



**Student–Athlete Handbook
2017-2018**

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WELCOME... to the GFCCHS Athletics Program! The material presented in this booklet has been compiled to better acquaint you and your family with the policies, practices and regulations that govern the athletic program at Great Falls Central Catholic High School. Please keep this booklet handy and refer to it when questions and/or concerns arise. If questions or concerns are not answered within this booklet, please feel free to contact me. **DO NOT** let your questions or concerns go unanswered or unresolved.

GFCCHS ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT PHILOSOPHY/PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Great Falls Central Catholic High School Athletics Program strives to provide the best opportunities beyond the school day for students to excel in knowledge, skills, teamwork, self-discipline, and moral character. The purpose is to provide each participant with experiences that will be positive, formative in Catholic values, and helpful in developing the virtues of faith, teamwork, responsibility, loyalty, good sportsmanship, fortitude, and enhancement of particular knowledge and skills. This athletic handbook is designed to inform participants, student/athletes and their parents/guardians of the rules, regulations, and information that will help develop a rich tradition of competition at GFCCHS.

Participating in high school athletics is a privilege that carries with it honor, responsibility, and sacrifice. Since competition is a privilege and not a right, those who choose to participate will be expected to follow the School Handbook and Athletic Handbook as established by the administration, and along with additional specific coaches' rules for their respective sport. They are expected to represent GFCCHS, their family, themselves and their community in a positive manner. By following the guidelines set forth in this athletic handbook, the ideals exemplified in athletics will become a part of the each person's personality and character and will be a model to those who watch each performance. The policies in this handbook are in force year around and apply to all students, participants, athletes and family members that are involved with MHSAA sanctioned events. The primary purpose of athletics is to help young adults grow into respectable citizens.

The success and tradition of the GFCCHS Athletic Program involves responsibilities for all prospective and participating athletes. Those entering the program should know these responsibilities and have the willingness to accept and maintain them. The student/athlete's conduct, on and off the field, and their behavior toward and interaction with other players, participants, students, parents, faculty and third parties must at all times comply with the general directives and overall mission statement of GFCCHS.

STUDENT-ATHLETE/PARTICIPANT DEFINED

A student-athlete/participant is defined as and includes all young men and women who participate and represent a team that engages in interscholastic competition and further includes cheerleaders, student managers, statisticians and all other individuals who may assist a team.

PARENT/GUARDIAN DEFINED

A parent/guardian shall be the person(s) responsible for the student-athlete and for purposes of this handbook, all related family members of the student-athlete and parent/guardian shall be expected to abide by the terms hereof.

CORE VALUES

Accountability - We must be accountable for our actions, but we also will hold the students accountable as well. As educators, we will encourage them to follow through with our expectations and make sure there are consequences for inappropriate or disrespectful behavior. Student-athletes want to be held accountable; they want to know parents, as well as coaches, care about their well-being and their future.

Responsibility - to self, school, program, team...student-athletes have a responsibility to be leaders among their peers. They must behave appropriately. We will encourage them to excel in school and make the right decisions in social settings and in peer groups.

Sportsmanship – so that we represent ourselves, our school, family and city to the best of their ability. Unsportsmanlike behavior by students will have consequences from the coach. We are to be more concerned with our students than officials or opponents.

Commitment – To make our teams the best they can be, coaches and students athletes must be fully committed. Faith, family, and academics should be priorities that come *before* athletics. We will communicate this to our student-athletes regularly.

Excellence - every task, drill, practice, game, and homework assignment will be done with the idea that we want to excel. Coaches and student-athletes alike should strive for excellence.

Instilling these core values in all student-athletes will go far toward the success of our our programs. We will prepare students to leave our programs prepared for college, work, and most importantly, life. Each and every one of our teams will be recognized by our opponents as having programs filled with hard working student-athletes who always give 100%, and that are leaders in sportsmanship. If our opponents perceive us in this light, then win or lose, we will have earned their respect.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

1. Each individual shall put the good of the team first and foremost.
2. Good sportsmanship will always be the focal point of the GFCCHS athletic department. It will be reflected in how we treat teammates, coaches, officials and opponents.
3. Each individual shall accept responsibility for the care of all equipment and school property. Damage due to negligence shall result in financial accountability to the individual.

4. Each individual shall obey the specific guidelines set forth for each team as given by the coach.
5. Each individual shall be a good citizen at all times, displaying honesty, self-discipline, courtesy, responsibility, and respect for self, others, and property.
6. Each individual shall strive to be a positive influence in all he/she does, representing the team, school, and community with pride and dignity.
7. Each individual shall refrain from engaging in negatives such as vulgar language, disrespectful or violent behavior, and other behaviors that would bring discredit upon themselves, their teams, their families, and their school. In short, GFCCHS athletes are expected to maintain the highest standard of conduct.
8. No individual shall use drugs, alcohol or tobacco. Please refer to Student Handbook for complete school policy.
9. Each individual shall comply with the standards set forth in this handbook, the core values of GFCCHS, the student handbook, and school policies and regulations. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action and/or dismissal from the team, as determined by the school administration.
10. Each individual shall comply with the standards as set forth by the MHSA or be subject to disciplinary action and/or dismissal from the team, as determined by the school administration.
11. Each individual shall comply with local, state and federal laws and regulations. Please see Student Handbook for complete explanation.
12. The student-athlete/ participant must acknowledge and understand that their participation is a privilege, not a right and such participation may be limited, suspended and/or terminated by the school at its sole discretion.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are required to attend all practices, team meetings, service projects, etc. that the coach deems necessary.

Students must attend school half a day (four periods) in order to qualify for participation in an athletic activity that day.*(SH pg. 44)

SPORTS PHYSICALS

A physical examination is required for each student in order to be considered eligible and to be approved for participation in a MHSA contest. Physical examinations must be completed prior to the first day of practice. This examination must be certified by a licensed medical professional acting within the scope and limitations of his/her practice. This certification is valid for a period of one school year. A physical examination conducted before May 1st is not valid for participation the following school year. The physical examination form developed by the MHSA Medical Advisory Committee and approved by the MHSA Executive Board must be used. A current form may be obtained from the athletics office.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

All fees associated with an activity must be paid at the start of sport season, before student engages in the activity. Fees include participation fee (\$35 for 1st sport/activity, \$50 for 2nd or more), transportation fee (\$40 per activity, used to defray bus expenses), uniforms, equipment fees, regular-season lodging. An arrangement to charge fees to the parent's tuition account must be approved by contacting the school bookkeeper at 216-3344 x302.

CODE OF CONDUCT

RULE 1: A student participating in athletic activities who is found to be in violation of the G.F. Central Catholic High School Drug, Alcohol, Tobacco, Harassment and Technology Policy will be penalized. *(SH pg. 24-30/42-43).

RULE 2: A student who is suspended from the school as part of any disciplinary process shall not participate in any athletic practices, meetings or competitions during stated removal.

RULE 3: A student participating in athletic activities who is found in violation of other policies of this Student-Athlete Handbook shall be disciplined in accordance with the rules set forth by each head coach. The head coach, in agreement with the Director of Athletics, may set specific rules, guidelines and consequences for each team.

Procedures

Upon reasonable suspicion of a student's violation, the Principal, Dean or School Counselor will conduct an investigation. Following the investigation, the student will be notified by the Director of Athletics as to the consequences described in the School Handbook and The Athletic Handbook.

Enforcement

Coaches, teachers, administrators, staff, athletes, and parents should work together to uphold and enforce the Student-Athlete Handbook. A possible code violation shall be reported promptly to the Director of Athletics.

If the Director of Athletics determines that an Athletic Code of Conduct violation has occurred, they will contact the athlete and his or her parent/guardian immediately.

*Student Handbook

SEASONAL TRANSITION POLICY

GFCCHS actively promotes the development of multi-sport athletes. As athletes transition from one season to another, the head coaches of the involved sports will collect and then confirm to the director of Athletics that ALL uniforms and equipment are returned before the athlete is released to participate in the next sport.

TRAVEL GUIDELINES

In order to participate in any school-sponsored trip, the following conditions must be met. Before departure, the student must:

1. Be a member of the team, club, or organization taking the trip.
2. Pay the full amount due for the trip. In addition, and any other prior commitments (fees, candy, fundraising quota, deposit, etc.).
3. Sign and return any required parent permission slip.
4. Parents may transport their student-athlete to or from an event with the approval of the Principal or Director of Athletics. This is accomplished by submitting a Travel Release form to the school office at least 24 hours prior to departure to allow time for proper approval and coach/advisor notification.
5. Travel attire is decided by the head coach of each individual team, with the approval of the Director of Athletics.

While on the trip, students will be governed by all the applicable rules and guidelines listed in the Student Handbook, including this handbook and comply with the following:

1. Stay with the group and use only the transportation provided. Administrators, coaches and chaperones must always know student's whereabouts.
2. Abide by all guidelines set by the coach regarding meals, arrivals, departures, room checks, etc.
3. Be accountable and responsible for your own actions and belongings at all times.
4. Do not remove any items from hotel room or premises. Violators will be reported to school officials.
5. Members of the opposite sex are not permitted in the same hotel room at any time.
6. Bring money for meals and spending money, if you choose to carry it.
7. Be in room and observe lights out at designated time.
8. Do not use or be in the possession of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.
9. When utilizing a hotel's swim facilities, student-athletes are required to wear proper swimwear (one-piece suits for girls, swim trunks (no speedo) for boys). Students will wear shirt or cover-up when moving between a hotel room and swim facilities.
10. Remember the purpose of the trip. Students represent themselves and their school and courtesy and cooperation is expected at all times.
11. Violation of these rules will result in a phone call to the student's parent or guardian, after which the student may be sent home immediately at the parent or guardian's expense. Further disciplinary consequences may also be imposed.

**GFCCHS & MHSA
INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ELGIBILITY**

Designation	Description	GFCC Criteria
Full Eligibility	Student may participate in competition	Pass five classes

Taking the overall wellness of the student athlete into consideration, any athlete that has a significant drop in grades during a season will be required to meet with the Director of Athletics and/or the Guidance Counselor to help find the source of the regression. Any athlete that quits a team during the season will not be permitted to go out for any other team during that sport season.

MHSA ELIGIBILITY RULE

To be eligible to participate in a MHSA contest, a student shall meet all of the following criteria:

1. A student must be enrolled in twenty hours per week and in regular attendance at the school where the student participates. Regular attendance is defined as actual physical presence in the building (bricks and mortar).
2. A grading period is defined as one semester. A semester is defined as one half of a school year (approximately 18 school weeks or 90 school days). This definition is applicable to all schools regardless of the type of class scheduling format utilized (i.e. block, traditional, trimester etc.).
3. A student must have received a passing grade and received credit in at least five classes of prepared course work or its equivalent in the previous semester, at the school where the student participates.
4. If a student is assigned an “incomplete” in a subject, he/she has not received a passing grade in this subject. The record at the end of the semester is final.
5. In the case of two or more schools entering into a cooperative sponsorship of activities, a student enrolled as a student and otherwise satisfying eligibility requirements would be eligible to participate in any activity sponsored by the school, regardless of whether the activity is sponsored only by the school or in conjunction and cooperation with another school, without being in violation of Article II, Section 2.
6. No student may establish eligibility concurrently at two member schools. Dual enrollment is not recognized for the purpose of eligibility in MHSA activities.
7. This rule is not applicable to IDEA '04 and Section 504 students when their individual education plans (IEP) under IDEA or their educational accommodation plans under Section 504 certify that the students are not required to meet this minimum academic to have passed 20 hours of prepared work per week. However, all students must be enrolled in twenty hours per week.
8. The second semester begins on Monday morning following the week in which the first semester ends. A student who becomes eligible the second semester would then become

eligible on Monday morning. A student who becomes ineligible the second semester would become ineligible on Monday morning.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

A student who transfers his or her enrollment to GFCCHS from a different high school is required to complete an Athletic Transfer document. The parent or guardian of the transfer student must contact the Director of Athletics as soon as possible upon enrollment at GFCCHS to begin the reporting process. GFCCHS does not grant eligibility for interscholastic competition before receiving the MHSAA ruling.

Two eligibility rulings are possible:

1. Limited eligibility: Participation is allowed at the junior varsity level for 90 days from the date the athlete enrolled at GFCCHS.
2. Full eligibility: Participation is allowed at the JV and varsity level immediately upon notification from the MHSAA.

DESCRIPTION OF AWARDS

Sub-Varsity

Certificates of participation are awarded upon successful completion of the sub-varsity season in a sport.

Varsity

The Varsity letter is given upon successful completion of the first varsity season in the athletic program. The letter is placed on the left breast of the letter jacket purchased by the athlete. Subsequent awards will be specific sport pins or bars. Other awards are determined by the coach for each sport.

Father Mac Memorial Athletic Award

The Father Mac Memorial Athletic Award will go to the athlete who best meets the following criteria areas as determined by each sport:

1. Incorporation of the mission of the school and Catholic identity into their athletic participation
2. Positive mental attitude/sportsmanship
3. Academic excellence and overall commitment in the classroom
4. Positive model of the Catholic faith
5. Overall leadership and commitment to the program

MEDICAL SERVICES/INJURIES

Great Falls Central Catholic High School contracts Certified Athletic Trainers.

The GFCCHS coaching and athletic training staff prioritizes the health and safety of our participants above winning. The staff is trained to instruct athletes in the safe and proper skill

and training techniques of their individual sport. Due to the nature of athletic activity, however, injuries, sometimes serious, may occur.

Participation in high school athletics carries with it the very real potential for injury. It is reasonable to believe that at least one time during the four-year career of our student athletes that they will face an injury that will result in missing one or more days of practice or contests. The student-athlete and their family can help. Proper rest, nutrition, strength/conditioning and the adherence to the rules and guidelines established by the medical provider, athletic trainer, GFCCHS Athletic Director and the coaches of an athlete's sport will go a long way to assure that injuries are minimized.

Unless an athlete's injury is extremely severe, he or she is strongly encouraged to seek medical care and guidance first from the contracted Athletic Trainer. Athletic health care professionals have extensive knowledge and experience in the prevention, rehabilitation, and management of sports injuries. All accidents or injuries incurred in practice or a contest in the MHSAA sanctioned sports and cheerleading must be reported to the coach immediately. This will allow for the appropriate sports medicine support from our athletic trainer.

GUIDELINES FOR RETURN TO PRACTICE AND COMPETITION

In order for an injured athlete to return to practice /competition, a specific written release from a Medical Provider must be presented to the Director of Athletics and Coach specifying the level of activity to which the injured player may return.

WEIGHT ROOM

The E. L. Wiegand Human Performance Center is available for use by athletes after school, as scheduled by Coach Nelson. No student shall use the weight room facilities without adult supervision. Students may be able to take advantage of a weight training class by scheduling it with the school counselor.

INSURANCE

Parents are responsible for all of the insurance needs of their student athlete. If an injury occurs during sports participation, proper documentation must be completed to establish access to the secondary insurance provided by the school.

SCHOOL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY

All athletes and team members are expected to care for equipment, uniforms, supplies, and facilities as if they were personally owned. This responsibility includes proper attention to washing and drying instructions (if not done by team manager), inspections, and security of all items.

Locker rooms are to be kept clean at all times to help ensure a safe area. All team members share in the responsibility to fulfill this expectation for the health and safety of the team. Athletes are expected to keep their personal areas organized and their personal items clean.

Unauthorized use of another person's personal or school-issued items will not be tolerated. Participants will be expected to reimburse the school for school-owned items that are not returned at the designated time in specified condition. A bill for such items will be passed on to the Business Office and will appear on future billing statements.

FUNDRAISING

All student athletes are required to participate in all fundraising activities designated by the coach, Director of Athletics and school administration. Full participation from all athletes will better help our sports teams to thrive. All student athletes are expected to fundraise the minimum set forth by the coach, Director of Athletics or school administration.

EXPECTATIONS

At GFCCHS, relationships are built on mutual respect. Coaches are professionals who are aware of and committed to upholding the responsibilities, policies and regulations of the MHSA, GFCCHS and the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings. Each student must be treated as an individual, yet as a part of the team. Rules and regulations will be uniformly and fairly enforced at all times. In most instances, during the season of play a student-athlete spends more time daily under the direct supervision and guidance of his coach than any other adult. This time spent should be enjoyable, educational, positive and worthwhile; the influence that a coach may have with each individual team member is enormous. Athletes and their families can expect the following from members of the GFCCHS Athletics Department coaching staff:

Time Commitment- Practice and game schedules and other time commitments, consistent with the guidelines mentioned previously in this booklet, will be made known to all team members.

Team Rules - Team rules and regulations, in addition to the ones stated in this booklet, will be well-defined, discussed and enforced with all team members. Self-discipline of all student-athletes will be encouraged. Penalties for rule violations will also be well defined and applied fairly and consistently.

Individual Success - The coach will provide an opportunity for each athlete to succeed to the best of his abilities.

Social and Emotional Growth - The coach will attempt to assist each athlete to grow socially and emotionally.

Team Spirit - The coach will attempt to instill and promote team spirit and cohesiveness.

Athletic Performance - Individual performance by an athlete will be critiqued by a coach at the appropriate time. Each athlete will be encouraged to work towards their full potential and to develop a positive self-image.

Skill Development - Each athlete will be taught the rules and the skills of the game with the goal of developing maximum proficiency in the specific sport area.

Approachability - The coach will be available to all of his/her athletes. Team members are encouraged to approach the coach about any topic that they wish. Students should make every attempt, if a matter is of a personal nature, to approach the coach privately when there is sufficient time for meaningful discussion.

Competitiveness - Interscholastic sports are, and should be, competitive. Those who compete do so with the ultimate goal to win the contest, the game, race, match or event. However, the GFCCHS Athletic Department staff knows that preparing students to succeed rather than merely to win games is more important. Win or lose, students should learn lessons of a lasting and positive nature.

COMMUNICATION

Issues Appropriate for Communications between parents and coaches:

- a) The physical and mental treatment of your child.
- b) Ways to help your child improve.
- c) Concerns about your child's behavior.

Issues Not Appropriate for Communication between parents and coaches:

- a) Playing time.
- b) Team strategy.
- c) Play calling.
- d) Other players on a child's team.

Resolving Concerns or Conflicts

- a) Some concerns or conflicts may require a conference between the coach and a parent. Such conferences can help the coach and parent to understand each other's concerns and to work together for the good of all the children on the team.

b) Some parents find it difficult to accept their child not playing as much as the parent or child expects. Coaches are professionals and exercise their judgment based on what they believe to be best for all student-athletes involved. Playing time, team strategy, play calling or discussing another student-athlete are not appropriate topics for discussion.

c) Parents can make an appointment with a coach by calling the school at 406-216-3344. If the coach cannot be reached directly, call the athletic office at Extension 320.

d) Please do not attempt to meet with a coach before, during, or immediately at the conclusion of a contest (within twenty-four hours). These can be emotional times for parents and coaches, and the coach's supervisory duties do not allow for enough time for the attention that a parent's concern may require.

e) Scheduled meetings with coaches should be marked by courtesy and the willingness of each party to listen to the each other.

f) If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily after a conference with the coach, a parent may call to make an appointment with the Director of Athletics to discuss the matter further. However, a parent must first attempt to resolve the matter directly with the coach.

g) In the unusual case where the matter is not resolved after conferring with the coach and then with the Director of Athletics, a parent may request that the Director of Athletics schedule a conference that includes the Principal. After hearing from all parties, the Principal will make a final determination in the matter.

**STUDENT/PARENT ATHLETIC HANDBOOK
SIGN-OFF SHEET**

This form must be completed and returned. The signatures of the parent/guardian and the student indicate that each has read, understands and has agrees to abide by the stated policies. This document must be on file in the Director of Athletics office prior to the start of the official season date for the selected sport.

As parents or guardian of _____
(Please Print)

I/We have read and will support the policies of the Great Falls Central Catholic High School as stated in the Student-Athlete Handbook.

Signed _____
(Student) (Date)

Signed _____
(Student) (Date)

Signed _____
(Student) (Date)

Signed _____
(Parent or Guardian) (Date)

**PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS FORM TO
GFCCHS MAIN SCHOOL OFFICE**