



2023-24
ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

Revised: 7/5/2023

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ATHLETIC PROGRAM PROFILE

MASCOT

Patriot

COLORS

Navy Blue, Red, and White

LEAGUES

Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS) for Grades 9-12

- High School athletics classification: TAPPS 1-A
- TAPPS by-laws and rules at www.tapps.biz

GOVERNANCE

All Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric sports are subject to and governed by TAPPS rules and by the policies laid out in the CA Athletic Handbook and Parent Student Handbook.

SPORTS

High School: Grades 9-12

- Volleyball (girls)
- Basketball (boys and girls)
- Track and Field (boys and girls)
- Cross Country (boys and girls)
- Swimming (boys and girls)
- Golf

Middle School: Grades 6-8

- Volleyball (girls)
- Basketball (boys and girls)
- Track and Field (boys and girls)
- Cross Country (boys and girls)

ATHLETIC FEES

Participation fees are charged for school-sponsored athletics teams to help cover the cost of the facility rentals, officiating fees, league membership, coach stipends, uniforms, and basic equipment costs. The school's Athletics Booster Club also makes available financial aid to help cover the participation fees for those in need. Such financial aid is based solely on need and is handled by the school administration. Those in need of financial aid for participation fees should contact the Athletics Office.

Athletic fees for fifth – twelfth grades will be billed through FACTS based on the sports each child participates. Please note that athletics fees may vary from sport to sport depending on the cost of the sport. For example, basketball and volleyball fees will typically be higher than track fees because they yield greater expenses (i.e. facilities rentals, officials' payment, equipment etc.).

➤ Volleyball	\$ 475.00
➤ Basketball	\$ 475.00
➤ Track	\$ 350.00
➤ Cross Country	\$ 350.00
➤ Golf	\$ 495.00
➤ Swimming	\$ 150.00

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

- Athletic Director: Janet Angst
- School phone: 281-373-2233
- Cell phone: 281-687-1533
- Email: janet.angst@covenantcypress.org

Covenant Academy Patriots,

Welcome to the **2023-24** athletic season at Covenant Academy! The Lord has done amazing things with our athletic program. Our girls high school volleyball team went to playoffs for the third year in a row, our girls high school basketball team finished in the top 8 teams in the state for TAPPS 1A, and our high school boys basketball AND our high school boys golf both placed 2nd in state for TAPPS 1A.

Athletics, rightly understood as an integral part of education, compliments our greater mission at Covenant. Lessons of commitment, teamwork, tenacity and overcoming adversity are advanced on our courts and fields. It is in the midst of “running to win the prize” that our student-athletes experience great life lessons. These lessons go beyond the x’s and o’s and into the heart of each one as they develop a love for Christ and service to those around them.

Along the way, our programs also provide wonderful opportunities to strengthen the larger community of Covenant Academy. Relationships built in the stands provide cohesiveness among our parents as they support their children. Your enthusiastic participation is important as we continue to seek to honor God through our athletic program.

This athletic handbook contains the philosophies, policies, and guidelines which govern the Covenant Academy Athletic Program. Although it is intended to be comprehensive, there will inevitably be situations that occur that are not outlined in this handbook. Having a common understanding of the rules and regulations will assist in reducing concerns and unforeseen problems.

We ask that both parents and student-athletes read this handbook. There is an Acknowledgement Form at the end of this handbook. We ask that a signed copy be on file with the Athletic Director before a student-athlete can participate in athletics.

We are looking forward to a great year in athletics! **GO PATRIOTS!!**

Janet Angst

Athletic Director

*“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize?
So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things.
They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we can imperishable.
So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air.
But I discipline my body and keep it under control,
lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”
1 Corinthians 9:24-27*

Volunteers

Our program exists because of our volunteers. Our partnership with our parents is what makes our school unique and what makes our athletic program different. We are a small school, and we depend on our volunteers to make our program successful.

We have many needs, which include but are not limited to:

- Driving to and from practices and games
- Helping with admissions
- Line judging at volleyball games
- Coordinating snacks for late games
- Running the clock for basketball games
- Running the scoreboard for basketball games
- Athletic fundraising

We know that every parent is extremely busy, **but it is expected that each family step in to help in AT LEAST ONE of these above areas.**

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Table of Contents

ATHLETIC PROGRAM PROFILE	3
MASCOT.....	3
COLORS.....	3
LEAGUES	3
GOVERNANCE	3
SPORTS.....	3
ATHLETIC FEES.....	3
ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION	4
ATHLETIC PROGRAM	9
PURPOSE.....	9
ATHLETICS MISSION	9
ATHLETICS VISION	9
PHILOSOPHY.....	9
SCHOOL LEVEL PHILOSOPHY	10
MULTIPLE SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES.....	10
GENERAL POLICIES.....	12
COMMUNICATION	12
SPORTSMANSHIP.....	12
SCHEDULING	12
TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL	13
SEVERE/INCLEMENT WEATHER.....	14
MUSIC POLICY	14
SUBSTANCE ABUSE.....	15
FUNDRAISING.....	15
GAMBLING	15
HAZING	15
LOST AND FOUND	15
STUDENT-ATHLETES.....	17
CODE OF CONDUCT.....	17
AGE/GRADE ELIGIBILITY.....	17
ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS.....	17
REQUISITES FOR PARTICIPATION	18
PARTICIPATION	18
PRACTICE POLICY	18
DISCIPLINE POLICY.....	19

Revised: 7/5/2023

TIME COMMITMENTS.....	19
GRADE LEVEL PRACTICE AND GAME COMMITMENTS	20
LETTERING POLICY.....	20
DEPARTURE FROM TEAM	20
INJURIES.....	21
STEWARDSHIP	22
ATHLETIC UNIFORM AND DRESS CODE	22
PARENTS	23
COACHES	25
COMMUNICATION	25
SAFETY PROCEDURES	25
END OF SEASON AWARDS	26
2023-24 PARENT & STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	27

ATHLETIC PROGRAM

PURPOSE

Covenant Academy Athletic Department exists to help fulfill the mission of the school:

Covenant Academy serves Christ and His Kingdom, by sharing the gospel and partnering with parents to train students by way of Scripture and the classical liberal arts.

Covenant Academy athletics will help fulfill this mission by teaching a Christ-centered approach to competition and teamwork, as well as respect for our opponents and officials. Covenant Academy athletics also hopes to instill a lifelong love for exercise and physical fitness in our student-athletes.

ATHLETICS MISSION

Covenant Academy's athletic program exists to glorify God and fulfill the school's mission through athletic training.

ATHLETICS VISION

In athletics we pursue truth by seeking victory fairly and submitting ourselves honestly to the rules of the game.

We pursue goodness by endeavoring to represent Christ as we win or lose graciously, putting forth our best effort no matter the opposition.

- We pursue beauty by seeking to master the skills in each event.
- We learn to serve Christ's kingdom by working as a team, not seeking individual glory, but putting our efforts into the success of the group.
- We seek to work hard and compete fairly and to do so for Christ's glory.

PHILOSOPHY

Covenant Academy athletics helps to fulfill the mission of the school by teaching the Christian way of competing and the Christian way of life as expressed through our four guiding principles from Scripture:

Love God and love neighbor (Matt. 22:37-39)

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Speak what is helpful and useful (Eph. 4:29)

"Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear."

Honor those in authority (Hebrews 13:17)

"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."

Obey all the way, right away, cheerfully, everyday (Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:23)

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men."

SCHOOL LEVEL PHILOSOPHY

We recognize the normal stages of a child's development and strive to provide appropriate opportunities in athletics for all of our student-athletes:

5th Grade Athletics

At Covenant Academy we believe it is important to expose our students to organized athletics as early as 5th grade. We also recognize that at that age, many of the kids are simply not ready to participate in competitive game play and that it is critical to give them opportunity to develop their skill before doing so. In light of this, 5th grade students who desire to participate in athletics are encouraged to practice with the MS team, however there isn't a guarantee that they will participate in games. There may be occurrences when a 5th grader is needed to participate in games simply to have enough numbers to make a team. As we continue to grow as a school, there may come a time when we can create a division for 5th-6th and another division for 7th-8th. In the meantime, however, 6th-8th will compete in game play at the MS level and 5th graders are invited to be a part of the practice team, and potentially compete, as needed.

Middle School Athletics (Grades 6-8)

The goal of our Middle School athletic program is to further in the student-athlete a love for the game, continue to develop fundamental skills and help athletes begin to understand and execute more advanced- level strategies and schemes. MS school athletics also help further develop the concepts of commitment and teamwork. All MS school athletes who have consistently attended practice, demonstrated commitment to improving their skills, and met CA athletic handbook expectations will be given playing time in each game. This does not mean each player will receive equal playing time. Playing time may differ in each contest at the coach's discretion. All Middle School level athletes are expected to understand and follow all CA Athletic Handbook policies.

High School Athletics (Grades 9-12)

The goal of our High School athletic program is to be competitive within TAPPS at the district, regional and state levels. All CA High School teams will continue to focus on excellence in execution, develop leadership skills, cultivate a "team first" philosophy and stress Christian core values. All High School coaches will work to place players in positions that best utilize their athletic talent and provide the greatest benefit to the overall success of the team. Each head coach takes into consideration each players' knowledge, ability to execute, attitude, conduct and safety regarding playing time. High School level athletes are not guaranteed playing time nor are they guaranteed a place on a varsity team. All High School level athletes are expected to understand and follow all CA Athletic Handbook policies.

Creation and size of teams is determined by many factors including but not limited to the number of participants interested in a sport, facility availability, safety, and coaching resources. Cuts are permissible if based on facility or resource issues. Decisions will be made on a season-by-season, team-by-team basis if we cannot provide a healthy experience for all parties involved.

MULTIPLE SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

CA encourages athletes to be well rounded by participating in various activities both in and outside of athletics. We believe young athletes should experience a wide range of sports and activities. Different sports challenge athletes in different ways, they also develop different skills and disciplines. CA athletes are highly encouraged to participate in various sports. It is our belief that the skills developed through training methods used in one sport will help athletes develop skills required in another sport. We also believe that young athletes need to experience new sports in order to discover where their true talents

may lie. Athletes are also encouraged to expand their experiences by participating in other school-sponsored activities.

Multiple Activity Participation

With prior approval of both the athletic director and the leader of the activity, student-athletes may participate in a non-athletic department program and on an athletic team at the same time. Leadership representing both activities will work closely together to minimize conflicts. Where there are schedule conflicts, there must be a declared priority and agreements made between student, parents, and head coach as to how the student will divide his/her time between the activities. Athletes must understand that playing time may be affected by loss of practice time or availability for games.

Conflict Resolution between School and Non-school Activities

All CA athletic teams are voluntary activities in which CA student-athletes and their families choose to participate. Students are expected to honor their commitments to their team and their teammates. Athletes participating in outside activities and on CA athletic teams should notify the head coach prior to the start of the season of any potential conflicts. An agreement should be in place between the athlete, parents and head coach as to how these conflicts will be settled. If it is necessary to miss a practice or game, the student-athlete must communicate this absence to the coach or Athletic Director as soon as possible prior to the absence. The Athletic Director and coaches shall recognize the importance of family, church, and job commitments in his consideration of consequence (such as reduced playing time) as related to absences due to these events.

GENERAL POLICIES

COMMUNICATION

Methods of Communication

CA communicates in a variety of ways to parents and fans. All game and practice schedules are posted at www.rankonesport.com. This site is updated as needed. If early dismissal from class is required, it will be communicated to teachers, team members, and parents as soon as possible, prior to the event so adequate plans may be arranged. Any changes to posted schedules will also be communicated to parents via email through RenWeb and/or RankOne.

Conflict Resolution

Due to the number of teams, players, parents, and coaches involved in CA athletics, there is occasionally a question, problem, miscommunication, or concern that arises. In such cases, individuals are encouraged to communicate directly with the other person in accordance with Matthew 18:15. If the situation is not resolved, the individual should then discuss the matter with the next person in the chain of command. Conflict should continue to follow the chain of command until the matter is resolved. Typically, the order is: 1) coach involved, 2) head coach of the team, 3) Athletic Director, 4) Head of School.

SPORTSMANSHIP

During home contests, CA serves as host to the visiting team and its students and spectators. They are our guests and they should be treated accordingly. During away contests, we are expected to act as invited guests. We will treat the personnel and facilities of the home school with care and respect.

As participants and spectators, we want to cheer for our team, not against the opponent, being modest in victory and gracious in defeat. Additionally, we will regard the rules of the game as an agreement, the spirit and letter of which we shall not break. Players play the game; coaches coach the game. An official never loses a game for a team. Much like we do not readily credit an official for a win, we will not blame an official for a loss. Officials will be treated with respect, and we will accept absolutely and without quarrel the final decision of any official.

Any member of the Covenant community who is a participant or spectator at an event, who uses profanity, engages in inappropriate behaviors, such as fighting or similar misconduct, may be dismissed from the event and is subject to disciplinary action by the school, including, without limitation, suspension, or dismissal from the team. Any athlete, coach, or spectator ejected from a contest subjects the school to a \$50.00 fine and sanctions from TAPPS.

SCHEDULING

The Athletic Department seeks to schedule games and practices well in advance of the season. Please be aware that the Athletic Department has no control of CA district alignments or league scheduling. These are established by TAPPS. There may be changes in the schedule due to a change in an opponent for an 'away' game, conflicts with facilities rented by the school, or a schedule conflict. Such changes will be posted on the school website as soon as possible, and an email or Team App notification will be sent to all team parents.

Games

All games and meets are scheduled and approved by the Athletic Director. The goal of the CA athletic scheduling policy is to provide an age-appropriate level of commitment for student-athletes and their families. To this end the following guidelines apply:

- MS school teams will typically play no more than 16 regular season contests, one pre-season tournament, and a post-season championship tournament, if qualified and available.
- High School teams may not exceed the allowable number of contests as set by TAPPS by-laws for that sport.
- No team at any level will participate in more than three contests per week.
- Weekend tournaments must typically be scheduled on weeks with no more than one other contest.
- If teams are in the playoffs, games must be played as scheduled by TAPPS.
- Note that these numbers primarily refer to basketball and volleyball competition.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL

CA provides limited transportation with an approved CA driver to and from games or off-campus practices. CA coach or Athletic Director will communicate as soon as possible prior to practice or event if CA transportation will be provided. For those teams not traveling on the Covenant Academy van it will be the responsibility of the student-athletes and their families to arrange transportation to these events. Per coach approval, student-athletes have the option to drive themselves alone, or they may drive themselves and no more than one other student-athlete who is not a sibling of the driver. Driving non-siblings requires written parental approval from both sets of parents of the student-athletes. Student-athletes may also ride with another adult with written parent approval or a CA approved driver. Regardless of the means of transportation, it is paramount that student-athletes arrive promptly for games and practices. Late arrivals affect practice scheduling and can affect starting line-ups for competitions.

Athletic Team Travel Policies

CA may supply limited transportation to various athletic events. When traveling as a team on CA supplied transportation all teams must abide by the following travel policies.

There must always be more than one athlete in the school van at all times. A coach, or designated CA driver may not carry one student alone in the van, unless it is their own child.

Safety Procedures

- All students must use safety restraints if available while vehicle is in motion.
- All body parts shall remain inside the vehicle at all times.
- All students must remain in their seats while the vehicle is in motion.
- No horseplay or public display of affection will be allowed.
- No throwing of objects, inside or outside the vehicle.
- No excessively loud conversation, yelling or inappropriate language.

Return Travel Policies

Return travel will vary from sport to sport and team from team. Each coach shall set his or her return policy when traveling as a team on CA transportation. The coach will convey the standard return policy prior to the first road trip. If there is a change to the standard policy at any time during the season, the coach will notify the parents at the earliest possible time. If an athlete is not returning on CA supplied transportation, **the athlete or parent must check out with a coach before leaving the competition site.**

Music Policy on CA Transportation

Each coach shall set his or her own policy as to whether athletes may use personal music devices. If allowed, music must be congruent with school philosophy and played at a level as to not interfere with other people on the vehicle. Listening to personal audio devices is based on coach discretion. If allowed, headphones must be worn.

Food and Beverage policies

Coaches may allow athletes to bring food and drinks aboard the vehicle. All drinks must have a plastic lid or cap. Athletes will be responsible to collect and dispose of all trash upon exiting the vehicle.

Equipment policies

Athletes will be expected to help unload equipment from the vehicle both at the game site and upon their return to campus.

Overnight Games/Competitions

High School teams may have games and competitions that require the team to spend the night prior to or after a contest. On such an occasion, the head coach or athletic director will make lodging arrangements for all team members. All team members will stay with their team unless prior permission is given by the head coach. This is essential in order that the coaches can conduct team meetings, notify players of any schedule changes, ensure that players are on time to competitions and build team unity. Players will be given an itinerary prior to any out-of-town or overnight trip. Players will also be informed of any expenses for which they are responsible. All players must have a signed permission slip pertaining to the trip, explaining all CA policies concerning overnight trips.

Meals and Lodging

If funds are available, the Athletic Department will help defray lodging costs related to regular season and playoff games. Otherwise, meals and lodging costs are paid by athletes during the season.

SEVERE/INCLEMENT WEATHER

Any changes to published schedules due to inclement weather will be updated on the CA website. Communication will also be circulated through RenWeb or RankOne as soon as a decision is made. If lightning is present during an outdoor event, all parties must be moved indoors. Thirty minutes after the last visual evidence of lightning, the event may be resumed. During outdoor practices, heat and humidity levels are closely monitored and all coaches are required go through all TAPPS and National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) heat related training programs. When possible, practices will be scheduled in the coolest times of the day.

MUSIC POLICY

All music played during practices, off-season workouts, and pre-game warm-ups must be submitted to the Athletic Director for approval.

Individual Music

Use of iPods, smart phones, and other devices for playing individual music at practice, games, or during travel will be consistent with CA policy. If allowed, music must be congruent with the school philosophy. Volume of devices will be set at a volume so as not to disturb any other individuals. Headphones are to be used on all personal audio devices.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

CA vigorously opposes student use, possession, or distribution of tobacco or alcohol in any form, on or off campus. Violation, whether on or off campus, subjects a student-athlete to disciplinary action deemed appropriate by the coaching staff, athletic director, and administration. Penalties may include multiple-day suspension, permanent removal from the team, or expulsion from the school. Students are not permitted to use, possess, purchase, or distribute illegal drugs, including athletic performance enhancement drugs (PED's). Violation, whether on or off campus, subjects the person(s) involved to disciplinary action and may lead to the involvement of local law enforcement. Athletic performance enhancing drugs are detrimental to the health of the student and are never an acceptable alternative to hard work.

FUNDRAISING

All fundraising activities must be submitted to the Head of School for approval.

GAMBLING

Gambling is not tolerated. Violation subjects the person(s) involved to disciplinary action.

HAZING

Hazing is not tolerated. Hazing is defined as subjecting someone to an indignity, fright, abuse or threat. Violator(s) will be subjected to disciplinary action.

LOST AND FOUND

Coaches require athletes to be good stewards of all personal articles, equipment and facilities. Should an item be lost or misplaced, check with the coach then check in the Lost and Found located at the front offices.

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STUDENT-ATHLETES

CODE OF CONDUCT

Representing Covenant Academy in athletics is a student's choice and thereby a privilege. Student-athletes shall conduct themselves in a way that honors God, Covenant Academy, their teams, their families and themselves. A Covenant Academy student-athlete reflects the mission and identity of the school, no matter where he/she is. Student-athletes are expected to always behave with consideration for others in thought, word, and deed. Student-athletes must abide by the school's stated rules and policies as stipulated by Athletic Department staff members and/or school administration. A student's failure to embody these standards of conduct shall be reported immediately to a coach or administrator and may result in discipline, including, without limitation, suspension, or dismissal from the team.

AGE/GRADE ELIGIBILITY

- Students entering 7th or 8th grade must be 14 years old or younger on September 1 of the current school year.
- For participation in TAPPS, students must be less than 19 years old on September 1 of the current school year. Students in the 8th grade are not eligible to participate on or against varsity teams in TAPPS competition.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Student eligibility will be assessed on a weekly basis via the Failing Report on RenWeb. To be eligible, students must be passing all classes. A student who is academically ineligible will remain so for one week after the failing report was checked. If by that time the student's grades are all at 70 or above, he/she is once again eligible to play. Students, parents, and coaches will be notified when a student is determined to be academically ineligible and when the student returns to academic eligibility. Ineligibility does not extend to the following school year.

Students who participate and compete in athletics are student-athletes, which means they are students first, and athletes second. This requires a high level of commitment and hard work. Academics must remain a priority year-round, with focus and dedication to be maintained, whether during a sport season or out of season. If an athlete is on the failing report more than 3 times during the school year, he or she may be asked to meet with teacher(s) involved to lay out a plan for how he or she will improve. If the student is on the failing report more than 5 times, he or she will not be able to participate in any athletics for the remainder of the school year.

Efforts will be made to balance school workload; however, student-athletes are responsible for their own academic performance. A student-athlete who misses school due to athletic competition is responsible for keeping up with his or her schoolwork. It is the student's responsibility to inform the teacher at least one school day prior to missing a class. The student will arrange to fulfill all academic work. Any homework assignments that are due should be turned in prior to the missing class period(s), or arrangements must be made with the teacher as to when assignments will be accepted. Any tests that the student will miss should be taken ahead of time, if possible.

REQUISITES FOR PARTICIPATION

Each student desiring to participate in CA athletics must be an enrolled fulltime Covenant Academy student and must complete the following:

- Signed acknowledgement of Athletic Handbook Form
- Annual physical examination and submit signed physical evaluation, medical history, concussion, and sudden cardiac forms.
- CA Parent/Student Acknowledgement of rules
- TAPPS Acknowledgement of Rules
- Any other TAPPS or school required documentation

All documents must be on file in the office prior to the first day of participation in any given sport. A **student-athlete may not participate with the team until all documentation is completed.** All the aforementioned documents can be found on RankOne or from the Athletic Director.

In addition to the required documentation listed above, a student-athlete must be prepared to pay or have planned to pay all athletic fees. The fee will be billed to the student's account at the end of the season. The athletic fee schedule is set prior to the beginning of each school year. **Any student-athlete with outstanding athletic fee payments or uniforms that have not been returned, may not participate with the team until all fees are current.**

PARTICIPATION

Participating in athletics is a privilege and is contingent on the following:

Clearance from Previous Sport – Student-athletes must be cleared from their prior sport before they may begin competing in a new sport. This includes, but is not limited to, the uniform and equipment returned in good condition and payment of athletic fees.

Good academic and moral standing – Student-athletes may not participate in practices or games if they have failed to achieve the minimum academic requirement or if they are suspended from school.

School Attendance and Athletic Participation

To be eligible to compete on any given game day or to practice on any given day, a student must be in attendance for at least 3 periods on the day of practice or game (or on the day before of a Saturday game), unless prior arrangements have been made by the Administrator or the Athletic Director. All early releases from school for athletic competition must be approved by the Athletic Director and the Administrator in advance.

PRACTICE POLICY

Practice and Game Attendance

Parents and student-athletes must recognize that absence from practice hinders skill development and physical conditioning and jeopardizes team unity. Absence from a team practice negatively affects an athlete's performance and often his position with the team.

Attendance at practices is required for participation in games. Coaches will be constantly adding and adjusting team strategies during practice sessions. Missing practice may result in students being unprepared for game situations.

Missed practices will be classified and handled under the following two guidelines:

- **Unchangeable Family Commitments** - Defined as an absence outside of the control of the player due to family commitments and includes illness. These absences should be kept to an extreme minimum and will typically not result in loss of playing time.
- **Player Chosen Activity** - Defined as an absence from practice due to a player's deliberate choice. These absences may result in a loss of playing time during the next scheduled game and/or extra conditioning work at the next practice.

If it is necessary to miss a practice, the student-athlete must communicate this absence to the coach or Athletic Director as soon as possible prior to the absence. Excessive absences from practice and games may result in removal from the team for the remainder of the season.

All attendance policies will be approved by the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director and coaches shall recognize the importance of family, church, and job commitments in his consideration of consequence (such as reduced playing time) as related to absences due to these events.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

- Any student disciplined in other areas of school life is subject to suspension from the athletic program to be determined by the Athletic Director and the HOS.
- If a student receives a suspension or discipline of any kind, the serving of that takes precedence over attendance at practice and/or games.
- Students serving suspension will be ineligible for any practice or game held on that day.
- Any student using profanity or abusive language, or demonstrating unacceptable behavior will be subject to suspension to be determined by the Athletic Director and HOS.
- 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.

TIME COMMITMENTS

Volleyball (fall sport)

All High School and MS volleyball teams will begin practices on the first week of August, following TAPPS Guidelines. Coaches may schedule morning or afternoon practices on weekdays prior to the start of classes. Some early summer practices may also be required. Parents and athletes must be aware that practices and competitions begin before the start of the school year. Volleyball continues through October, with post season play-offs in early November and the State Championship tournament the second weekend of November.

Cross Country (fall sport)

High school and middle school teams will be expected to run and workout during the summer months. Students will be expected to participate in group runs as well as run on their own. It is understood by coaches that family vacations occur during this time and students will not be penalized for missing practice. Cross Country continues through early/mid October.

Basketball (winter sport)

HS and MS basketball begins in mid-October and continues through mid-February, with post season play- offs through February; the State Tournament is the first weekend of March. Those athletes that are competing in a fall sport will start basketball upon conclusion of their fall commitment. They may have one week off between activities if they so choose.

Track and Field (spring sport)

MS and HS track begins in mid-February. MS track continues to late April and HS track to the first weekend of May. Those athletes that are playing basketball will begin their spring activities upon the conclusion of basketball. Athletes may have one week off between activities if they so choose.

Golf (spring sport)

Golf typically begins in March, with tournaments on weekdays (usually Mondays or Tuesdays). This will require missing a day of school to attend the tournament. Athletes are responsible for all make up work missed on these days. The State Tournament is a two day, out of town tournament, usually in late April.

Tryouts

Tryouts allow coaches to place like-skilled players together which aids in each player’s development. If a student misses a tryout, he/she will be placed on the lower-level team. Coaches reserve the right to pull players up from lower-level teams at any time.

GRADE LEVEL PRACTICE AND GAME COMMITMENTS

MS sports (Grades 6-8)

MS school athletics will not exceed more than four required days (games and practices) within a given week, without prior approval from the Athletic Director. Occasionally, competitions may be held on Saturdays depending on league or host-team scheduling. No teams will have mandatory practices over extended school holidays, such as Christmas and Spring Break. Teams may have practices on Monday holidays or teacher workdays, if required by the coach. With approval from the Athletic Director, teams may have limited practice during the last week of December if league play is scheduled to resume during the first week of January. Playing a game after several days off or inadequate preparation can become a safety health issue for the athletes. No team-related events or activities are permitted on Sundays.

HS sports (Grades 9-12)

HS school athletics will not exceed more than five days (games and practices) within a given week, without prior approval from the Athletic Director. Occasionally, competitions may be held on Saturdays. Rhetoric teams may conduct non-mandatory practice during extended school holidays such as Christmas and Spring Break. No team-related events or activities are permitted on Sundays. No team may schedule practices or any other team activity during TAPPS required dead periods.

LETTERING POLICY

A player letters when he meets the requirements for his sport or is deemed able to letter by the head coach through regular contribution to the team both in games and practices. The athlete can letter only if he participates in the varsity level of competition at Covenant Academy. A player must finish the season with the team in order to letter unless a season-ending injury occurs that prohibits him from finishing. In such a case, the letter is dependent upon the athlete staying in good standing with the team throughout the remainder of the season. Lettering requirements for each sport are determined by the head coach and must be approved by the Athletic Director.

DEPARTURE FROM TEAM

There are three types of departure from a team. Please note that no athletic fees will be refunded for any departure.

Leaving a Team

Season ending injury, poor health status, family emergency, or academic performance may lead to permissible departure from the team only after being discussed between the parents, the head coach

and/or the Director of Athletics. A student-athlete may still be eligible for a varsity letter in this circumstance, and he will still be eligible for his next season's sport.

Quitting a Team

Regardless of reason, any player that quits a sport after the sport has begun will not be eligible to participate in the next sport of his/her choice during the same season. HS students will not be eligible to earn a letter in that sport. The only exception to this rule is if the student-athlete and head coach have clearly communicated that quitting may be an option. For example, if the Head Coach has agreed to let a student-athlete try a sport for a week and the student-athlete then quits within the agreed upon time, the student would be eligible for the next season's sport.

Dismissal from a Team

Regardless of reason, any player who is dismissed from a team due to conduct, rules infractions or disciplinary reasons, will not be eligible to play in the following season of athletics. HS students will not be eligible to earn a letter in that sport.

INJURIES

Athlete Care and Injury Reporting Guidelines

1. Athletes are to report practice injuries to the coach.
2. The coach will initiate early first aid care. The coach will notify the parents of all injuries.
3. Injured athletes are expected to continue treatment through the recovery period and attend practices/games unless other arrangements are made.
4. Parents are encouraged to contact the coach or Athletic Director regarding any questions or concerns relating to their child's injury.
5. All athletes missing practices or games due to injury must notify the coach directly, prior to that practice or game.

Concussion Protocol for Injury during Practice or Game

- Student athletes injured in a school practice or school athletic competition will be evaluated by their coach and/or trainer for a concussion. If the student shows any signs of a concussion, they will be removed from play. **When in doubt, sit them out!**
- Athletes will NOT return to active participation on the day of injury.
- Parents and Athletic Director will be immediately notified.
- Athletes must be evaluated by an appropriate health-care provider
- **Athletes may not return to practice or play until they have been cleared by a physician.**

Medical Referral for Injuries

Any athletic care service provided by a coach is not designated to replace the family physician or to dictate medical care. The choice of health care provider and initiation of medical referral always remains at the discretion of the parents. Your family physician should be contacted if problems develop with an injury, the condition worsens, or if the condition persists for an extended period.

Procedures Involving Injuries

All athletes who have been removed from activity by the coach and referred for physician evaluation must provide a note from the consulting physician prior to returning to activity. In addition, all athletes who have been removed from activity by a physician must present a note from the physician clearing the athlete to reenter activity. Injured players continued attendance at all team events is mandatory unless there is an agreement between the athlete and head coach.

Athletic Injury Report Form

If an injury occurs at a practice or game, coaches will be expected to fill out the Athletic Injury Report Form and submitted to the Athletic Director no later than the day following the injury.

STEWARDSHIP

All student-athletes are expected to be good stewards of all equipment, facilities, and uniforms entrusted to them. If available, student-athletes will use assigned lockers for the storage of uniforms, equipment, and personal items. Personal items should always be stored in lockers or a designated area.

ATHLETIC UNIFORM AND DRESS CODE

Student-athletes are responsible for caring for uniforms, warm-ups and other gear as well as returning clean items in good condition at the end of the season. If a student-athlete is missing a uniform or piece of equipment on the day of a game, another uniform or equipment may be issued if available. If a uniform is lost and cannot be found, another uniform will be issued if available. In either case, the athlete will be responsible for both the original uniform and for the additional uniform and/or equipment. **The student-athlete must turn in uniforms and all equipment at the end of the season or pay the replacement cost for or cleaning cost for any missing or damaged gear.**

Uniform Policy:

Uniforms will be distributed to athletes prior to their first game.

- Athletes are responsible for the maintenance of their uniform throughout the season.
- Any damage, outside of normal wear and tear, will be the responsibility of the athlete.
- Uniforms must be turned in, to the coach, no later than two (2) weeks after the last game of the season. ***If no arrangements have been made directly with the Athletic Director, a \$25.00 late fee will be charged after that date.***
- Uniforms or uniform parts are to be worn **ONLY** during athletic games or approved athletic events, not for P.E. or general wear.

Damaged uniform pieces will need to be replaced at the expense of the student-athlete if the damage is unrelated to games or practices. ***The replacement cost of each uniform item (top or bottom) is a minimum of \$100 and may be as much as \$150. A cleaning fee will also be assessed, if necessary.***

Game Days

Students are permitted to wear *navy team jersey (top only)* to school on spirit days and on game days approved by the school administration. They are to be worn with approved school uniform bottoms. If the shirt is a tank, a navy t-shirt must be worn underneath.

Practice Dress Codes

Students are expected to be present at practice with the correct attire and equipment for their sport. Practice uniform is to be determined by the coach but is typically navy or black shorts and a Covenant Academy t-shirt. Basketball athletes will be issued practice shorts and pinneys. Athletes may not wear jewelry while participating in athletics. Competition uniforms are not to be worn in practice unless specified by the head coach.

PARENTS

Parents are the most influential models for young athletes. From a parent’s conduct to the priority sports plays in the family order of life, parents significantly impact a young person’s athletic experience and they are critical to the success of our athletic programs. The athletic department needs parents to serve in one or more of a variety of volunteer positions throughout the year. Team parent, travel coordinators, drivers, overnight chaperones, statisticians, clock managers, videographers, admissions, field/gym preparation and cleanup are just a few of the volunteer opportunities that provide much needed help as well as good community time between parents.

The following guidelines are an attempt to provide a foundation for our joint effort to guide your sons and daughters through the challenging, yet wonderful, experience of interscholastic sports.

Parent and Athlete Meeting

There will be a mandatory meeting held prior to the start of each season to go over expectations of students and athletes, distribute schedules, and discuss volunteer needs. We will also explain specific needs (ex: line judge for volleyball, scorekeeper for basketball). It is expected that each parent will volunteer in some fashion during each season.

Perspective on Why Kids Play the Game

Most young people participate in sports for the following reasons: to have fun, to develop a natural desire to play, to make new friends, to be with friends, to be part of a team, and to compete. “To win” or “to be a champion” is often not at the top of the list. Athletes must hear from parents and coaches that it is the process of competing that counts. Undue emphasis on winning and losing minimizes the value of sports.

Presence at Games and Practices

The coach’s classroom is the court or field, usually with undefined walls, making it easy for parents to naturally move close to the action. Parents should be interested, supportive observers from a distance. Practices are considered valuable instructional and evaluation time. Parents and guests are expected to refrain from disrupting practice sessions and from interacting with players and/or coaches during practice, including during water and rest periods. The coach needs room to instruct, and the player needs room to perform without distraction from the stands or sidelines. Distraction only yields poor results.

During games or competitions, parents and guests should remain in the stands or in other designated areas for spectators. Certain areas are restricted to coaches, players, and official team personnel (i.e., trainers or managers). Failure to cooperate with these restrictions may subject the team to penalties by game officials and can even lead to ejection from the contest.

Coach as Leader

Each coach is prayerfully and thoughtfully considered, recruited, interviewed, and hired and therefore has authority over students in each given sport. Parents and student-athletes must trust that coaches endeavor to make the best decisions for the team as well as for the individuals that form the team. Coaches are with the team on a daily basis in practice and in competition evaluating character and performance and therefore will make judgment decisions based on what is in the best interest of the team. Playing time, players’ positions, and strategy will be left to the discretion of the coach. Parents should help their children understand that being a team member means accepting the coach’s decisions even when he or she does not agree with them.

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It is also important to remember that neither coaches nor parents are infallible evaluators of talent; nor are they perfect in calling plays. A team does not function well with non-coaches trying to coach. Parents should not place their children in the position of deciding whether they will listen to their parent or their coach. Yielding to authority is a biblical lesson that our children will learn from the example of their parents.

Parents should never contact opposing schools, officials, or the TAPPS offices to voice complaints over athletic contests, opposing players, coaches, fans, or officials. All concerns and/or opinions should be communicated directly to the team coach or Athletic Director.

COACHES

Successful athletic programs start with quality coaches. We believe coaches are one of the most significant components to the athletic program and seek to hire Christian role models who are committed to fulfilling the mission of the school, who desire to disciple our student-athletes and serve their families and who are knowledgeable in their sport.

School athletic programs are an integral part of each student's overall education and development, and coaches shall assist each student-athlete toward developing his full potential. Mentoring, development and the care and safety of our student-athletes are our coaches' most important responsibilities. Therefore, if possible, a coach will not be responsible to instruct more than one team during a practice or competition. An exception will be for the male and female track team which may train and compete at the same event. Coaches, in partnership with the Athletic Director, oversee all teams and all levels in their sport, providing a firm foundation for program development. The coach will strive to motivate and assist athletes, both in-season and out-of-season, to achieve their full potential as players.

"Optional Practices" are not mandatory, and no penalties will be levied to individuals who cannot make these types of practices.

COMMUNICATION

Coaches must communicate with student-athletes and parents on a regular basis. Coaches will conduct a parent meeting prior to the start of the season to communicate the expected commitment to the team and the anticipated practice and game schedule. The head coach and/or Athletic Director will also be in regular communication with parents and athletes during the season. Coaches or the Athletic Director will communicate about any suggested summer camps or conditioning programs well in advance of any planned activity. All summer activities, other than pre-season practices for fall sports, must be held on a voluntary basis.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

Transportation

Coaches will not transport any athlete other than their own child in a one-to-one situation. Any coach or parent transporting a child should be an approved CA driver and always have two or more athletes or another adult present in the vehicle.

Pick Up from Athletic and Extra-Curricular Events

Parents need to pick up or have arranged pick up of their child at the designated time for dismissal. If a Coach, teacher, or sponsor is left in a position where he/she is in a one-to-one situation, these procedures will be followed:

- The adult and athlete will remain in a public and easily viewed area; always maintaining an appropriate space between the adult and the student.
- If outdoors, the adult may want to sit in his/her vehicle in a location where the adult can see and talk to the student.
- If indoors, the adult and athlete will wait in a foyer or commons area. The athlete and adult will never be in a one-on-one situation in a closed room. If in a classroom setting, the door will always be open.

Student Needing to go to Restroom or Areas Outside Your Field of Vision

If a student needs to go to the restroom or areas outside of a coach's field of vision, when possible, the athlete will be accompanied by another adult or teammate. The coach will send someone to locate the

athlete if an extensive time has passed. In events such as track and cross country where students must be in areas outside of a coach's direct supervision, coaches will always be aware of where the athletes should be. Whenever possible, a parent or teammate will accompany the athlete to the competition areas. When possible, no student will be left alone unattended in the team camp area. In workouts where athletes will be out of the coach's sight lines, athletes will be training with a partner so that no one is running or training on their own in unsecured areas.

Overnight Trips

Coaches and sponsors will have clear curfews set on all overnight trips. They will do a room check at the stated time. If the trip is co-ed, there will never be boys and girls unsupervised in the same room without the entire group and with permission from the sponsor of the trip. Anytime there is a coed room, the door to the room must remain opened and unencumbered. At no time will a student leave the hotel or facility without permission or unaccompanied.

Individual or Private Instruction

If a coach or sponsor is going to schedule time with an individual student for instruction, he/she will notify the parents in advance that this will be a one-on-one situation. The athlete and adult will remain in a **public area if possible during the session. If a private room is required, the door will always remain** opened, and they will remain visible from the doorway.

Coach Supervision of Practice and Game Sites

Coaches should arrive 10-15 minutes prior to the time athletes are scheduled to arrive unless the coach is travelling with the team to an away game.

END OF SEASON AWARDS

Covenant Academy recognizes the importance of coming together and celebrating a successful season, which is why we host an end of season awards ceremony. It is a good thing to acknowledge and honor the hard work of each team. In addition to celebrating the team, Covenant Academy also recognizes two individual members of each team: the most improved athlete and the athlete who embodies the spirit and culture of the school (The Patriot Award).

The most improved athlete is one who day in and day out was dedicated to getting better--putting in time not just during practice, but outside of practice to develop his or her skill. We always want to encourage athletes to be committed to improving and developing in all aspects of life and we believe this kind of award encourages that level of commitment.

The Patriot Award, our highest honor, goes to the athlete who has demonstrated the following: excellent academic standing (all A's and B's), godly character, a genuine pursuit of Christ, extremely hard working in his/her sport, full of humility, an encourager, and tenacious competitor.

These two awards are up to the coach's direction. If he/she feels that none are deserving of either award, he/she does not have to give out the award.

2023-24 PARENT & STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have received, read, and understand the Athletic Handbook for this school year, and I agree to abide by the rules and guidelines stated therein.

Student's Name (printed)

Grade

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature (Father)

Date

Parent Signature (Mother)

Date