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**Faith Baptist Christian Academy**

**Athletic Handbook**

**INTRODUCTION**

 The Faith Baptist Christian Academy athletic guide for coaches, student-athletes and parents concerning the policies that govern interscholastic athletics at Faith Baptist Christian Academy. The coach of an athletic team reports to the Athletic Director and is primarily responsible for the compliance by his/her team members to the rules, regulations, and policies governing athletics at Faith Baptist Christian Academy. The Athletic Director will administer these rules and regulations as they relate to inter-team and inter-coach relationships. Sound reasoning, good judgment, and adherence to the school's core values will be the standard by which situations outside these stated rules and regulations are determined and evaluated. Interscholastic athletics is a voluntary program. Students are not obligated to participate, and participation is not required for graduation. Thus, competition in athletics is a privilege and not a right. Accompanying this privilege is the responsibility to conform to standards established for the school’s athletic program. This privilege may be revoked if the athlete fails or refuses to comply with the rules It should be carefully noted that the policies and procedures detailed in this handbook are reflective of official action by Faith Baptist Christian Academy. As such, all policies will be followed as written. Thank you for your participation in our athletic program. May God bless you as you use your God-given athletic abilities and desire to serve Him in this integral part of school life.

**Mission Statement**

The mission of the Faith Baptist Christian Academy Athletic Department is to glorify God through the pursuit of excellence in athletics while maintaining a primary focus on the development of Christian character in everyone associated with program through the teaching of our core values.

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**Core Values**

**F - Faithfulness to Christ, family, and academics**

**B - Believe to Achieve**

**C - Choosing the team over myself**

**A - Attitude of gratitude is essential**

**Our Coaches**

The coach is the “living curriculum” for the student athlete. Coaches at Faith Baptist Christian Academy are the most significant components of the athletic program. They are both teachers and active participants at the same time. They have the responsibility to model Christ-like behaviors and attitudes.

In order to be an effective coach and role model, FBCA coaches must also be thoroughly knowledgeable in their sport, capable of detailed preparation, able to motivate athletes, able to adjust during competition, and work effectively under the authority of the Athletic Director and School Administration.

**Our Parents**

Parents of student athletes have a responsibility to both their child and to the team. Without strong parental support the student-athlete will not be able to achieve his/her greatest potential and/or the team may suffer. It is important that parents provide positive reinforcement and understand their role as being part of the team. Parents, as well as players, should be supportive and always encourage coaches and teammates. Parents are not coaches and learning to trust coaches is a key step to learning the experiences athletics provides. It is also important that parents honor the Lord when attending athletic events. For FBCA’s athletic program to be successful, coaches, student athletes, and parents must make a firm commitment to always glorify God.

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**Our Athletes**

Faith Baptist Christian Academy student-athletes should be diligent in preparation, always give 100%, demonstrate personal discipline, be respectful in all situations, maintain self-control, show humility, and aggressively pursue excellence regardless of the score, opponent, time, referee, or situation. The ultimate and final responsibility rests upon the shoulders of the student-athlete, for it is the student-athlete who is accountable to his/her parents, coach, and the Lord.

**Our Teams**

Our athletic teams should always strive to:

1. Glorify God.
2. Play Hard.
3. Have Fun.

**Philosophy**

Faith Baptist Christian Academy Athletics is founded on the teaching and principles of God’s Word. Biblical principles and the corresponding philosophies may differ substantially from schools with other philosophies. Such differences, however, do not necessitate unworkable relationships. Instead, our philosophy of athletics should provide an opportunity for others outside the FBCA community to visualize actions and principles that are quite unique today. The Faith Baptist Christian Academy’s athletic program is a wonderful opportunity to minister to the non-Christian community through exemplary actions, Christ-like attitudes, and a high level of individual and team athletic skill.

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**Athletic Department Expectations, Practices & Policies**

**Eligibility for Interscholastic Participation**

All student athletes at Faith Baptist Christian Academy must be exemplary members of the student body. Therefore, standards of academic achievement have been adopted for student-athletes to establish and maintain eligibility.

1. Academics – Faith Baptist Christian Academy academic standards are high. These standards acknowledge that academic achievement takes precedence over athletic participation. Therefore, FBCA academic standards have been established at levels higher than those required by the SECC. These standards, as well as specific eligibility/ineligibility information, are as follows:
2. Each student-athlete is assumed to be eligible for athletic participation until a declaration of ineligibility is made by the principal or the Athletic Director.
3. **Any failing grade (“F”) (at quarter or semester), a quarterly composite grade point average of less than 2.5 or an incomplete (INC) will render a student athlete ineligible.**
4. Once a student-athlete is declared ineligible due to academic shortcomings, the period of ineligibility will last until the next formal, written student academic evaluation occurs. At that time, the entire academic record of the ineligible athlete will be re-evaluated. The academic criteria applicable for the quarterly grading periods (no “F’s” and a minimum grade point average of 2.5) will also be the standard of re-evaluation at the time of the midterm update. After the grades have been re-computed for the midterm update, any ineligible student regaining eligibility status (no “F’s”, a minimum grade point average of 2.5 and no incompletes) will be immediately allowed to compete as a team member. If, however, an ineligible student-athlete does not re-establish eligibility at the time of the midterm report update, that student-athlete may be dropped from the team. Furthermore, if a student-athlete is declared ineligible at a quarterly grading period, regains eligibility at the time of the midterm update, and subsequently is declared ineligible at the next quarterly grading period, that student athlete will be dropped from the team. In other words, any time a student athlete is ineligible twice during the same athletic season (defined as the time tryouts are held until the last interscholastic contest is completed), that student athlete will be dropped from the team.
5. In the event a student athlete has met all academic standards but drops significantly in academic performance during a time period when he/she is in no immediate danger of being declared ineligible, the coach has the authority to institute measures of accountability to help the student athlete get back on track.
6. Practicing with the Team if Ineligible – Generally speaking, ineligible student athletes should be spending time correcting situations that rendered them ineligible. Therefore, it would be advised for student athletes not to be practicing with the team on a regular basis and they cannot accompany the teams to interscholastic contests. There are times, however, when coaches need these student athletes at practice for the sake of team continuity. The discretion of the coach, with the concurrence of the Athletic Director, will dictate the necessity and frequency of the attendance of a student athlete at practice. At no time will an ineligible student athlete be permitted to miss school to practice or accompany his/her team on an athletic trip.
7. Suspension from School – A disciplinary action severe enough to warrant student suspension will eliminate the student athlete from all participation in interscholastic sports for the duration of the suspension. Therefore, any suspension, whether in school or out-of-school will render a student athlete ineligible to attend practice or any interscholastic contest. After serving the suspension, further disciplinary action will be assessed according to the discretion of the school and athletic director.

**Participation Fees**

Participation fees are essential to help fund the cost of interscholastic athletics, transportation to athletic events, game officials, tournament entry fees and supplementary equipment and supplies. The fees are as follows:

$100 Per Sport Due before the first game of each season.

* If a student-athlete plays multiple sports during the same season, the second sport will be discounted by 50%.
	+ - Example: Volleyball is $100 and Cross Country is $50
* If a student-athlete does not have their sport’s fee paid on time, that student-athlete will be suspended from the team, and will not be allowed to practice or participate with the team until the fee is paid.

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Participation Fees are not a guarantee of playing time on a team. This fee is not assessed if an athlete does not make the team. All the conditions of being a team member apply as if the fee did not exist. Playing time is based solely on the coach’s discretion and assessment of a student’s athletic ability and game situations.

**Forms**

1. All student-athletes must have a current physical form on file with the school in order to participate in Faith Baptist Christian Academy athletics.
2. All student-athletes must have a current waiver of consent and liability on file with school in order to participate in Faith Baptist Christian Academy athletics.
3. There may be additional forms necessary for participation. These forms will be given out by the athletic director.
4. If the student-athlete is a home school or sister school student, there must be a current form on file stating such in order to participate in Faith Baptist Christian Academy athletics.

**Transportation**

1. All team members are expected to ride with the team to contests when transportation is provided.
2. Team members can ride back from contests with their parents or guardians.
3. Students may be released to their parents after an away contest with verbal or written consent to the coach. Students may be released to another adult only with verbal or written consent from their parents.
4. At no time should students ride with a student driver without written or verbal consent of their parents.
5. Coaches are responsible to stay with student athletes returning from off campus events at night until all students have been picked up.

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**Athletic Conduct & Discipline**

The following are the Faith Baptist Christian Academy athletic code of conduct rules. The conduct of participants in athletics at FBCA, in or out of school, shall be as follows:

1. Not to reflect discredit upon our school, teammates, coaches, or Jesus Christ.
2. Not to create a disruptive influence on the discipline, moral or educational environment in our school.
3. The following is a starting foundation for misconduct and the disciplinary actions that such conduct is subject but not limited to:

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| **Misconduct** | **Disciplinary Action** |
| Use, possession, distribution or under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, and the abuse of prescription drugs. | Suspension or termination from the team. |
| Immoral sexual conduct, possession or distribution of pornographic materials, inappropriate use of cell phones, sexting, invasion of property, or sharing of sexually explicit materials. | Suspension or termination from the team. |
| Felonies, misdemeanors, or theft | Suspension or termination from the team |
| Harassment, hazing, or bullying | Complete study course recommended by the athletic director and possible suspension or termination from the team. |
| Careless or reckless behavior resulting in the damage of someone’s personal property or the property of the school | Temporary suspension from the team until the items are replaced and/or reimbursed. |
| Careless or reckless behavior, profane language, vulgar speech, dishonesty in any form such as lying, cheating, or theft, school suspensions not mentioned and use of anything violating school policy. | Possible suspension or termination from the team. |

1. All student athletes shall adhere to these rules and will be subject to any disciplinary action listed above.

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**Anti-Hazing & Bullying Policy**

Hazing or bullying in any form is neither tolerated nor consistent with any spiritual, educational or athletic goal at Faith Baptist Christian Academy.

 “Hazing” or “bullying” refers to any activity expected of someone joining a student organization that humiliates, degrades, or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person’s willingness to participate.

Hazing or bullying activities are generally considered: physically abusive, hazardous, and/or sexually violating. The specific behaviors or activities within these categories vary widely among participants, groups and settings. Typical hazing practices would include personal servitude; sleep deprivation; restrictions on personal hygiene; yelling; swearing; insulting new members/rookies; being forced to wear embarrassing or humiliating attire in public; consumption of vile substances or smearing of such substances on one’s skin; brandings; physical beatings; binge drinking and drinking games; sexual simulation and sexual assault.

Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism that subjects a student to extreme mental stress, embarrassment, shame or humiliation that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from remaining in school is considered Bullying or Hazing.

Any activity that causes or requires the student to perform a task that involves violation of state or federal law or Faith Baptist Christian Academy policies or regulations is considered hazing.

Hazing or bullying in any form will not be tolerated at Faith Baptist Christian Academy and will result in disciplinary actions. There may be other disciplinary consequences as well administered by the Coach, Athletic Department, and Principal.

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**Chain of Command**

When handling disputes, concerns, or any other situation, it is important to use the proper chain of command.

Parents and Players speak with the coach. If the coach cannot resolve the issue, the coach will speak with the athletic director. If the athletic director cannot resolve the issue, the athletic director will speak with the school administration.

If a parent or player attempts to jump the chain of command, the authorities will send it back to the proper level of the chain of command.

**Solving Disputes**

All disputes at Faith Baptist Christian Academy, including those related to athletic matters, should be handled in a Biblical manner. FBCA encourages application of the “Matthew 18 Principle” when handling a problem/settling a dispute. This principle, in summary form, encourages the offended party to go directly to the one with whom he/she has a problem. (e.g., student athlete should talk to the coach at an appropriate time prior to parental involvement and prior to going directly to the Athletic Director.)

Lack of playing time is not considered a dispute and should not be addressed with the coach by the parent.

If the situation is not resolved, the offended party is encouraged to seek a solution by speaking to the next person in authority. In simple terms, an athlete should approach the coach first, and if unresolved, the athlete, parent and coach should meet next, then the Athletic Director.

Players and parents should not meet with coaches directly after an athletic contest. If there is a conflict that is not an emergency, that conflict will need to be discussed 24 hours after that contest. This will allow all parties involved the proper time to assess the situation and handle the situation in a Christ-like manner.

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**Playing Time Policy**

While it is true that our coaches and administrative personnel believe it to be important to broaden the experience of Faith Baptist Christian Academy athletes, and that broadening is enhanced by playing time, it is also an important goal of the FBCA athletic program to strive toward excellence. Therefore, no minimum per game playing time provisions or minimum numbers of athletic meets in which athletes must compete are established at the Middle School, Junior Varsity or Varsity level. Playing time decisions are left up to the individual coaches.

**Starting Late Policy**

A student may start a season late if the reasons are acceptable to the coach and the Athletic Director. If a cut has been made, the student must go through a three-day try out period. If the student is determined to be good enough, they may be added to the team. No one may be cut to make room for this student. The student must have a minimum of (5) practices including the tryouts before he/she can participate in a contest.

**Multiple Sport Policy**

To fully accomplish the mission statement of FBCA Athletics we, the coaches and athletic administrators, must encourage all our student athletes to participate in multiple sports. A multiple sport athlete has two to three times the opportunity to develop Christian friendships, Christian character, competitive experience, and reap the benefits of cross training, etc. than a single sport athlete.

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**Off-Season Practice Policy**

When a student athlete makes a commitment to participate in a team sport, he/she is making a commitment to the team to be always at his/her best/peak performance during the season. The student athlete is also facing the challenge of maintaining his/her academics at the highest level possible. Therefore, it is vital that coaches communicate and come to some agreement that is in the best interest of our student athletes.

Off-season activities include but are not limited to:

1. Open Gyms, scrimmages, pick-up games
2. Conditioning
3. Weight training
4. Skills practices
5. Drills

**Student athletes may choose to participate in non-FBCA off-season sports outside the FBCA campus. This is permissible, but “club” or “AAU” sports must take a backseat to the athlete’s FBCA team, when it comes to schedule conflicts.**

**Scheduling Policy**

The scheduling of all athletic events and practices is determined by the Athletic Director in cooperation with each coach. The coach will issue a schedule to the students and parents as soon as possible in each season. If practice is understood to be every day, there may not be a printed practice schedule issued. Athletic practices may be scheduled on Saturdays, but there will never be any practice on Sunday. On occasion an athletic event may be scheduled on a day or weekend when school is out on vacation. When this is determined to be necessary, the dates will be given out as far ahead as possible and all athletes are expected to be in attendance.

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**Parent/Coach Meetings**

All parents of student athletes are required to attend a pre-season meeting with the coaching staff of that sport. The meeting shall be held before the first contest. Parents will be informed of all rules for their sport as well as the rules of Faith Baptist Christian Academy.

**School Equipment/Uniform Policy**

1. Students are responsible for all equipment issued to them. Athletic uniforms are supplied for the sole purpose of athletic participation. This equipment is not to be used for any other purpose.
2. When the season is over, all equipment and uniforms are to be returned to the coach who will keep inventory of all items issued to the team. The coach will then submit the end-of-season inventory list to the Athletic Director in a timely manner following the season.
3. The parent is responsible for the dollar replacement cost of any lost or damaged school issued equipment or uniforms.

**Code of Conduct**

In order to best fulfill the goals of the discipline process, Faith Baptist Christian Academy has established a Code of Conduct that defines expected student behavior and establishes the procedure and process for addressing disciplinary matters. Please be aware that student conduct and behavior outside of Faith Baptist Christian Academy can affect a student’s standing at FBCA as well as the reputation of FBCA, therefore it is the expectation of the administration that students always adhere to the code of conduct. It is therefore also understood that violations of the code of conduct both inside and outside of school, including breaks from school, may be addressed as a disciplinary concern by the administration. Students are specifically considered to be under school jurisdiction at any time at which they are under the direct supervision of Faith Baptist Christian Academy and its employees, including when riding a school bus or attending a school function or activity.

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**Students are expected to demonstrate the following behaviors and characteristics:**

* Integrity in the keeping of one's word, speaking the truth, doing one's own work, carrying out responsibility (doing assignments adequately and on time) and respecting authority.
* Respect for self, Faith Baptist Christian Academy and its employees and students, and the property of others.
* Courtesy extended in all relationships – student to student or student to teacher/staff.
* Stewardship of the property, supplies, and equipment of Faith Baptist Christian Academy, as well as wise stewardship of personal items.
* Preparation for class and readiness to learn.

**Dress, Hair, & Uniform Standards for Players**

For a student-athlete to participate with FBCA, the following standards must be kept by each participant:

1. Male students will be clean shaved. Facial hair will not be allowed.
2. Male students will keep their hair off the ears, off the collar, and out of the eyes.
3. All students will wear FBCA gear to and from all athletic events.
* This includes being at the gymnasium during, and in between games.
* This includes athletic events where the student-athlete is participating or not participating.
	+ When a student-athlete steps onto the FBCA campus, they are a representation of FBCA, and will dress according to the standards set forth by administration.
	+ If a student-athlete attends an athletic event, and is not dressed according to FBCA standards, the student-athlete will be asked to change, or asked to leave the campus.
1. Female students will have a minimum of 7” inseam shorts for athletic events and practices.
* If dresses or skirts are worn to athletic events, they must be to the top of the knee.
	+ This includes, but is not limited to athletic events, award presentations, graduations, etc…

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**Rules Concerning Home School & Sister School Student Athletes**

FBCA is allowed to have 33% of their roster consisting of a mixture of homeschool or sister school students. This guideline is set forth and enforced by the Southeastern Christian Conference.

* Example(s):
	+ 10 traditional students (5 HS/SS students)
	+ 8 traditional students (4 HS/SS students)
	+ 6 traditional students (3 HS/SS students)
	+ 4 traditional students (2 HS/SS students)
* Once a homeschool student signs up to play with FBCA, that homeschool student cannot participate in any other school’s athletic programs for the entire school year. This rule is set forth and enforced by the Southeastern Christian Conference.
* Homeschool students cannot be involved with public school programs such as, but not limited to: Georgia virtual, K12, charter schools, or any other option offered or paid for by the public school. This rule is set forth and enforced by the Southeastern Christian Conference.
* Sister school students can only participate with FBCA in sports that their school does not provide. If their school has a sport, the student-athlete must participate with their school. This rule is set forth and enforced by the Southeastern Christian Conference.
* All homeschool or sister school student-athletes are expected to abide by the standards set forth by FBCA.

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**Rules Concerning Traditional Students Becoming Home School Students**

Traditional students are those of full-time capacity in Faith Baptist Christian Academy. Once a traditional student begins an athletic season, that student-athlete cannot change status during that season.

* Example:
	+ A student-athlete does not agree with decisions, standards, or guidelines set forth by FBCA, and decides to leave school, and become a homeschool student. This student would not be allowed to continue with the FBCA athletic program.
	+ There are special circumstances where a student must change status, but these circumstances will affect the percentages of our rosters and the rules set forth by the Southeastern Christian Conference.