



HCCA
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Athletics Handbook

1. Introduction & Philosophy

The mission of Harps Crossing Christian Academy (HCCA) is to provide a quality education in a Christian environment while supporting families. We are committed to developing the whole child—mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially—through an athletic program built on biblical principles:

- *"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."* — Colossians 3:17 (ESV)
- *"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men."* — Colossians 3:23 (ESV)

While we aim to foster a highly competitive atmosphere and celebrate individual and team success, our ultimate goal is to live a life that honors God. Maintaining this balanced perspective allows our athletes to do and be their best.

Governance

The Athletic Department, school board, and administration establish these policies. They apply to all elementary, middle, and high school sports. References to the **Georgia Association of Private & Parochial Schools (GAPPS)** apply strictly to middle and high school levels.

2. Parent Expectations

Supporting Your Athlete

Parents are vital to the success of HCCA athletics. We value your family's interest and believe sports provide a wealth of opportunities. We ask that you support the program by:

- Attending games frequently to show meaningful support.
- Maintaining objective, positive expectations without placing undue pressure or unrealistic expectations on your child.
- Expressing support for the coach's judgment, character, and actions, whether or not you fully agree.
- Remaining flexible when scheduling adjustments occur.
- Building up and speaking well of all team members.
- Volunteering to help the athletic department with tournaments, admissions, and concessions.

Sportsmanship Policy

All HCCA spectators must model Christ-like behavior. **Unacceptable behaviors include booing, jeering, cursing, mocking, taunting, or directing negative comments toward officials, coaches, and athletes.**

A game official, school administrator, or the Athletic Director (AD) has the authority to remove a person from an athletic contest for unsportsmanlike behavior. Violations may result in the administration denying the right to attend future contests or restricting the family's participation in HCCA programs. We encourage spectators to positively hold one another accountable. If you notice concerning behavior, consider gently intervening or bringing it to the attention of an administrator or the AD.

3. Student-Athlete Responsibilities

Representing HCCA is a privilege. Student-athletes are expected to honor God by winning with honor and losing with grace.

Core Expectations

- **Role Modeling:** Set a positive example on and off the field. Younger students copy you, and other communities evaluate HCCA based on your conduct and attitudes.
- **Self-Discipline:** Commit to rigorous physical and mental preparation without settling for mediocrity or compromise.
- **Controllables:** Maintain total control over your **effort** and **attitude**, especially during difficult losses, questionable official calls, or teammate conflicts.

4. Requirements for Participation

To participate in HCCA athletics, students must meet the criteria outlined below:

Requirement	Policy Details
Academic Eligibility	Middle and High School students must pass all core academic classes in the current quarter to play in the next quarter (e.g., passing Q1 secures Q2 eligibility). The AD performs periodic academic checks.
Sport Limits	Athletes may only participate in one sport per season .
School Attendance	Full-day attendance is required on practice and game days. Documented medical or dental appointments are the only exception; a written verification note is required, and permission must be granted by the AD or Head of School.
Conduct Eligibility	Detentions or suspensions must be served at the earliest scheduled time. Suspended students cannot participate in any athletic activities on the day(s) of suspension.
Physical Exam	Athletes must submit a physical exam report signed by a licensed healthcare provider (physician, NP, PA, or military medical examiner) and parent. The exam must have occurred within the prior 12 months and be on file before the first official practice.
Sports Fees	High School: \$300.00 per sport Middle School: \$200.00 per sport. All fees must be paid prior to the first day of practice.

Required Registration Forms

Parents must complete the following forms for every sport played:

1. Parent/Guardian Consent for Travel and Participation Form
2. Concussion Information Guide (Must be read and signed by parent and student)
3. Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) Form (Must be read and signed by parent and student)

5. Athletic Department Funding

HCCA athletics are not funded by tuition. Operations rely entirely on sports fees, concessions, gate admissions, summer camps, and corporate sponsorships. If you would like to become a sponsor, please contact the athletic department.

- **Admissions:** Gate fees apply to most home contests, and spectators should expect them at away venues.
- **Passes:** Individual and family athletic passes are available through the Athletic Department.

6. Codes of Conduct

General Behavior

Athletes must show respect to teammates, opponents, spectators, officials, and coaches. Bullying, intimidation, "trash talk," jeering, taunting, or booing will not be tolerated.

Hazing & Harassment

Initiations or any actions that denigrate or endanger the mental or physical health or safety of a student are strictly prohibited and will be handled according to the *HCCA Parent/Student Handbook*.

Game Ejections

If a player is ejected from a game by an official for an unsportsmanlike act (such as fighting), the AD will notify GAPPs. The player will serve a **minimum one-game suspension** for the next scheduled contest, with harsher penalties possible depending on the infraction.

7. Attendance, Travel, & Academics

Missing Practices or Contests

Joining a team requires a full-season commitment from both athletes and parents. Notify the coach as soon as possible if a practice or game will be missed, which will generally result in team-specific consequences. If an athlete must drop a sport mid-season, they must consult the coach. They cannot begin practicing for another sport until the initial sport's season is completed.

Equipment & Uniforms

- Athletes are responsible for keeping checked-out equipment clean and in good condition.
- Sports gear must only be worn during practices and games (not during PE class or other times unless directed by the coach).
- Lost or unreturned gear is the financial obligation of the athlete up to full replacement value, and late fees may apply. Future sports participation is blocked until restitution is made.
- Athletes will be required to purchase a game uniform, which becomes their property.

Travel Policies

- HCCA provides transportation when possible to away games via school bus or shuttle. On occasion, for nearby games outside school hours, teams may meet directly at the site.
- Parents may drive their own student home after signing out with the coach. Any other transport arrangements must be pre-arranged in writing with the AD. **Athletes are never permitted to ride to or from away contests with other student athletes.**
- Students must behave respectfully, follow driver/coach directives, keep vehicles clean, and remain safely seated. Please pick up your child promptly upon return; coaches must wait until all students are picked up.

Missing Class for Athletics

Students must pre-arrange makeup work for classes missed due to athletic travel. Failure to turn in assignments may lower grades.

- Assignments given before the absence are due immediately upon return.
- Work assigned during the absence (including tests/quizzes) must be completed within a maximum of **one day for each day missed**. Students/parents must coordinate with the teacher on the day they return to schedule makeup times.

8. Extracurricular Conflicts & Playing Time

Activity Scheduling Conflicts

If an athletic event conflicts with another HCCA activity (like a drama production), students should track schedules and notify their coach promptly. Prior permission is required to miss practice for another activity's tryouts. Conflicts will be resolved using these priorities:

1. Post-season games (Regional/State tournaments that serve as criteria for advancement).
2. Region qualifiers or seeding competitions.
3. Regularly scheduled events (which take priority over rescheduled or added events).
4. The relative importance of the student's participation to the group's performance.

Playing Time Philosophy

- **Varsity:** Roster selection and playing time are based entirely on skill, experience, and coach strategy. Playing time is **not guaranteed**, and squads consist of the best players regardless of grade. Below varsity level, athletes generally participate in all contests, though exceptions occur.
- **Middle School:** Coaches aim to give every student game experience during competitions under normal conditions, though playing time will not be exactly equal.

9. Coach Policies, Injuries, & Practices

Coach Policies

Coaches may establish additional team rules consistent with this handbook. These rules must be approved by the AD. All coaches must adhere to HCCA and GAPPS regulations. The AD provides mandatory coaching clinics and holds pre- and post-season meetings.

Athletic Practices

- Practices run Monday–Friday. After-school practices must end by 8:30 PM, and by 5:30 PM on Wednesdays.
- No practices are allowed on Sundays. Saturday or school holiday practices require AD approval. Teams may practice off-campus based on facility availability.
- Coaches or approved adults must be present at all practices. All adults leading practice must clear a background check and be approved by the AD.
- **GAPPS Rules:** High school athletes must complete **10 physical practice days** before playing in their first competition.

Injury Reporting

All injuries must be reported to the coach immediately. If an injury requires medical attention, an injury report must be completed. The athlete must submit a physician's written clearance note to the Athletic Department before returning to practice or play.

Inclement Weather

If HCCA closes school due to weather, all athletic contests are automatically canceled. For practices or closures due to non-weather reasons, decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, with practices requiring approval from the Head of School.

Valuables

Athletes must secure their own personal belongings. HCCA is not responsible for lost or stolen property at home or away venues. Valuables and money should never be left unprotected.

10. Conflict Resolution

If a conflict or concern arises, parents and athletes must follow this communication hierarchy:

1. **Student-Athlete & Coach:** The student-athlete should first attempt to address the issue directly with the coach.
2. **Parent & Coach:** If unresolved, the parent may schedule a meeting. Parents must not approach a coach immediately after a game; they must wait until the next day or schedule a suitable time. Parents are asked to respect the coach's role and offer support despite disagreements.
3. **Athletic Director:** If no resolution is reached, a joint meeting with the parent, coach, and AD will be scheduled.
4. **Head of School:** The final step, if necessary, is a meeting with the Head of School. Meetings with the Head of School must be submitted in writing and should be requested only after all previous steps in the conflict resolution process have been completed.

11. Varsity Letters & College Recruitment

Lettering Criteria

Varsity letters are awarded to athletes who complete the season in good standing, finish all team obligations, and receive the coach's recommendation based on sport-specific criteria on file in the athletic office.

- Athletes moving between competition levels receive an award for the highest level achieved, provided combined requirements are met.
- Coaches may choose to letter a senior who did not meet standard seasonal requirements.
- Injured players who regularly played may be awarded a letter if the coach determines they would have otherwise met the requirements.

Award Tiers

- **First Varsity Award:** Chenille letter, certificate, and sport emblem.
- **Subsequent Varsity Awards:** Certificate and sports bar.

College Recruitment

HCCA aims to provide opportunities for athletes to compete at the collegiate level. Students interested in recruitment should proactively coordinate with their coach and the AD to assist in making contacts with college programs.