

## ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

### PHILOSOPHY OF ATHLETICS

Christians are commanded to be different from the world around them and this includes athletics (Isaiah 55:8, 9). The reason is that we have a different perspective. Jesus Christ is to be the center of all our attention, both on and off the athletic field. We are to have His attitude, actions and mindset (Phil. 2:5, Romans 8:29). We are to do everything as unto the Lord and not unto men (Col. 3:23).

In other words, we are to be as much like Christ as we can be with the Holy Spirit's help and we are to perform as if Jesus were the only one watching. Jesus loved us so much that He gave Himself for us (Phil. 2:8). It is only natural then that we should give all we have to Him in return.

### PURPOSE OF ATHLETICS

Athletics is a tremendous vehicle with which to instill character qualities we want all of our athletes to exhibit. These are all scripturally based, and they are consistently reinforced through study, practice, and prayer.

1. Dependability: Be at all practices and contests unless excused by your coach. Do what is expected of you in all situations.
2. Punctuality: Be on time, never late!
3. Love: Be self-sacrificing and show a real concern for team members, coaches, and opponents. Remember, Christ centered His love upon others, not Himself.
4. Enthusiasm: Take an interest in every part of your sport and be glad to quickly carry out every part of the job (I Thess. 5:16).
5. Faith: Show that you know the Lord is in control of all circumstances and that He is carrying out His will in your life (Heb. 11:1).
6. Humility: Show forth the attitude that God is the One responsible for your abilities, talents, and success (Phil. 2:3, 4).
7. Endurance: You must be able to withstand stress, hard work, and the problems that all Christian athletes experience (Gal. 6:9).
8. Boldness: Be ready to boldly express what Jesus Christ has done for you. The Christian athlete cannot be one who is timid or gives up (Acts 4:29).

### CODE OF CONDUCT

ECA Athletes are representatives of and ambassadors for our school. The athlete must, at all times, demonstrate conduct becoming a Christian. Many occasions arise where tempers can flare, officials appear to be in error, or opposing players try the patience of the athlete. On such occasions, ask what Christ would do, and then act accordingly. In summary, **ACT** as a matter of Christian testimony - don't **REACT** to temporal situations.

### COMMITMENT TO ATHLETICS

Athletics at Elkhart Christian Academy are an integral part of the overall school program. Christian witness and testimony can and should be exemplified through participation. Our athletic program is one of several means of developing the total Christian. Any worthwhile activity requires commitment. Sports are no exception. The construction of facilities, employment of personnel, and building of sports schedules are very real commitments on the part of the school. Parents, too, commit time, money, and energy toward athletics for their children. The same commitment is required from the athlete.

The athlete should endeavor to maintain a Christ-like attitude before others, committing his or her life as a witness and testimony for the Lord. There should be continual evidence of academic responsibility and growth. The athlete must rise head and shoulders above the minimum standards set forth in this handbook and the general student handbook and consider their willingness toward commitment **BEFORE** considering participation.

Students are urged to exercise caution in attempting to participate in numerous activities. Interscholastic sports at the high school level require a substantial time commitment, which usually extends Monday through Saturday from the first official day of practice until the end of the IHSAA tournament. A commitment to an athletic team indicates that all non-school conflicts will be resolved in favor of the high school team. Exceptions would include religious holidays, family wedding, or funeral etc.

When a conflict arises, the student should notify the coach and/or sponsors involved and attempt to resolve the conflict equitably. If the conflict persists, the student may contact the athletic director or principal for assistance.

### **ATHLETIC PROGRAM PROFILE**

Elkhart Christian Academy has a rich tradition in both its girls' and boys' athletic programs. The entire school and community take pride in the accomplishments of the Eagles' athletic teams.

ECA offers 5 varsity sports for girls: cross country, soccer, volleyball, basketball, and softball. Five varsity sports are offered for boys: cross country, soccer, basketball, baseball, and golf. In addition, cheerleading is subject to the regulations for athletes.

Offered at the middle school level are: girls – cross country, soccer, volleyball, basketball and cheerleading. Boys are offered: cross country, soccer, and basketball.

ECA is a member of the Northland Athletic Conference (NAC). Other conference members are Argos, Oregon-Davis, and Westville.

### **ABSENCE DUE TO ILLNESS OR INJURY**

An athlete who misses school or athletic participation due to illness or injury must have clearance in writing from a physician to resume participation. A permission form to resume playing must be on file with the athletic director and coach. If 5 to 10 days are missed, the athlete must participate in 4 practices before being allowed to play in any interscholastic contests. If more than 10 days are missed, 6 practices are required.

### **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES**

Academics must always have higher priority than athletics. Students who wish to participate in extra-curricular activities (including sports, academic teams, drama, etc.) must meet certain academic requirements.

Secondary:

To be eligible scholastically, students must have a "C" (75) average or better and no "F's" (64 and below) at the end of their last grading period. Eligibility is determined by a student's first quarter, first semester, third quarter, and/or second semester grades. Eligibility for the fall season is determined by the spring semester grades of the previous year. Therefore, the eligibility guidelines

become effective on the following dates: **October 25, 2010; January 3, 2011; March 21, 2011; August 1, 2011.**

**Probation:**

Students with less than a “C” (75) average or one failing grade will be placed on probationary status. Students are permitted to participate while on probation, but must raise their grades to eligibility status by the end of the next grading period.

**Ineligibility:**

Students receiving more than one failing grade at the end of any grading period will be ineligible for the next nine weeks. Students who are on probation or ineligible status, and fail to raise their grades to eligibility status by the end of the next grading period will be ineligible to participate in athletics and other extra-curricular activities for the following nine weeks. Ineligible students may not practice or compete during the period of ineligibility. In order for a student to be removed from ineligibility, he/she must attain eligibility status by the end of the next grading period.

**IHSAA AND ECA ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION IN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS**

Participation in athletics is a privilege earned by adhering to the rules and standards set by the IHSAA, NAC, and ECA. Students who have questions concerning eligibility should contact the athletic director or principal before endangering their athletic eligibility. All athletes should carefully read and understand the Athletic Code of Conduct before engaging in any athletic practice or activity.

**AGE RESTRICTIONS**

A student whose 20<sup>th</sup> birthday occurs on or prior to the scheduled date of the IHSAA State Finals in a sport shall be ineligible for athletic competition in that sport.

**AMATEURISM**

Students shall not play under assumed names, accept remuneration directly or indirectly for athletic participation, or participate in athletic activities, tryouts, auditions, practices, and games held or sponsored by professional athletic organizations, clubs or their representatives. The receiving of awards shall be kept within the reasonable bounds (as defined by IHSAA), have symbolic value only, and be with the consent and under the supervision of the school principal. Athletes using or accepting merchandise as an award, prize, gift or loan, or purchasing such for a token sum, are in violation and may lose their amateur status.

**ATTENDANCE**

1. Student athletes are expected to make school attendance a priority. This includes day of and the day after an athletic activity (practice/game).
2. Students must be in school, signed in at the front office, by the beginning of **fourth** period or they will not be permitted to participate in the athletic activities (practices/games) scheduled for that day.
3. If students leave school early due to illness, they may **not** return that afternoon for games or practices.
4. Students are expected to be in attendance and on time the day following any athletic event.
5. Exceptions are legitimate illness, prearranged absences, or school functions.

6. Students leaving school early for an athletic event are responsible for any missed work including making prior arrangements for any tests missed.
7. High school student athletes who are eligible for early release must be enrolled in at least 6 classes at ECA or an approved educational organization (i.e. Elkhart Career Center).

### **EQUIPMENT ISSUE AND RETURN**

ECA endeavors to provide each sport and team member with the safest and highest quality equipment available. All equipment issued to an athlete is expected to be returned in the same condition as when issued (except for normal wear). When equipment is lost or damaged, the athlete will be required to reimburse the athletic department for the item. Failure to return equipment or compensate the school for lost or damaged equipment will result in forfeiture of awards, future eligibility, and/or diploma.

### **FACILITIES USAGE**

All facilities here at ECA have been provided by the Lord Jesus Christ through His people, and are to be treated as such. Extreme care must be taken to assure that the next group using the facilities finds them clean, well cared for, and vacated on time. The following regulations are in force:

1. No student is permitted the use of any athletic facility at any time without the direct supervision of a staff member.
2. The use of any school athletic equipment must be cleared through the Athletic Director or coach.
3. Locker and shower room facilities must be left neat and free from any items not in proper storage receptacles.
4. Valuables must not be left in unsecured locations.
5. The use of non-ECA facilities for practices and contests is subject to these regulations.

### **GROOMING AND APPEARANCE**

ECA athletes act as representatives of the school and community and therefore are required to exhibit a well-groomed and appropriate appearance. Each coach of a sport, along with the athletic director and principal, will determine the appropriateness and styles within the context of safety and accepted social norms.

### **INSURANCE**

ECA administrators and coaches are safety conscious and are trained to instruct athletes in safe and proper techniques of their sport. Due to the nature of athletic activity, injuries may occur. While the school provides the opportunity for such participation, the parent retains the right of denial of such participation. Parents must carry the responsibility for providing medical care and insurance coverage for their son or daughter who participates. Parents are urged to have an insurance policy to cover athletic injuries and the cost of treatment. **Please note that neither the IHSAA nor Elkhart Christian Academy carries any kind of first dollar medical insurance for athletic injuries.**

### **MULTIPLE SPORT PARTICIPATION**

ECA supports the concept of participation in more than one high school sport. High school coaches should not establish expectations out of season, which would prohibit or restrict a student's participation in another sport, which is in season. A student who desires to participate in more than one sport in the same season must have prior

approval of the coaches and athletic director. A schedule resolving practices and competition conflicts must be established prior to the season and approved by the athletic director. The student will be required to designate a primary sport.

### **OVERNIGHT TRIPS**

Occasionally, scheduling dictates overnight athletic road trips. All provisions set forth in this handbook and the general student handbook apply to overnight trips. The Athletic Director will arrange lodging. The only exception to staying in school-arranged lodging is the possibility of staying with parents who have also made the road trip. Prior Athletic Director approval is required.

The following expectations apply to all athletes on overnight trips:

- The hotel will turn off all phones to the rooms for long distance calls. Long distance calls may be made from the coach's room.
- The hotel will turn off the movie channel so movies cannot be rented or viewed.
- No athlete will leave the hotel at any time for any reason.
- Athletes should always be in groups, not walking around the hotel alone.
- A curfew will be set for athletes to be in rooms and for lights out.

### **PARTICIPATION ON TEAMS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL ATHLETICS**

Athletes who participate as members of any similar teams in the same sport season, not under the direct supervision and management of ECA, shall not be eligible for participation on the high school team. Participation in other sports while participating on a school team should only be done with the knowledge of the high school coach and Athletic Director.

### **PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS**

All athletes (gr. 6-12) are required to have an ATHLETIC RELEASE CARD in order to participate in pre-season sports' practices and season contests. Each athlete must register with the Athletic Director or assistant athletic director to receive the release card upon verification of receipt of current sports physical and medical consent/release form. The athlete will also be given an updated student handbook.

### **PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS**

All students desiring to participate in interscholastic athletics must undergo a yearly physical examination performed by a licensed medical doctor prior to the first practice of any sport. The physical form, which must be signed by the doctor, student and parent, may be obtained from the athletic office. The doctor's signature must be dated after May 1<sup>st</sup> preceding the school year in which the athlete is to participate.

The parent/student certificate must be completed and returned in order for a student to be eligible for athletic practice/participation. The signature of a parent and athlete indicates that each has read, understood, and agreed to abide by the stated policies.

### **PRACTICE REGULATIONS**

Practice sessions are specifically designed to sharpen skills. These skills cannot be applied to contest situations if attendance at practices is not consistent.

Students are required to wear acceptable modest sportswear. Athletic T-shirts, jerseys, sweat shirts, number shirts, modest athletic shorts, or sweat pants are acceptable. Tight

(biker shorts) or short shorts, bare midriff shirts, or anything that might present a questionable message are not permitted.

Student athletes are expected to be at all “tryout” practices and regular practices. If a conflict occurs with any practice, the coach must be notified in advance of the conflict and a determination will be made by the coach of the athletes “tryout” status or position on the team. No students may tryout after the initial tryout period to start the season. Exceptions will be made for students transferring in late to start the semester.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

All athletic team members, managers, statisticians, and cheerleaders are required to travel to and from away contests in school-provided or school-sponsored transportation. The athlete must travel to and from contests in the same vehicle. Permission will be granted to allow the student to return home with his or her parents. However, please be sure to communicate such arrangements with the coach or Athletic Director. Additional exceptions to team travel may be granted by the coach or the Athletic Director.

The intent of this policy is to enhance team unity and morale, to allow coaches and administration to properly arrange for transportation of teams, to provide a means to meet family emergencies, and to properly account for every individual who is traveling.

### **WEIGHT ROOM**

Before athletes take advantage of our weight room facility, it is important that parents and athletes understand the guidelines and agree to follow them.

1. Permission slip must be signed and returned to athletic department before first use of facility.
2. No one is to use the weight room without direct adult supervision in the weight room.
3. No gum.
4. Shoes, shirt, and shorts must be worn.
5. Biker shorts or spandex must be worn under regular shorts during co-ed sessions.
6. No horseplay.
7. Athletes must have a spotter for the bench press.
8. Benches must be wiped down after use.
9. No food or drink in the weight room.
10. Check that all nuts, bolts, and screws are fully tightened.
11. Keep clear of cables and all moving parts when using the machines.
12. Perform exercises at a smooth moderate pace.
13. Make sure all snap links are closed before using a machine.
14. **Any music played in the weight room must be approved by the adult supervisor.**

## **Elkhart Christian Academy** **Athletic Program Contract** **Parent and Athlete Code of Conduct**

Our interscholastic athletic programs serve to help fulfill the school's mission to provide an education that is ***distinctive, Biblical, and life-changing***. Athletics help students grow not only physically, but also academically, emotionally, socially, and, most importantly, spiritually in order to prepare them for life. Ultimately, we believe athletics is our most effective discipleship tool at ECA.

Our athletic program is designed to teach the skills of hard work, dedication, desire, self-discipline, and leadership. These personal characteristics are essential for effective participation in team sports and are required in life. We believe participation in athletics is a privilege, not a right or an entitlement. The staff, administration, and coaches are committed to partnering with parents to help athletes grow and mature in these characteristics.

We recognize that athletes and their parents are constantly in the public eye representing God and our school and serve as role models for young children, other students, other parents, and fans. It is our desire that our athletic teams will compete well with other schools and will provide outstanding living testimonies of Christian sportsmanship, respect, responsibility, integrity, teamwork, and commitment. Therefore, athletes and their parents/guardians will be held to the standards outlined in the Student/Parent Handbook as well as the additional standards presented in this contract.

### **ATHLETES**

1. I acknowledge that I am a student-athlete and that my school work comes first. I purpose to do my best in my studies during the season and in the off season. It is my responsibility to immediately inform my coaches of any change in my academic eligibility.
2. I acknowledge that I am a leader in the school and I must conduct myself accordingly on and off the court/playing field. My conduct and my testimony must serve as an example of godliness. It is my responsibility to immediately inform my coaches of any discipline situations in which I am involved in and out of school (e.g., detention, suspension).
3. I acknowledge that my coach is the God-ordained authority in my life as it relates to the sport in which I choose to participate. I will submit to his/her leadership and will not demonstrate any form of disrespect toward my coach (e.g., challenging authority, speaking ill of him/her to others, using inappropriate language or tones of voice with him/her).
4. I recognize that I am part of a team both on and off the court/playing field and I will place my team's interests, needs, and success above my own.
5. I will treat each teammate with respect. I will do all I can to help each teammate maximize his/her skills, talents, and abilities both on and off the court/playing field. I will refrain from all language or actions that undermine team building with any of my teammates.
6. I understand the value of practice. I will come to practice on time prepared to work hard and participate.
7. I acknowledge that practice is an essential prerequisite to playing in a game. I recognize that missed practice time will affect my playing time. All excused

absences must be arranged in advance with the coaches. Playing time is an earned privilege, not a right, and is granted at the sole discretion of my coaches.

8. I will treat my opponents and the opposing coaches with respect. I will not demonstrate any unnecessary disrespect or aggression towards another player (verbal or physical) at any time.
9. I recognize the authority and position of the game officials. I will treat each official with respect and will not argue any calls.
10. I will not show disrespect to any other adult on or off the court/playing field. This includes all coaches, parents, spectators, and school personnel.
11. I agree to comply with all team rules including the “dress-up” policy established by the coaches for the sports teams on competition days.
12. Finally, recognizing that I am part of a team, I will uphold and will help enforce the statements, attitudes, and behaviors described above from each of my teammates. As a team, we represent God, our families, and our school and as a team we will live out a God-honoring testimony with our words and actions.

## **PARENTS**

1. I will demonstrate good, Christian sportsmanship by showing positive support for the athletes and coaches of all participating teams at all times.
2. I will host the visiting team with respect and dignity.
3. I will always conduct myself properly with the other team’s parents, athletes, or coaches.
4. I will demonstrate respect for the game officials at all times and will not criticize calls or the officials.
5. I will require my child to treat other athletes, coaches, game officials, administrators, and fans with respect.
6. I will always allow the team’s coaches to be the only coaches, by refraining from coaching from the sidelines at practices or games.
7. In an effort to allow the coach to be the coach, I will not enter the practice or game areas during the game or practice without prior approval from the head coach, unless it is an emergency.
8. I will always use speech that reflects a positive Christian testimony (e.g., no profanity, destructive criticism).
9. I will cheer for our team – not against the opponent.
10. I will support and root for all the players on the team and for the team as a whole.
11. I will encourage maturity in my child by making him/her take responsibility for any issues that arise and talk directly with his/her coaches.
12. I will help my child keep his/her priorities straight by maintaining a balanced focus on schoolwork, church responsibilities, relationships, and other life matters besides athletics.
13. Finally, recognizing that my family represents our God and school, I will uphold and will help enforce the statements, attitudes, and behaviors described above from each parent, spectator, and fan that represents our school. Especially as a spectator at athletic contests, I will live out a God-honoring testimony with my words and actions.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH COACHES**

Parents and athletes must recognize that coaches are granted broad discretion and autonomy over general team matters, including roster selection, participation, playing time, selection of starting athletes, recognition of athletes, and recommendations for

award recipients. If an athlete or parent has a question or comment about how to better contribute to the team's overall success, he/she may approach the coach at an appropriate time and place with the right spirit.

*Appropriate concerns for parents to discuss with coaches during the season*

- The physical and mental treatment of my child
- Ways and methods to help my child improve
- Clarification about the expectations of my child and his/her role on the team
- Concerns about the behavior or safety of my child

*Issues not appropriate for parents to discuss with coaches during the season*

- Playing time
- Team strategy
- Play calling
- Other athletes
- Coaches' philosophies, skills, and knowledge of the game

## **PROCEDURES TO RESOLVE ISSUES**

Coaches, athletes, and parents are encouraged to maintain open communication. Should an issue arise during the season, the issue should be resolved through a series of up to three face-to-face meetings (Matthew 18:15-19). Barring some unusual circumstance (e.g., personal safety, character), the meetings should follow a prescribed order.

1. The athlete will address the issue directly with the coaches.
2. The parents will meet with the coaches, with or without the athlete, upon agreement by both the parents and the coach.
3. The parents, with or without the athlete, upon agreement by both the parents and the coach, and the coaches will meet with the athletic director.

A 24-hour Wait Period Policy is in effect when there is a need to address player issues. Parents are asked not to approach coaches immediately following the practice or contest where issue occurred. Face-to-face conversations, text messages, voice mails, emails, or other means of electronic communication will all be considered as approaching the coaches. The athletic director will address all violations of the 24-Hour Wait Period.

After 24 hours, the coaches may be contacted by phone, email, or text to arrange a face-to-face meeting. Issues are to be addressed during this in-person meeting and not via phone conferences, emails, texts, or other electronic communications. The coaches will summarize the issue, the discussion, and the resolutions in memo form and distribute copies to the participants and the athletic director.

I understand that the coaching staff is selected and vetted by the athletic director, the administration, and the school board. Consequently, the coaching staff has the full support of the athletic director, the administration, and the school board. Except under extreme circumstances, no changes in the coaching staff will be made mid-season.

Any changes or issues related to the coaches' performance that must be resolved may be brought to the attention of the athletic director after the season is completed and will

be promptly addressed during the off-season. At the end of each season, evaluation forms will be distributed to the athletes' parents to provide an opportunity to offer constructive assessments and comments regarding the coaches and the athletic programs.

I hereby agree that if I fail to conform my conduct to the foregoing while attending, coaching, officiating, or participating in any Elkhart Christian Academy athletic programs or sports event, I will be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to, the following in any order or combination:

1. Verbal warning by the coaches, athletic director, or the administration
2. Written warning by the coaches, athletic director, or the administration
3. Suspension or immediate removal of the parent and/or the athlete from current and/or future athletic events
4. Suspension or immediate removal of the parent and/or the athlete from the remainder of the season
5. Expulsion of the athlete from the ECA athletic program

I pledge to make this year with the Elkhart Christian Academy Eagles as positive and memorable as I can. By signing this agreement, I, the Athlete, agree to abide by the letter and spirit of this document.

Athlete Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_