

GREAT HEARTS
Irving



Athletic Department Handbook

2018-19

Introduction

The Great Hearts Athletics Handbook provides students, families, coaches, and administrators with the policies, guidelines, and expectations for the schools' athletics programs.

It is expected that all students and families read through the entirety of the Athletics Handbook prior to participation in a sport. While the handbook does not give an exhaustive treatment of school policies and expectations, it does provide a framework in which each sports program must operate. Any issues falling outside the bounds of the Handbook will be dealt with by the coaching staff, athletic director, and school administration as needed.

Purpose

In keeping with the broader mission of Great Hearts Texas, each sports program will strive to build a community of young men and women committed to moral, intellectual, and physical excellence. First and foremost, by participating in athletics, each student will be afforded the opportunity to grow in prudence, justice, temperance, courage, charity, and ultimately rejoice in the goodness of being through play.

The school is committed to ordering athletics within the mission of the academy and preventing the emergence of a separate "jock" culture. At Great Hearts, athletics does not exist as an island of its own, but as a noble enterprise that assists the Academy mission of promoting the fulfillment of the person.

Participation Fees

All sports require a fee to pay for supplies, rented venues, equipment, coaches, and tournaments. The athletic departments at Great Hearts schools are self-supporting programs through income from fees. The fee for any sport must be paid prior to the first official practice day. The athletics fee is \$250 per athlete, per sport. There is a family cap of \$1250 for the year.

Student Cost Waiver

Great Hearts does not want to exclude any student from participation due to financial hardship. The school determines a family's eligibility for free and reduced athletic fees through our Student Cost Waiver application, available in the school office. Eligibility for waived or reduced athletic fees is determined according to the same standards as those found in the Free and Reduced Lunch application.

Eligibility

In order to participate in school athletics, athletes must meet school eligibility requirements as well as the eligibility requirements of the league in which the sport is played. Questions regarding eligibility status should be directed to the athletic director for clarification.

Academic Eligibility Requirements

- Student-athletes must be enrolled at the school in seven classes and maintain satisfactory progress toward graduation throughout each semester.
- Eligibility checks will be conducted at the mid-point and end of each grading period. Should an athlete receive a failing grade at the mid-point of any grading period, he or she will be declared ineligible for a three week probationary period. An athlete may regain eligibility when he or she maintains passing grades in every class at the next grade check.
- Student-athletes must meet school behavior standards in order to be eligible for athletics.

ELIGIBILITY CALENDAR

Quarter	First Grade Check	Second Grade Check	Final Grade Check
1	9/26	10/17	11/7
2	11/28	1/4	1/25
3	2/27	3/20	4/10
4	5/13	5/28	6/4

A student-athlete in danger of becoming academically ineligible should consult with his or her instructor(s) in order to determine action necessary to retain eligibility. Once determined academically ineligible (i.e. failing one or more classes), the student athlete has a three week period to improve his or her grades. If, at the end of the three-week period, the student athlete is passing all of his or her classes, he or she regains eligibility. Academically ineligible student-athletes are encouraged to participate in practice sessions and attend team meetings, but **may not participate in contests or travel to away games** until eligibility is regained. Ineligible student-athletes may not miss classroom instructional time in order to travel to away athletic contests.

Attendance Eligibility Requirements

- Student-athletes must attend a minimum of one-half of their classes during the school day in order to participate in competition that day. In the case of extenuating circumstances, school administration may grant relief from this requirement.
- Student-athletes must attend 90% of the total school days in any given semester.

Absence and Club Sports Policies

Student athletes who participate on Great Hearts' sports teams are expected to attend every scheduled practice in season. Excused absences include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Absence from school day due to illness
- Scheduled doctors' visit
- Significant family events (weddings, funerals, etc.)

All excused absences must be arranged between athlete and coach. Unexcused absences will be dealt with according to rules established by each head coach.

It is not acceptable for a student athlete to miss a practice or competition due to commitments to a club program. It is expected that Great Hearts student athletes

prioritize school practices and competitions above involvement in programs outside of the school.

Registration Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible to participate on a Great Hearts athletic team, student-athletes must complete the online registration and have a completed physical examination form on file. Coaches will be notified by the athletic department when student-athletes have turned in a completed physical examination form and have completed the online registration process and are cleared for participation. For high school athletics additional forms will be required.

Physical examination forms and registration can be found on the school athletic website.

Behavioral Expectations

At Great Hearts, we expect our students to achieve the ideal of the lady-scholar-athlete and the gentleman-scholar-athlete, and we emphasize those identities in that particular order. Our student athletes are held to the highest standards of behavioral excellence at all times. We expect that our athletes aspire to obtain and act on the cardinal virtues:

- Prudence
- Justice
- Temperance
- Courage

Great Hearts expects its coaching staff and athletes to uphold these virtues through regular practice. Inappropriate conduct, including use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs may result in lost playing time, suspension, or expulsion from the athletic program.

Additionally, we hold our parents to a similarly high standard and expect them to uphold these same virtues at practices and games. Parents should at all times remain respectful of officials, coaches, athletes, and other parents.

Parental Role in Program

Parents play a crucial role in the development of student athletes at Great Hearts. At the beginning of an athletics season it takes time for athletes to trust their coaches and to follow them in the good but challenging direction the coaches are trying to lead them. When complete trust is gained between players and coaches, athletes are able to play to their full potential, with great confidence, passion and pride in themselves, their teammates and their school. Parents have tremendous power to expedite the process of building the athlete's trust in the program by showing support. Many parents have backgrounds in the sports being played and may in fact have a wealth of wisdom to offer.

If parents have questions or comments about the way the game is being taught by the coaches they should feel free to share these questions or comments with the head coach while protecting the unified voice of the program and the trust of the athletes in their coaches by not sharing these comments or questions in front of the student athletes. (If you can commit to being at one or more practices a week as a parent volunteer, please consider speaking to the head coach about volunteering).

Parents are asked to defer from coaching players from the stands during practices and games so that the athletes can concentrate on following the instruction of the coach as the voice of the program. During practices and games it is also important that athletes stay with the team and do not go to the stands until after the game or practice is complete.

Participation in School Sports: A Commitment and a Privilege

In addition to helping the athlete arrive to practices and games on time, parents can support their athletes in seeing that their participation in a school sport is understood as both a privilege and a commitment. This sometimes appears paradoxical to athletes, and parents and coaches must help in clarifying these two aspects of athletics. Parents are asked to help their athlete be true to that commitment by not taking away participation in a school sport as a punishment if the athlete has already begun that sport. Taking away the athlete's participation in a game or practice can send a conflicting message about that athlete's commitment. Athletes should not feel that they have a right to participate on their school team regardless of effort or attitude. Arriving to each practice and game on time is only the first step in what the athlete must give in order to merit playing time and representing the school in athletic competitions. Parents can help their athlete see that full effort and a great attitude are keys to the sport being a fulfilling experience.

Dress Code

All shirts worn for athletic practices and field day should be modest, loose fitting, in good repair (e.g. no holes, torn sleeves, etc), should be worn either tucked in or well over the waist of the pants/shorts if not tucked in. No midriffs may be shown. T-shirts are preferred—no camisoles or sports bras may be worn as outer garments. Sleeveless shirts may be worn if modest. No clothing should represent popular culture images (e.g. band shirts, movies, etc).

Use of Uniforms and Equipment

All school equipment and uniforms are loaned out each season and should be treated with the utmost care. Irresponsible use may result in the student athlete repaying the cost of the item to the athletic department. Likewise, facilities should be treated with great care, whether they are rented, belong to another school, or are on campus, and an effort should be made to leave the facility as clean or cleaner than it was before use.