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Praise Academy Philosophy of Athletics

Praise Academy is committed to providing not only a competitive sports program to its students, families, and fans; but also one that fosters Christ-like character among our student-athletes in addition to athletic abilities.

Many circumstances arise in preparation for and during athletic competition that offers opportunities for God's principles to be applied and it is our goal to see students exemplify Christ-likeness in everything they do. Our dedicated coaches help young people relate victories and defeats, as well as the principles of hard work and teamwork to their daily walk with the Lord.

One of the guiding principles for the Praise Academy Athletic Department can be found in **Colossians 3:23-24**: *“And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance, for you serve the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

All policies and procedures that are defined by the Athletic Department are done so with the intent of teaching and instilling Christ-like qualities in the student-athletes for them to put into use in their daily lives. Our athletic handbook also provides a way to maintain consistency throughout our athletic program and to set forth the standards by which we expect our athletes to adhere. We require that parents, as well as student-athletes, take time to read this handbook so each can properly support Praise Academy and its Athletic Department.

Athletic Goals and Expectations

There are five basic goals that Praise Academy strives to instill into each of its student-athletes. They are:

- Develop Christ-like character in each student-athlete. -Galatians 5:22
- Teach intensity, diligence, dependability, and self-control. -Philippians 4:13
- Teach submission to authority on and off the field or court. -Hebrews 13:17
- Develop Christian leaders that can be examples for the entire student body to respect and follow. -Hebrews 13:7
- Teach the Biblical definition of winning and how to make it a lifestyle. -Colossians 3:23, I Corinthians 9:24

Athletes' Code of Conduct

Every athlete is expected to maintain a good Christian testimony. At any time, a student-athlete not maintaining a Christian testimony on or off the field or in the classroom may be suspended or dismissed from the team. Student-athletes are expected to be examples of good conduct to other students. In that regard, each PA student-athlete will be held to the following code of conduct:

1. After an athlete receives a suspension from school, the student will be suspended from his/her team for the next game. Further action will be at the discretion of the principal and/or athletic

director.

2. A suspended athlete may participate in tryouts for a team, but may not actively participate in games until he has served a probationary period.
3. The use of profanity will not be tolerated. The use of profanity on or off the field may result in additional conditioning, a loss in playing time, or another form of punishment as agreed upon by the coach and athletic director.
4. Fighting during athletic events will result in punishment. This punishment will be determined by the coach and athletic director.
5. Athletes are to be good representatives of Christ and Praise Academy on road trips. Failure to do so may result in suspension or dismissal from the team.
6. Praise Academy does not condone and will not tolerate "hazing" or "initiations" of athletes by other athletes. Any such actions will result in suspension and/or dismissal from the athletic team.
7. Any student-athlete that is ejected from a game will be suspended for the next game. If the student-athlete receives a second ejection, he/she will be suspended for two games. A third ejection will result in dismissal from the team and forfeiture of athletic privileges for the remainder of the school year.

Sports Offered at Praise Academy

Fall Sports

Volleyball (Grades 6-12)

Flag Football (Grades 1-8)

Middle School Tackle Football (Grades 6-8)

Varsity Cheerleading (Grades 8-12)

Cross Country (Grades 5-12)

Varsity Tackle Football (Grades 9-12)

Junior Cheerleading (Grades 1-6)

Winter Sports

Junior Cheerleading (Grade 1-6)

5th & 6th Grade Boys Basketball

Junior High Boys Basketball (Grades 7-8)

Varsity Boys Basketball (Grades 9-12)

Varsity Cheerleading (Grades 8-12)

Junior High Girls Basketball (Grades 6-8)

Varsity Girls Basketball (Grades 9-12)

Spring Sports

Softball (Grades 9-12)

Middle School Baseball (Grades 6-8)

Baseball (Grades 9-12)

Varsity

Note: Praise Academy is committed to develop its Athletic Department through the addition of both junior high and high school sports as the school continues to grow, and the facilities and funds are available. All sports listed are subject to having enough student participation.

Athletic Association

Our middle/high school athletes compete in the GICAA, Georgia Independent Christian

Athletic Association. GICAA is a statewide program that is governed by their members. The member schools form the rules of the league. GICAA is a five member team that determines the district of play as well as support to all of their members. You may visit the website at any time at gicaasports.com

Team Selection

It is our desire for each of our students to have the opportunity to play the sport(s) of their choice. The tryout process (when necessary) will be used to maintain a manageable number of players for our limited staff and facilities to accommodate.

However, we are a competitive sports program; it may become necessary in the future that all team rosters be compiled through the tryout process. Student-athletes that represent our school will possess the ability, character, and attitude, passion for the game, commitment, time availability, energy, and academic standing to compete at this level.

Junior High

We view the middle school years as an excellent time for our students to gain the necessary athletic experience that will prepare them to be a contributing factor on our varsity and junior varsity teams. Therefore, it is our desire for each of our middle school students to have the opportunity to play the sport(s) of their choice. The tryout process is used on this level in order to maintain a manageable number of players for our limited staff and facilities to accommodate.

High School

High school teams are obviously more competitive, and thus more selective, than that of middle school teams. Many factors go into the selection of a team. Each Praise Academy varsity coaching staff is allowed to set the size of their team roster. All final rosters will be shown to the athletic director for approval before any official postings or announcements can be made.

If enough interest is present on the high school level, a junior varsity team may be formed to facilitate the extra players who do not make the varsity team. It is the coaches' decision as to which players make the varsity team and which will play on the junior varsity team. The only rule regarding who plays on each team is that a senior cannot play on a junior varsity team. Players may play on both teams if it is necessary to do so in order to form the junior varsity team. However, a player who starts for the varsity team must adhere to the GISA rules (see GISA rulebook).

Quitting a Team

We believe that character is never formed by quitting. Responsibility, integrity, loyalty, and honoring commitments are all attributes that we wish to instill in our athletes. We also believe that students and parents need to realize that participating on an athletic team, whether in middle school or high school, is going to require some effort and sacrifice of time and resources. When a student decides that they want to play on a team and begin a season they are making a commitment to that team.

If after the season begins the athlete decides that they wish to quit the team, they need to realize that they are hurting the team by not honoring the commitment that they made when the season began. We

feel that a student needs to take seriously the decision to play for a team, and if they make that choice then they need to do everything in their power to honor their decision. **All athletic fees are non-refundable.**

Playing Time

Praise Academy's goal is to provide a competitive athletic program. Coaches determine playing time based upon various factors. These include a student's athletic skill, attitude, work-ethic, performance in practice, and "in-game" needs. Our goal is for all players to gain in-game experience. However, this will not be done in such a way that it adversely affects the team's ability to be in a position to win. Participating on any Praise Academy team, and more specifically playing in games, should always be considered a privilege and not a right.

Practices

Parents have permission to attend their child's practice. Parents are welcome at practice as long as they are seen and not heard. Our coaches are here to do a specific job, and we feel that is best accomplished when there is no confusion at practices as to who is giving our student-athletes instruction.

Middle School and Junior High

Most team practices for our middle school and junior high teams will be held after school and begin around 3:15 p.m. Coaches may call additional practice time as needed (and facilities permit), but sufficient notice will be given to both the student-athletes and parents.

High School

Practice times for our high school teams will vary. We must also understand that our buildings are multi-use facilities and there will be times when gym availability (or a coach's schedule) could warrant practices before school, later in the evening, or on Saturday. These are possibilities that should be considered by both students and their parents before committing to play for a team.

Game and Practice Attendance Requirements

Once any student-athlete has joined a team, he/she has committed attention and attendance to that team until the last game/meet is completed. Players must be at every practice or game unless excused for one of the following reasons: 1) death in the family, 2) previously scheduled church commitment. Student-athletes and/or their parents are responsible for communicating **ANY ABSENCE** to their coach before the practice or game, unless there is an unexpected emergency.

Praise Academy is supportive of its student-athletes being involved in their local church/youth group. We would never schedule a game on Wednesday or a practice or game on Sunday **that would interfere with a regularly scheduled worship service.** We encourage our families to be actively involved in the local church, however, any athlete who misses a practice or game may have to make up practice activities and face the team's policy for reduction in playing time. This is not meant as punishment for an excusable absence, but a reward and incentive to those team members who were present.

A team member who must miss a practice or game may return to their former status as soon as they have fulfilled the team's policy for absences. Each coach will announce their discipline procedure for missed practices or games. Multiple unexcused absences may result in dismissal from the team. All athletes must also be on time to all practices and games. Coaches will also announce their own discipline procedures for tardiness.

Physical Exams

Students participating in the athletic program will be required to have a current physical exam performed by a doctor **PRIOR TO THE FIRST PRACTICE OF THE SEASON**. Without a physical form on file in the office, a student will be considered ineligible to participate in competition. Any physical performed within the past 12 months will be accepted and will be in effect for one year. A copy of the Pre-participation Physical Examination form can be obtained from the athletic office or on-line at www.praiseacademy.com.

Eligibility

STUDENT – ATHLETE ACADEMIC POLICY

Seniors must take at least 4 subjects. Students must maintain a 2.0 GPA in order to participate. The Athletic Director will check grades every 3 weeks to determine ongoing eligibility; however all exceptions must have prior approval from the Athletic Director and the administration.

Student-athletes, parents, and coaches are encouraged to "keep current" regarding their students' grades so that students will be continually encouraged to make their academics a priority. "Keeping current" will also help coaches plan for necessary adjustments in their program or team should students become ineligible.

While Praise Academy views athletics as an integral and necessary part of a student's overall education, we also feel strongly that it is a privilege earned and maintained by thorough and diligent attention given to respect and responsibility in the academic areas.

In order for a student-athlete to participate on any given day in a team's practice or game, he/she must be in the class for the ½ of the day. Exception: All exceptions must have prior approval from the Athletic Director and the administration.

Athletic Fees

The Praise Academy athletic fees are set by the athletic department. All fees are due to be paid in full prior to the team's first game. All fees are non-refundable.

Concession Stand/Gate

Every athlete's family will be required to volunteer in the concession stand and gate a minimum number of times per sport. This is essential to be able to operate a successful concessions operation. If you are scheduled to work a particular time and are not able to fulfill your obligation, please get a

replacement immediately. The proceeds from the concession stand and gate go towards the daily costs of running the PA athletic department and help keep the athletic fee to a minimum.

Uniform Responsibility

All uniforms and equipment that we have are viewed as gifts from God, and we ask that those who are issued these items to view them the same way. Uniforms are one of our largest expenditures as an athletic department, and so it is important that we try to maximize the life of these items. With that in mind, we ask that athletes and parents use the following guidelines when cleaning and caring for uniforms that they are issued:

- 1)Wash separately
- 2)Wash in cold water
- 3)Hang up to dry – DO NOT TUMBLE DRY!!
- 4)Do not make alterations unless given permission by the Athletic Director.

Uniforms become the responsibility of the athlete as soon as they are issued until the time that they are returned. Athletic uniforms are only to be worn for games, not practices or other functions. Any damage that is done during that period, other than normal wear and tear, is the responsibility of the athlete and will be billed to them accordingly.

All uniforms and equipment must be returned to the athletic director within one week after the last game of the season. Any student-athlete who does not return uniforms and/or equipment will have his/her report card held and costs for replacement charged to his/her school bill. An athlete will not be allowed to participate in another sport until all overdue uniforms, equipment, and fees have been turned in. Any lost items will be billed to the athlete at full replacement value. All uniforms are proper of the school even though fundraisers or parent donations are given toward uniforms.

Transportation/Road Trips

It is the responsibility of the athlete and their family to arrange transportation to and from all home athletic practices and events.

The school will arrange for transportation for all away games. Families will be provided with a schedule at the beginning of each season. However, schedules are subject to change.

What the student-athletes are to wear on road trips or to away games is set by the coach of that sport. In any case, student-athletes need to be aware that they are representing their team, their school, and most importantly their Savior Jesus Christ in the way that they act and the way that they dress. All students are expected to dress appropriately.

When transportation to away games is provided by the school, all team members, cheerleaders, and managers must travel to the game on the school bus. A student-athlete may ride home from an off-campus game with his/her parent(s), legal guardian, or a friend's parent(s) provided that the coach has been notified by written or verbal communication from the student-athlete's parent(s) or legal guardian

prior to leaving the contest site.

Insurance Coverage

Praise Academy requires all student-athletes to be covered under a family primary care/major medical health insurance policy. Praise Academy has a supplemental insurance policy only. **The supplemental insurance excludes tackle football.** You may notify the school after you have filed with your primary insurance. Since this is a supplemental policy, there are caps on reasonable and customary expenses.

All students are required to have a sports physical to verify that they are fit to participate in sports. **As of January 28, 2013, Praise Academy accident/liability insurance does not cover tackle football. Medical coverage excludes tackle football for any member playing, practicing, or training. Therefore, it is the parent's responsibility to carry medical/liability coverage for their child(ren) playing tackle football. A current copy of coverage must be on file in the athletic office.**

Banquet

Praise Academy will honor its junior high and senior high student-athletes at their respective end-of-the-year banquet. All team members should make every effort to be present at that time. Only athletes who appear on a team's final roster will be recognized at the awards banquet.

Junior High

Each junior high student-athlete will receive a participation certificate for each sport he/she plays in a given school year. Managers will be honored with a participation certificate that outlines their contributions as well.

Senior High

In order to letter for a varsity team, a student-athlete must participate in at least ½(half) of the innings or quarters of every game for his/her sport. Only athletes who appear on a team's final roster will be recognized at the awards banquet. Those student-athletes will receive a letterman's certificate at the annual banquet that denotes their years of service to that sport. Athletes who do not letter will receive a participation certificate for that sport. Varsity letterman's jackets will be available to purchase through the athletic department at PA.

Chain of Authority for Disputes

The Athletic Department does its best to run and organize our team and events in a manner that will allow all of those involved to receive the greatest possible enjoyment and benefit. However, we realize that just as in any other organization there will be times that certain problems, conflicts, and concerns arise. It is for that reason that we feel it is important to state up front our position on handling these situations.

We use Matthew 18:15-18 as our Biblical guide to handle such issues. If any parent, athlete, coach, teacher, or administrator has a concern over an athletic issue, they have a Biblical responsibility to go first to the person(s) that they have the concern about or with. It is our desire that any problems can

then be cleared up and those involved can move on. If, however, this does not resolve the issue, then and only then, should the issue be brought to the attention of another person. For the record, the level of authority at Praise Academy is as follows:

- 1) Coach
- 2) Athletic Director
- 3) Administration
- 4) School Board

Preseason Forms for Parents and Student-Athletes

For the safety of our athletes, the following forms will be due back in to the athletic office before any middle school or high school student-athlete may compete in the first game of the season:

- 1) Physical Examination Form
- 2) Copy of Medical Insurance Card
- 3) Parent/Athlete Agreement Form

Note: These forms are transferable from sport to sport. Only one of each form needs to be completed per child per year.

Conclusion

It is my hope that this manual has addressed and answered many if not all of your questions about the Praise Academy Athletic Department. If at any point you have any other questions that are still not answered or are unclear, then please feel free to contact me at shelly.franks@praiseacademy.com.

Thank you for entrusting your children to this school, and I look forward to the privilege and responsibility of serving you and your family.

Shelly Franks, Praise Academy Athletic Director