



2017-18 Athletic Handbook

“As a ministry of McGregor Baptist Church, Southwest Florida Christian Academy will partner with Christian parents in providing their children with a distinctively biblical and academically excellent education that will equip students to be godly leaders and to successfully engage the culture for Christ.”

SFCA offers a variety of sports to students in grades 6-12. Through sports programs, students have the opportunity to develop physical skills and abilities, to work with other members of a team, and to express and promote Christian values and attitudes. All of this is accomplished within a competitive framework and requires selection, sensitivity, and care on the part of the coach or sponsor.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.” At SFCA, we will strive for excellence in our athletics, but we will also practice Kingdom Athletics whereby athletic success is measured in terms of spiritual growth and development of the team members. This must receive greater emphasis than the won/lost record. It is vital that students give their best effort while representing our Lord, SFCA/McGregor, the team, and themselves in such a way as to lead others to desire what our students have in terms of their spiritual walk. When all the proper priorities align, the wins will take care of themselves.

This leadership by example extends to our coaches, administration, staff, parents, and fans. We believe it is critical that an atmosphere of respect and courtesy be shown to both game officials and opponents. The coach has a critical responsibility to serve as a Christian role model for our students, to respect game officials, to apply biblical principles to practice and game situations, and to demonstrate humility in victory and graciousness in defeat.

Within this competitive framework, it becomes easy to lose our focus, to alter our perspective, and to allow winning to become the main focus. At SFCA, success is not only determined by the scoreboard and performance, but also by the satisfaction that comes from knowing that we put forth 100% effort and a proper attitude to represent our God, our school, and our team. While the quest for victory is a part of any athletic contest, our commitment to Christ demands that we reject the “winning at all cost” philosophy and develop within students a perspective on our activity that is consistent with our Christian heritage. Those demands place a significant responsibility on the coach, who is called at all times to be a Christian role model for our students, regardless of the score, the circumstances, or other pressures that naturally arise as a consequence of competition.

Participation

Participation in the athletic program at SFCA is a privilege, not a right. Our administration, teachers and coaches are committed to collaborate to ensure the most positive education-based athletic experience for each student-athlete. We would ask that the same level of commitment is demonstrated throughout each season that the student-athlete participates in.

If at any point during the season, the student-athlete, parent or family become a detriment to the positive team chemistry, the student-athlete may be removed from the team. This will be left up to the coach and athletic administration.

We understand that in today’s society, non-school (travel) organizations play a role in many student-athletes athletic endeavors. Our coaches will spend many hours preparing each student-athlete and team mentally and physically for competition. We ask that during the school sport season, the school sport take priority. At no time will an absence due to a non-school

organization be excused or tolerated. If you can foresee scheduling issues ahead of time, and feel that the non-school organization take priority, please do not start the school sport.

Attendance

To participate in an athletic event, the student must be present at school a minimum of 4 hours the day of the event or have approval from Administration for the time not present at school.

Each athlete must inform the coach of any absences. Any unexcused absence from a practice or game may result in loss of playing time or dismissal from the team.

The following absences may be justified, but are to be approved in advance by the appropriate coach (circumstances permitting):

- Family emergencies
- Illness
- Medical appointments
- Academic tutoring
- Special family situations
- Special church activities

Awards

VARSIITY

While each sport has separate scoring methods and participation rules, the following criteria must be met for a student-athlete to receive a Varsity letter:

- The student-athlete must attend all contests. The exception to this rule would be things such as a player being ill, a family wedding, or a death in the family.
- The student-athlete must be a member of the team for the entire season.
- If a student-athlete is injured in a sport and not allowed to play further, the student-athlete will finish the season with the team, cooperating with the coaching staff to stay involved in team activities as permitted by the injury.

For the individualized sports, such as Cross Country, Wrestling, Swimming, Golf, Tennis and Track and Field, the athlete must score varsity points in at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of the contests to be considered eligible for a Varsity letter. Each coach is expected to fully disclose the methods used to determine a Varsity letter prior to the season beginning.

Varsity Letter or Pins will be awarded to those athletes who receive varsity letters. Team Certificates will be awarded to those athletes who do not letter.

Managers of team sports who meet the above requirements will be eligible to letter. Statisticians who adequately meet the above requirements are eligible to receive a team letter or certificate.

Each coach will select the athletes that will receive an award based on criteria laid forth in each individual sport.

MIDDLE SCHOOL (Grades 6, 7, and 8)

A Certificate of Participation is awarded to each athlete on the middle school teams. Medals are awarded to athletes in each sport based on the discernment of the coaching staff. Managers and statisticians will be eligible to receive a Certificate of Participation.

Scholar Athlete Award

The Scholar Athlete Award will be awarded to the student-athlete who fulfills the following criteria:

1. Has maintained at least a cumulative GPA of 3.75 after the first semester of their junior year.
2. Has received their fourth Varsity Letter

Legacy Award

The Legacy award is an award meant to reward the “program builders” that contribute to the foundation of each SFCA sport. The Legacy Award will be given to the student-athletes that fulfill four full seasons in a sport starting with their ninth grade year and finish the season of their twelfth grade year.

Scholar Athlete Society

The Southwest Florida Christian Academy Scholar-Athlete Society recognizes the athletic and academic accomplishments of student-athletes in grades ten through twelve. Student-athletes may apply no earlier than the spring of their sophomore year and after completing four seasons in any sports offered at SFCA. The applicant must meet a minimum cumulative weighted grade point average of 3.0.

Upon acceptance, members of the Southwest Florida Christian Academy Scholar-Athlete Society will be expected to be an active supporter of school-wide athletic events. On occasion, members may be expected to represent the school and athletic department at community and school events. The student applicant must be in good standing and at all times must uphold the SFCA mission statement. Any applicant not in good standing is ineligible for the induction to the SFCA Scholar-Athlete Society. Applicants meeting the minimum requirements and wishing to apply will be selected by the Athletic Director and the High School Principal.

All student-athletes inducted into the SFCA Scholar-Athlete Society must remain in good standing of all minimum character, leadership, education, and service requirements each year. In addition, all members must continue to participate in SFCA Athletics through their senior year. Any member who does not continue his/her participation or does not maintain the minimum requirements may be removed from the society.

SFCA Scholar-Athletes will be recognized at commencement with a cord.

Coach, Parent, and Player Relationships

The following procedures are established in consistency with the teaching of scripture as found in Matthew 18:15-17.

PARENT/COACH RELATIONSHIP

Both parenting and coaching are difficult vocations. By establishing and understanding each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide a greater benefit to our children. As parents, when your child becomes involved in our program, you have an obligation to understand what expectations are placed on your student-athlete. This begins with clear communication from the coach.

COMMUNICATION PARENTS SHOULD EXPECT FROM THE COACH

- Philosophy of the coach
- Expectations the coach has for the child and the other players on the squad
- Locations and times of all the practices and games
- Individual team requirements (i.e. special equipment, off-season conditioning, etc.)
- Procedures if an athlete is injured during a practice or a game
- Weekly updates to the schedule for practices/contests

COMMUNICATION COACHES SHOULD EXPECT FROM PARENTS

- Concerns expressed directly to the coach
- Notification, well in advance, of any schedule conflicts
- Specific concerns in regard to a coach's philosophy and expectations if the philosophy is in disagreement to the philosophy of Christian education
- Medical or physical limitations of the child

As student-athletes become more involved in athletic programs, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way athletes or their parents wish. At this time, a discussion with the coach is encouraged.

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES

- The treatment of the student-athlete, both physically and mentally
- Ways to help the student-athlete improve
- Concerns about the student-athlete's behavior
- Academic support

It is very difficult for parents to accept the imbalance of playing time. Coaches are professionals, and they make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for the team.

ISSUES NOT APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS WITH THE COACHES

- Playing time
- Team strategy
- Play calling
- Other student-athletes

There are some situations that may require a conference between the coach and parent. These meetings are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedures should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issues of concern.

PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW WHEN A PARENT HAS A CONCERN TO ADDRESS WITH THE COACH

- Call/email the coach to set up an appointment.
- If the coach cannot be reached, contact the AD for assistance in arranging an appointment with the coach.
- Do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a practice or game. **Please use a 24 hour rule following a contest, win or lose. We ask that you take at least 24 hours before attempting to make contact of any type with the coach to allow a diffusion of emotion.** These can be emotional times for the parents and coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.

WHAT CAN A PARENT DO IF THE MEETING WITH THE COACH DOES NOT PROVIDE SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION?

- Call and set up an appointment with the AD to discuss the situation.
- If the issue is not resolved at this meeting, the next appropriate step would be to set up an appointment with the Head of School.

Conduct

STUDENT CONDUCT

As a member of athletic teams, athletes are high-profile representatives of Southwest Florida Christian Academy. Student-athletes are expected to act in an appropriate manner. The following behaviors are inappropriate and will not be tolerated:

- Fighting
- Profanity
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes and drugs
- Rude and disrespectful behavior
- Taunting opponents or officials
- Destruction of property

Student-athletes who exhibit any of the above behaviors or any other inappropriate behavior will be disciplined by the coach and, possibly, the athletic department.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE OR INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

- A student-athlete who is ejected from a contest for a flagrant foul or unsportsmanlike conduct shall be ineligible to participate in at least the following game (determined by FHSAA rules and regulations).
- If a student-athlete is ejected from an athletic contest, and the school is levied a fine, the athlete will be financially responsible for his/her proportionate part of the fine issued by FHSAA.
- All student-athletes who act in an unsportsmanlike manner will be required to meet with the AD before resuming athletic participation.

SPECTATOR CONDUCT

- Everyone associated with an athletic event plays an important role in seeing that standards of sportsmanship are upheld. Fans are reminded that their sportsmanship and behavior reflect upon the reputation of SFCFA.
- Fans are not permitted on the playing surface at any time unless authorized.
- Fans are not permitted to bring animals to any athletic events.
- A spectator should –
 - o Demonstrate good sportsmanship
 - o Respect, cooperate, and respond enthusiastically to cheerleaders
 - o Diplomatically censor fellow spectators who display negative behavior
 - o Respect the property of the school and the authority of the school officials
 - o Never heckle, jeer, or distract members of the opposing teams
 - o Apply the “courtesy is contagious!” slogan at all times
- Fans/students will be directed by the athletic staff to cheer for their teams and not against the opponents.

Discipline

The student-athlete represents Southwest Florida Christian Academy in school, at practice, and at sporting events. Practices and games are considered an extension of the school day. Therefore, school rules are to be followed at practice and at all athletic events, as well as when being transported to and from games.

If an athlete receives a disciplinary action that conflicts with practice or games, the athlete must serve the disciplinary action that is given. If the disciplinary action is not served, the athlete will move to the next level of disciplinary action. In the event that a team moves to post-season play, other disciplinary options may be considered.

If an athlete is on Internal or External Suspension on the day of the game, the athlete is not allowed to attend the game and will be ineligible for participation in practices or games for a minimum of five school days. This will apply to post-season activities as well. The Administrative Team will hold the final decision in such matters.

If a student-athlete receives more than fifteen disciplinary referrals over the course of the academic school year, he/she will become ineligible for participation in any sports program the remainder of the current school year.

Eligibility

To be eligible, students must maintain a “C” average or above (2.0 GPA) each semester while in middle school and a cumulative “C” average or above (2.0 GPA) while in high school (SFCA standards were formed in compliance with the Florida High School Athletic Association.). Students whose grades drop below a “C” average (2.0) for the semester will be removed from participation by the Administration until the next semester. Students who receive an “F” at the quarter grading period will be placed on Academic Notice and may lose eligibility if their grade does not improve by the next three week period. If a student becomes ineligible, they will be reevaluated at the next progress report or quarter to determine eligibility to resume participation (as long as their GPA is above a 2.0). Eligibility for fall activities is determined by the grades received for spring semester the previous school year.

The following forms must be completed before participation (practice).

- FHSAA Pre-participation Physical Evaluation (EL2)
- FHSAA Consent and Release from Liability (EL3) which requires the viewing of “Concussion is Sports” video and printing of completion certificate when finished
- SFCA Participation (Waiver and Indemnity)
- Student/Athlete Guidelines & Commitment Agreement (back page of handbook)

Those students who are deemed to be ineligible for reasons other than academics or discipline (i.e. age limitations, transfers, etc.) may serve as managers or statisticians at the discretion of the athletic director and head coach of the sport in question.

No student may participate in games, team camps, etc., who currently is not in good standing at SFCA. Home school students may participate on middle school teams or on high school teams as approved by FHSAA, Gulf Coast Athletic Conference (middle school teams only), and the Administration of SFCA.

Home school students in grades 6-12 may participate on a middle or high school team if he or she makes the team. Participation is contingent upon meeting FHSAA regulations, filing the required paper work, receiving an endorsement of the athletic director following a family interview, and submitting in advance the current annual registration fee and per sport fee. If a student fails to qualify for the team, the per sport fee will be refunded. No refunds will be available in the event a student quits the team during the scheduled season or is injured to the extent he/she may no longer participate.

Letter Jackets

Student-athletes who have earned a varsity letter are eligible for a school letter jacket. The student-athlete is responsible for the purchase of the jacket. Managers may also earn jackets, but if the first letter is for managing, the requirement is two letters to become eligible for a jacket.

Quitting a Team

The SFCA athletic department does not condone an athlete quitting a team. If a student-athlete quits a sports team after the first game, he/she is ineligible to participate in the next sport season (conditioning/practice/games) until the conclusion of the sport the player quit. **Before the athlete quits a team, the athlete must meet with the Athletic Director.**

Team Selection

SFCA offers the following inter-scholastic sports for grades 6-12:

FALL:

Girls Football Cheerleading
Boys/Girls Cross Country
Boys Football
Boys/Girls Golf
Boys/Girls Swimming
Girls Volleyball

WINTER:

Girls Basketball Cheerleading
Boys/Girls Basketball
Boys/Girls Soccer
Boys Wrestling

SPRING:

Boys Baseball
Girls Softball
Boys/Girls Tennis
Boys/Girls Track

Athletes who come out for any sport will be selected by means of a tryout. The athlete will be chosen based on skill level, attitude, and academics. The coaches of each sport will make the selection. The amount of participation in a given game will be up to the discretion of the coaches.

Student-athletes who possess skills and abilities well above those of typical students at their grade level may have an opportunity to “play up” as follows:

- No student below 6th grade may play on a SFCA interscholastic sports team.
- No student will be permitted to “play up” if this would place them or the team in violation of any FHSAA or league rules.
- A middle school student may be invited to try out for a JV/varsity team based on input from the coaches and AD.
- Students may be asked to “slide” between the gold and blue middle school teams and the JV and varsity teams during a sport season based on athletic ability and/or need (see

next paragraph). This decision is left solely to the coaching staff and the AD. This is not a parental decision.

- Students may also be permitted to play up with a tryout available to all students in their respective grade for situations where the number of players on a given team is insufficient to compete with other schools. This determination is to be made by the AD in consultation with the respective administrator.
- At no time will an athlete be permitted to participate on two athletic teams during the same season. Tryouts for the upcoming season will be worked out between the athletic administration and coaches to allow all athletes a fair tryout.
- Spring football and spring cheer are held in preparation for the upcoming fall season. These sports are not a “spring” sport. Student-athletes that are returning to SFCA in the fall will be permitted to participate in these sports. Families must have registered intent with the front office to return in the fall to participate in these sports.

Transportation

Students must use transportation provided or designated by the school for transport to and from school activities. All students will be brought back to school when the team participates in an event scheduled away from the school. It is neither the coach’s responsibility nor that of anyone offering their services for car-pooling to take any child home once the team has returned to the school. If a parent is not available to pick up his/her child, it is the responsibility of that family to make arrangements prior to the scheduled event. Parents may sign only their child out at the conclusion of the game if the coach chooses to allow athletes to not ride the bus back to the school. We strongly encourage each student-athlete to return to school on the bus. This promotes team cohesion and also promotes teamwork in unloading and cleaning the van/bus. Parents may not take another child with them unless arrangements are made in advance, and the proper paperwork is signed by both the parents and the person transporting the athlete.

When traveling out of town, teams may stop to eat after the game. The student is responsible for the purchase of his/her own food.

The following guidelines will be observed on the bus:

- While the bus is in motion, athletes must be appropriately seated and not move about.
- Misconduct and inappropriate language will be dealt with immediately.
- Food and drinks (other than water) are not allowed on the bus.

Uniforms

The uniform is the responsibility of the athlete. In the event the uniform is damaged or lost, the athlete will be charged to replace the uniform.

Wash in cold water, hang to dry, and, when necessary, dry in the dryer using low heat.

Failure to return a uniform will result in report cards being held, and the athlete will not be able to report to the next sport season.

High School athletes on the varsity teams will be allowed to wear their team jersey or team shirt and school uniform bottoms on the day of home games.

Grace Gym/Weight Room

After school gym usage is only for off-season conditioning and for teams practicing when a coach is present. There will be no “open gym” time after school unless a coach or staff member scheduled the space through the athletic office.

The weight room is a common use facility. Each team will have equal access to this facility, with priority given to in-season sports. Use of the weight room requires following these guidelines:

- No student is permitted in the gym/weight room without direct supervision from an SFCA coach or staff member.
- Student-athletes must have proper workout attire consisting of a clean, dry t-shirt, athletic shorts, socks, and athletic shoes (no cleats). Student-athletes must remove all jewelry before entering weight room.
- No food or drinks are permitted at any time.
- Students are responsible for re-racking and cleaning of weight room after each use.

Social Media

We encourage each family to use social media as a positive way to recognize accomplishments and get SFCA positive publicity. If at any time, a derogatory or negative remark is made pertaining to a member of a team, Athletic Department or school the student-athlete/family involved will be asked for a meeting with the AD with possibility of suspension resulting.

Student-Athlete Guidelines & Commitment Agreement

I. General Guidelines:

A. Each team member is a representative of SFCA (at all times, including away from school). Each member should maintain a standard of good Christian character in compliance with school guidelines.

II. Conduct:

- A. There is to be absolutely no profane language used any time, on or off the field.
- B. Displays of temper and other immature acts of lack of self-control are prohibited.
- C. There shall be mutual respect for all officials, coaches, and other team members. Criticism or slander of others is prohibited.

III. Grade Eligibility:

A. Grade eligibility is based on a cumulative GPA of a 2.0 (high school students) or a per semester GPA of a 2.0 (middle school students) on a straight 4.0 scale (per FHSAA).

IV. Attendance:

- A. All excused absences from any sport, if prior notice is possible, must be presented **to the coach** two days prior to the excused absence. (See Athletic Handbook for acceptable excused absences.)
- B. An unexcused absence from practice may result in exclusion from the next game.
- C. Three unexcused absences from practices may result in expulsion from the team.
- D. An unexcused absence from a game may result in immediate expulsion from the team.
- E. An unexcused tardy to a practice will result in reduced game time.
- F. If a class period with a test is missed, I understand that the test must be made up after school before I may practice or compete in competition.

Realizing that the primary objective of the SFCA sports program is to honor Christ and represent Him in all athletic competition, I hereby commit myself to the following stipulations.

- 1. I will uphold the SFCA code of conduct as specified in the Athletic Handbook and this agreement.
- 2. I will submit myself to my coach(es) as my authority, and I will respect and obey that authority.
- 3. I accept the terms that if I quit the team or am dismissed from the team for disciplinary reasons, I forfeit my eligibility for that sport.

Student's Name

Student's Signature

Date

As his/her parents, we have read the SFCA guidelines and agree to support the guidelines set forth in the Athletic Handbook and this commitment form. Additionally, we agree to support the SFCA King's Parental Pledge listed below.

SFCA KING'S PARENTAL PLEDGE

- We will support Kingdom Athletics by demonstrating good sportsmanship and offering positive support for all players, coaches, game officials, and administrators at all times.
- We will place the emotional and physical well-being of all players ahead of any personal desire to win.
- We will support the coaches, officials, and administration working with our child in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- We will ask our child to treat other players, coaches, game officials, administrators, and fans with respect.
- We will treat visiting teams and their spectators with hospitality and respect.
- We will refrain from any activity or conduct that may be detrimental to the biblical example of SFCA, its members, or its programs.
- We will support our athletic program and its student-athletes by volunteering at concession/gate.

Parent's Signature

Parent's Signature

