LIFE WAY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

2026-2027

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Life Way Christian School strives to offer a variety of sports for participation to students. Interscholastic athletics is a voluntary program. Students are not obligated to participate; thus, participation is a privilege. This handbook is a reference guide for coaches, students, parents outlining the policies that govern interscholastic athletics at Life Way Christian School.

The coach of an athletic team reports to the Athletic Director and is primarily responsible for the compliance by his/her team members to the rules, regulations, and policies governing athletics.

Sound reasoning, good judgment, and adherence to the school's core values will be the standard by which situations outside these stated rules and regulations are determined and evaluated.

CORE VALUES

C *Christ-like Attitude*

H *Honesty*

R *Responsibility/Respect*

I *Integrity*

S *Service*

T *Teamwork/Trust*

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

Life Way Christian School Athletic Department is committed to:

- Discipleship of coaches and student athletes.
- Outreach to opposing teams and fans and to the larger community.
- Preparation of student athletes for both competition and life with Christ as our model.
- Stewardship of our resources.
- Pursuit of athletic excellence.

PHILOSOPHY

Life Way Christian School Athletic Department is founded on the teaching and principles of God's Word. Biblical principles and the corresponding philosophies may differ substantially from schools with other philosophies. Such differences, however, do not necessitate unworkable relationships. Instead, our philosophy of athletics should provide an opportunity for others outside the Life Way Christian School community to visualize actions and principles that are quite unique in today's society. The Life Way Christian School Athletic Program is a wonderful opportunity to minister to the community.

LWCS SPORTS		
FALL	**WINTER**	**SPRING**
Cross Country	Basketball	Baseball
Golf	Cheerleading	Soccer
Tennis		Track
Volleyball		Softball

MISSION STATEMENT

The Athletic Department at Life Way Christian School is more than just a sports program. ***Our mission is to glorify God through the discipleship of student athletes and pursuit of excellence in athletics with the Bible as the foundation and Jesus Christ as our focus.***

COACHES

Life Way Christian School has high expectations for the coaching staff. Coaches have a responsibility to model the Christ-like core values, behavior, and attitude at all times.

You may depend upon our coaches to have a thorough knowledge of their sport, to be capable of detailed preparation, to be able to motivate athletes, and to be able to make adjustments during competition. They will work cohesively under the authority of the Athletic Director and Life Way Christian School Administration. Each of these take seriously the opportunity they have to mold young lives for Christ.

The coaches at Life Way Christian School adhere to the following:

- Exemplify the highest moral character as a role model for young athletes.
- Recognize the individual worth and reinforce the self-image of each team player.
- Create a set of training rules for athletes, which reflect the core values of Life Way Christian School Athletic Program.
- Strive to develop the qualities of Christian leadership, initiative, and good judgment in each team member.
- Communicate and interpret the team goals and objectives to athletes and parents.
- Provide a safe environment for practice and competition.
- Gain an awareness of the importance of prevention, care, and treatment of athletic injuries.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of the game official.
- Build and maintain relationships with other coaches and administrators.
- Strive for excellence in coaching skills and techniques through professional improvement.

COACHES – cont'd.

- Promote personal fitness and good nutrition.
- Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.
- Encourage a healthy respect for the overall Athletic Program and its vital role in education.

PARENTS

Parents of student athletes have a responsibility to both their child and to the team. With strong parental support, the student athlete will be able to achieve his/her greatest potential. Parents play a vital role in being part of the team. They should be supportive and encourage coaches and team players at all times.

"The success of any program depends upon the support of it greatest fans."

It is important for each parent to provide positive reinforcement and take an active role in being a part of the team.

- Honor the Lord when attending athletic events.
- Represent your school and community well with positive interaction with opposing fans and players.
- Use positive verbal support for the team.
- Respect and acknowledge the integrity/judgment of the officials.
- Display modesty in victory and graciousness in defeat.
- Make every effort to see that your athlete attends all practices and games
- Encourage your athlete to give maximum effort in the classroom, on the field/court, and in life.
- Take an active interest in your athlete's sport.
- Communicate politely with the coach if you have any issues or concerns. If a resolution is not found, take those issues or concerns to the Athletic Director.

Youth sports can be an emotional experience. The physical activity of the athletes can often spill into the stands and create strong reactions in coaches and parents. Therefore, it is important to separate an athlete's sports development from game emotions. For this reason, all discussion between parent and coach should be

moved away from the presence of the players. The coaches and administration desire a resolution to all parental concerns and wish them to be fully addressed in a reasonable discussion. Most importantly, the athlete's enjoyment of a game should not be marred by an ill-timed confrontation.

In order for Life Way Christian School Athletic Program to be successful, it is imperative that coaches, student athletes, and parents adhere to the mandate to glorify God at all times:

"And whatever you do, whether in word of deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

~Colossians 3:17

ATHLETES

A Life Way Christian School athlete is a servant of God and a defender of the Christian faith. He/She is to follow Jesus' example and apply it to the sport, the team, and daily life. The athlete is to do his/her best to live up to the expectations that go with representing family, teammates, and school authorities.

". . .To whom much is given, much is required . . ."

~Luke 12:4

Sportsmanship:

- Be a leader; practice good sportsmanship as an example for others to follow.
- Be a positive encouragement to your teammates during games and at practices.
- Be respectful to coaches, teammates, and your opponents.
- Be diligent in preparation.
- Give your best each and every day at games and practices.
- Strive to have fun during your sports experience by coming to practice with the intent of becoming a better athlete, and more importantly, a better person.
- Be courteous and never argue with the coach or the referee. Understand they have a difficult job and respect their decisions.
- Win with humility and lose with dignity.

Health and Safety:

- Respect your body and lead a healthy lifestyle.
- Respect the rules as outlined by your coach.
- Do not engage in any behavior which could injure someone else.

Expectations:

- Arrive early for practices and games and come prepared to play.
- Attend every practice and every game if physically able.
- Notify the coach in a timely manner if unable to attend.
- Do the very best in all your classes.
- Remember that participating in sports is an opportunity to learn, grow, and have fun.
- Respect team rules and will be polite in discussing concerns with your coach.

ELIGIBILITY

Life Way Christian School is a member of the Arkansas Activities Association. All student athletes must be exemplary members of the student body. Minimum standards of academic achievement have been adopted in order for student athletes to establish and maintain eligibility. In order to be eligible, students must meet the following criteria:

- Students must sign a waiver releasing the school from liability in case of accidents or incidents that may occur during the athletic competition.
- Students must have an annual sports physical on file through DragonFly.
- Students must be enrolled in at least one (1) class in order to participate.
- If transferring from a AAA member school student must have a signed CSAP form.
- Students must be passing with at least a sixty (60) percent in all classes and have a grade point an average (GPA) of 2.0 or higher.
- Students must maintain a good attitude and proper conduct.
- Students must attend school for more than half of the school day on the day of an event in order to be eligible to participate in that day's practice or game unless given prior approval by the athletic director or administrator.

- Students must be in good disciplinary standing. A disciplinary action severe enough to warrant student suspension is certainly serious enough to eliminate the student athlete from all participation in interscholastic sports for a least the duration of the suspension. Therefore, any suspension, whether in school or out of school, as deemed by the Life Way Christian School Administration, will render a student athlete ineligible to attend practice or games during the time of the suspension.

Participation Fees:

The participation fees are essential to help with the cost of the athletic program, game officials, tournament entry fees, supplementary equipment and supplies, and uniforms. Fees are $150 per student, per sport. Each sport may require additional charges during the season; but these are for items that the student athlete will be able to keep even after the season ends. Fees should be paid prior to competing in a game.

Physical Form and Parental Consent:

In order for a student to be allowed to try out for a team or practice with a team, he/she must have a current sports physical completed and on file through DragonFly prior to the tryout or first practice of each year.

Student Athlete Code of Conduct:

All Life Way Christian School student athletes will adhere to the following code of conduct. A violation can result in suspension or expulsion from an athletic team.

As an expression of Life Way Christian School's mission, the discipline policy is intended to support the discipleship process for students and to serve as a reflection of Jesus Christ and as an extension of the home. As such, the primary purpose of the discipline process is to produce growth in students while maintaining an environment of learning and order, providing a support to parents, and reflecting Scriptural principles of conduct and influence. In keeping with this purpose, the Scriptural principles that provide the foundation for the discipline policy are as follows:

- The responsibility of parents for the education of their children – *Deuteronomy 6:6-9*
- The submission to authority – *I Peter 2:13-17*
- The principle of reaping and sowing – *Galatians 6:7-8*
- The guidelines for confrontation, restoration, and separation – *Matthew 18:15-17*

Under the guidelines of these Scriptural principles, the goal of Life Way Christian School through disciplinary process is to:

- Provide an environment of order and respect that promotes an atmosphere conducive to learning.
- Apply necessary and appropriate consequences for choices.
- Keep lines of communication open with parents by communicating disciplinary outcomes.
- Guide in the restoration of relationships with Jesus Christ and with Life Way Christian School, its employees, and its students.
- Use relational influence to produce spiritual growth, correction, and right choices.
- Do so in a context that seeks the best interest of both the involved parties and the student body as a whole.

The conduct of participants in athletics at Life Way Christian School, in or out of school, year-round shall be as follows:

- Should not discredit our school, teammates, coaches, or Jesus Christ.
- Should not create a disruptive influence on the disciplinary, moral, or educational environment in our school.

Student athletes are expected to demonstrate the following behaviors and characteristics:

- Integrity in the keeping of one's word, speaking the truth, carrying out responsibility, and respecting authority. Athletes are to fulfill the obligations to their team. Therefore, they should not quit the team prior to the end of the season.
- Communication with coaches, teachers, and Athletic Director.

- Respect for self, Life Way Christian School, coaches, officials, fans, and the property of others and the school.
- Courtesy is extended in all relationships – athlete to athlete and athlete to coach.
- Stewardship in the care of property, supplies, and equipment of Life Way Christian School, as well as stewardship of personal items.
- Reconciliation through Biblical and appropriate repentance and forgiveness when offenses have been committed or received.

Student athletes are expected to refrain from the following behaviors and characteristics:

- Tardiness to practices and competitions
- Use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs.
- Careless and reckless behavior
- Inappropriate use of cellular phones, cameras, and other electronic devices
- Inappropriate public displays of romantic affection
- Profanity and vulgar or offensive speech or gestures
- Dishonesty in any form
- Rebellious or disrespectful attitude
- Harassment, bullying, or hazing in any form

Life Way Christian School reserves the right to implement a drug testing policy. Parents will be notified before any student is tested.

Part-time Student Eligibility

- Must go through the student enrollment process and pay the enrollment fees
- Live within a 25-mile radius of the school
- Pay the athletic fee of $150
- Be enrolled in at least 1 class
- Students transferring from a AAA member school or homeschool must enroll before June 1st of their 7th grade year (9th grade for varsity sports) or be required to not participate in JH Varsity/Varsity level sports for 365 days. Students transferring after their 10th grade year will not be eligible for 365 days.

TRYOUTS

Due to a limited number of uniforms, it is necessary for students to try out for an athletic team. In order to tryout, the student must meet the following criteria:

- Student must have a physical examination completed and on file through DragonFly.
- Student must be passing all classes with at least a sixty (60) percent and have a grade point average (GPA) of 2.0.

TEAM RULES

Each head coach will furnish the athletes with specific rules that apply to that team. Team rules and discipline may go beyond those listed in this handbook, but cannot be of lesser standard. The Athletic Director must approve these individual team rules.

ATTENDANCE

Practice and Games

Each member of a Life Way Christian School athletic team must assume the responsibilities associated with such a position. The athlete has an ethical obligation to the team and to the school. This obligation includes regular attendance at practices and athletic competitions.

Emergency situations may arise that render it impossible for an athlete to attend a practice or contest. Absences should be few and far between and arranged with the coach as early as possible. Absences from practice or games may result in not playing. This is at the coach's discretion.

School

A student athlete must attend school on the days of an athletic practice or game in order to participate in that practice or game. Students who are absent from part of the school day and are granted an excused absence (e.g., a dental appointment) will be allowed to participate in the practice or contest that day.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITIY

Academics take priority over athletics at Life Way Christian School. To be eligible for participation in sports, student athletes must have a grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 in the previous semester and must be passing all classes with above sixty (60) percent. Grade checks will be done of the following dates:

September 18
October 9
November 13
December 18
January 29
March 12
April 16

If a student is failing one or more classes, that student **will not** be allowed to compete in games and **will not** be allowed to travel with the team for a least two weeks. The student **will** be allowed to continue to practice. The student will be required to participate in the Supplemental Instruction Program (SIP) for a minimum of 100 minutes each week they are in SIP. Should the student need to miss a practice in order to address the failing grade, this will be viewed as an excused absence. After two weeks, grades will be checked again for that student. If he/she is passing, he/she **will be** reinstated to competition.

If the student is still failing (below 60% in one class) after the two-week check, that student will then be **ineligible** until the next official grade check (progress report or quarter) and **will not** be able to compete in games or travel with the team.

If a student fails to meet the 2.0 GPA requirement for the previous semester, they will be required to participate in the SIP program for the current semester in order to be eligible for athletics.

A student is restricted to a maximum of two consecutive semesters in the SIP any time a student's GPA falls below a 2.0 for the previous semester.

DISPUTES AND PROBLEM SOLVING

All disputes at Life Way Christian School should be handled in a Biblical manner. In particular, Life Way Christian School encourages application of the "Matthew 18 Principle" when handling a problem and settling a dispute. This principle encourages the offended party to go directly to the one with whom he/she has a problem. The student athlete should talk to the coach at an appropriate time prior to parental involvement and prior to going directly to the Athletic Director.

It is necessary that this chain of command be followed precisely. If not, the upper-level authorities will direct the offended party to solve the problem at the appropriate level.

Chain of Command Protocol

Player → Coach

Parent → Coach

Parent → Athletic Director

Parent → School Principal

Parent → Head of School

ISSUES NOT APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS WITH A COACH

- Playing time
- Team strategy
- Other student athletes

NO QUIT POLICY

If a student is fortunate enough to be selected for a position on one of the Life Way Christian School athletic teams, it is important that he/she makes a firm commitment to that team. Should a student quit a team, he/she will be in jeopardy of not being able to try out for the next sports' season depending on the circumstances for quitting.

PLAYING TIME POLICY

While it is true that our coaches and administrative personnel believe it to be important to broaden the experience of Life Way Christian School athletes; and that broadening is enhanced by playing time, it is also an important goal of the Life Way Christian School Athletic Program to strive toward excellence. Therefore, no minimum per game playing time provisions or minimum numbers of athletic meets in which athletes must compete are established at the varsity level. At the Junior High level, we strongly encourage our coaches to make certain all members of the team get playing time; but it is not guaranteed and may differ from game to game.

STARTING A SEASON LATE

A student may start a season late if the reasons are acceptable to the coach and the Athletic Director.

ACCIDENTS/INJURIES

Coaches are certified in CPR, First Aid, and AED. If an accident or injury occurs and is witnessed by a coach, the athlete will be evaluated by his/her coach. The coach will submit a written accident report to the Athletic Director within 24 hours. If the injury is serious, the coach will call emergency services and the parents.

All injuries should be treated with caution and handled with care. The parents will be contacted in the event of all injuries.

Coaches treat any acknowledged condition in the confidential manner with which the information is related by the parent or guardian. If an athlete misses practice on the request of a physician, the athlete should have a note of clearance before returning to practice.

If a student is diagnosed with a concussion. They will need complete the concussion protocol set by the Arkansas Activities Association before returning to competition.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

The Athletic Director, in consultation with the coach and officials, will make decisions based on the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) guidelines for student athlete safety. The goal is to have a decision made by 2 p.m. for any cancellations.

SCHEDULES

The scheduling of all athletic events and practices is determined by the Athletic Director in cooperation with each coach. The coach may issue a schedule to the students and parents as soon as possible in each season. Athletic practices will be scheduled from Monday-Friday with an occasional approved Saturday.

TEAM PICTURES

A professional photographer will take team and individual pictures each season. The pictures are for purchase but that is optional. Every member of the team will have a picture taken for yearbook purposes regardless of purchase.

SCHOOL EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS

Students are responsible for all equipment issued to them. Athletic uniforms are supplied for the sole purpose of athletic participation. The equipment is not to be used for any other purpose.

When the season is over, all equipment and uniforms are to be returned to the coach who will keep inventory of all items issued to the team. The coach will then submit the end of season inventory list to the Athletic Director in a timely manner following the season.

The parent is responsible for the dollar replacement cost of any lost or damaged school issued equipment or uniforms.

CANCELLATIONS AND CHANGES

It is necessary at times to cancel games and practices at the last minute. These changes will be done through email and the student calling parents.

PARENT MEETINGS

All parents of student athletes are required to attend a pre-season meeting with the coaching staff of that sport. The meeting shall be held before the first contest. Parents will be informed of all rules for their sport as well as the rules of Life Way Christian School.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Along with the necessary financial costs, parents should be aware of the necessary service/costs associated with athletic participation in their athlete's sport. This participation which is required by all parents includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Concession sales
- Basic assistance at home contests
- Special event/tournament volunteer work
- Other needs as directed or requested by that team's coach

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ATHLETIC HANDBOOK AND CODE OF CONDUCT

2026-2027

In order to be a part of this Athletic Program,
this form must be signed by the player and parent.

I have read and understand the expectations of being an athlete at Life Way Christian School, and I agree to be held by these expectations.

Player Name (Printed)	Player Signature
Parent/Guardian Name (Printed)	Parent Signature

Date