



PARENT/STUDENT ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;”

~I Peter 1:13

PHILOSOPHY

School sponsored athletic competitions mean more than competition between individuals representing different schools. They are, rather, a means of learning a way of life, which exemplifies the philosophy that hard work, drive, and determination bring eventual success. Good sportsmanship, both as a winner and a loser, and the concept of self-discipline and self-esteem are inherent parts of any student's participation. Athletic competition is a part of the total educational program and as such contributes to the development of desirable learning habits and outcomes in knowledge, skills, and emotional patterns. Athletic competition is an integral part of school life. When carefully planned and operated, it:

- Extends and reinforces the instructional program
- Gives students practice in democratic self-government
- Builds student morale and promotes positive support for the school
- Provides wholesome social and recreational activities
- Contributes to the enhancement of all segments of a multi-cultural student body

We expect all fans and athletes alike to limit words and actions at sporting events to those that are uplifting, encouraging, and always positive (Ephesians 4:29-32). We expect this to be our behavior toward our children, our opponents, our opposing fans, and game officials, whether "home" or "away," "ahead" or "behind." We expect every ATLCA person in attendance to do what Jesus would, regardless of what the scoreboard says or how our opponents may conduct themselves. We want to teach our students how to think, speak and act as followers of Christ at our athletic events.

Relationship to Academics

Athletics are considered part of the curriculum and are treated the same as all the other academic classes that students take on a daily basis.

Athletic Contract

The following are terms and conditions that must be met in order to participate on an ATLCA athletic team. This is only a partial list of requirements and is in addition to the other rules set forth in the "ASH TREE LEARNING CENTER ACADEMY Athletic Code of Conduct".

- 1. All players are expected to have 100% attendance starting with the 1st DAY OF PRACTICE.**

All players are expected to attend all practices, work assignments, conditioning, contests and tournaments to their conclusion. Many contests, tournaments and work assignments are on Saturdays and are mandatory to attend.

Excused absences and consequences

(1) Excused absences will be cleared with the coach before the practice is missed, either in person, by a phone call, or by a message left in the school's Athletic and/or Administrative office. (Messages are not to be sent with another team member.) If the absence is not cleared before the practice, it will be considered not excused.

(2) Excused absences will be for the following reasons only:

- (a) **Physical illness.** If you are not sick enough to be at home from school, you should be at practice, even if you are not able to participate. If you are going home ill, see your coach before leaving school.
- (b) **Family Emergencies.** (Death in the family, medical emergencies, etc.)
- (c) **Some School Activities.** If the school activity is not essential to passing a class, it will be reviewed on an individual basis. If the school activity is for a prolonged period of time, it may be deemed necessary for you to resign your position on the team. Other school activities should not interfere with your participation in a scheduled athletic contest.
- (d) **Doctor or dentist appointments.** When appointments cannot be scheduled at a time that does not interfere with practice and they have been cleared with the coach, at least one day in advance, they will be excused. Please refer to game schedules so that appointments do not conflict with contests. Missing contests for an appointment is not an acceptable excuse unless it is an emergency.
- (e) **Religious observances.**

b) **Non-excused absences may result in removal or suspension from the athletic team.**

2. ALL PLAYERS MUST HAVE STOPPED PARTICIPATION IN CONTESTS FOR OUTSIDE CLUB TEAMS, IN THE SAME SPORT, BY THE FIRST SCHEDULED CONTEST OF THE ATLCA ATHLETIC TEAM (INCLUDING NON-LEAGUE CONTESTS), IF THEY CHOOSE TO PARTICIPATE AND HAVE BEEN SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE ON THE ATLCA ATHLETIC TEAM.

The only exception to this rule is for athletes who have received permission from the principal to participate on designated Olympic Development Program (ODP) teams, during their season of sport. This form must be provided by the athlete and signed off by the principal, 30 days prior to participation on the ODP team.

3. Making the team **does not guarantee playing** time in matches. There is the possibility that as a player, they will get little to no playing time in contests.

4. ***Playing time is up to the discretion of the coach.*** Parents recognize that playing time, position, and strategy are determined by the coach. There is the possibility that players may get little to no playing time. Positions and playing time will be determined by ability, attitude, adherence to team and school rules, and effort, as decided by the coach. The parent will support the coach's decisions. Questions about playing time are inappropriate. Questions about what the athlete may do to improve should be directed to the coach.

Academic Eligibility

1. Student athletes must pass 25 semester units (Middle School) and 30 semester units (High School) with a minimum of 2.5 GPA.
2. Student athletes must be currently enrolled in a minimum of 25 semester units (MS) and 30 semester units (HS).
3. A student athlete who received a single «incomplete» during the prior marking period will be placed on academic probation. A student who is on academic probation will become ineligible at the following marking period if all grades do not improve to 70% or better.
4. A student who is currently enrolled in any class, except physical education, may not drop said class in order to participate in athletics.
5. A student who is suspended for disciplinary or attendance reasons will become ineligible for the remainder of the current sports season.
6. All student athletes must be enrolled at ATLCA in order to be eligible for athletics.

Eligibility is determined when a student begins participation and continues until there is a break in participation. Once an athlete resumes participation, eligibility is again determined.

Grades received in summer school may be used to recalculate eligibility for the beginning of the following fall semester. How courses are used for eligibility are determined by the courses taken.

VIOLATIONS

The following behaviors are unacceptable and violate your Activity Code responsibility:

5. Use, transfer, possession, or sale of tobacco (all forms), alcohol, marijuana, steroids, or any illicit drugs or paraphernalia, look a likes, or abuse of prescription/non-prescription drugs.
6. Academic Dishonesty
7. Inappropriate behavior and/or acts of unsportsmanlike behavior such as but not limited to, cheating, fighting, gambling, or verbal abuse which is profane, vulgar or obscene; or sexual/racial harassment of faculty, citizens officials, players, spectators, students and/or coaches.
8. Robbery, theft or vandalism of any school, person or public property.
9. Falsification of information or signature (athletic permits, parking permits, physicals or other school-related materials).

CONSEQUENCES

CATEGORY I - VIOLATIONS

All Category I Alcohol and Drug violations will be referred to the Principal. Student athletes in violation must be assessed and follow through on all recommendations set by Principal in conjunction with contest suspension. Contest suspension is in effect until recommendations have been met.

Category I tobacco violations will be referred to the Athletic Trainer. Tobacco II violations will be referred to the Athletic Trainer. Student athlete must view Course I or Course II tobacco video and pass course test. Suspension is in effect until the course work and the course test has been successfully completed. **FAILURE TO ATTEND SCHEDULED COURSE DATE WILL RESULT IN AN ADDITIONAL CONTEST DATE SUSPENSION.**

ALCOHOL/TOBACCO/DRUGS

First Offense	Suspension from 20% of the season contest dates
Second Offense	Suspension from 40% of the season contest dates
Third Offense	Loss of scholastic eligibility for one year, starting from the date of infraction

If necessary, the suspension may carry over from one season to the next or from one school year to the next.

Category I violations are cumulative and begin upon student athlete's admittance to Ash Tree Learning Center Academy.

1st Offense Procedure: Referral for Alcohol/Drugs Tobacco Education Course I for smoking violations

In the event of an alcohol/drug violation, the Director of Athletics with the Dean, Principal, counselor, parents, and student athlete to enumerate present and future sanctions.

In the event of a tobacco violation, the following procedures will occur:

1. Coach **calls** parents, notifying them of violation and pending sanctions.
2. Athletic Director mails violation form to parents that requires their signature; this is to be mailed back in a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the A.D. within 5 days.
3. Athletic Director includes a letter to be signed and returned by parents, stating consequences of a 2nd offense.
4. **STUDENT/ATHLETE REMAINS INELIGIBLE TO COMPETE UNTIL THESE REQUIREMENTS ARE MET:**
 - a. Violation form is signed by student, parent, coach, A.D., and Principal (if applicable) and returned to A.D. within **five** days of notification.
 - b. Appropriate program is completed and has signature of approval

from course instructors (e.g. Tobacco Education Courses I and II, Care Referral). Failure to attend scheduled T.E.C. I or T.E.C. II course program, as scheduled, results in additional **one** contest date suspension.

- c. Athlete has met contest suspension requirements as sanctioned by Athletic Department (e.g. 20% of season for first violation).

2nd Offense Procedure: Referral for Alcohol/Drugs Tobacco Education Course II for smoking violations

Coach will complete procedures for second offense with A.D.

1. Coach will **call** the parent and notify them of the offense. Coach and A.D. will meet with student, parents, and Principal. A.D. will send a follow-up letter to parents and give a copy to the Director of Guidance, stating the facts and the consequences of the next offense.
2. Same as #4 above (e.g. 40% of season for second violation).

3rd/4th Offense Procedure:

Coach will complete procedures for third and fourth offense with A.D.

1. A.D. will **call** parents and notify them of the offense and removal from the team. Coach, A.D., CARE Representative will meet with student and parents. A.D. will follow up with a letter stating the fact and consequences of the student's actions. Director of Guidance will receive copy of letter.
2. Student is ineligible until form is signed and returned stating that student has complied with and met all recommendations set forth through the Principal of Ash Tree Academy as stated in the ATLCA student handbook.

Any athlete who holds an elected or appointed team captaincy may be required to relinquish his or her position upon violation of the guidelines.

CATEGORY II - VIOLATIONS

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR and/or acts of unsportsmanlike behavior as stated under "Violations"

ROBBERY, theft or vandalism of any school, person, or public property

FALSIFICATION of information or signature (athletic permits, parking permits, physicals, or other school-related material)

First Offense	Suspension from 20% of the season contest dates
Second Offense	Suspension from 40% of the season contest dates
Third Offense	Loss of scholastic eligibility for one year, starting from the date of infraction

If necessary, the suspension may carry over from one season to the next or from one school year to the next.

Category II violations are cumulative and begin upon student athlete's admittance to Ash Tree Learning Center Academy.

Category I and II violations will be administered as separate categories and will not accumulate together. Consequences for multiple violations must be served consecutively. Athletic Directors will administer all 1st and 2nd offense violations.

APPEAL PROCESS

Violations of training code, when initiated from Dean of Students, must be appealed through the Dean's Office within 5 school days of Athletic Violation Notification. In instances of off-campus violations, appeals may be referred to the Code Committee within 5 school days of Athletic Violation Notification.

In cases of 3rd offense sanction, student may appeal the decision to the Code Committee through the Athletic Director within 5 school days of Athletic Violation Notification. The Code Committee will hear the appeal and render a decision as soon as possible.

DISCRETION OF THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Athletic Director has the discretion to handle situations not clearly identified in this code, in whatever manner the Athletic Director sees fit, acting in the best interest of Ash Tree Learning Center Academy.

Preventing Eating Disorders in Athletes

- Take warning signs and eating disorders seriously!** Cardiac arrest and suicide are the leading causes of death for people with eating disorders.
- If an athlete is chronically dieting or exhibits mildly abnormal eating, refer to Mrs. Margaret Brown who will arrange for an evaluation.
- De-emphasize weight** by not weighing athletes and eliminate comments about weight. Instead focus on areas in which athletes have more control in order to improve performance. *For example, focus on strength and physical conditioning, as well as the mental and emotional components of performance.* There is no risk in improving mental and emotional capacities.
- Don't assume that reducing weight or body fat will enhance performance. While weight loss or a reduction in body fat can lead to improved performance, studies show this does not apply to all athletes. Performance should not be at the expense of the athlete's health.

- Recognize signs and symptoms of eating disorders and understand your role in prevention.**

- Provide athletes with accurate information regarding body composition, nutrition and sports performance to reduce misinformation and challenge unhealthy practices.
- Emphasize the health risks of low weight, especially for female athletes with menstrual irregularities.
- Eliminate derogatory comments or behaviors about weight...no matter how slight. If there is a concern about an athlete's weight, the athlete should be referred to Mrs. Brown, who will arrange for an assessment.
- Don't give advice about weight loss, or appearance.**

Concern of Supplement Use

- Coaches need to promote a healthy lifestyle through balanced nutrition and daily physical activity.
- The American Medical Association does not recommend use of supplements for anyone under 18.
- High school supplement use is a growing concern! Companies have targeted the young athletes. Coaches assume that they're safe since they're sold over the counter and have even recommended taking them to their athletes. Because existing law treats dietary supplements as foods, consumers think they are safe. Many consumers believe these products have been approved by the government, when in fact they have not.
- Doctors are quite concerned about the long range effects of use on the kidneys and liver.

Alcohol/Drug Use

The use of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs is absolutely not allowed and consistent with the expectations stated in the ATLCA Handbook.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The expectation of the Athletic Department is for all players to attend all classes regularly on the day of the activity, practice, or competition. In order to participate on an athletic team in practice or in a contest, the student must be in attendance at school for a minimum of 4 periods. Any missed periods must be excused prior to an athlete being allowed to participate in practice or an athletic contest on that day.

The athletic director, the assistant director, or the principal may review special circumstances to waive this policy. This must take place prior to the start of practice or the athletic contest for that day.

Coaches at no time may waive this policy.

Any athlete who did not attend a minimum of 4 periods and has any unclear absence and/or cuts for one or more classes is ineligible from participating in athletics for that day whether it is practice or an athletic contest.

1. Any athlete who is found to have participated in practice on a day where they did not attend a minimum of 4 periods and/or have any unclear absences or cuts will be suspended for a minimum of 1 contest.
2. Any athlete who is found to have participated in an athletic contest on a day where they did not attend a minimum of 4 periods and/or have any unclear absences or cuts will be suspended for a minimum of 2 athletic contests.
3. Any parent or player who knowingly attempts or succeeds in falsely clearing an absence will result in the player being suspended from the team for a minimum of double the penalty that would have been imposed or removal.
4. Succeeding violations of the attendance policy can result in doubling the penalties and/or removal from the team.

Enforcement of these penalties for violations of the athletic attendance policy is the responsibility of all school personnel, including but not exclusive to the coaches, the athletic director, the assistant athletic director, the principal, and attendance staff.

Any coach who knowingly does not enforce the athletic attendance policy may lead to their dismissal. Under no circumstances should the coach be asked to waive this rule.

TRANSPORTATION

Drivers

Competent adult drivers in safe vehicles with proper restraint provisions will transport all students. For all games where school transportation is available, the coaches must reserve the transportation in advance. Varsity teams, larger roster sizes and distance to travel will help establish priority when transportation is in high demand.

The Athletic Director, not the coaches, will establish the time that students will be released from class for participation in games held on school days.

Ash Tree Academy has opted to follow a "Drive Now, Talk Later" policy. No one driving any school owned or school maintained vehicle should use a cell phone or other telecommunication device while driving, regardless of the nature of the call.

Parent volunteer drivers of ATLCA athletic vehicles must be pre-approved by the ATLCA insurance provider through the ATLCA athletic department. Please allow three days prior to the athletic event for all information to be returned to gain permission. This approval is valid for two years, after which a driver must reapply.

All parents will be required to sign a permission form allowing their child to be transported by the school.

Students will not be allowed to drive themselves or other students to away games. Students may drive themselves in a case where the game is off campus but considered our home field, course, or court.

Athletes may not transport themselves to away athletic contests, unless they are over the age of 18 and have completed all of the ATLCA requirements to operate a vehicle during school functions. **At no time may an athlete transport another student to an away athletic contest.**

Parents who will transport their son or daughter from an away athletic contest must sign in with the front office each and every time this occurs. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action against the athlete.

Taking an athlete to any away event requires clearance through the athletic office prior to the contest.

EQUIPMENT

Students are responsible for all issued school equipment. Students are expected to keep the equipment clean and in its best possible condition. Any loss due to student neglect, including items that are stolen, will be his/her financial obligation. Students will not be allowed to try out, practice, or participate on any other athletic team until equipment is returned or reimbursed.

Missed Academic Time for Athletics

The Ash Tree Academy's school policy for pre-arranged absence applies to athletics. Athletes missing class to attend athletic events are to discuss early dismissals and absences in advance with teachers and are to complete those assignments on time, as described in the ATLCA Handbook.

Athletic Objectives and Guidelines for Participation

The following are the objectives and guidelines for athletics at Ash Tree Academy. Students can participate in three levels when applicable in the sixth through twelfth grades: (1) Middle School, (2) Junior Varsity, and (3) Varsity. Each of these levels has specific objectives and purposes to maintain clear performance of the school's primary goals and objectives.

Middle School

The objectives of the middle school program are improvement through participation and development of basic skills. Coaches will also teach basic rules and principles of the game. Middle school athletics will allow each student the opportunity to participate and grow in sportsmanship and Christian character. Each athlete will not be assured participation in each game. However, each coach will try to reasonably allow every athlete the opportunity to participate in games/matches contingent on his or her attitude and participation in practice. The amount will be determined by the players' skill, age, and attitude as viewed by the coach.

Junior Varsity (JV)

The objectives of junior varsity athletics are to reinforce basic skills, to start to develop advanced athletic skill and Christian character at an increased competitive level. Junior varsity athletics are more competitive and exist to prepare younger players for varsity play. At this level, each athlete will play and have the opportunity to experience a more intense, organized level of play. Each athlete will be allowed playing time (although not necessarily in every game). The amount will be determined by the players' skill, age,

and attitude as viewed by the coach.

Varsity

The objective of the varsity level is to exhibit impeccable sportsmanship and excellence. Varsity athletics is highly competitive and advanced. At this level the athlete will be scrutinized more thoroughly in his character, ability, attitudes and skills. He/she will play before many witnesses, including the Lord. The most qualified athletes will be allowed playing time on the varsity teams. Playing time will be entirely at the discretion of the coach. Coaches will communicate with players about their roles, coaches' expectations, and general playing time expectations.

ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION POLICIES

Roster Size

Ideal maximum roster sizes for each sport are identified below. These numbers act as guidelines for each sport and instances with large rosters will be discussed by the coach and Athletic Director to take the appropriate action.

Volleyball – 10 players

Basketball – 12 players

7th & 8th Grade Students Playing High School Sports

By GISA rules, except for football, 7th-12th grade students are eligible to play on varsity high school teams. Middle school students are not eligible for State Tournament participation until 7th grade.

The ATLCA philosophy is that 8th graders will be allowed to try out for the high school teams only when the Athletic Director decides that it is in the best interest to the ATLCA athletic program and to the individual student and his/her family.

Middle school athletes who play on varsity teams are not eligible for "letters" or letter jackets. They may receive a pin if they participate on a varsity team.

Try-outs

Try-outs and team cutting process, if needed, will be conducted after at least three days of practice (at the coaches' discretion). Generally, prospects will be expected to attend practices and/or try-outs from the very first day. Generally, any student allowed to try-out late must have an emergency reason for doing so, and must have communicated and have approval with the Athletic Director and coach. Any student must be enrolled at the ATLCA for at least five days and participated in three practices to participate in any games.

Sunday Practice

Sunday practices are prohibited, including "optional" practices.

Non-School Day Practice

Except as approved by the Athletic Director, all non-school day practices are optional: attendance is encouraged, and failure to attend may hamper the athletes' progress in skill and team play; but coaches may not actively penalize non-attendance.

Practice Length

Practices may be no longer than 2 ½ hours in length for any one child except with the approval of the Athletic Director.

Injury Related Unconsciousness in Athletics

Any ATLCA athlete who becomes unconscious ("blacks-out") for any length of time during a game or practice is ineligible to continue practice or re-enter the game for the remainder of that practice or event, and remains ineligible until cleared by a doctor for return to competition.

Participation and School Attendance

A student who is absent from school more than one-half day may not participate in athletic activities that day.

Rules and Regulations for Athletic Activities

All applicable policies and guidelines established by Ash Tree Academy of Savannah, GA administration apply to students participating in athletic activities at Ash Tree Academy of Savannah, GA.

In addition, GISA rules and regulations will also be followed. The Athletic Director and coaches are expected to become familiar with these rules and regulations.

The Athletic Director shall be responsible for ensuring that all players meet both Ash Tree Academy of Savannah, GA and GISA requirements for participation. The Athletic Director will notify coaches of any ineligible players. Coaches shall submit to the Athletic Director a list of participants at the beginning of the season in order to facilitate this review.

Overlapping Seasons

In cases where seasons overlap for different sports (fall to winter or winter to spring) the current (already in season) sport will take precedence over the new (just beginning season) sport.

Coaches of new sports may not require (or pressure for) try-out or practice attendance until the current season ends, not even as observers.

Separate try-outs must be held after the current sports season for players of overlapping sports, by the new sports coaches, but only on completion of the current sports season. This may necessitate "late cuts" (final cuts held long after try-outs began), and new sports coaches must thoroughly over-communicate this to athletes and parents.

Parents may allow their child to attend practices of both current and new sports, even on the same day, but this is (1) optional, not required, and (2) may not involve participation, only observation. Current sport coaches may not forbid attendance (as an observer) to new sports practices where parents have approved such attendance.

It is expected that new coaches neither pressure nor require attendance to practices (or tryouts) prior to current sport season ending. Such dual attendance is entirely the prerogative of parents.

GISA School and Conference Athletic Rules and Regulations

1. High School JV Eligibility is generally grades 7th-10th. High School Varsity eligibility is grades 7th-12th. At the ATLCA, JV sports are generally for grades 9th-10th.
2. No high school student is eligible if his 19th birthday comes before August 1 of the current school year.

A player cannot turn 17 before August 1 of that school year for JV eligibility. Middle school athletes may not turn 15 before October 15 to participate on a Triangle Middle School Conference team. Middle school athletes who miss the age deadline

1. may participate on a high school team.
2. Organized practice start dates:
 - a. Fall – Monday of the week containing August 1
 - b. Winter – Monday of the week containing November 1
 - c. Spring – Third Monday in February

GISA Handbook on Sportsmanship

The GISA recognizes that independent school interscholastic athletic events must be conducted in such a manner that good sportsmanship prevails at all times. It is necessary that administrators and coaches be individually and collectively responsible for taking every possible step to promote good sportsmanship at every interscholastic event. These steps must include the provision of such things as safe and adequate facilities for participants, spectators, and officials; the best possible officials for the events; and adequate control of spectators, players, and pre-game/post-game activities. Every effort must be made to promote a climate of wholesome competition.

Athletic competition in the GISA is guided by the following ideals:

The Players:

1. Play within the rules of the game.
2. Win with humility and lose without excuses.
3. Respect officials and accept their decisions.
4. Never play with the intent to injure and opponent
5. Never forget that they represent their schools, their coaches, and their families as well as themselves.
6. Respect the property and facilities of their opponents.

The Coaches:

1. Inspire in their players a love for the game and the desire to win.
2. Teach that it is better to lose fairly than win unfairly.
3. Show restraint and respect when dealing with officials.

4. Serve as positive role models for their players.
5. Hold their players accountable for unsportsmanlike behavior.

The GISA Schools:

1. Have a responsibility to treat officials, opposing teams, and their spectators as guests.
2. Have a responsibility to educate their supporters to cheer the strengths and victories of their own teams and never to denigrate the performance of opponents or officials.
3. Will not tolerate any spectator, either adult or student, whose behavior is disrespectful toward players, officials, coaches, or other spectators.
4. Will not permit any type of spectator behavior that detracts from the proper conduct of the game.

COACHES

Coaches' Authority

The coach's authority to lead their team as they deem appropriate is in keeping with the philosophies and policies of Ash Tree Academy of Savannah, GA. The head coach is charged with conducting tryouts, determining the team roster, defining players expectations, implementing team rules, deciding student-athletes' playing time, and taking disciplinary actions whenever necessary. Student -athletes are expected to completely and respectfully abide by the leadership and authority of the head coach and their assistants. Disciplinary measures may include but are not limited to increased exercise, suspension for a period of time, or expulsion from the team. Grievances with disciplinary measures or similar issues should be taken directly to that coach first.

Wisdom is advised in choosing what issues a parent should take to the coach. Please keep in mind that most parents believe that their child should be getting a majority of the playing time and that expectation is not possible or realistic when dealing with a group of athletes. Therefore, while we want open communication between parents and coaches in all things, parent opinions about game strategy, substitutions, and playing time should remain private, and uninvited questions about such coaching discretion decisions should be considered off limits. ATLCA coaches will be asked to *not* engage in "defending" strategy and playing time decisions.

When approaching a coach, parents should do so in a respectful way and in a manner consistent with Galatians 6:1-3. If the matter is not resolved, then the Athletic Director should be contacted. Further escalation would go to the Upper School Principal and finally to the Headmaster.

Volunteer Assistant Coaches

When volunteers offer to assist, the head coach is required to obtain approval first from the Athletic Director. With said approval, the head coach becomes responsible for proper training of the assistant, including making certain the assistant reads this handbook and agrees to adhere to these policies.

Parent Coaches/Assistant/Volunteers

Volunteer coaches or assistant coaches who are also parents of team members are expected to maintain a professional detachment from the parent/child relationship while "on duty." In other words, they should act as a "parent" only after leaving the game, practice field, or court for the confines of their home.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline Policies

All policies for student behavior adopted by the Ash Tree Academy of Savannah, GA Board apply to athletic events. The same consequences for disobeying the discipline standard of the school will apply toward misbehavior during athletic activities.

When discipline is necessary, the coach may administer any of the following options (not limited to these options):

1. Suspension from part or all of practice(s).
2. Suspension from one or more events.
3. Suspension from the team, with approval of the Athletic Director and Principal.

Parents will be notified beforehand of all major disciplinary actions. The coach is responsible to notify the Athletic Director of any discipline.

Ejections

Any ejection from a game or match by an official will result in a minimum of a two (2) game suspension from athletic events. This applies to coaches, students, and parents. ATLCA parents may not approach an official to discuss issues before, during, or after a game or match, or for any other reason. Any ejection decision by an official will be adhered to by the coaches, parents, athletes, and the school administration without further discussion. There will be no appeal.

School Discipline Policy

The Ash Tree Academy of Savannah, GA Student Handbook discipline policy for students applies in full to our coaches and athletes. All consequences of discipline problems described here may be applied to athletes. The kind and amount of discipline will be determined by the coaches and, if necessary, the Principal. The discipline will be administered in the light of the individual student's infraction and attitude. All discipline will be based on biblical principles, e.g. restitution, apologies (public and private), punishment, restoration of fellowship, no lingering attitudes, etc. In order to maintain consistency, coaches will regularly meet with the Athletic Director to discuss school guidelines concerning discipline.

It is vital for our parents and students to realize that maintaining an orderly atmosphere in the school and during athletics events is critical to the learning process. As in all other areas of the education at ATLCA, love and forgiveness will be an integral part of the discipline of a student. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." – Proverbs 28:13.

Meeting with the Athletic Director

There are five basic behaviors that will *automatically* necessitate discipline from the Athletic Director (versus the coach). Those behaviors are the following:

1. **Disrespect** shown to any staff member, including all coaches, paid or volunteer. The staffmember will be the judge of whether or not disrespect has been shown.
2. **Dishonesty** in any situation while at school, including lying, cheating, and stealing.
3. **Rebellion**, i.e. outright disobedience in response to instructions.
4. **Fighting**, i.e. striking in anger with the intention to harm another student.
5. **Obscene language**, including taking the name of the Lord in vain.

AWARDS

High School Athletic Awards Eligibility

High school athletes may receive cloth letters for meeting the requirements outlined below:

1. An athlete receives a letter for participation in his/her first varsity sport, along with the pin for that sport. All future varsity participation results in a pin only.
2. Students enrolling late in the season must participate in at least 50% of the season in order to be eligible for a letter.
3. To be eligible for a letter, a student may not have been suspended or subject to any serious school or team disciplinary action.

Coaches may, at their discretion, recommend for lettering students who have not met the specific requirements but have shown dependability, determination and effort in all practices and games. The Athletic Director must give final approval for any exceptions. Athletes must attend practices and matches/games faithfully and work hard with a good attitude in order to achieve a letter or pin. A coach may recommend to the Athletic Director that a student who has not met these criteria receive only a certificate of participation. Such students will be notified well in advance of the end of season if they have fallen short of these criteria. Parents must be notified of this situation in a timely manner.

High School Awards

These awards will be given as follows:

First Year Letter & Pin
Second Year.....Pin

Third Year.....Pin
Fourth Year.....Pin

A letter and pin will be awarded to a student manager who fulfills his/her responsibilities for two entire seasons of game-only service or one season of game-and-practice service.

Team captains will be recognized in each sport. Team captains will receive a pin.

High School & Middle School End of Season Programs

Special award programs will be scheduled at the end of each sport season. Special awards will be presented at this time. If coaches desire to present other awards they must receive approval from the Athletic Director. "All-Conference" and "All-State" performances are generally recognized at this time as well.

High school teams are allowed to give out the number of awards closest to 25% of their team roster size (fewer awards may be given at the coach's discretion). All coaches must present the "Coaches Award" which will be given to the athlete who best exemplifies all aATLCA athlete should be, all a Christ-like athlete should be, NOT necessarily the best player on the team, although it may be.

Championship Banners

Championship banners will be purchased and hung in the gym for (1) Conference Championship Teams (defined as conference tournament champion in all "tournament sports"), and/or (2) State Championship teams. Banners are not purchased for regular season first place UNLESS that qualifies the team for state play-off competition.

Senior Night

There will be no "senior night" celebrations before or during ATLCA home game/match events. Any special recognition of seniors for their last game will have to occur on a non-game night or off of the court or field before or after the game (not immediately before a game; a game start time may not be delayed for individual player recognition). No special recognition will be allowed before, between or at half time of actual games/matches.

UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

Practice Apparel

ATLCA athletes must wear appropriate athletic attire that is consistent with the standards set by the school. All clothing should fit modestly and appropriately to the athlete's body type.

Sliders/Compression shorts are highly recommended for every athlete to wear underneath their uniform for each sport.

Appropriate footwear is required. Students may not practice barefoot, in socks or in dress shoes.

Mouth guards are strongly recommended for all athletes involved in practices or games in contact sports (basketball).

Female athletes may wear uniform color T-shirts underneath their athletic tank top.

ATLCA game uniforms may NOT be worn for practices or any other non-game occasion.

Game Apparel

Uniforms will be distributed to the students at school before their first game. ATLCA athletic uniforms should be worn for games only. In washing uniforms at home, please adhere to the instructions printed on the uniform. Please repair tears and holes and disconnected stitching as they occur. DO NOT PUT UNIFORMS IN THE DRYER; LINE DRY ONLY. The goal of the uniform is unity. With that in mind, we expect our athletes to dress in such a way as to promote unity over individuality.

Return: Uniforms will be returned by the students on the day of the post-season team meeting scheduled by their coach. All uniforms that are returned or are damaged will be the responsibility of the player to pay for the replacement.

Jewelry is not permitted in any form in game events. Females need to be careful about choosing the time of year for ear piercing. It is not recommended that an athlete get her ears pierced during a sports season because the earrings will have to come out for games.

ATLCA strongly recommends that male athletes purchase groin protection in sports where such protection is appropriate (cup, jock strap, or compression shorts). Athletic cups must be worn by all baseball players during any on-field team practice or game.

Uniforms should be worn in the most modest fashion possible. A rolled up waistband to make shorts "short" is not permitted.

Eating on Trips

During athletic trips, coaches must communicate in advance if the team plans to stop and eat on the ride home.

Student Conduct While Traveling For Athletics

As indicated in the ATLCA student handbook, traveling ATLCA students are expected to behave in the same manner as required on school grounds, with appropriate respect and courtesy.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Physicals

An annual physical is REQUIRED before playing sports.

Insurance

ATLCA recommends that each family check with their insurance provider for adequate coverage in the event of injury, especially in contact sports. Most insurance companies provide supplemental coverage for athletics.

Letter Jackets

Students are eligible to order letter jackets if they are in the 9th, 10th, 11th or 12th grade and have completed a season on a varsity team

Athletic Department Communication

Parent/Coach Relationship

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to children. As parents, when your children become involved in our program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

Communication You Should Expect from your Child's Coach

- Philosophy of the coach.
- Expectations the coach has for your child as well as for the all the players on the team.
- Locations and times of all practices and contests.
- Team requirements, i.e. fees, special equipment, weight lifting conditioning, etc.
- Procedures to be followed should your child be injured during participation.
- Student misconduct that results in the denial of your child's participation

Communication Coaches Expect From Parents

Concerns should be expressed directly to the coach.

Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.

Specific concern with regards to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations.

As your children become involved in the programs at Ash Tree Learning Center Academy, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments in their lives. It is important to understand that there may also be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times discussion with the coach is encouraged.

Appropriate Concerns To Discuss With Coaches

- 2 The treatment of your child – mentally and physically.
- 3 Ways to help your child improve.
- 4 Concerns about your child's behavior.

Communication Matters Left To The Discretion Of The Coach

1. Playing time.
2. Team strategy.
3. Play calling.
4. Other student-athletes.

These are delicate topics. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all of the students involved. While you may have differing opinions than that of the coach with regards to the four topics above, you should follow the procedure that is listed below.

Protocol For Communication with Coach and Athletic Director

- 2 Student-athlete should talk directly to coach about concerns.
- 3 Parents call to set up a meeting with coach.
- 4 Parents and coach meet to discuss concerns.
- 5 Parents call Athletic Director to set up a meeting.
- 6 Parent and athletic director meet to discuss concerns.

Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution. The Athletic Director should be involved only if student-athlete, parent and coach meetings do not provide a satisfactory resolution.

Managers

Players who have been “cut” are a good resource for team managers and scorekeepers, statisticians, ball boys, etc. Coaches may offer the opportunity for students to continue to practice with the team as an added incentive for participating as a manager. Additionally, managers may attend away games with the team and enter at no charge.

Team Parents

In past years, we have enjoyed the initiative taken by parents to fulfill the role of “team parent.” A team parent supports the team by encouraging players, organizing carpools, communicating directions to events, providing refreshments, and promoting team camaraderie by overseeing post-game outings. Parents, who are able to support one of the teams in this manner, please contact either the head coach or Athletic Director.

Policy on Games and Practices during Breaks and Early Release Days

1. Teams may practice on early release days. This is at the coaches’ discretion.
2. Coaches may not have *mandatory* practice over any break. However, they may have *optional* practices, if desired, during breaks. Attendance of optional practices may be strongly encouraged, but non-attendance may not be penalized.

Parents will be informed well in advance of the occasions when our high school and middle school conference teams must compete over our spring and fall breaks. For the long-term success of our athletic program, all athletes are expected to take part in team competitions occurring over breaks. Please plan your vacations accordingly, as we alert you to the dates of our competitions.

Supervision at Athletic Events

Children are to be supervised at all times at athletic events. Parents are responsible for the supervision of their children.

Parents and Fans

Our fans are a vital part of the success of ATLCA athletics and we encourage vigorous positive participation by our fans. We do believe cheering should be cheerful, never negative or demeaning.

ATLCA fans are also ambassadors of Christ and of our school and should cheer our teams in an appropriate manner. Our cheering should build up and encourage ALL who hear (Ephesians 4:29).

Our emphasis on sportsmanship and character amongst our student athletes and student body begins with the example set by our parents.

Derogatory “cheer” (“air ball”, “miss it,” etc.) comments, “booing,” taunting (or any kind of derisive singling out of opponents), arguing, or disputing directed at any participant (players, coaches, officials, and fellow fans) will not be tolerated and will be considered grounds for removal from ATLCA sporting events.

Spectators should NEVER approach an official before, during, or after a sporting event. Never ridicule or shout criticism toward officials and referees.

During a game, the team bench is for coaches, players, and officials only. Do not approach the bench area during a game (including half-time).

A parent's/fan's inability to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner while at a ATLCA athletic event could jeopardize their future attendance at ATLCA events.

Athletic Etiquette Expectations

Pre-Game/Half-time Music Policy

1. All music must be submitted (in advance of play) and approved by the Athletic Director.
2. Instrumental music must be upbeat, cheerful, and uplifting. No music that is "dark" or violent in its beat, tone or origins is permitted.
3. Although upbeat secular instrumental music is allowed, it may not be music with inappropriate lyrics.
4. Music should not be selected from artists who are recognized by the general public for being "outrageous," and certainly those having a known sinful lifestyle should be excluded.
5. Students and parents will be held accountable if they submit music that is found, after the fact, to have been known to be in violation of these standards.

During Pre-Game Warm-ups

Be sure you are appropriately dressed and outfitted: shirttails tucked in (note: undershirts that "show" must be a solid color without printing and match the color of the jersey top), jewelry and metal hairpins out, and so on.

Pre-Game warm-up time is no time for horseplay. Do your drills with a serious attitude to prepare your mind and body for competition.

There should be no socializing with fans or family during warm-up time, half-time, or any time until the game is over and post-game activities are complete.

Pre-Game, Game, and Post-Game

1. Player Introductions: Some schools will introduce players through a loudspeaker. Often this will be starters only. Coaches will instruct athletes in the protocol for each specific sport, but in general, you will line up on the sideline at attention and run to the middle of the court or field when called, then line up there until everyone arrives. Your team will usually huddle at midfield for a team chant, and then return to the bench. We ask coaches to not allow self-promoting actions such as chest thumping or any action that may lack the appearance of genuine humility. This is a great opportunity to shake hands with players from the other team and/or officials.
2. Pre-game Prayer: If a prayer is offered, athletes should line up on the sideline or at midcourt and be in prayer, heads bowed.
3. National Anthem: Some schools may play or sing our National Anthem. Players will line up on the sideline at attention with our eyes toward the flag and respectfully listen or sing along.
4. During the game players should not talk to friends or family in the stands. Keep your mind and attention on the game. Stand and greet teammates (who are exiting the game) with applause and encouragement. Stand and cheer good effort

and good plays by your teammates. Bench enthusiasm is required. Sulking or pouting on the bench is forbidden. During timeouts, all players must gather around the coach giving full attention to the coach. Time-outs are called and conducted by the coach; players should speak only when requested. Players should never argue with or complain to or about game officials, and never demonstrate body language that could be interpreted as disrespectful. Players may never speak unkind or derogatory comments toward opposing players. Christ-like demeanor and conversation is always our standard.

5. After the game athletes should line up single file to greet the opposing team with a handshake and congratulations or other encouraging words. Gracious whether we win or lose! Never complaining!
2. Post-game prayer will be done when appropriate as many coaches will gather both teams together for a short prayer. Players should then report to the locker room or the designated area for a meeting with their coach before dismissal.

Parent/Coach Communication

Specific to athletics:

1. All concerns should first be presented by the parent or student to the coach. A respectful demeanor is required at all times.
2. If the problem is not resolved, the parent or student may bring the concerns to the Athletic Director.
3. If the problem is still not resolved, the parents may approach the Principal.
4. If there is still no resolution, a meeting with the Headmaster will be scheduled.

Please be assured that our coaches want parental feedback and are expected to be grateful and graceful when you bring your concerns to them in a humble respectful manner, seeking as much to understand as to be understood.

Sportsmanship

Coaches, players and fans are representing the name of Christ during all public events. Therefore, compliance with the following guidelines will be expected from all participants.

1. Comments by coaches, directors, participants, and spectators should be only uplifting, positive, encouraging statements. (Ephesians 4:29-32)
2. Verbal abuse and/or un-Christ-like language or tones of speech toward athletes, spectators, or referees is forbidden.