three (3) or more detentions during the school year will be removed from the team on which he/she is participating and not be permitted to try out for the upcoming athletic team. This consequence is applied only within the boundaries of the school's calendar year.

If a student must be removed from a team for disciplinary action, athletic fees will not be reimbursed.

Practice/Game Attendance

Participating on a Heritage athletic team should be considered a firm commitment by students who sign up to play. The team depends on the consistency of all players in order to grow and develop as a cohesive unit. The following are participation expectations for athletic practices and games. Athletes excused from PE for medical reasons are also excused from, and will not be permitted to participate in, athletic practice and game participation.

1. **Absent from School** – for any reason:
 - a. Any student absent from school is ineligible to practice on the day of the absence.
 - b. Any student absent from school on the day of a game is ineligible to participate in that game.
2. **Absent from Practice** - for any reason other than illnesses, doctor/dentist appointments, family emergency or family trips that can only be taken during the normal school term:
 - a. Absence due to a prescheduled conflict must be communicated to the coach, in advance. This is not a guarantee of playing time and all playing time decisions are left up to the individual coaches.
 - b. Athletes with an unexcused absence from practice will not play during the first quarter of the next scheduled game (with the exception of track).
 - c. Athletes with three or more unexcused absences from practice will be removed from the team.
3. **Absent from Scheduled Games** – for any reason other than illness, doctor/dentist appointments, family emergency or family trips that can only be taken during the normal school term:
 - a. Absence due to a prescheduled conflict must be communicated to the coach, in advance. This is not a guarantee of playing time and all playing time decisions are left up to the individual coaches. Athletes with an unexcused absence from a scheduled game will not play during the first half of the next scheduled game (with the exception of track).
 - b. Athletes with two or more unexcused absences from games will be removed from the team.
4. **Joining the Team after the Start of the Season:**
 - a. Athletes will not be allowed to join a team after the season has started, with the exception of a newly enrolled family. A newly enrolled student may qualify for a team that has room on the roster only if tryouts have NOT been conducted for the structure of that particular team.

Resolution of Concern or Grievance

When a concern or grievance arises, the first step involves self-examination (*Matthew 7:4-5*). This should include evaluating how you (or your child) may have contributed to the situation. This may involve confession

to God and others for sin in your lives. Following this, if a parent still wishes to discuss the actions or decisions of a coach, assistant coach, or the Athletic Director, the parent should follow the procedure outlined by Jesus and recorded in Matthew 18:15-17, namely:

1. The complaint or concern should first be communicated personally and privately to the party who is believed to have committed an injustice or an offense. As we train our children to follow Jesus, we request that athletes bring their concerns directly to the coach. As this is a difficult step of obedience to learn, parents are encouraged, if necessary, to be present when this conversation occurs.
2. If the concern is with a coach, and after the first step the issue is not resolved, the Athletic Director should be contacted. The Athletic Director may set up a meeting with the parent alone or with the parent and the coach (and in some cases the student athlete involved).
3. If there is still no resolution, the parent may contact the Head of School. This contact should be made in writing, specifically explaining the problem and the steps that have been taken. A meeting will then be set up that includes the parent and the involved parties.
4. Following the meeting, the parent will receive a response in a timely manner.

During this process, all parties (parent, coach, athlete, AD, and Head of School) are to maintain an attitude of gentleness and humility.

Failure to follow this biblical procedure is almost certain to result in further serious damages and complications which extend beyond the original problem, perhaps making a peaceful and just resolution impossible. Repeated failure to follow these Biblical procedures could result in the expulsion of the family from the school. If your grievance is with an athletic policy, please give a written explanation of the unresolved issue to the Athletic Director. You will be contacted in a timely fashion. Please, if your grievance is with a coach or assistant coach, do NOT go to the Head of School or a Board member first. It is a violation of school policy to discuss a problem or grievance with anyone, for whatever reason, who is not a direct part of the problem or solution.

Athlete Transportation

Parents of athletes assume full responsibility for the transportation needs of their athletes to and from practices and games, whether home or away. Coaches are responsible to ensure that all athletes are appropriately supervised and may not leave the premises of practices or games until all athletes have been picked up. Parents, legal guardians, and/or carpool drivers responsible to pick up athletes from practices or games must be on time. Pick-up time for athletes will extend 10 minutes from the scheduled conclusion of practice. For example, if practice is scheduled to conclude at 5:30pm, all athletes must be picked up before 5:40pm. Parents, legal guardians, and/or carpool drivers that arrive after the designated pick-up time will be charged according to the late fees assessed in the Before and After School Program (\$1 per minute late). Coaches must be contacted immediately if extenuating, emergent circumstances arise that cause a parent, legal guardian, or car pool driver to be late for pick-up.

School Issued Athletic Uniforms

For sports in which the Athletic Director issues uniforms, the care of those uniforms is the responsibility of the student to whom it was issued. Uniforms must be kept neat and clean. All school-issued uniforms must be returned to the Athletic Director cleaned, in good repair, and neatly folded within one week of the conclusion of the season. Parents will be responsible for the replacement cost of a lost, or otherwise not returned school issued uniform. The cost of the uniform can be obtained from the Athletic Director and fines must be paid in the school office.

Heritage Christian School Athletic Contract

For Parents and Athletes

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3. Develop and refine fundamental skills.
4. Establish positive relationships.

Contract Expectations:

1. I understand the goals established for the Athletic Program at Heritage Christian School and will commit wholeheartedly to the pursuit of stated goals.
2. I will conduct myself in a Christ-like manner during practices and games. I realize that unsportsmanlike conduct is inconsistent with how Jesus asks me to behave and that it is the responsibility of my parents, coaches, Athletic Director and Head of School to guide me in the pursuit of this goal.
3. I will strive for academic excellence as I realize the priority of developing my mind and investing in my school work. I will submit to the **Athletic Eligibility Policy** set for Heritage Christian School.
4. I will strive to be a godly role model for other students at Heritage Christian School by upholding school rules and interacting respectfully with students and authority figures. I realize I am a leader and will act accordingly submitting to the **Behavior Eligibility Policy** set for athletes at Heritage Christian School.
5. I will respectfully submit to the authority of Heritage Christian School coaches and his/her decisions regarding my participation on the athletic team. If a concern arises, I agree to faithfully follow the principles outlined by Jesus in Matthew 18 and reinforced in the **Protocol for the Resolution of Concern or Grievance Policy**.
6. I will respectfully submit to the authority of game officials and his/her decisions regarding my participation in the game.
7. I will faithfully attend all practices and games submitting to the **Practice/Game Attendance Policy**. Any expected absence from practice must be submitted in writing, preferably before practice that day. Those athletes not attending practice (unexcused absence) will not be allowed the same amount of playing time as those who attend all the practices.

I understand the expectations written above and commit, before God, to uphold them to the best of my ability.

Parent Signature

Date

Athlete Signature

Date