

VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT HANDBOOK

2015-16



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This athletic handbook outlines for administration and coaching staff important information concerning the athletic program at Valley Christian School. It is comprehensive, yet not exhaustive. Any comments/clarifications should be directed to the athletic director.

The athletic program is an important part of the overall educational experience of students at VCS and must conform to the school's philosophy of Christian education. Athletic competition must never be allowed to damage the testimony of Jesus Christ or the philosophy and ministry of the school.

PHILOSOPHY OF ATHLETICS

"For physical training is of some value, but Godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. | Timothy 4:8 (NIV)

The Athletic Department at VCS desires to present itself to God and not to man. Our coaches, staff, and student athletes should strive to give their all as they represent VCS and Jesus Christ. Whether in the classroom or on the field, all abilities: mental, emotional, physical and spiritual should be used for the Lord. This requires a commitment to excellence in all we do.

- ❖ **NO Student-Athlete may participate in any pre-season workout, practice, scrimmage or contest until the Code of Conduct, Athletic Participation Fee, OSHAA Physical Form, Emergency Medical Form, and Concussion form are all returned to your coach.**

VCS Athletic Programs Christian Worldview Integration Philosophy

The Athletic Programs include Football, Boys and Girls Basketball, Cheerleading, Volleyball, Girls Soccer, Track & Field, Baseball, Wrestling, Swimming, and Softball. In all of these athletic opportunities the focus is on skill improvement and Christian character development rather than primarily on winning. Learning from competition and seeking to win is important in all sports, but a singular focus on winning is the idolatry of sports in the secular world. In Christian worldview integration philosophy of athletics the first emphasis is on health and positive development. Not all students who participate in athletic programs can be competitive winners, but all can improve their health and overall performance. In Christ our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit so that under the Lordship of Christ we are to glorify God with our bodies (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Different sports develop different types of coordination and skill. The physical conditioning in all athletics improves student fitness, and important antidote to an electronic-focused era when you people are less active than previous generations.

Paul embraced the importance of disciplining the body like an athlete to develop self-control (1 Cor. 9:24-27). Virtues from athletics include participating with a positive attitude, building physical skills, learning teamwork, developing leadership qualities and self-respect, as well as a strong work ethic. As emphasized in the ACSI approach to athletics, our Athletic Programs are means of discipleship and testimony as ambassadors for Christ (2Cor. 5:20) where victory in Christ can be won through achieving things like: praying together for each other, showing teamwork, demonstrating respect for coaches and officials, encouraging other, responding to adversity with courage, using circumstances to witness, and even showing love of opponents!

The goal of competing successfully and winning is a good goal when God is glorified. As the famous missionary Eric Liddell (Chariots of Fire) said, "God made me (to be a missionary) for China, but he also made me fast, and I feel God's pleasure when I run!" Purified by Christian values, all of the classical benefits of athletics are God's blessings. The joy of play and healthy competition are God-given gifts for students to enjoy.

LOVE MORE, EXPECT MORE, BE MORE

The athletic department works to support that motto through athletic competition that honors God by our actions and attitudes during practice and competition. In acknowledgement of that commitment we recognize that winning is merely the object of the contest, not the sole purpose of the competition. We believe that the nature of athletic competition offers immeasurable opportunities to develop Christ-like character traits while training to face difficult tasks that mirror life's challenges. In a society that often encourages and honors those who would use athletics for selfish gain, our commitment through the athletic program is to prepare our student-athletes for the ultimate test: life as a follower of Christ.

OUR PROGRAM

Valley Christian School is unique in that it is one campus accommodating grades K-12 that offers a diverse selection of student activities including multiple options in sports programs through the athletic department. The athletic department strives to offer each school a selection of sports activities that allow skill and competitive development that are physically and emotionally appropriate at that school level. The athletic program is an integral part of the educational program at Valley Christian School. Our desire for the athletic program is to build character and to develop qualities necessary for Christian leadership in young men and women. This is accomplished through hard work, discipline in facing difficult challenges and being pressed to meet their fullest potential. The athletic program affords students the opportunity to see themselves as they are, each with their unique abilities and limitations.

The athletic department wants our young students to confidently explore their athletic interests in all sports, regardless of their previous experience, skill level, or game knowledge. As their interest, skill and commitments peak they will eventually compete at the high school level in an arena that is highly competitive and challenges their individual and team skills. It is the desire of the athletic department that the culmination of participating in our programs will meet the student-athletes' desires to compete, use the gifts and talents that God has blessed them with, and have an experience that has a positive impact for a lifetime.

THE VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ATHLETIC FAMILY

A reflection of our commitment to excellence, our school and our witness to the community is through our student-athletes, parents and fans. By design, training and expectation, the VCS student-athlete should have the following attributes: be diligent in preparation, relentless in effort, disciplined by nature, respectful in actions, self-controlled with words, humble in spirit, and aggressive in the pursuit of excellence, without regard to the score, opponent, time or referee.

As Christian student-athletes display these characteristics, good things usually happen; teams are successful, players are motivated, fans are supportive and enthusiastic, parents are proud, perspective student-athletes want to participate, and very often non-believers are drawn to Christ.

SPORTS OFFERED BY VCS

VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL offers students a variety of sports in which to participate. These sports are usually offered during three distinct seasons: fall, winter, and spring.

Girls may participate in the following sports:

Fall: volleyball (HS & MS) cheer (HS & MS)

Winter: basketball (HS & MS), swim (HS), cheer (HS, MS)

Spring: softball, track (HS),

Boys may participate in the following sports:

Fall: football (HS & MS)

Winter: basketball (HS & MS), swim (HS), wrestling (HS)

Spring: track (HS), baseball (HS)

PARTICIPATION

Valley Christian offers a wide range of opportunities to participate in athletics and extracurricular activities and these are open to every student. Any student wishing to participate in a given sport at Valley Christian must be cleared through the athletic department.

The requirements for participation include:

- Payment of designated athletic fee
- OHSAA Physical form – checked and cleared
- Concussion form
- Emergency Medical Form
- Academically eligible
- Parent/guardian must attend the OHSAA Mandatory pre-season meeting
- All OHSAA eligibility requirements (OHSAA.org)

Coaches will need to work hand-in-hand with the athletic department to ensure they have a cleared roster with respect to the above requirements.

Student-Athletes will not be allowed to practice or participate until all the above requirements are completed and on file. It is not acceptable for a coach to allow a prospective student-athlete to participate until everything has been completed and on file.

No student-athlete can participate in practice, scrimmage, or games for any sport, until physicals have been performed. This is State law – no exceptions.

OHSAA by-laws states that an annual physical examination certifying that a student is physically fit to participate in athletics is required **before** a student may try-out, practice or participate in interscholastic competition.

VCS provides an opportunity each school year to obtain a physical examination. Check the school calendar on the website for the date and time of the physical offering. Appointment times are assigned based on the order in which the paperwork is completed and returned to the Athletic Department. No physical examination will be given until all forms are completed and turned in.

The cost of a physical is \$20.00. Check should be made payable to VCS.

Physicals are good for one year beginning May to April.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

Students must adhere to the following to remain eligible for participation:

Maintain Academic Eligibility

Even though the athletic program is an important part of the overall VCS experience, the mission of the school remains academics. The VCS athletic department monitors the academic progress to ensure the academic eligibility of each student athlete. To accomplish this, there must be continuous clear and frequent communication between the athletic department, coaches, teachers, parents, and student-athletes. Scholastic eligibility for student athletes will be checked after three weeks (during the fourth week) of a semester and each succeeding week thereafter. VCS may choose to run eligibility checks on any day of the week.

The period of probation and ineligibility will always begin the Monday following the day eligibility is checked. Initial fall sport academic eligibility will be based on the grades earned in the final quarter of the previous year.

The high school office will publish a list of all ineligible students and send them via email to each coach. It is, however, **the responsibility of the coach** to make sure that ineligible students **do not participate** in competitions during the ineligibility period. Participation of an ineligible student will result in forfeiture and an extension of the ineligibility period.

A student-athlete must be passing in all subjects he/she is enrolled in during a semester. If a student is not passing all subjects enrolled in on the day of the grade check, he/she will be placed on probation for the next one week period. If a student is still failing one or more classes during the next week on the grade check day, he/she will be ineligible to participate during the next one week period. The ineligibility periods will begin on Monday and end on Sunday.

A student who has lost eligibility under this provision must be passing all subjects in order to regain eligibility. A student-athlete who is academically ineligible is to attend all practice sessions and all home games and sit on the bench with the team. However, an athlete who is academically ineligible may not miss any school to attend an athletic event with the team.

For some athletic events, student-athletes must be dismissed early from school and likely will miss some academic work. Early dismissal for away games or practices is never an excuse for failure to fulfill academic responsibilities. Each student-athlete is responsible for contacting teachers before early dismissal regarding work or assignments that might be missed or assignments that are due that day. Student-athletes must coordinate with the teacher to make up all missed work, including written assignments, quizzes, and tests. All assignments not completed will result in failure for that work and will jeopardize the student-athlete's academic eligibility.

Adhere to any School Policy Governing Participation:

A student must be in attendance at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of the school day to participate in that day's contest. Student-athletes must arrive at school by 11:30 to be eligible to participate in any game that afternoon or evening. Any student-athlete who leaves before 11:30 will be considered absent and, therefore, unable to participate in that day's extracurricular activities.

Student-athletes not able to arrive at school by the designated time or leave school early to due to an approved college visit, physician appointment, funeral, or Director of Athletics approved event are still eligible to participate in a game that afternoon or evening.

A student-athlete cannot miss a class more than ten times during the school year for school sponsored activities. A student-athlete who has ten activity-related absences cannot represent the school in any activity without prior approval from the Principal.

Student-athletes leaving school due to an illness **cannot return** for participation in any game that afternoon or evening.

In case of a snow day or cancellation of classes the decision on whether a game or event will be held or cancelled will be made by the Athletic Director, along with the President and the competing team's school officials.

If a student-athlete **receives a detention of any kind**, the serving of that takes precedence over attendance at practice and/or games.

Student-athletes serving **suspension** will be ineligible for any practice or game held on that day.

Any student-athlete using profanity or abusive language, or demonstrating unacceptable behavior will be subject to suspension to be determined by the coach, Athletic Director and/or administration.

Any student found to be using tobacco, alcohol, or drugs will be automatically subject to dismissal from all athletic teams for the current academic year. Any exceptions must be approved by the Athletic Director and the Principal.

Maintain OHSAA Scholastic Eligibility

OHSAA scholastic eligibility standards are required of all students engaging in co-curricular activity programs. The athletic office will verify OHSAA eligibility of each athlete and work with the head coach of each sport to complete the required paperwork in order for an athlete to participate in that sport. www.ohsaa.org

TEAM GUIDELINES

Student-athletes who earn a position on the team are expected to remain on the team throughout the season.

If a student-athlete experiences some difficulty which affects their remaining on the team, a conference with the coach, the parents, and the student-athlete must be held prior to the player leaving the team.

In the event of an unexpected medical condition which impacts a student-athlete's ability to participate, a conference with the coach, the parents, and the student-athlete will be held to identify the level of participation which is reasonable.

Student-athletes must participate in any approved fund-raising done for their participating sport program.

Excessive tardiness or absences by a student- athlete should **initially be handled by the coach**. Each coach should **have specific guidelines and penalties** established for tardies and absences. **Natural consequences for violating this policy should be motivating** in that it helps a student- athlete be more disciplined and structured in their attendance and allows for communication with the head coach when being tardy or absent is absolutely necessary. Coaches should make sure that student-athletes and parents understand their policy prior to the start of each season.

Practice Policy

Student-athletes are **required** to be at all practices. At the beginning of the season, coaches will communicate to team members their **expectations** for performance and attendance. There should be no allowances for missed practice (other than academic or medical reasons). If a student- athlete anticipates missing a practice or a game, prior notice should be given to the coach. The consequences for missing will be outlined ahead of time and then implemented. **Attendance at all practices is required for participation. Injured players are expected to attend practice to observe and learn new team strategies.**

If a student-athlete is participating in a practice not held directly after school and wishes to remain on campus, **they must remain in a supervised area until practice begins**. Coaches need to consider that student-athletes may need academic help occasionally which will involve time before or after school.

Playing Time Policy

Playing time is a privilege.

Playing time will be distributed at the discretion of the coach using the following guidelines based on level of competition:

For middle school, freshman teams, coaches are instructed to give **each** team member an opportunity to play (within their particular playing position) based on practice attendance, effort, and attitude. The ultimate **goals for these teams are sports introduction, skill development, team-building and player retention.**

For jv and varsity teams, there is **no guarantee** of playing time. Coaches are instructed to use ability, effort, and attitude, to distribute playing time. Evaluation of ability and game strategy is at the coaches' discretion. Any change in team status (junior varsity, varsity, etc.) of players will be at the discretion of the coaching staff, and will take place for the following reasons: depletion of a roster due to injury or ineligibility, changes in ability level, and team strategy.

When making cuts, the coach is responsible for evaluating each prospective student-athlete based on objective criteria. Communicating with each individual the specific reasons why he/she did not make the team will enable the student-athlete to target areas for improvement. The coach is also responsible for evaluating each student-athlete as to his/her role on the team. The coach(s) is the sole judge on who should start and how much playing time each player should receive.

Changing Sports after the Start of the Season

From the time that practice officially begins, a student- athlete cannot join or compete in another sport until after the end of the initial sport's season, except in the following situations:

- If **both coaches** involved and the Athletic Director **agrees** that a change of sport would be beneficial to the person without being unfair to the individuals on either team.
- Circumstances that common sense would warrant a return to a previous team are not possible. Injuries or OHSAA eligibility would be examples where moving an athlete on to the next sport would be applicable.

Completing a Sport and Transferring to Next Sport

Before a student-athlete is cleared to go into another sport he/she must be cleared by the previous sport's head coach. The previous coach must clear each student-athlete with the athletic office that releases them from that sport and verifies that the student-athlete has turned in any uniforms or equipment that belongs to that sport or has paid appropriate fees to cover the cost of participation, uniforms or equipment.

The coach who is receiving the student-athlete cannot practice or play that student-athlete until he/she has received verification from the athletic office that a student is cleared to participate in the next sport.

All head coaches and the Athletic Director will consult on all middle school, freshmen and JV teams that have completed their season and evaluate the benefit of individuals either staying in that sport until the varsity season is completed or moving on to the next sport. Circumstances may be different for each sport and from season to season.

In-Season, Off-Season Policy

As soon as a student-athlete has turned in all equipment and is cleared, the student-athlete may go to his next sport. If the student-athlete plays only one sport then he/she will be allowed to stay in that sport's offseason as long as there is a program and supervision.

Valley Christian is unique in that we have different grades and different sports practicing simultaneously. In the cases where there is a conflict of interest involving a multi-sport student-athlete, **the priority for practice** will be given to the sport that is **in-season** at that time. An example of this would be an athlete who is in off-season football but is now signed up for track, or baseball. The offseason program workouts would have to be approved by the head coach from the in-season sport. While this does create some conflicts it is merely a symptom of Valley Christian's growth and strain on facilities.

Multi-sporting is a necessity at Valley Christian and is encouraged. All VCS student-athletes, parents, and coaches should understand the importance of the multiple-sport athlete to our program and support, encourage, and allow students to participate in one, two, or three sports as they desire or have ability to do so. VCS is too small to build a successful balance of programs if student-athletes specialize. Dual sporting, attempting to participate in two sports simultaneously, will be reviewed on a case by case basis. **NO COACH WILL HOLD IT AGAINST AN ATHLETE FOR PARTICIPATING IN MULTIPLE SPORTS.**

It should be understood that student-athletes who are finishing one athletic season while tryouts are in progress for another season would be given special consideration and an opportunity for a delayed or abbreviated tryout. Injury, illness, and other special situations will be taken into consideration as well, but must be authorized by the varsity head coach

and Athletic Director. Coaches have to be conscious and mature enough to look at each multi-sport student-athlete and ensure that they are not conditioning athletes to only their sport.

Athletes Dismissed from a Team

A coach may not dismiss an student-athlete from his sport without approval from the Athletic Director. Each coach should **keep written documentation on incidents** leading up to a possible suspension or dismissal and communicate with a student-athlete's parents on any incidents that would jeopardize their team membership or not honor Valley Christian as a student-athlete.

Any student-athlete who quits a sport may not go into another sport until the end of the first sport. Any consideration to move forward to another sport would be at the discretion of the previous head coach of that sport and the Athletic Director.

A student-athlete who quits will be removed from the team roster and forfeit any post-season reward(s) or recognition(s) such as team pictures, letters, athletic banquet awards, senior night, etc.

Any student-athlete seeking reinstatement to a team after a suspension or a dismissal has to have the approval of the head coach and the Athletic Director.

Lettering in a Particular Sport

Guidelines on lettering will be **left up to the coach** for each sport with final approval from the Athletic Director. Coaches wishing to award letters **have to have a written policy on file with the athletic office.**

Uniforms and Equipment

Any uniform or equipment issued to a student-athlete is the student-athlete's responsibility to maintain and to return in good condition.

Uniforms or uniform parts are to be worn **ONLY** during athletic games or approved athletic events, not for gym or general wear.

***Lost or damaged equipment will be charged to the student-athlete.**

All uniforms and equipment **must be returned to the coach within one week** after the final contest of the season or as directed by the head coach. This must be done **BEFORE** moving on to another sport.

Any student-athlete who does not return uniforms and/or equipment **will have his report card held and costs for replacement will be charged.**

A student-athlete will not be allowed to participate in another sport until all overdue uniforms, equipment, and fees have been turned in.

The coach is responsible for the kind and type of practice uniforms each team will use. Although practice uniforms are not standardized, student-athletes should use modesty when choosing practice attire.

Participation Conflicts

In case of conflicts with other school activities, VCS will follow the criteria below:

Students must notify each teacher, coach or sponsor promptly when a conflict of schedule first occurs.

Responsible teachers, coaches, or sponsors will meet to resolve the conflict based on the following guidelines:

In case of two competitions deemed of equal status by the respective principal the student-athlete will be able to make a choice of where they would like to participate. Examples: basketball game the same night as a debate contest, drama practice conflicting with an athletic practice.

In cases where the student-athlete is choosing between competitions, the other sponsor or coach not chosen cannot assign a penalty or consequence for the student-athlete not participating. The sponsor or coach not chosen will deal with the situation and student in a professional manner.

Field trips of an academic nature will supersede practice but will be considered equal with athletic competition. Example: a school-sanctioned field trip will take precedence over football practice but equal to a football game.

If the scheduling conflict occurs between two athletic teams and an agreement cannot be reached, the Athletic Director will be consulted.

State, division, conference or playoff events take precedence over regular practice or competition. Example: state ADEC competition takes place over a basketball game.

Competition always supersedes practice. Example: basketball game takes precedence over choir practice.

A fine arts technical rehearsal takes precedence over an athletic practice. Example: a dress rehearsal for a play takes precedence over a regular athletic practice for a regular season game.

Non-Related Sports Teams

At no time will non-school teams take precedence over a VCS team that is in season including games and practices. VCS coaches will work with the player as much as possible but there is no guarantee. The VCS teams must take priority. Notification that a conflict exists should be done at the earliest possible date to facilitate an agreeable resolution.

THE
STUDENT-ATHLETE



STUDENT-ATHLETE'S CODE OF CONDUCT

The Valley Christian student-athlete should have the following attributes: to be diligent in preparation, relentless in effort, disciplined by nature, respectful in actions, self-controlled with words, humble in spirit, and aggressive in the pursuit of excellence, without regard to the score, opponent, time or referee. **Proverbs 14:23 In all labor there is profit, But idle chatter leads only to poverty.**

Participation in athletics at Valley Christian School is a privilege. If you choose to participate in athletics you willingly accept the responsibility of being a leader; both in and out of the classroom and in the arena of competition. **Luke 9:48 "...For he who is least among you—he is the greatest."**

You also understand you are representatives of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Those who choose to participate must make sacrifices and establish priorities. With these things in mind, the following guidelines have been established for those students who elect to participate in the athletic program at VCS.

- Maintain a good Christian testimony. Every student-athlete is expected to seek to be above reproach in all they say and do as representatives of VCS and of Christ Himself. **At any time** a student-athlete is not maintaining a Christian testimony on or off the field or in the classroom **may be suspended or dismissed** from the team.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship throughout the contest year by treating opposing players, coaches, officials, and all representatives with respect.
- Abide by the rules of the game with modesty in victory and graciousness in defeat. Be humble.
- Respect the decisions and judgment of the officials.
- Maintain school dress at all times, plus any other dress specifications outlined by coaches.
- Accept correction and instruction from **any and all authority**.
- Be prompt to all scheduled practices, off-season workouts, games and team meetings. It is the student-athlete's responsibility to notify a coach if he/she is unable to attend a practice or event. Notification should always be given as soon as the student-athlete learns he or she cannot attend. It is not appropriate or acceptable to be absent from an event or practice without prior notification.

- Strive to keep language at the highest level of propriety. No profanity or vulgar language is permitted, nor should it be tolerated without consequences.
- Abide by the school's drug and alcohol policy. Student-athletes who use or are in possession of drugs, including tobacco and alcohol at school or school-related events will be subject to the penalties for all students as well as the additional penalties reserved for extracurricular participants.
- Exhibit self-control at all times.

Philippians 2:3

³ Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

John 13:34 - 35

³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. "

- Athletes are to be superior in their actions as representatives of Christ and Valley Christian School on road trips. Respectable and first-class behavior is a must. Failure to do so may result in suspension or dismissal from the team.
- Fighting during athletic events will result in a suspension to be determined by the administration and Athletic Director. More severe disciplinary action may be enacted depending upon the circumstances.
- Valley Christian School does not condone and **will not tolerate** "hazing" or "initiations" of student-athletes by other teammates. Any such actions will result in suspension and/or dismissal from the athletic team.
- Student-athletes are responsible for their behavior in the locker room area as well as on the field or court. VCS strongly disapproves of rough play and expects the student-athletes to demonstrate responsible actions in the locker room area.
- Any permanent removal of a student-athlete from the game by an official due to an attitude or language will result in a one game suspension. The Athletic Director and administration may review and make final decisions regarding game suspensions.

THE COACHES



COACHES' DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES & EXPECTATIONS

Moses asked God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" He answered, "I will certainly be with you."-Exodus 3:11-12a

Because of our commitment to excellence, coaches at VCS are the most significant components of our athletic program. They have the responsibility to model Christ-like attitudes, behaviors, and desires for our student-athletes. They are participants and mentors at the same time. One of the coach's most pivotal roles is to develop and model Christian character traits. In order to be considered an effective coach and role model, our coaches must also be knowledgeable in their sport, capable of detailed preparation, able to motivate athletes, able to make adjustments during competition, and actively give training within each situation a team or individual student-athlete may face.

Coaches have great responsibilities, but also opportunities, to mold young lives for Christ. Any coach in charge of student-athletes at any level in any sport will be expected to maintain a high degree of integrity for carrying out duties and responsibilities, while always exemplifying high professional and Christian character traits, which will honor God in our actions and words.

OHSAA Requirements for all coaches

- Pupil Activity Permit
- BCI/FBI check
- First aid, CPR
- Concussion awareness certificate
- Coaching Fundamentals of Coaching certificate

Seasons

The dates for starting and ending a sport's season are determined by the OHSAA. It is the responsibility of each coach to know and follow the in-season and out-of-season guidelines set forth by the OHSAA (ohsaa.org) when planning for his/her upcoming season. The head coach for each sport will notify and plan with the Athletic Director's office official sign-up dates for each sport. Coaches should prepare an event calendar with significant dates and expectations in order to participate in that sport. Information needs to be coordinated through the Athletic Director's office with enough time given for adequate advertising and announcing of important dates.

Information should be given to the Athletic Director's office in a form that is easy to place on Schedule Star and the athletic calendar.

General Coaching Duties:

- Coaches are to be spiritual mentors to our student-athletes and the program, as well as, ambassadors for Valley Christian.
- Coaches are appointed by the school administration and the Athletic Director and shall be responsible to the Athletic Director who shall with the school administration decide on continuance or removal of that coach.
- Coaches shall be contracted annually and must sign the contract including the responsibilities outlined in the contract. Coaches should consider the sport as an integral part of the overall ministry of Valley Christian and should employ sound educational principles, ensuring all student-athletes feel a worthwhile part of the overall Valley Christian program.
- Each coach must exhibit integrity in all of your dealings with players, coaches, parents, faculty, officials and opponents. You are a leader, a mentor, and a coach first and foremost. Be professional at all times. Strive to set a Christ-like example on and off the playing field and or court. Stand firmly and fairly for what you believe is right in every situation.
- **Be on time!** "First to arrive, last to leave." Make the best possible use of the available time and resources while supervising both the student-athletes and the facilities. Coaches who use the facilities on Saturdays or Sundays or a holiday are responsible for the team leaving the building.
- All aspects of a player's effort **to prepare** mentally, physically and fundamentally are the coach's responsibility. You cannot always control which team wins a game, but you can determine how your players prepare to win.
- A coach must be present at all open gyms, weight work outs, games and practice sessions.
- Coaches must make every effort to prevent accidents.
- When your practice has concluded, **you must stay until the last student-athlete is out, and make sure that all doors are locked. Turn out all lights when you leave.**
- **The locker rooms are to be locked at all times. Athletic lockers are not school lockers. No books, no food, no access without a coach. Meet kids in the dressing rooms, check and lock all doors before leaving for practice. Do not send kids back to the locker**

rooms unless a coach is going to be with them. Be personally responsible for locker room observation. A coach should always be on duty wherever athletes are present. Do not leave them unobserved.

- Deliver a great experience to the student-athletes in your program regardless of playing experience or athletic contribution. Look for opportunities to make a difference. Interact with the student-athletes who are struggling, may never be an “A” player, who needs the team more than the team needs them.
- Emphasize sportsmanship. Student-Athletes must be coached and played in such a way that sportsmanship and a team’s ability to win a game are never compromised.
- Exhibit loyalty to VCS, the athletic department, fellow coaches, and your student-athletes at all times.
- Adopt a positive attitude. Players will always respond more favorably to a positive attitude than a negative one.
- Maintain a high level of energy, enthusiasm, and be an encourager. **Demand excellence on every play, at every practice, for every meeting, in every school situation, every time.** Attend all VCS coaches’ meetings.
- Maintain reliable e-mail and phone contact with the athletic office.
- Build healthy relationships with student-athletes while maintaining professional distance. Don’t become emotional or personal in your interactions with student-athletes. **Your issues** are not going to be solved by and are not the responsibility of the student-athletes. Remember, they are kids, expect kid behaviors.
- **Coaches are required to review the VCS, OHSAA complete academic and behavioral eligibility codes and standards with students prior to the first practice or meeting of a given extra-curricular activity.**
- Over-communicate with parents. Practice times, schedules, changes in schedules, meals, departing times, arrival times, etc. If you say you're going to end practice at a certain time, then stick to it.
- Dress professionally. Wear VCS gear when appropriate so that people can identify you as the coach. At no time should coaches wear clothing with the name or logo of other high schools.

- Understand and educate parents on the Cooperative Booster effort (EAGLE CLUB).
- Participate and get involved in your sport, know the rules, join professional organizations, represent VCS.
- Participate; nominate VCS Coaches when appropriate for “Coach of the Year” accolades.
- Understand the OHSAA rules and regulations (available on OHSAA.org) for your sport.
- Do not allow our student-athletes to listen to inappropriate music in our weight rooms or dressing rooms. If you can’t understand the words, stop it!
- Be outstanding hosts to our opponents. Greet them; make sure they know where locker rooms and facilities are located.
- When in doubt on any issue, consult the athletic director.

Coaches' Behavior Policy:

Any abuse (whether sexual, physical, emotional, or neglect) will not be tolerated. Abusive conduct or allegation will lead to immediate removal from leadership and responsibilities. To assist and protect your integrity and leadership responsibilities, we ask that you:

- Not put yourself in a compromising situation
- Not rely on your good reputation or put yourself in a position where it's your word against another individual's
- Be aware of what you say
- Watch what you do, being cautious of and avoiding any inappropriate touching
- Be aware that athletic activities could be opportunities for an abusive situation
- Focus on the spiritual guidelines while working with student-athletes

Any abusive situations you observe or become aware of must be reported immediately to the Athletic Director.

Support your head coach's policies and procedures. Avoid gossiping or creating dissention.

Head Coaches' Duties and Responsibilities:

- Discuss the athletic program with your student-athletes and your assistants. Make certain that they are aware of any rules or policies which pertain to your sport. If you have any special rules for your team, be sure the Athletic Director is aware of them before distribution and has a written copy on file.
- Exercise proper authority over student-athletes, garnering respect and honor from them. Be exemplary models of Godly behavior even in the midst of strenuous competition, and expect your student -athletes to do likewise.
- Oversee the total program for your sport. The head coach is **ultimately responsible for the organization and growth for the middle school and high school programs.**
- Meet with your staff to standardize techniques, drills, system of play, etc. to ensure consistent teaching within your sport.
- The Athletic Director must be notified of any/all injuries.
- Turn in all results and highlights to the athletic department following each contest.
- Report results to media when applicable.
- **Complete the season ending "Program Evaluation Report" and give the final copy to the Athletic Director and the time of your evaluation interview.**
- **Conduct written evaluations of assistant coaches and report to the Athletic Director.**
- **Complete inventory at season's end and turn final copy in to the Athletic Director. New purchases will not be approved until the end of season inventory is completed.**
- **Maintain archive of all stats for your program, team and Individual records.**
- Understand and share with all coaches the current OHSAA rules and regulations that pertain to your sport.
- Submit program needs to the Athletic Director.
- Coordinate or appoint oversight of an end of season banquet

- Check eligibility weekly and verify that all students on your roster are eligible to play in a contest that week.
- Ensure Valley Christian student -athletes are nominated, when applicable, for All-District and All-State type recognition within the NEIO, OHSAA, coach's organizations and media outlets such as the Youngstown Vindicator and Warren Tribune.

Use of Social Media with Your Athletes:

The use of text messaging and other social media to communicate with players is increasingly popular, but coaches need to be aware of the boundaries and limitations that should be respected. If coaches choose to use social media to connect with your players, please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Keep your coach hat on at all times. If you wouldn't say it to a kid in front of their parents, don't say it online or in a text. You should never use a text, instatgram or a Facebook page to discuss personal topics that do not relate to your team.
- Keep conversations professional and on task when emailing, texting, or communicating through social media. Announcing that practice is cancelled is appropriate. Commenting on a great effort can be motivational. Scolding a player or commenting on his/her family picnic photos is off-base. Always maintain the same personal boundaries that exist for in person conversations.
- Keep your technology interactions "G-rated." Party photos, photos with alcohol, shots of you wearing questionable attire should not be visible to school-aged players. Inappropriate/suggestive language should also not be used.
- Be aware of your privacy settings. A setting of "Friends Only" prevents friends of your players from accessing your page. Also, if your friends allow generous access to their pages, consider not friending players so that they can't find information out by looking at other pages.

Policy on Recruiting Athletes:

No recruiting of any kind will exist at Valley Christian School. If any coach is found to be in opposition to this policy he/she will be dismissed from their coaching duties.

The OHSAA states in Rule 4-9-1 of their guidelines that "Any attempt to recruit a prospective student-athlete for athletic purposes shall be strictly prohibited.

Recruiting outside of VCS

OHSAA guidelines are very specific in regards to parents talking to coaches. Do not approach student-athletes or parents to discuss any Valley Christian athletic program. If you are approached by a parent inquiring about VCS and our athletic program, inform them that they must first contact the President. Once they have made contact with the President/VCS they can then visit with you.

Travel Policies:

This policy applies to all off-campus games and tournaments when transportation is provided by the school.

Coordinate and **submit all travel requests** (this should include date & time of departure) to the Director of Athletics in advance of the start of each season. Any sport whose season and schedule are set prior to the season's first contest should have travel requests submitted at least one month before the start of the season. VCS bus will be used as our first mode of transportation. Non-VCS transportation has to be approved by the Athletic Director.

When the school provides transportation to away games, all team members, cheerleaders, managers, etc., must travel to the game on the school bus.

A team member **may ride home** from an off-campus game with his parent(s) or legal guardian provided that **the coach has been notified by written or verbal communication** from the parent(s) or legal guardian (not the student-athlete) prior to leaving the game.

A player may ride home with another parent provided the player's parents have given the coach verbal permission for that player to do so.

When players arrive back at school, the coach must be sure that each individual player has a way home and is off of VCS's property before leaving the property themselves.

Excusing Students for an Athletic Event:

Coaches must submit a list of students to be excused for school activities that require students being dismissed before the end of the regular scheduled school day. Students should be listed in alphabetical order and by grade. The type of activity and the departure time and return time should also be stated. This list must be presented to the athletic office at least three days prior to departure.

Use of Opponents' Dressing Facilities:

Coaches should discuss with team members the appropriate conduct when using the dressing facilities of opponents. Leave the locker room in better condition before it was turned over to you if at all possible.

Scheduling:

Wednesday and holiday scheduling:

Circumstances that might arise will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Wednesday afternoon practice should be concluding around 6:00 p.m. Student-athletes should be encouraged to attend their church activities or FCA functions on these nights. Practice and games on extended vacations may be scheduled upon approval of the Athletic Director.

Inclement Weather - Postponements:

Since turbulent weather is a large factor with spring athletic events, and postponements are fairly common, the head coach for each sport is responsible for postponing and rescheduling of events due to weather. Coaches should advise the Athletic Director of postponements as soon as the decision is made. The head coach in conjunction with the athletic department needs to make sure that transportation, re-assigning officials, workers, etc. get notified. The responsibility of postponement of games rests with the home school and we must be certain to give the visiting team sufficient notice so they will not leave prior to postponement.

Athletic Facilities/Field Policy:

Student-athletes are expected to respect the facilities and fields afforded them for practice and competition. Student-athletes are responsible for all trash and equipment after games and practices.

- No cleats should be worn in the building at any time.
- Locker rooms should be kept clean at all times
- Proper shoes should be worn at all times.

The gym(s) are in constant use. We must work together to split the gym usage between all sports, and school functions. You must have approval from the athletic office before using either gym.

The weight room is for all VCS athletics. Times must be scheduled with the athletic office. Again, we must work together to split the usage.

- **Under no circumstance are student-athletes allowed to use the weight room without a coach being present and supervising.**

Control of Keys:

All keys to the building, locker rooms, equipment rooms, etc. will be issued to the coaches by the Athletic Director. Coaches are not to give student-athletes their keys at any time. Managers may use coaches' keys during practice sessions, but are not to have their own keys. If the keys to the athletic area are lost, the coach should report this immediately.

Policy on Security Code:

Each coach will receive a code to enter the building from the Athletic Director. Coaches are not to give student-athletes their code at any time.

Locker Room and Access to Athletic Facilities:

All athletic facilities are to be kept locked at all times. Locker rooms, weight room, and gymnasium are off limits to students without a coach being present. Coaches are to report unlocked doors to the athletic director after securing the area. Coaches are to confront unattended students in athletic areas, remove them and find out where they are supposed to be.

If you are the last to use the building it is your responsibility to make sure the building is secure. Turn off the lights; check that all outside doors are locked. When leaving the building set the alarm.

Injury Protocol:

If Athletic Trainer and/ Doctor are NOT present:

- The head coach will be in charge of the situation, giving direction to others involved.
- Use of assistant coaches or parents of team members may be required to call 911* or to stay with the team if assistants or administrators are not present.
- Make sure to know the address of school or facility.
- Be able to state the location on campus of the injured athlete: N, S, E, or W of school and exact field name (football, baseball, soccer, etc.)
- Know the nature of injury: neck/spine, extremity, heart attack, etc.
- Stay on the phone until the EMS person HANGS UP

If Athletic Trainer and/Doctor are present:

- They will be “in charge” of the situation, giving direction to others involved.
- The school administrator in attendance will be directed to call 911*. They may appoint security staff or an individual to meet the ambulance at a designated location.
- The head coach suspends all activity and stays close to athlete. Assistant coaches direct the rest of the team to a neutral location AWAY from the injured athlete to rest and remain calm.
- The administrator notifies the parents of the situation and verifies the transport location (which hospital to go to).

PARENT/GUARDIAN



VCS Athletics
Parent/Coach Communication Guide Parent/Coach Relationship:

Children are best served in their athletic experiences by understanding and respecting the position of both the coaches and parents. Clear communication between student-athletes, coaches and parents is an important element in any athletic program.

COMMUNICATION THAT STUDENT-ATHLETES AND PARENTS SHOULD EXPECT FROM THE COACH:

- Philosophy of the coach
- Expectations for the season, the team and your son or daughter
- Team selection process (this will vary in different sports and vary for different levels of competition)
- Team rules and guidelines and consequences for infractions
- Times and locations of practices and games
- Injury procedures

COMMUNICATION THAT COACHES EXPECT FROM PARENTS:

- Concerns expressed directly to the coach
- Notification of any injury or illness in a timely manner
- Notification of any scheduling conflicts well in advance (notification of an absence from practice or a scheduled event must be done in advance except in the case of an emergency).

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH THE COACH:

- The coach's interaction with your child
- Any concerns about your child's interaction with others
- Ways to help your child improve academically/athletically

The primary role of every VCS coach is that of a mentor and educator. Coaches make decisions on what is in the best interest of all student-athletes and the program. As a parent it is sometimes difficult to accept these decisions. Certain concerns such as those previously listed are appropriate to discuss with your child's coach.

Other areas, such as those listed below, **must be left to the discretion of the coach and his/her staff.**

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

• Please **do not** attempt to **conference with a coach before or after a contest or practice.** These can be emotional times for the parent, student-athlete, and the coach. Meetings of this nature usually do not promote positive interactions.

When issues arise it is **ideal that the student-athlete and coach resolve them through direct dialogue.** Communications between the coach and student-athlete are encouraged as it marks a significant maturation in our young student-athletes and helps prepare them in dealing with difficult issues. When a parent-coach conference is necessary, please follow the procedure outlined below.

WHEN YOU HAVE A CONCERN TO DISCUSS WITH A COACH; PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURE.

- If the coach/student-athlete conference does not resolve the situation, please call the Athletic Director at the school and ask for a conference with the coach. You may also choose to email the coach. **Please only use email to set up the conference and not in place of the conference itself.** Email, though expedient, is a very poor form of communication any time dialogue turns to emotional topics or differences of agreement. Our school policy is that once discussions turn emotional or to differences of agreement, phone calls or personal conferences is the "rule of the day".
- Request a time to meet with the coach.
- Call the Athletic Director and request that a meeting be arranged between the parent and coach. We request all staff to return phone calls and emails within 24 hours.
- Describe your specific area(s) of concern.
- Limit your discussion to your own child's issues. Do not discuss issues pertaining to other athletes or parents unless they specifically involve your child.

WHAT CAN A PARENT DO IF THE MEETING WITH THE COACH DOES NOT PROVIDE A SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION?

- Call the Athletic Director to discuss the situation. At this time the appropriate next steps can be determined.

