

Word of God Academy
Student Athlete Handbook
2024-2025



Requirements for Participation

-Students must be in good standing with business offices, admission's offices, and meet minimum academic standards.

-Updated ACEL Physical forms must be on file in the athletic department. Physicals are good for one calendar year from the date signed by the physician.

-Student Athletes are expected to be in school the day of an athletic contest. If a student misses school for an illness or doctor/dentist appointment, he/she must attend ½ of their academic classes to be eligible to participate in the contest. The Administration reserves the right to allow a student to participate based on proper documentation from parents.

Student Athlete Code of Conduct

Word of God Academy believes co-curricular activities are necessary to supplement the curriculum of the school and provide meaningful and educational experiences for each student. Since participation in athletics is **voluntary** and all groups and organizations must exist within a framework of certain policies, rules, and regulations, the Athletic Department has developed the following code of conduct:

A. All athletes must abide by all regular school policies and the ACEL regulations. All athletes must adhere to these policies during the full duration of their season including all conditioning sessions and postseason competitions (tournaments).

B. Appropriate care must be taken of all equipment, school facilities, and properties. Athletes will be held **financially responsible** for any damage or loss through **their** negligence.

C. All athletes shall report any injuries or illness to their respective coaches immediately upon occurrence.

D. The athlete shall be expected to attend **all required practices, meetings and contests**. The appropriate coach shall be notified of an absence. No season is over until all contests and tournament games are completed.

E. Athletes quitting a sport after being selected as a member of that team will not be eligible to participate in the next season's contests or practices until all practices and contests for the prior season are completed.

F. Athletes who are under any type of medication shall have on file with the coach (or athletic director) a note from the parent/guardian and/or doctor.

G. All athletes shall abide by all regular school policies and by the code on student suspensions, expulsions, and removals that was adopted by the School.

H. Athletes who engage in any criminal activity or violations of civil law will be denied participation in a co-curricular program.

I. Athletes shall abide by additional rules and regulations presented normally to all team members of a particular sport by the coaches. It is the policy of the Athletic Department to prohibit the use by students of any tobacco product, alcoholic product, or drugs not prescribed by a physician.

Specific Expectations of the Student-Athlete

- A. Be on time (15-20 min before) for practice, games, bus departure and class.
- B. All coaches, game officials and school administrators are to be treated with respect.
- C. Athletes will conduct themselves in a manner that is pleasing to God, be supportive of their teammates and always give their best.
- D. Proper attire must be worn at all times. **Individual coaches** may set sport specific equipment/attire fashion and grooming requirements.
 - Any student not abiding by the game day dress code will be sent to detention. If the student-athlete misses half of their academic classes due to detention, they will not be eligible to participate in the contest.
- E. Jewelry is strictly prohibited during **all practice and games**.
- F. It is the **student-athletes responsibility** to communicate with their coach if practice time is missed due to academic responsibilities. Communication should be done prior to missing a game or practice.
- G. **Understand that coaches reserve the right to enforce team policies and rules.**
Consequences may include: reduced playing time, extra conditioning, and extra practice or written assignments.

As members of athletic teams, athletes are high-profile representatives of WOGA. Students are expected to act in an appropriate manner. The following behaviors are inappropriate and will not be tolerated:

- Fighting
- Profanity
- Use of/being under the influence of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs
- Unsportsmanlike conduct
- Rude or disrespectful behavior on and off the field/court
- Taunting opponents or officials
- Destruction of property
- Obscene gestures
- Derogatory or degrading comments

Students who exhibit any of the above behaviors or any other inappropriate behavior may be suspended from athletic competition pending further investigation. The AD, the coach, and the HOS will determine the length of suspension.

Unsportsmanlike or Inappropriate Conduct

- Any act of unsportsmanlike or inappropriate conduct will be dealt with swiftly. If the act occurs during an athletic contest, the student may be removed from the contest by the head coach.
- A student who strikes, curses, or threatens an official or coach during a game, or at any other time, because of resentment over occurrences or decisions, or who fails to maintain a standard of conduct satisfactory to WOGA and/or ACEL will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary action.
- A student who is ejected from a contest for a flagrant foul or unsportsmanlike conduct shall be **ineligible to participate in any contest for one week**. If no contests are scheduled during that week, the student will miss the next game, or the next two contests in any other sport,

and must pay the fine, if assessed, by the ACEL.

- All students who act in an unsportsmanlike manner, resulting in a letter/penalty, will be required to meet with the AD before resuming athletic participation.

Dismissal Offenses

- The following is an overview of the philosophy of the WOGA Athletic Department on potential dismissal from a team. ***This should be a last resort*** because we cannot reach or teach students if they are not present. For the coach to decide to dismiss a student athlete, the coach should feel that keeping the athlete would destroy the team or his/her ability to make progress with the team.
- Behaviors in the range of “dismissal offenses” for the student athlete:
 - Lying, cheating, stealing or aiding another to do so
 - Drinking alcohol, ***smoking anything, steroid use***, or any involvement in illicit drugs
 - Behavior that causes the coach to consider the athlete an undermining influence because of repeated examples of poor attitude, attendance, or work habits.

The coach will not summarily dismiss a student in violation. The AD and Head of School will be given detailed information regarding an incident that includes the possibility of dismissal from the team. It could be that the offense, on the surface, does not seem to rise to the level of dismissal, but the coach has cumulative information regarding the student athlete that puts the athlete in the category of incorrigible. It could be that the student’s cumulative attitude and behavior damage the chemistry of the team and the coach’s ability to succeed. The decision to dismiss a student athlete will be determined jointly by the AD, Head of School and the coach.

Spectator Code of Conduct

Attending an athletic event means that the spectator has assumed responsibility for proper representation of Word of God Academy, just as the athlete does. These rules apply to all spectators (parents, students, fans, etc.):

- Spectators should conduct themselves in a Christ-like manner; remembering that they are representing Word of God Academy at all times.
- Parents are to be supportive of their child, give positive reinforcement and have an accepting behavior of their child’s abilities. However, ***please don’t coach from the stands at games and or practice; that is the coach’s job.***
- Parents should trust the coaching staff to be good role models and Christian examples of what is right for the players, the sport and the academy.
- Spectators are always to regard the official’s decision as final.
- Parents and spectators are not allowed to enter home locker rooms, visiting locker rooms or official’s locker rooms.
- Spectators are to cheer positively and are to completely avoid abusive language.
- Spectators are not permitted to engage in any kind of intentional display of rude behavior toward visiting teams.
- Spectators are to respect and obey property regulations established by each school.

- Spectators who are asked to leave or be removed from a game by the Word of God Academy staff **will be subject to a minimum of three game suspensions (next 3 games). If a game official removes you from a game, you will be suspended from all home and away competitions for the remainder of the season. This applies for all home and away games.**

**These rules are in effect at both home and away games for Word of God Academy athletes, students, spectators, and parents, even when not observed by opposing teams and fans. Failure to meet these standards will result in disciplinary action. Any spectator situation will be reported to the Head of School via the Athletic Director. Because we are a Kingdom Education Academy, we expect a high level of Biblical morals and values to be displayed at our athletic events.*

Dealing with Conflict on Athletic Teams

Parent/Coach Relationship

Both parenting and coaching are difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to our children. As parents, when your child becomes involved in our programs, you have an obligation to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

Communication Parents Should Expect From Their Child's Coach

- Philosophy of the coach and statement of commitment to Jesus Christ, the child, and his/her family
- Expectations the coach has for the child, as well as other players on the team
- Locations and times of all practices and contests
- Team requirements will be announced during the pre-season parent/player meeting (i.e. special equipment, off-season conditioning, tournaments etc.)
- Procedures if an athlete is injured during practice/contest
- Discipline that may result in the denial of an athlete's participation

Communication Coaches Should Expect From Parents

- As children become involved in the athletic programs, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way athletes or their parents wish. At this time, discussion with the coach is encouraged.
- Concerns expressed directly to the coach
- Parents' commitment not to be an agent of division, or gossip in the community
- Notification, well in advance, of any schedule conflicts
- Specific concerns in regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations
- Medical or physical limitations of the child

Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with Coaches

- The treatment of the child: spiritually, relationally, emotionally, and athletically
- Ways to help the child improve or concern about child's behavior

Issues Not Appropriate to Discuss with Coaches Outside of a Private Setting

It is very difficult for parents to accept their child's not playing as much as they may hope. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be

the best for all athletes involved. Here are the items not appropriate to discuss with the coach.

- Playing time
- Team strategy
- Play calling
- Other student athletes

Procedures to Follow When a Player/Parent has a Concern with the Coach

There are some situations that may require a conference between the player and the coach and the parent and the coach. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these times of conflict arise, here is the established Chain of Command to follow:

Step 1 – Athlete to Head Coach

We believe that student athletes should be able to approach his/her coach with regards to conflicts that arise on athletic teams. Parents are asked to encourage their child to deal directly with the team's head coach.

Step 2 – Parent to Head Coach

Once your child has met with his/her head coach, parents are welcome to set up meetings with the head coach of their child's teams. Such discussions should be done with a professional demeanor. ***Parents are not allowed to approach coaches immediately before or after contests and must follow the 24-hour rule.*** This action will not be tolerated in our department. Failing to comply can result in your child's loss of privilege to participate.

Step 3 – Parent to Athletic Director

If the proper channels of communication have been followed and the conflict is still not resolved, parents are encouraged to set up a meeting with the athletic director. Please contact the athletic department to schedule this meeting. This will allow the proper allotment of time to be scheduled for the meeting. A follow-up meeting with parent, student-athlete, head coach and AD will take place if necessary.

Step 4 – Parent to Head of School

If steps 1-3 have been followed and the conflict is not resolved, a meeting with the Head of School can be set up through the upper school office.

Understand the Chain of Command.

*If at any point during an athletic season, behavior of a Word of God Academy coaching staff member is observed that would be considered unethical in regards to the Christian morals, values and standards of our school, please notify the AD directly.

Player Pick up Policy

-All athletes must be picked up no later than 20 min after the scheduled end time of practice/games

-If parent is running late, communication is mandatory to the head coach

-If tardiness becomes a routine, meeting with Coach/AD will take place

-Parents please be mindful of your coaches time away from family. Coaches please be mindful of times that you have scheduled and stick to them

Middle School Athletics Philosophy

Competitive Teaching - Our desire is to utilize our middle school athletic teams to teach the basic concepts of competitive athletics. Middle school athletics will be a combination of participation, basic skill development, and basic knowledge of rules, sportsmanship, and the development of an understanding of working in a team environment. Our desire is to use our middle school teams as a feeder system for our varsity teams. With this being said, middle school student-athletes are held to the same standards of discipline, behavior, commitment and academic standard as varsity athletics. At the middle school level multiple sport participation is encouraged. Whenever possible, cutting will be avoided on middle school sports teams. However, some sports are limited to a manageable number of team members. The AD will have final say on limiting the number of spots available on each team (see tryout policy for more details on tryout process).

Junior Varsity Athletics Philosophy

Competitive Development – Our junior varsity teams are used to prepare student-athletes grades 9-11 for varsity competition. This level is also used as a transition period for athletes who are not ready to compete on the varsity level yet. Junior varsity teams will be created based on participation numbers, facilities, and logistic capabilities. If at all possible, junior varsity teams will practice and workout with the varsity team. Schedules for this level will be abbreviated to maximize varsity play. ***No senior is allowed to compete on the junior varsity level.***

Varsity Athletics Philosophy

Competitive Excellence – Our goal on the varsity level is to compete at the very highest level possible without compromising our values as a Christian school. The varsity level requires the greatest commitment, self-discipline and work ethic. At this level, our kids are expected to train under our coaching staff pre-season, post-season and in-season. At the varsity level we expect their number one priority to be Word of God Academy, not club, AAU, travel, etc. Varsity coaches' priority is to play athletes that best embrace their system and are committed to our team's success. Varsity level teams are limited in number and are subject to a tryout process if necessary.

Varsity Tryouts

It is our desire to see as many students involved during the athletic season as possible. However, due to facility space, time constraints, and manageable numbers on some sports teams, tryouts are necessary. In sports with limits on the number of participants a tryout process will be in effect to select the team. Our tryout process is as follows:

1. There will be a minimum of 2 evaluation workouts.

Skill drills, dependability, effort, and team leadership are also part of a coach's evaluation. In addition, there are other attributes that coaches look for:

- Muscular strength
- Muscular endurance
- Flexibility
- Cardiovascular fitness
- Sports specific skills
- Vertical leap and agility (ability to move and change directions)

2. The tryout process will be communicated to the team prior to the beginning of workouts.

This will ensure that each student-athlete is aware of the following expectations:

- a. Length of tryout period will be a minimum of two days.
 - b. Objectives used to select members of the team.
 - c. Distribution of practice and completion schedules.
 - d. Explain the commitment necessary to join the team
 - e. Academic standards
 - f. Classroom behavior and discipline
3. Attendance is required for making a team. You must attend both workouts.
4. The head coach and his/her staff will select the Varsity team.
5. The head coach will notify student-athletes who do not make the team prior to the release of the final roster.
6. During the tryout process, head coaches will be working directly with the AD to work through any special situations that may arise (injury, illness, etc.)
7. ***Parents are not allowed to attend the tryout process.***
8. ***Risk of Participation Disclaimer: Participation in interscholastic athletics can lead to possible injury. Word of God Academy and staff have taken every precaution to prevent such injuries, but the risk of injury is possible with any physical activity. Word of God Academy is not liable for any injury due to participation in the sports program***

Participation Fees

Our athletic participation fee has been set by our business office and is necessary for the athletic department's operations. The fee is non-refundable. Participation Fees are as follows:

- \$225 for 1st sport (Junior Varsity or Varsity)
- \$185 for 2nd sport (Junior Varsity or Varsity)

- \$185 for 1st Sport (Middle School)
- \$125 for 2nd sport (Middle School)

Equipment/Uniform Policy

1. Team uniforms and equipment are the property of Word of God Academy and must be treated with care. Uniforms must be kept clean and under security. Uniforms and warm ups are for game use only and are not to be worn as street wear. Report any loss, theft or damage to uniforms and warm ups to the respective coach. Lost, stolen, intentionally damaged uniforms and/or equipment must be replaced at cost.

NOTE: Since uniforms and warm ups must be ordered in large quantities, carelessness becomes expensive. Equipment will be repaired or replaced at the athlete's expense, at over the counter cost. The student-athlete's school account will be billed for the amount of the replacement.

2. At the end of each season, all uniform components and equipment must be returned in good condition and on the date specified by the head coach. An automatic \$75.00 fine will be assessed if uniforms are not received to the head coach.
3. Uniforms must be turned in to the head coach.

Sexual Ethics Policy

Word of God Academy affirms the biblical understanding of sexuality as a gift from God (Genesis 2:24) as defined in His Word. In concert with biblical teaching, WOGA supports the principle and practice of purity in singleness and fidelity in marriage, which is the union of one man and one woman. In addition, WOGA recognizes that the gift of gender is part of the goodness of God's creation and is predetermined by God and revealed at conception. Lifestyles or practices inconsistent with these biblical teachings are also inconsistent with the mission of WOGA. WOGA affirms the biblical teaching that all sexual conduct outside the sanctity of marriage, including both hetero and homosexuality, is a sin, a turning away from God's ideal as outlined in Scripture. WOGA understands that while we all fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), the grace of God poured out through the blood of His Son calls us to repentance, forgiveness and a new life in Christ (2 Corinthians 7:10, 12:21; 2 Timothy 2:25; 2 Peter 3:9). We understand that these issues are very personal in nature, and great discretion will be given in dealing with such matters – our purpose is not to bring shame or discomfort to an individual or family. However, nor will our actions negotiate the veracity of biblical absolutes on the altar of cultural convenience and compromise. Consequently, our policy for all WOGA students, staff, parents/guardians and board members calls for devotion to a biblical standard of purity. When confronted as a result of not observing these biblical standards, continued involvement with WOGA would necessitate a contrite heart before the Lord. In addition to personal behavior, board members, staff, students, parents/guardians and their families are expected not to participate in advocacy groups that promote sexuality contrary to biblical teaching. WOGA may determine a consequence for the individual that is appropriate for the act committed. In doing so, the school shall offer counsel and assistance to the individual so that the consequence imposed may be a catalyst for redemption in his or her life. If a continued relationship with WOGA and any member of the WOGA staff, board, student body or parental body is deemed to be damaging to (or a distraction from) the mission of WOGA, appropriate action, which could include dismissal, may be necessary. WOGA will respond to such issues with an appropriate combination of grace and truth.

HAZING/BULLYING/PEER HARASSMENT POLICY

Hazing or peer harassment that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental health, physical health, or safety of a student for initiation or membership in, or affiliation with any team will not be tolerated. All athletes must be given the opportunity to compete without threat of any type of abuse. Coaches have a responsibility to maintain a safe and positive environment for all athletes. Students are encouraged to notify coaches or other school personnel of instances of hazing or harassment. Anyone engaging in these behaviors is subject to being dismissed from the team. Zero tolerance!