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Introduction
The purpose of the Athletic Department Manual is to standardize structure, implement vision, and establish boundaries for the operation of athletics under the umbrella of Aberdeen Christian School.

The challenge is for the Athletic Department to meet as effectively as possible the needs and interests of all its students. The extracurricular program is designed to enrich the educational experience and has the potential of contributing to the total development of each student in several ways. Teams will be formed on various levels in sports officially sanctioned by SDHSAA including cross country, girls volleyball, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls track/field, and boys and girls golf.

Through organized practices and interscholastic competition, each team will offer participants the opportunity to develop physical, social, and mental skills as outlined by the specific athletic objectives. Each team has a regularly scheduled sport season featuring games or meets against other schools and culminates with the opportunity to participate in District and State competition. These contests are highly competitive and allow students the chance to display their level of skill and development.

Philosophy/Objective
Our philosophy of athletics stems directly from our philosophy of education. The goal is to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ and to “develop the spiritual part of the athlete so that the Holy Spirit is in control and directing his mind and body.” (Romans 8:29, 1 Thessalonians 5:23)

The Athletic Department strives to be consistent with the Mission Statement of Aberdeen Christian School by providing Christ-centered athletic instruction, developing athletes who strive for academic excellence and molding athletes to become responsible citizens who embrace a distinctly Christian worldview.

A great athletic program can be used as a recruitment tool to draw other potential student-athletes and to clutch current student-athletes. As an athlete, the purpose of competing in athletics is to win; therefore, as an Athletic Department, we are compelled to build victorious teams and to “run so as to win the prize.” (1 Corinthians 9:24)

Athletes can and should be used as a tool to reach the spiritually lost and to benefit the community around us. (Proverbs 4:10-13, 11:30, 22:6)

All educational values of any consequence improve human relations. When the effect of participation in an activity takes place, immediately, the meaning of the performance is understood and evaluated and corrections or changes can be made. Considering athletics in the light of these criteria, the following principles are recognized:

1. Participation in sports provides experiences through which pupils learn social values. Athletic assemblies serve to teach students to act favorably in large groups. Knowledge of the game, interpretation of rules, courtesy, school morale, respect for property and many other values are stressed as desirable social outcomes.
2. Athletic activities are conducted and regulated as other enterprises in society. The program operates within the rules of the game. Few activities like sports offer the opportunity for
parents, students and other citizens of the community to mingle together with a common bond.

3. Athletic competition provides situations requiring skilled performance, respect for opponents, and acceptance of results determined by officials, and playing the game according to rules. Experiences related to planning, organizing, adjusting, and completion of task occur continually and are immediate in effect.

Further, the purpose of the Athletic Department of Aberdeen Christian School is to help each participant:

- Build strong character traits including a respect for the rights of others.
- Use critical thinking and good judgment in decisions.
- Develop the understanding, skills, habits, and attitudes necessary for full enjoyment and appreciation of life.
- Form disciplined work habits and pride in careful workmanship.
- Develop their potential to the maximum.
- Understand and follow good health and safety practices.

Participation in athletics at Aberdeen Christian School is open to every student but conditions upon meeting the criteria of academics, character, and athletic skill necessary to compete. While all teams are expected to play hard in the true spirit of competition, there is a different emphasis at each level of play:

1. **Middle School (Grades 6-8)**. The athlete is provided a learning experience and the opportunity for basic individual skill development. Team concepts of play are introduced. The athletic philosophy of Aberdeen Christian School at this level is three-fold:
   a. First, to offer a program in which interested student-athletes can try-out and work toward improving their skills;
   b. Second, to provide a setting which encourages team members to use their skill in competition with others; and
   c. Third, to prepare the student-athlete to compete at the next level by implementing disciplined foundational instruction.

2. **Junior Varsity (Grades 7-12)**. The athlete improves skills while learning team concepts that are more complex. Sport practices will be organized so that each squad member is an active participant during practices and develops in skill and understanding of team strategies and physical conditioning. All squad members will experience learning opportunities in self-discipline, emotional control, and sportsmanship.

3. **Varsity**. The athletic philosophy of Aberdeen Christian School at the High School level is two-fold:
   a. First, to offer a program in which interested student-athletes can try-out and work toward improving their skills; and
   b. Secondly, to provide a setting which encourages team members to use their skills in competition with others.

The athlete is advanced in skill and physical development. Emphasis is placed upon individual and team potential. The athlete’s playing time is determined by how it will best serve the team.
When making cuts, the coach is responsible to evaluate each prospective athlete based on objective criteria. Communicating with each individual will enable the student to target areas for improvement. The coach is also responsible for evaluating each athlete as to his/her role on the team. There are no guarantees regarding playing time, especially on the varsity level. The coach is the sole judge on who should start and how much playing time each player should receive. Association rules allow 7th graders to compete on the varsity level at the discretion of the coach and school.

**High School Athletic Objectives**

1. Rules, strategies, and game plans shall be communicated to athletes as an aid in maximizing their potential success, knowledge, and enjoyment of their athletic events.
2. Appropriate advanced techniques, skills, and playing opportunities shall be provided to all athletes whose skill level enables them to go beyond the more introductory or participatory level of play.
3. Sport practices will be organized so that each squad member is an active participant during practices and develops in skill and understanding of team strategies and physical conditioning.
4. All squad members will experience learning opportunities in self-discipline, emotional control, and sportsmanship.
5. Sportsmanship will be taught and emphasized in the school’s athletic program. Participants are expected to be courteous to coaches, officials, and opponents as well as work with teammates in harmonious ways.

**Athlete Participation – High School Teams**

Our goal is to provide as many students as possible with an enjoyable and beneficial experience in our athletic programs. While we wish that meant playing time and statistical success for everybody, we understand that is not possible. It is our goal that everyone play a part in the benefit of the team as a whole, and that every athlete be treated well.

**Academics**

The athletes as Aberdeen Christian School are students first and foremost. Coaches will work with teachers in helping the student-athlete be successful in the classroom. If a student has a scheduled after-school tutorial, the student will not be penalized for being late or missing practice. Students participating in athletics should anticipate the demands on their time and plan accordingly. Athletic participation should never be used to excuse incomplete assignments, missed tests, or tardiness. Student-athletes should be present and prepared for class regardless of game and practice schedules.

**Affiliation**

The high school is a member of the Lake Region Conference, an affiliate of the South Dakota High School Activities Association (SDHSAA).

*See Appendix for a complete listing of participating teams.*


**Attendance - Classroom**
You must attend at least 50% of your assigned classes on the day of a game or practice to participate. Any exceptions to this rule must have approval from the Athletic Director.

Any student-athlete who fails to attend all classes the next school day after a scheduled contest will be placed on attendance probation. A second occurrence may result in the athlete becoming ineligible to compete in a portion of the next regularly scheduled contest. Any exceptions must have approval from the Athletic Director.

**Awards**
Athletic awards are presented at the end of each academic year at a special dinner. The Booster Club provides funds for the purchase of all awards. Coaches may present awards in categories that are predetermined. Since the number of awards is limited, careful consideration should be given to athletes selected. For the sake of time and fairness, additional presentations or recognitions may be made at a team gathering at another time and place.

**Varsity Letter**
A letter is awarded to any player on a varsity who the coach feels made a strong contribution to a team. Ideally, a letter winner is anyone who attends all practices and games. You can make a large contribution to a team without playing in the games through hard work in practice, and encouragement. Therefore, playing in the games is not a prerequisite for receiving a varsity letter. The first year an athlete receives a letter they will receive a chenille letter “AC” with a pin representing the sport they lettered in. Each successive year they will receive another pin representing the sport they lettered in or a bar at their discretion and preference.

**Spirit of the Knight**
Given to an outstanding Senior athlete who has shown excellence in academics, spiritual growth, athletic ability, and sportsmanship. Each athlete must have participated in at least two varsity sports during his/her senior year.

**Conduct**
Athletes must show the proper respect for authority. A strong, capable opponent will bring out the best in us and show us our areas of weakness. Officials and opponents must be treated with the same respect and dignity that we would want to receive. Humility is the mark of greatness. *(Proverbs 11:2, 12:1)*

Expect that some calls don’t go our way – it is these games that become defining moments for our character development. We must stay cool and focus on the bigger picture, not letting circumstances distract us from our ultimate goal. *(1 Corinthians 9:25)* Participants in the athletic program must die to self, giving up individual rights to gain team victories. *(Philippians 2:5-8)*
**Discipline**

Coaches are employees of the school. Therefore, all school policy and standards of behavior for students set forth by the administration will be carried out by the coaches at practices, games, and on road trips. Disciplinary actions for misconduct will be applied. Serious offenses will be brought to the attention of the administration.

**Dress Code**

Appropriate apparel, as outlined in the student handbook, should be worn for all road trips, before and after games. Dress code policy applies unless teams go to the game in uniform.

**Eligibility**

Athletic competition, fine arts dramatic productions, band, and choir competitions are a privilege at ACS. Athletes and fine arts participants represent the school to the community and must display good sportsmanship and Christian character. To participate in interscholastic sports, athletes and fine arts participant must meet the current academic requirements as stated below.

**Academic Ineligibility**

Any student in grades 7-12 with an F in any subject or an overall grade point average below 2.0 shall be ineligible to play interscholastic sports for 4 weeks following the issuance of a quarterly report card. Ineligibility begins at 3:30 p.m. on the school day of the issuance of a 9-week report card.

**Eligibility Reinstatement**

In order to be reinstated to a team, a player must show evidence of improvement on the mid-quarter progress report in the subject(s) in which he/she was ineligible.

The Athletic Director and administration also reserve the right to enforce “behavioral ineligibility” based on other disciplinary situations.

*This section is the same as the Academic Eligibility section of the Parent-Student Handbook.

All athletes must have the following forms completed and on file in the school office:

1. Current SDHSAA Physical Examination Form (Appendix)
2. Current SDHSAA Interim Pre-Participation Health History Form (Appendix)
3. Student Participation Permission Form (Appendix)
4. Emergency Medical Authorization Form (Appendix)
5. Proof of health/accident insurance (Appendix)

Coaches at each individual sport kick-off meeting will have the forms necessary and instruct parents on how to properly complete each form.
**SDHSAA Eligibility Requirements**
Under the rules of the South Dakota High School Activities Association, athletes are NOT ELIGIBLE IF:

1. They have reached their 20th birthday.
2. Have attended more than 4 first and 4 second semesters in grades 9-12.
3. Have not passed 20 hours per week of high school work in the previous semester.
4. Have not enrolled in or attended a minimum of 20 hours of class per week.
5. Have graduated from a 4 year high school or an equivalent institution.
6. Have not enrolled by the 16th day of the current semester.
7. Have been absent for 10 consecutive school days – except illness/emergency.
8. Transferred without open enrolled completed or a parental resident change.
9. Do not have all physical, history, or permission slips on file.
10. Have ever participated in an athletic contest under an assumed name.
11. Have ever violated their amateur status.
12. Have competed as an individual or member of another team during their regular high school season.

Prior to a student’s involvement in any athletic activity, the child’s parent or guardian must attend a meeting held by the coach and Athletic Director. These meetings will consist of information that the parent will need to understand to ensure their child’s successful participation in the sport. It will also consist of rules and guidelines that must be adhered to by all family members when attending athletic events involving ACS. Eligibility hinges on academics, conduct, and attendance.

**Gifts or Awards**
Under the rules of eligibility for interscholastic competition set forth by the South Dakota High School activities Association, no athlete can accept any gift or award that has a value of more than $75.

**Equipment**
All equipment used by athletic teams at Aberdeen Christian School is the property of the school. At the beginning of each season, the coach will be given an inventory of the equipment checked out to him/her. The care of the equipment is the responsibility of the coach. After each practice and game, a careful check should be made to make sure that all equipment is accounted for. No equipment should be checked out to students for personal or home use. At the end of the season, all equipment should be returned within one week of the final game.

**Facilities**
Extreme care and caution should be taken in the use of facilities. Coaches should enlist the help of athletes to ensure that every field and court is left in the condition in which it was found. All cups, bottles, and other trash should be picked up. Any student defacing or destroying property will be disciplined according to school policy. Activities by teams should be limited to the are specifically designated for the team’s use. All other areas are off limits.
**Homeschool Participation**

Aberdeen Christian School is open to homeschool students that would like to participate in our sports programs. All requirements are the same as for part-time and full-time students. There is an annual $75 fee for participation per school year for insurance purposes. Athletes will not be eligible to participate in games, meets, or practices until the fee has been paid.

**Homeschool Paperwork**

Upon a homeschooled athlete entering the 9th grade, we will need a certificate of exemption copy, as well as the Open Enrollment Form 1A paperwork. This Open Enrollment form can be found by going to the SDHSAA website and clicking the FORMS tab—Athletics tab—Open Enrollment. Please fill out Sections I, II, and III and then sign. In the sections which ask for "High School Previously Attended" please put Aberdeen School District 6-1 (if you received your homeschool certificate of exemption through the Aberdeen school district). If you received yours from Warner for example, you would need to put Warner School District. The school which you are "transferring" to is Aberdeen Christian.

**Physicals**

All students participating in athletics must have a record of a current physical on file in the school office. Copies of the physicals will be given to each coach in case of an injury or medical emergency. All athletes must be examined by a certified physician and have a copy of the doctor’s permission for them to participate with their coach before the first practice. Physical examinations are good for a period of three years.

**Practice**

Practice venues and times will be determined by the Athletic Director in cooperation with coaches. Because of limited facilities that must be shared, flexibility is required. Any change to the practice schedule must be approved by the Athletic Director. Student-athletes are required to be at all practices and games. At the beginning of the season, coaches will communicate to team members his/her expectations for performance and attendance. There should be no allowances for missed practice (other than academic or medical reasons). If an athlete anticipated missing a practice or game, prior notice should be given to the coach. The consequences for missing will be outlined ahead of time and then implemented.

Students must be present at school for at least 50% of his/her classes in order to participate in that day’s practice or game. Each athlete, whether starter or backup, must respond with maximum effort on practice days so the team may achieve maximum results on game days. *(Colossians 3:23-24)*
Scheduling

Sunday Participation
No contest under the auspices of the South Dakota High School Activities Association may be staged on Sunday.

Wednesday Evening Activities
All school-sponsored practices will end by 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday evenings.

Cancellation of Events
In the event any scheduled athletic event has to be canceled or postponed, the athletic office will inform the news media in the community as soon as possible.

Summer Participation Philosophy
The athletic department believes the summer participation situation needs to be kept in proper perspective. Athletic development during the summer months needs to focus on the development of individual skills and strength. Team skills are secondary in nature.

Sportsmanship
Athletes and coaches at Aberdeen Christian School are to be exemplary in their display of sportsmanship during games and practices. Team members should congratulate opponents after a game with a customary handshake and kind word. Physical and/or verbal abuse aimed at an opponent, official, coach, or teammate will result in immediate discipline by the coach, and possibly, the administration. Taunting and/or inappropriate language directed toward an opponent or teammate is not “part of the game” and is inconsistent with the mission of Aberdeen Christian School. An athlete ejected from a contest is automatically suspended for the next game but may sit on the bench. All ejections are to be reported to the Athletic Director no later than the day after the ejection takes place.

Athletes are to demonstrate sportsmanship and an attitude of cooperation with coaches and teammates. An athlete who has a grievance with the coach or another player should attempt to resolve the problem with that individual first, in private, in accordance with Biblical principle. Matters of disagreement and dispute should be kept confidential between the individuals involved. If the situation remains unresolved, the Athletic Director will be informed.

Transportation
Transportation to all home games is the responsibility of the parents/players. Aberdeen Christian School arranges transportation via parents and coaches for teams to all out-of-town games. Players must travel with the team. There are two exceptions upon notification of the coach: (1) a player may ride home with his/her parents after the game; or (2) a player may return with another parent provided verbal or written
permission has been granted by his/her parents. Parents may not give permission for a player to ride with another student.

The coach will monitor the music played on the van music systems. Seat belts, if available, must be used by students at all times. Drivers should not exceed the speed limit by more than 5 miles per hour.

**Uniforms**

Uniforms are the property of Aberdeen Christian School. The school and the Booster Club provide the funds for purchasing uniforms.

The coach has the responsibility for distributing and collecting uniforms. Athletes are responsible for the care of the uniform and should follow the manufacturer’s instructions for cleaning after each use. An athlete who loses an uniform must pay the replacement cost for that uniform. Uniforms which show more than normal wear may also have to be replaced and must be paid for by the student. Uniforms are not to be altered or tailored by the athlete. Athletes are to wear the complete uniform provided by the school at games and games only. They should not be worn to school, practice, or used for other recreational activities. Athletes are to be in complete uniform for team pictures which are made each season. All ununiformed are to be cleaned and returned to the coach and accounted for within one week of the final game of the season.

**These responsibilities will also cover the position of any sports “Manager.”**

**Jr. High Sports**

The goal of Jr. high sports is to develop as many kids as possible to be ready to contribute at the high school level. While the expectation is that everyone will get to play, playing time will not be distributed evenly amongst the players. Playing time will be at the discretion of the coach. Jr. high is constituted as 6th - 8th grade. Younger kids may be brought up at the discretion of the coach when needed.

**Administration/Coach/Participant/Parent Communications**

**Coach/Athlete/Parent Communications**

We believe that communication is key between coaches and their athletes, and the athletes’ parents. It is our goal to make sure that our coaches/athletic director and those in leadership communicate effectively on the expectations of the athletes.

**Communication you should expect From the Coach**

1. Expectations of the coach for his/her players
2. Locations and times of practices, contests, events
3. Team requirements
4. Disciplinary Actions

**Communication that Coaches/Athletic Director Expect From Parents**

1. Notification of athletes’ absence. (In advance when possible)
2. Specific concerns in regard to the coach’s/Athletic Director’s behavior
3. Coaches expectations

**Appropriate Concerns to Discuss With Coaches/Athletic Director**

1. How your child is treated – Physically/Mentally
2. Concerns about your child’s behavior
3. What does my child have to do in order to better his or her-self and the team?
4. What role does my child play on this team and why?
5. What can we, as parents, do to help our child fulfill his/her expectations?

**Off-limit topics when it comes to parent and coach discussions. These topics are the following:**

1. Coaching Strategies – the coaches decide how the team will play.
2. Other Athletes – it’s unprofessional to discuss other students’ talents.
3. Playing time

If parents have questions/concerns in these areas, the Athletic Director is their contact point. If you feel there is a need to have an outlet to discuss these topics, please contact the Athletic Director, NOT the coach. The AD will approach the coach with concerns regarding these areas, that he/she deems necessary and appropriate. Concerns regarding boys basketball that would typically go to the AD, shall go to Superintendent/Principal Mr. Kline.

Parents are encouraged to practice the 24 Hour Rule which states: Parents and coaches both need to take at least 24 hours to “cool down” before discussing anything after a game.

One other way you have a voice is through our annual end of the year evaluations. This is your chance to share your thoughts/concerns/ideas in a way that is well thought through, and appropriate.

When parents feel their concerns have not been adequately addressed, a face-to-face meeting with the athletic director and administration may be requested.