



Discovery Christian School

Student-Athlete Handbook

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction
II.	Athletic Department Mission
III.	Athletic Eligibility
IV.	Attendance
V.	Multiple Sport Athletes
VI.	Fundraising
VII.	Code of Conduct
VIII.	Expectation of Coaches
IX.	Social Media
X.	Athletic Apparel
XI.	Transportation
XII.	Athletic Fees
XIII.	Required Documentation
XIV.	Parent Participation
XV.	Apparel and Branding
XVI.	Music Guidelines
XVII.	Conflict Resolution
XVIII.	Athletic Directory

I. INTRODUCTION

Your Participation as an athlete draws the focus of public attention to you as you represent DCS in the community. Be consistently aware of this whether you be in the gymnasium, on the field, in the classroom, at home, or in public. Be sure to display Christlike character and maturity in your words and actions.

DCS is very proud of the opportunities for athletic participation we offer our students. We view these opportunities as part of the total development of our students. Athletic participation assists in the building of positive Christlike character and leadership traits.

Participation in any extracurricular activity is regarded as a privilege rather than a right. You have committed yourself to certain responsibilities and obligations as an athlete. It is the athletic program's intent, through this handbook, to acquaint you with the policies that are necessary for the success of our athletic program.

II. ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT MISSION

We will commit ourselves to invest in and protect the mental, physical, and spiritual growth of our students, each other, and the greater community around us.

III. ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

The Midsouth Association of Independent Schools (MAIS) requires students to pass four (4) major units/credits the previous academic year in order to be eligible to participate in athletics the next school year. Eligibility for each season is established at the beginning of the season. No student will be permitted to participate in interscholastic contests for more than four (4) years after entrance into 9th Grade. He/she shall not be permitted to participate in interscholastic contests if he/she has reached the age of 19 prior to August 1st of the respective school year (barring an appeal made through the MAIS main office). Student averages will be checked midway of each 9-week grading period and at the end of each 9-week grading period. Any student failing more than one (1) subject, at the aforementioned intervals, will be placed on academic probation. Students on probation are allowed to practice and participate in all athletic/extracurricular activities with no restrictions. If a student is placed on probation and is still failing more than one (1) subject at the time of the subsequent grade check, that student will be deemed ineligible. Ineligible students are not allowed to practice, play, travel, or participate in any athletic/extracurricular activities. Eligibility can only be regained if the student is no longer failing more than one (1) subject at the next scheduled grade check. Students who do not pass four (4) major units/credits at the end of the academic year will be expected to complete any credit recovery courses by July 1st. If a student has not completed his/her credit recovery by this date, he/she will not be allowed to participate in any summer practices, weight programs, camps, or performances until the course work is complete.

The following eligibility requirements are required of any student wishing to participate in any extracurricular activity:

- The student's behavior must be in compliance with the school's Student Conduct/Discipline Policy. Any discipline infraction that warrants being sent to the administrator's office or contacting parents can result in a suspension of the student from the next game/event. Two such incidents during a season will result in a student's permanent removal from the activity.
- A student who is ineligible due to low grades or behavior infractions will be suspended from participating in games/events until conditions are improved. He/she is required to participate in all preliminary activities (i.e, practices and preparation times) and is expected to attend games/events.
- A student must be present for one half of the school day in order to participate in any athletic event (practice or game).

**In the event a student 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.*

IV. ATTENDANCE

Coaches and the Athletic Director will monitor the attendance and eligibility of student-athletes in coordination with the classroom teachers.

School Attendance

- In order to be eligible to participate in any athletic event (practice or a game), the student must be present in school for at least one-half of the school day.
- Any student arriving after 11:00 a.m. without a valid excuse and documentation prior to that day will be excluded from athletic participation on that day.

Team Attendance

- When selected for an athletic team, it is expected that the student athlete will attend all practices and games pertinent to that team. Failure to make practices will result in extra conditioning as seen fit by the coach. Excessive absences from practice may result in the removal of the student from the team.
- In the event that an absence is unavoidable, the coach must be notified prior to the scheduled practice.

Off-Season Practice

- Summer/off-season practices vary by sport and should be expected.
- Any conflict with summer/off-season practices and/or events must be communicated to the coach prior to the scheduled event.

V. MULTIPLE SPORT ATHLETES

In the event a student-athlete competes in two sports during the same season, the following will serve as guidelines for the coaches, family, and student-athlete for managing practices, games, etc.

- Games take priority over practice.
- Varsity takes priority over junior varsity.
- Conference games take priority over non-conference games.
- Athletes who start take priority over bench players.
- If all is equal at this point, then the student/family must notify each coach in writing no later than one week ahead of the known conflict of which competition the student will attend. If a situation occurs that cannot be determined by these criteria, both coaches should confer with the Athletic Director to determine the proper course of action.

Above all, we commit to strive to do the best thing for our students.

VI. TEAM FUNDRAISING

Each athletic team is granted the ability to have 1-2 team fundraisers each year. All fundraisers must have approval by the Athletic Director and Head of School at least one (1) month prior to the event/effort. This includes any fundraiser organized by a coach or parent which will carry the Discovery Christian School name or logo.

VII. CODE OF CONDUCT

Expectation of Student Conduct:

Being involved in athletics is a privilege, not a right. When a student signs up for athletics and becomes a member of the team, they make a commitment. Since participation in athletics is voluntary and all groups and organizations must exist within a framework of certain policies, rules, and regulations, the athletic department has developed the following code of conduct.

- All athletes must abide by all school policies of DCS and all participation policies of the Midsouth Association of Independent Schools. These policies must be adhered to during any pre-season activities, the regular season, and any postseason competition.
- Appropriate care must be taken of all equipment, school facilities, and properties. Athletes will be held financially responsible for any damage or loss due to their negligence.
- All athletes shall report any injury or illness to their respective coaches immediately upon occurrence.
- All athletes are expected to attend all required practices, meetings, and contests. The appropriate coach shall be notified of an absence. No season is over until all contests and tournament games are completed.

- If an athlete quits a sport once sanctioned competitions have begun, that student is not eligible to participate in another sport (practices or competitions) until the season (practices and competitions) of the sport they quit has concluded.
- Athletes who are taking any type of medication shall have on file with the DCS Athletic Director a note from the parent/guardian and/or doctor regarding medication and treatment.
- If a sport requires a tryout, that tryout will be administered by the Head Coach of that particular sport. The tryout will be administered fairly and equally for all parties trying out. Once a student-athlete completes a tryout and is selected for a team, all fees associated with being a member of said team will be expected to be paid and the “quitting policy” will take effect.
- Students who receive an out-of-school suspension (OSS) will be ineligible to participate (practice, play, travel) for the time of the suspension. If a student receives an out-of-school (OSS) and does not miss a game/event during the time of the suspension, he/she will miss the next scheduled event (game, performance, etc.) after the suspension. (Loss of game(s)/event(s) applies only to in-season sports. An athlete will not be suspended from participation in a sport if the offense which led to suspension occurred in the student’s off-season).
- If a student-athlete is ejected from an athletic contest, that student-athlete will serve an automatic one game suspension to be served during the next scheduled contest. The length of the suspension can be increased based on factors of the ejection. Ejections can be appealed to and/or reviewed by the Athletic Director. Appeals may be made in writing within 24 hours of an ejection and will be dealt with on a case by case basis, precedent will not apply.
- All athletes are expected to abide by all school policies, including but not limited to, the use of any tobacco product, alcoholic product, or drugs not prescribed by a physician. For any violation, the discipline policy established in the student handbook will be used.

Student athletes are expected to demonstrate the following behaviors and characteristics:

- Integrity in the keeping of one’s word, speaking the truth, carrying out responsibility, and respecting authority.
- Respect for self, Discovery Christian School, coaches, officials, fans, and the property of DCS and others.
- Courtesy extended in all relationships: athlete to athlete, and athlete to coach.
- Stewardship of the property, supplies, and equipment of DCS.
- Responsibility and maturity in posts, photos, ‘retweets’, ‘likes’, and ‘favorites’, etc. when it comes to social media, maintaining a reputation that is glorifying to God and a good representation of Discovery Christian School (each athlete and parent will sign a contract accordingly).

Student athletes are expected to refrain from the following behaviors and characteristics:

- Tardiness to practices or competitions
- Careless and/or reckless behavior, including illegal activity
- Inappropriate use of cellular phones, cameras, and other electronic devices

- Profanity and vulgar or offensive speech and/or gestures
- Inappropriate use of social networks or media outlets (i.e.: Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok, etc.)
- Lying, theft, or cheating
- Rebellious or disrespectful attitude
- The possession and/or distribution of pornographic material
- Harassment in any form, both physical and/or sexual in nature
- Hazing in any form (see addition Hazing information below)
- Use or possession of any weapon or dangerous item on school property or at any athletic event

Anti-Hazing Policy

Hazing in any form is neither tolerated nor consistent with any spiritual, educational, or athletic goal at DCS and will result in disciplinary action.

”Hazing” 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. Any activity that causes the student to perform a task that is in violation of state and federal law or DCS policies is considered hazing.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying in any form is neither tolerated nor consistent with any spiritual, educational, or athletic goal at DCS. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action.

Spectator Code of Conduct

DCS expects all parties present at a contest to display the highest possible level of sportsmanship, being respectful of others and bringing honor to God at all times. Players, coaches, and spectators should treat opponents, game officials, and visiting spectators with respect at all times. DCS reserves the right to warn, censure, place on probation, or suspend (for up to one calendar year) any player, team, coach, or school official determined to be acting in a manner contrary to the standards of DCS. Spectators who do not adhere to standards of good sportsmanship may be asked to leave the contest and/or be prohibited from future contests. Taunting or intimidating participants, officials or coaches is disrespectful, unfriendly, and not Christlike. This type of behavior will NOT be tolerated.

Follow these simple guidelines:

- Parents and spectators are not allowed to approach, confront, or engage a game official before, during, or after an athletic contest. In the event this occurs the parent will be asked to leave the event and authorities will be notified, if necessary. Repeated offensive behavior will result in being banned from future events.
- If a parent wishes to have a discussion with the coach over an issue, a conference needs to be scheduled. These conferences will take place at least 24 hours after the sporting event.

- Players, coaches and fans from the opposing team are not to be viewed as the enemy, but as opponents in a competitive event.
- Spectators are to cheer positively and are to completely avoid crude, obscene, or abusive language.
- Spectators are to regard the official's decision as final.
- Spectators are to be an exemplary role model by positively supporting teams in every manner possible, including content of cheers and signs.
- Spectators are to respect fans, coaches, and participants.
- Parents are to be supportive of their child, give positive reinforcement, and have an appreciation of their child's abilities.
- Parents and spectators are not allowed to enter home locker rooms/dugouts, visiting locker rooms/dugouts, or official's locker rooms.
- Spectators are to respect and obey property regulations established by each school.
- Spectators who are asked to leave or be removed from a game by the game officials or DCS administration will be subject to suspensions from future DCS athletic contests. If a game official removes a spectator from a game, the MAIS reserves the right to levy a fine as well as suspend said spectator from further athletic contests. Any fines assigned to the school will be the responsibility of the spectator who caused the fine.

Refrain from unacceptable behavior including but not limited to:

- Yelling or negative chanting or gestures toward the opponent.
- Booing or heckling an official's decision.
- Criticizing officials in any way, including anger at an official's call.
- Taunting or trash talk.
- Refusing to shake hands or to give recognition for good performances.
- Blaming loss of game on officials, coaches, or participants.
- Laughing or name-calling to distract an opponent.
- Using profanity or displays of anger that draw attention away from the game.
- "Coaching" the student athletes during a competition from the stands.

VIII. EXPECTATIONS OF COACHES

Each coach at Discovery Christian School commits to serve as a Christian model in the education of their athletes on and away from the athletic arena. As such, DCS coaches are expected to do the following:

- Set a Christian example in speech, behavior, and attitude.
- Ensure the safety and welfare of each athlete.
- Communicate with parents/guardians prior to any off-campus travel.
- Support the mission statement of Discovery Christian School.
- Support the overall athletic program and the coaches of other sports, and encourage students to participate in as many athletic activities as they may desire.
- Responsibility and properly use all school owned equipment.
- Be fair and unbiased with each player.
- Put the team in front of an individual player.
- Strive to help each player reach his/her highest potential.

IX. SOCIAL MEDIA

We understand that Social Media has become a part of everyday life. Below are the expectations placed upon all staff, athletes, parents, and other supporters associated with DCS Athletics. It is expected that parents and guardians will partner with DCS in helping our athletes use social media responsibly. DCS reserves the right to determine consequences for breaking these policies on a case by case basis.

- Social Media will not be used in any way to insult or defame Discovery Christian School or any individuals/entities associated with DCS.
- Social Media will not be used in any way to insult or defame another individual, team, or school, whether associated with DCS or not.
- Vulgarity and profanity must not be found in Social Media posts especially while any of these apply: on DCS campus, at a DCS sanctioned event, or wearing any DCS attire.
- Coaches are to use discretion when posting to social media any posts including or alongside student athletes.
- The creation of any social media account representing or associated with Discovery Christian School Athletics must first gain approval through the Athletic Office. In no case, should a student have access or control over said accounts. Upon creation, any login information needs to be provided to the Athletic Director and/or Assistant Athletic Director.

X. ATHLETIC APPAREL

- Student athletes are required to wear Discovery Christian School athletic apparel during an athletic period and/or after school practice.
- Students are responsible for and expected to maintain proper care of all equipment issued to them.
- All uniforms are property of the school, not the individual.
- Students will be assigned uniforms/equipment for the season.
- Students are responsible for payment of any lost, stolen, or damaged items.

- Each item not returned will be assessed at a rate comparable to the current replacement cost.
- Students must return all assigned uniform/equipment to their coach within 5 school days after the close of the season.
- Grades will be withheld for those who do not return or pay for lost/damaged equipment.
- Student athletes who do not return equipment/uniform will not be allowed to participate in another sport.
- Student athletes are not to wear uniforms, either practice or game, at any time other than those allowed by specified team regulations.

XI. TRANSPORTATION

To game:

Student-athletes are required to ride the DCS bus to all away games/events with the exception of cheerleaders. All other exceptions must be submitted in writing and approved before the event.

From Game:

Student-athletes are required to return to DCS by school bus or be signed out by a parent or legal guardian. Students who wish to ride home with someone other than a parent or legal guardian must submit a written note to the coach 24 hours before the game/event.

XII. ATHLETIC FEES

Athletic Fees

Fees will be determined on an annual basis. If an athlete quits a sport after team fees (travel, meals, gear, etc.) have been assessed, they are still responsible for the payment of those fees.

Sponsorship/Advertising Sales

- A percentage of the sponsorship donation will apply directly to the student account that acquired the sponsorship.
- Sponsorship money over the designated amount cannot be designated to another student account per request.
- Sponsorships and payments cannot be carried over from one year to the next. Overage is applied to the Athletics general account.

XIII. REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

1. **Physical Examination Form:** Each student athlete must pass a physical exam before they can practice or participate in a school-sponsored sport. They must submit a physical form signed by a physician/nurse practitioner before participation of any kind is permitted. Physical examinations are valid for one calendar year. No athlete will be permitted to

engage in conditioning, practice, or competition unless the athlete has a valid physical on file. Any physical forms should be given to the head coach or athletic director.

2. **MAIS Concussion Form:** Required for all student-athletes.
3. **Student-Athlete Handbook Agreement & Assumption of Risk Form:** Required for all student-athletes.
4. **Transportation Consent Form:** Required for all participants who ride to and from events provided by DCS.

XIV. PARENT PARTICIPATION POLICY

It is mandatory that the parents/guardians work at least one shift at the admission gate and/or concession stand of each sport that their student-athlete is participating in. A \$100 holding fee will be added to the student's account until the duty has been fulfilled. Failure to do so by the end of the season will result in the fine being charged.

XV. APPAREL AND BRANDING POLICY

Any items including but not limited to apparel, cloth, uniforms, social media accounts, or promotional materials that will represent either explicitly or implicitly Discovery Christian School must follow the proper approval process. Any designs for the aforementioned items must first gain design approval through the Athletic Office prior to any circulation of said item.

XVI. MUSIC GUIDELINES

Music is a valuable tool for us, and it is a gift from God. We must be mindful of the way we use this gift, realizing the influence it has on our students, families, and community. Our athletic events can remain fun and exciting without the use of vulgar or suggestive music.

- In all cases, the Head Coach is responsible for any music played in their area. This does not mean that the Head Coach is in charge of all music, but instead is responsible and accountable for the adherence of these guidelines.
- No music should be played from a student's device. This applies to games and practices.
- Develop a playlist before you choose to play music.
- Know the music being played. What do the lyrics mean? If lyrics cannot be understood, don't play the song.
- Edited versions of vulgar songs do not make them permissible to play. This also applies to instrumental versions of songs.
- Pre-game/In-game music should be listened to thoroughly by coaches before being played over any speakers.
- Baseball and softball coaches should closely monitor the walk-out songs for batters. Review the song name, artist, and lyrics.

XVII. CONFLICT RESOLUTION PLAN

Below is the process for parents and student-athletes with regards to dealing with conflicts that may arise on athletic teams. To the best of our ability, this plan is patterned after the Matthew 18 biblical model of conflict resolution. These conflicts may be a result of any number of situations from intra-team disputes to summer plan time conflicts. In all cases, the following pattern is to be followed.

- **Step 1 - Athlete to Head Coach**
Student-athletes should be able to approach his/her coach with regards to conflicts that arise on athletic teams. When your child handles the problem, it becomes part of the learning and maturation process. Encourage your child to exercise the opportunity to speak directly with his/her coach before a parent/coach meeting is scheduled.
- **Step 2 - Parent to Head Coach**
Once your child has met with his/her head coach, parents are welcome to set up a meeting with the head coach for their child's team(s). Such discussions should be done in a professional manner. A parent, in no circumstance, should approach a coach immediately before or after an athletic conflict. Twenty-four (24) hours must pass prior to a meeting following an athletic contest. If a parent fails to follow the twenty-four (24) hour rule, their child will be required to sit out the following game.
- **Step 3 - Parent to Athletic Director**
If the proper channels of communication have been followed and the conflict is not resolved, parents are encouraged to set up a meeting, through the school secretary, with the Athletic Director. By scheduling this meeting through the school secretary, this will ensure the information and meeting will be scheduled in an appropriate time-frame.
- **Step 4 - Parent to Head of School**
If, following a meeting between parent/coach and subsequent meeting between parent/athletic administration, resolution to the conflict is not achieved, a meeting with the DCS Head of School is appropriate. Again, this should be scheduled through the school secretary.

DCS Parents, Guardians, and other Supporters commit:

- They will support their child and attend as many contests as possible.
- They will avoid putting pressure on their child to start, score, or be the "star" of the team.
- They will support the coaches in public around other parents and fans.
- They will avoid speaking negatively about the coaches to their child.
- They will understand the ultimate purpose of athletics. It exists as an integral part of the total educational mission of the school.
- They will appreciate the educational opportunity that their child is receiving in our athletic program. This included time and efforts provided by the coaching staff.
- They will understand that the goals of the team and athletic program are more important than the hopes and dreams that they have for their child.

XVIII. ATHLETIC DIRECTORY

David Parker	Head Football	dparker2@dcslions.com
Jayleen Thurman	Peewee & Assistant Football	jthurman@dcslions.com
Eric McMillan	Assistant Football	emcmillan@dcslions.com
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Steven Bailey	Head Golf	sbailey@dcslions.com
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