

***Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,
as working for the Lord, not for human masters.***

Colossians 3:23 NIV



VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK (July 25, 2023)

VCS Mission Statement

Valley Christian School exists to partner with Christian families who desire educational excellence, taught through a Biblical worldview, so their children will be prepared for a lifetime of authentic faithfulness and service to Jesus Christ.

Athletics Mission

Valley Christian School Athletics exists to use athletics as a training ground to partner with Valley Christian School families to develop student-athletes that are Godly men and women who love Jesus, love each other, and love people. Then, launch them into the next phase of their lives prepared for a lifetime of authentic faithfulness and service to Jesus Christ. We desire a Christ-centered athletic program that upholds Biblical standards, reflecting a distinctive Christian athletic department.

VCS Athletics Purpose

The school is committed to an athletic program which will bring glory to God by:

- Teaching athletes to display Godly character traits as part of their Christian testimony to the opposing team's members and fans.
- Teaching athletes to strive for ultimate performance while upholding Christian values and biblical principles.
- Teaching athletes that their value to the team is found in contributing their best in the role assigned for the benefit of the team.
- Implementing programs dedicated to the development of "athletic potential" in participating athletes and helping those athletes prepare for higher levels of competition.
- Providing the best Christian coaches available.
- Providing training facilities, equipment, and uniforms that allow for excellence in a chosen sport.
- Involving the student body, parent/guardians, and teachers in developing school spirit and unity.
- Providing a safe environment for athletes and fans.

Each coach is committed to:

- Guiding athletes to glorify God.
- Teaching each athlete to work diligently toward specific personal and team goals.
- Teaching the "team concept" as opposed to self-glorification.
- Teaching interpersonal relationship skills.
- Teaching respect for rules and authority.
- Designing practice sessions to provide developmentally appropriate training and conditioning of athletes.

Philosophy of the Valley Christian Athletics Program

The preeminence of Jesus Christ is our priority and the goal of all our programs at Valley Christian. Valley Christian does not and will not recruit student-athletes, nor pursue coaches based on their winning records alone. Of course, VCS will seek to improve coaching and playing skills each year. While winning is a goal, it is not the primary purpose.

At the Junior Varsity level and even more-so at the Varsity level, greater ability and talent will likely affect playing time and require greater responsibility. VCS expects our faculty, staff, and parent/guardians to support our commitment in this matter.

Team goals for all players and coaches should include:

1. Become an integral part of a team according to God's pattern for teamwork described in I Corinthians 12:12-26.

2. Walk closer with our Lord Jesus Christ through opportunities of hearing others share their experiences with Him and through opportunities to share our own relationship with Him.
3. Become the very best player/coach that God will allow with the strength and talent He has given.
4. Receive the unconditional love of God through the coaches and players and having received, share this love with others.
5. Influence the halls and classrooms of Valley Christian in a positive way to the glory of God and in the strength that comes through fellowship with other believers.
6. Understand the perseverance and confident humility that comes through facing difficult circumstances and, in the strength given by God, learn to win and lose to the glory of God.
7. Be a strong testimony to all spectators, opposing teams, and officials.
8. Learn to come under the authority (coaches, officials) that God has placed over each team member.
9. Strive for excellence in all things—physical, spiritual, academic.

Sports Offered at Valley Christian

We will continue to provide a variety of programs to fit the interests of our students. The following programs are offered as of the 2023-2024 seasons.

Fall:

Football – JH, JV, and Varsity
 Volleyball - JH, JV, and Varsity

Winter:

Boys' Basketball - JH, JV and Varsity
 Girls' Basketball – JH, JV and Varsity

Spring

Co-ed Track – JH and Varsity
 Co-ed Tennis - JH and Varsity

Co-op Opportunities

Spring Girls' Softball – Varsity with Loyola Sacred Heart (co-op final year 2023-2024)

Requirements for Participation

If anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown, unless he competes according to the rules. (2 Timothy 2:5)

Eligibility

- Eligibility is determined by a myriad of rules associated with the school and the MHSA (Montana High School Association). Eligibility for each potential student-athlete will be determined by the athletic director, principal, or head of school (Superintendent). Any discrepancies will be brought to the MHSA for clarity.
- A student must attend VCS at least half-time and not be enrolled in another school/program to be eligible for athletics.

Attendance

- Student-athletes must attend all classes to remain eligible.
- Excessive tardiness and unexcused absences will result in suspension from play. Please consult the *Student Handbook* for more information on what is tardy and unexcused.
- A student-athlete must attend half of the school day to remain eligible regardless of reason. Extenuating circumstances (family emergency) should be brought to the athletic director.

Academics

All student-athletes are required to maintain their grades and stay eligible. This not only affects the student, but also the team. Grades are checked each Monday beginning the second Monday after practices begin (Fall would be an exception). VCS will use the following as a guide to determine academic eligibility:

When a student has 1 F or 2 D's the following steps will happen:

Week 1: Warning.

Week 2: Suspension from games. May practice.

Week 3: Suspension from practices and games for 2 weeks.

Week 5: Expelled from athletic activity.

If a student-athlete becomes academically eligible after a long period of ineligibility, the coach has the discretion to hold the athlete out of competition until the coach believes the athlete is prepared both physically and mentally to return to competition. If a student-athlete returns to eligibility late in the season, or during the post-season, the coach may, at his/her discretion, leave the athlete off a post-season roster.

Physical Exam

- MHSA requires that a physical examination be performed for each student-athlete for that student to be considered eligible for participation.
- This examination must be completed prior to the first practice.
- This examination must be certified by a licensed medical professional acting within the scope and limitations of his/her practice and must be submitted on the official MHSA Pre-Participation Physical Form (form is updated annually).

- This examination must be completed and form dated after May 1st for the following school year

Conduct and General Policies

- It is important that our attitude and behavior is always under control. The team suffers when an individual loses control. Respect toward officials, players, and coaches is expected. *A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control. (Proverbs 29:11)*
- Every player is responsible to treat equipment (balls, nets, etc.) with respect and care. Student-athletes may be charged for damaged equipment and uniforms from neglect.
- All practice and game use areas must be cleaned up after events.
- The uniform issued to each athlete is his/her responsibility. Lost or damaged uniforms must be paid for in full. All uniforms need to be cleaned properly and returned clean.
- All injuries and illness must be reported to the coach.
- While it is the desire of VCS Athletics to allow everyone who wishes to participate the opportunity to do so, VCS reserves the right to limit the number of student-athlete positions available on a Junior High, Junior Varsity or Varsity team due to the availability of practice and/or game facilities, coaches, equipment, transportation, etc.

Practice Dress Code

- Student-athletes may wear practice attire that is like their game day uniform.
- Locker rooms will be available.

Game Day/Special Occasion Dress Code

The head coach (with AD guidance) will be responsible for giving participants direction in advance of required game day attire for each occasion. School team participants are required to comply with game day attire on all game days or the last school day before a weekend game and any other special occasion as directed by the head coach. Coaches and AD are expected to address violations quickly.

Uniform Dress Code

Uniforms are selected by the AD and coaches (working together) in compliance with MHSA rules for athletic function, modesty, and appropriateness to the sport, while making every effort to apply Colossians 1:18 for the glory of God.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences do not maintain the “team first” attitude required of VCS student-athletes. Student-athletes should be committed to attending all mandatory organized team activities (practice, game, team meal, meetings, etc.). They should communicate with their head coach as soon as they become aware that they will miss an organized team activity.

Excused/unexcused absences will be determined at the discretion of the head coach and/or athletic director. If a scheduling conflict does arise, please contact the coach and/or athletic director as soon as possible so that they can make appropriate adjustments.

Parent/guardians/students: When it is possible, please schedule doctor, dentist appointments and college visits around practices and games. These things are important, but there is also a commitment to the team and teammates.

Use of alcohol and tobacco (including vaping)

VCS Athletics has a zero-tolerance policy for use of alcohol, tobacco, vaping, and illicit drugs. These are not in keeping with the standards to be our best for Christ on or off the field/court. *See guidelines in Student Handbook for more.*

Sportsmanship

The student-athlete is an ambassador for VCS and for Christ. Your actions and words are a reflection upon our Lord, our school, and our families. (Ephesians 4:29)

Authorized Areas

Parent/guardians are not allowed in the locker rooms or near the bench. Fans are to sit on the bleachers. Parent/guardians are not to come on the playing surfaces or bench area. Wait until you are called if needed. We realize that this may be difficult if you think that your athlete may be injured, but it is the very best thing that you can do.

Security

Do not prop open exterior doors. This is a security risk. When doors are unlocked to allow team members access to the building, the person who unlocked the door is responsible to directly monitor all entrance and egress of the building while the door is unlocked and to assure that the door is locked and secure before vacating the entrance area.

If you misplace a key/access card, contact the facilities director or the athletic director immediately. All keys/access cards are to be turned in on the last day of school. You must receive permission from the athletic director if you need keys/access cards during the summer. Do not share keys/access cards with unauthorized personnel. Coaches shall not allow students to use their keys unless they can directly, and visually monitor the student while they are in possession of said coach's key. Coaches shall not grant access to VCS facilities (gym, weight room, etc.) unless direct supervision is provided by the coach.

Support

The public support of the coaches at VCS is expected and anything short of this will not be tolerated. Derogatory talk about coaches and negative comments erode authority and respect and eventually hurt our program.

Promptness

Parent/guardians, be prompt in picking up athletes after practices and games. Remember coaches have families, also. Coaches should also make every effort to conclude practices at the posted completion time.

Confer with Coaches

Talk with the coach and athletic director before taking athletics away from your son/daughter for discipline reasons. The team is counting on him/her, and the decision affects more than one person.

Disagreements

If your son/daughter has a disagreement with the coach, please send him/her back to the coach to work it out. If it cannot be worked out, then you as the parent/guardian should set up a meeting with the coach to work it out. If the problem still cannot be worked out, please bring the concern to the athletic director. We are to use the Matthew 18 model for settling all disagreements. *Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained a brother. If he will not hear you, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. (Matthew 18:15)* **Do not speak to any coach immediately after a game/competition. Use the 24-hr. rule (wait 24 hours).**

Informational Meeting

At least one parent and the student-athlete must attend the pre-season athletic meeting prior to the student-athlete participating in a sport.

- All forms and fees must be submitted at the pre-season meeting
- All required forms will be announced prior to the informational meeting.
- Additional forms may be required per sport.

Cheering

Cheer and cheer loudly. Let the entire team hear your support! Be positive. Be enthusiastic. Be LOUD!

Transportation

All team participants are to be transported to and from all games together on a school provided carrier per sport when applicable and to the extent possible at the direction of the coach. Specifically, the time together after competition is important for coaches and the team. If there

is an extenuating circumstance and the team participants must leave with parent/guardians, parent/guardians must request this arrangement with the coach before departing and use appropriate check out form if applicable.

Social Media

1. Student-athletes, parent/guardians, and coaches are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects greatly on Christ and our school.
2. No person is authorized or granted permission by VCS Athletics to maintain any page(s) that gives the impression of a school, department, or team page.
3. School run webpages are the only authorized pages.
4. Student-athletes must maintain their personal social media sites in a way that reflect positively on VCS Athletics and our school.
5. Please see the athletic director for information on SM to promote your student-athlete for the next level.

Junior Varsity (JV)

No senior shall participate on a junior varsity team unless, under certain circumstances, a senior has not achieved varsity level skill and junior varsity level is the only opportunity he/she has to participate in the sport. In this case, the opposing team's head coach will be notified prior to the start of the game. A varsity starter shall not play in a junior varsity contest unless there are not enough junior varsity players to begin the game. Under no circumstances should a varsity starter play in a junior varsity contest when there are junior varsity players on the bench. It is permissible to play a varsity starter in a junior varsity game at a position that he/she does not play at the varsity level providing the opposing head coach is notified and approves (i.e., a football player who starts on offense only, but plays defense only in a junior varsity contest).

Varsity Letter

Athletic awards are given in recognition of outstanding athletic achievement and service to the school. The first year a student-athlete letters in a particular varsity sport he/she receives a chenille letter and a pin of that sport. Each additional year he/she letters in that sport, the athlete receives a bar. If an athlete letters in another sport, he/she receives a pin for that sport. The head coach has the prerogative to issue or withhold a letter for extenuating circumstances such as early season injuries and team or league violations. Coaches must provide sufficient documentation of these circumstances to the athletic director. In all cases, students must complete the season as a member of the team to earn a varsity letter.

Foundational criteria for Lettering for each sport

1. Student-athlete must have completed the entire season.
2. Student-athlete must be in good academic standing.
3. Student-athlete must attend all practices and games unless excused.
4. Student-athlete must not have been a disciplinary problem.

5. Student-athlete must meet minimum participation (play time) requirements.
6. All equipment must be turned in.

Minimum participation (play time) requirements to be eligible for consideration in each sport are as follows:

Volleyball

- Must have played in 35% of the varsity games of the regular season. (Each Match has 3-5 games)

Football

- Must have played in 50% of the quarters of the varsity regular season.

Basketball

- Must have played in 28 quarters of the varsity regular Season.

Tennis (one or more of the following)

- Compete as a varsity player for the majority of the season
- Play in the divisional tournament.

Track

- Participate as a varsity member for the majority of the season
- Score in the district meet
- Qualify for divisional meet
- Pre-qualify for state meet
- Have missed less than 10 practices (not including spring break)

Coaches and the athletic director will review each student-athlete that has met the minimum foundational standard for varsity letter consideration. The coaching staff has the discretion to award a varsity letter to a senior who has participated throughout the season, who meets the foundational qualities, but does not meet the minimum participation requirement. The coaching staff also has the discretion to award a varsity letter to any individual that has not met the minimum participation requirements, however, has made a significant contribution at the varsity level under the approval of the athletic director. Additional allowances may be made due to injury. Managers may be awarded a varsity letter at the request of the coach.

Awards

The following individual awards will be presented to varsity high school student-athletes (for Co-Ed sports, each award will be given to one female and one male athlete):

1. G.R.I.T. (God First, Reliable, Inspirational, Team First) The one team leader that gave everything and desired nothing selfishly. Coaches vote.
2. Defensive Player of the Year (if applicable). Team/coaches vote.
3. Offensive Player of the Year (if applicable). Team/coaches vote.
4. Most Improved. Coaches vote.



5. Most Valuable Player.
* Coaches may have additional awards

Team/coaches vote.
and accolades that they present.

Varsity Jacket/Sweater See athletic director for VCS authorized color pattern.

Character qualities VCS desires for our student-athletes:

- Boldness - Being ready to boldly express what Jesus Christ has done for you. The Christian athlete cannot be one who is timid or gives up. (Act 4:29)
- Commitment – Staying the course. (I Corinthians 15:58)
- Confidence - Knowing that he/she as an individual athlete is a winner in God's sight as he/she totally gives all he/she has to Jesus. (Ephesians 1:7-14)
- Dependability - Attending all practices, games and contests unless excused by the coach. Doing what is expected in all situations. (Titus 2:6-8)
- Determination – Making a mental, spiritual, and emotional decision to accomplish God's goals in His time, regardless of the opposition. (II Timothy 4:7)
- Diligence – Willingness to use all strength and ability to complete each part of a task whether in practice, in a game, or anywhere else. (Colossians 3:23)
- Endurance - Being able to withstand stress, hard work, and the problems that all athletes experience. (Galatians 6:9)
- Enthusiasm - Taking an interest in every aspect of the sport and being willing to quickly carry out every part of the job with a positive attitude. (I Thessalonians 5:16)
- Faith – Showing an understanding that the Lord is in control of all circumstances and that He is carrying out His will in each individual life. (Hebrews 11:1)
- Honesty - Doing what is right in the eyes of the Lord. (Proverbs 11:3)
- Humility – Having an attitude that gives God all of the credit for every team and individual ability, talent, and/or success. (Philippians 2:3)
- Intensity - always giving everything to the task at hand, focusing total attention upon the job assigned, and putting forth every effort to complete it to the best of one's abilities. (1 Samuel 17:45-47)
- Joyfulness – The result of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ from which His love naturally overflows to others. (Philippians 4:4)

Valley Christian School

Athletic Handbook Signature Page

I have received, read, and agree to follow the policies, rules, and guidelines outlined in the Valley Christian Athletic Handbook.

Student Name Grade

Please sign below as appropriate.

Student Date

Parent/Guardian Date

Parent/Guardian Date

Valley Christian Athletics and School Administration with Board approval reserve the right to alter or change the policies or rules contained in the Athletic Handbook based on individual needs, emergency issues, or other unusual circumstance.