

C O V E N A N T
CHRISTIAN ACADEMY



COVENANT

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2023-2024
ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

Covenant Christian Academy

**4201 North Ware Road
McAllen, Texas 78504**

**Athletic Department Hours
8:00 am - 3:50 pm**

**Phone
(956) 686-7886**

**Fax
(956) 686-9470**

www.ccamcallen.com

**Athletic Director
Coach Mario Molina**

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Section 1 - Introduction

1.1 Our Philosophy

The Athletic program at Covenant Christian Academy is a vital part of the school's total education program. Our school's mission statement is to glorify God through spiritual, academic, and physical growth. Our mission in the athletic department should mirror that philosophy as we glorify God through excellence in Christian athletics.

This commitment means that we value the unique potential that blesses each young man and woman. Our efforts are dedicated to the encouragement, and development of our student-athletes through participation, competition, and application of sportsmanship in a Christ-like environment. The development of Christian character is the foundation of why we have athletics. Student-athletes should demonstrate a servant's attitude, leadership, discipline, teamwork, and sportsmanship at every level both on and off the field of play. Coaches, athletes, and fans must understand that they are ambassadors for Christ to our community.

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."
Colossians 3:23-24

1.2 General Information

Covenant Christian Academy is a member of the Texas Charter School Academic & Athletic League (TCSAAL). The Elementary and some Middle School teams compete independently with various organizations in the Rio Grande Valley area.

1.3 What We Believe

We believe that the principles and lessons learned in the classroom, at home, and through the local church, can be put into practice through athletics. Because the arena of competition is surrounded with pressure and adversity, therefore, the athlete is tested, and their true character revealed. Consequently, the opportunity for character growth readily presents itself through athletic competition. Therefore, athletics at Covenant Christian Academy is considered an integral part of a student's curriculum.

1.4 Our Commitment

We believe Christians are commanded by Scripture to always do our best. As believers, we are not to waste the talent God has given us by giving anything less than total commitment, through participation and maximum effort. We also believe we should strive to be the best at what we do. Being the best at anything is a worthy and admirable goal of any Christian. Becoming the best may not always be the result of our efforts, but doing our best must be!

Section 2 - Coaching Standards

2.1 A Coach's Responsibility

Because of our commitment to excellence, coaches at CCA become one of the most important components of our athletic program. Coaches are responsible to model a Christ-like attitude and behavior. Coaches are both a participant and teacher at the same time.

In order to be considered an effective coach and role model, our coaches must be knowledgeable in their sport, prepared, motivating, and able to make adjustments during competition. In short, coaches have a great responsibility and opportunity to mold young lives for Christ.

2.2 Teams and Sport

Covenant Christian Academy offers the following sports:

Fall	Winter	Spring
Flag Football (Boys)	Basketball (Boys and Girls)	Soccer
Cheerleading	Cheerleading	Track (Boys and Girls)
Dance	Dance	Dance
Cross Country (Boys and Girls)		
Volleyball (Girls)		

2.3 Working with Student-Athletes

It is the goal of Covenant Christian Academy to address three aspects of our athletes: physical, intellectual, and spiritual.

Physical

In addressing the physical, athletes understand that they must become a student of their extra-curricular activity, in order to maximize the talent level needed to compete at the appropriate level.

"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees." Hebrews 12:11-12

Intellectual

There was a time when athletes survived in the moment based completely on their physical abilities, and coaches were thought to be great leaders based on only the physical output of the athletes. In today's world view, an athlete is someone who can start a mental task and finish it strong because of his/her physical enhancement. From athletics, he/she has learned how to overcome the adversities of life and to work well with others, even those who are difficult. They are conditioned to lead when it is time to lead and follow when it is time to follow. A true athlete has a strong will guided by an informed, focused, and calm mind. For these qualities to develop in a CCA athlete, they must be modeled by each CCA coach.

"Now then, my sons, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways. Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not ignore it." Proverbs 8:32-33

Spiritual

Each student-athlete must know that he/she was made by God, as is everything that can and cannot be seen. He/she has been blessed with a talent and a way to display their talent; not to promote themselves, but to glorify God. It is incumbent upon the coach to help each athlete come to the realization that they are blessed for the purpose of bringing glory to God in season and out of season; on the playing field and off the playing field.

"Don't let the excitement of youth cause you to forget your Creator. Honor him in your youth before you grow old and say, 'Life is not pleasant anymore.' Remember him before the light of the sun, moon, stars is dim to your old eyes, and rain clouds continually darken your sky. Remember him before your legs -- the guards of your house -- start to tremble; and before your shoulders -- the strong men -- stoop. Remember him before your teeth -- your few remaining servants -- stop grinding; and before your eyes -- the women looking through the windows -- see dimly." Ecclesiastes 12:1-3

2.4 Tryouts and Cuts

Several sports do not require limitations on number of students for their effective practice and/or competition. These sports might include cross country and track. Other sports may require tryouts to select a more limited number of students based on present and future needs, facilities, and opponents with similar teams. Cutting students after their tryouts is one of the most difficult tasks we will face as an athletic department and is one of the most sensitive issues for our students and parents to deal with.

Several suggestions for helping in this process are as follows:

- Tryout schedules and procedures will be publicized and clarified with students and parents as early as possible. No tryouts or cuts can be made before the TCSAAL starting dates for official practice.
- Coaches will be present in the tryout, evaluation, and selection process. Under no circumstances should parents of athletes be involved in the selection of players.
- A wide variety of evaluation drills and measurements will be used so that every child gets the best chance to demonstrate what he/she can do well.

Coaches will speak to every athlete that is cut so that the athletes know areas they need to improve if they would like to try out in the future. Coaches will never post a list on the door and have players read if they made the team or not.

- Covenant Christian Academy discourages athletes from quitting athletic teams. Student-athletes who quit will be restricted from joining other teams during that same season, and will not be allowed to begin working out with other teams until the conclusion of that sport's season (the sport that they quit). The Athletic Department reserves the right to review all cases individually. Athletes who quit a sport and feel that there are extenuating circumstances have the right to appeal the enforcement of the rule regarding quitting a sport. The appeal should be submitted in writing and delivered to the Athletic Office within 48 hours of quitting.

2.5 Multiple Sport and Dual Sport Athletes

Covenant Christian Academy is unique because we are a small school, and we offer a full athletic program. These two words "small" and "full" are contradictory in the world of school athletics. We want to encourage our athletes to use their gifts to excel in many sports.

Coaches will never claim ownership of any athlete, nor place the student in conflict between coaches who might vie for his/her participation. Our students should be encouraged to try different sports, and no coach will encourage strict specialization in a single sport.

In-season sports will always have priority. Students who play multiple sports should, with the consultation of all coaches involved, and parents, develop a plan for practice and competition. This would include off-season, pre-season, and summer training. The student-athlete will never be placed in a situation where a choice must be made between sports. The Athletic Director should be advised if problems arise in the implementation of a workable plan for the student-athlete.

2.6 Middle School Sports

Middle school athletics differs in some aspects from high school athletics. The same character traits should be encouraged as the high school teams. These would include, but not limited to leadership, teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship. We will do all we can as a school and coaches to encourage participation in as many sports as possible. Middle school is a time where students should try many sports and discover where their talents might lead them in the future. We are not, however, in a position to keep every student who tries out for a team. We will keep as many players as we can with consideration of team size and facility restrictions. Once a student makes a team, every player should expect to play in every game. This does not mean every player will get an equal amount of playing time, but coaches will be aware that we are trying to create enthusiasm and interest in each sport.

Section 3 - Expectations

3.1 Expectations of CCA Student-Athletes

Athletes should be diligent in preparation, give 100% at all times, demonstrate personal discipline, be respectful in all situations, maintain self-control, show humility, and aggressively pursuing excellence regardless of the score, opponent, time, referee, or situation. The ultimate and final responsibility rests on the student-athlete, for it is the student-athlete who is accountable to his/her parents, coach, Covenant Christian Academy, and the Lord.

3.2 Expectations of CCA Parents

In order to achieve our goals we need the support and cooperation of each parent. Here are how parents should contribute to a student's success and growth as an athlete at Covenant Christian Academy.

Pray regularly for your child, his or her coach and team.

The Bible reminds us that "we have not because we ask not." Pray specifically for the Lord to be at work in your child's life as well as those of his or her teammates. Pray especially for the coach. As fallible humans, every coach will make mistakes, but we have the assurance that God can work all things together for your child's good. So be in prayer that all the circumstances of the season will be used by God to teach what He wants your son or daughter to learn.

Be a positive fan.

First of all, your son or daughter needs to know that you love and support them in their quest to be an athlete. Whether starting or sitting on the bench, after a score or a miss, your love and encouragement need to be unconditional. Secondly, as our society grows increasingly negative, coarse, and vulgar, we have the opportunity to be a witness to other teams and their fans by cheering positively at games and respecting officials even when we disagree.

We need to be a positive witness for Christ. We realize that this expectation may require our parents to police themselves, not only in self-control but also in reminding and helping each other to do our best in this area. We need to ask ourselves, "Would my behavior as a fan make it possible for me to share Christ with those who observed and listened to me in the stands?"

Follow athletic department rules.

Each team will have its own rules. However, the following rules are true for all our teams:

At least one parent must attend the team pre-season meeting. ***If both parents miss the meeting, the student will not be allowed to play until at least one parent meets with the coach.***

The coaching staff should be informed in advance of any medical issues that might adversely impact your child's safety or performance.

If an athlete has a question about what is expected of them or what their role is on the team, the student must first go to the coach for these answers. This is an essential part of the student's growth. If the student is still unclear after speaking with the coach, a meeting with the student, coach and

parent(s) will be arranged. We will follow the steps outlined in **Matthew 18** to resolve all issues. A parent can talk to a coach about anything except playing time and other members of the team. These conversations should not take place immediately prior to or immediately following a game or practice. Please email or call the coach to set up an appropriate time to meet. If this meeting does not satisfy your expectations, then the coach, parent, and athletic director will set up a time to meet and discuss the issues.

Sportsmanship

Players, parents, and spectators shall at all times, represent Jesus Christ, Covenant Christian Academy, and their families with honor, proper conduct, and good sportsmanship. They shall understand that competitive rivalries are encouraged but that disrespect for opponents and officials is unsportsmanlike and lessens the value of competition.

Covenant Christian Academy will not tolerate any spectator, parent, or player whose behavior is disrespectful toward opposing players, officials, coaches, or other spectators. Players, parents, and spectators will exhibit respect for officials and accept and abide by their decisions whether they agree with them or not. Never taunt or engage in a verbal exchange with an opposing player, coach, official, or other spectators.

3.3 Academic Eligibility

Athletes must be passing **all subjects** and have no more than one D at report card time in order to participate in athletics. The student's coach will inform each individual student of his/her eligibility status. If a subject is failed, or if there is more than one D on the report card, the athlete becomes ineligible on the Wednesday following the end of the nine weeks, as this is the normal date report cards are handed out. Eligibility will be restored in 4-6 weeks so long as the athlete is passing **all subjects** and has no more than one D. Academically ineligible athletes will be unable to participate in games, sit on the bench, or travel with the team on road trips. However, they will be required to continue practicing with the team.

3.4 Attendance and Tardy Eligibility

Athletes must show commitment to the team and to CCA Middle School/High School as evidenced by daily punctual attendance to practices. One unexcused absence means you do not play in the next game. Two unexcused absences are cause for team dismissal. An athlete under serious school discipline (e.g. suspension) is not eligible to participate until the student has been cleared by the school administration.

Athletes must be in school for half a day to be eligible to practice or play in a game. Exceptions to this policy will be handled on an individual basis by the athletic director and/or school administration.

Athletes who miss practice or games due to family trips accept the possibility of their playing position being filled by another team member. **Please give the coach sufficient notice when family trips interfere with practice and game schedules.**

3.5 Athletic Participation Policy

The Athletic Department reserves the right to review all cases individually. Athletes who quit a sport and feel that there are extenuating circumstances have the right to appeal the enforcement of the rule regarding quitting a sport. The appeal should be submitted in writing and delivered to the Athletic Office within 48 hours of quitting. If an athlete quits one sport, they will not be allowed to participate in another sport until the semester is completed.

3.6 Conduct of Athletes and Student Spectators at Games

We believe it is a privilege for a student to represent CCA in athletics. Furthermore, we believe that an athlete's behavior should reflect that privilege. The coach, athletic director, and school administrators will deal with any type of school discipline resulting from inappropriate student attitudes or behavior before, during, or after an athletic event. It is understood that school rules regarding boy-girl relationships apply to **ALL** school activities.

Fundamentals of Good Sportsmanship

- **Show respect for the opponent at all times.** Good sportsmanship is the Golden Rule in action.
- **Show respect for the officials.** Good sportsmanship implies the willingness to accept and abide by the decisions of the officials.
- **Know, understand and uphold the rules of the contest.** Good sportsmanship suggests the importance of conforming to the spirit, as well as the letter of the rules.
- **Maintain self-control at all times.** Good sportsmanship means proper behavior by all involved in the game.
- **Recognize and appreciate skill in performance, regardless of affiliation.** The ability to recognize quality in performance and willingness to acknowledge it without regard to team membership is one of the most commendable gestures of good sportsmanship. Discipline for unsportsmanlike behavior will be administered by the coach and incidents will be reported to the athletic director and principal's office.

3.7 Complaint Procedure

It is not appropriate to confront a coach immediately following an athletic event. Due to the intense nature of competitive athletics, the best time to voice a complaint or concern with a coach is the day after the game. Please contact the coach the following day to set up an appointment to voice your concerns.

3.8 Sports Fees

Sports fees are due upon making the team and may be paid in the office. The fee is \$100 per sport.

Section 4 - Other Important Information

4.1 Emergency Procedures

Emergencies will happen periodically during the year in practices and games.

- First aid and medical supplies should be available at all athletic events.
- In the event of an injury, proper first aid procedures should be initiated by the coach who is present.
- If the injury requires immediate medical evaluation, a coach should contact the parent(s) and help arrange the transportation for that medical attention.
- A coach should stay with the student until a parent can be present with the child. If necessary, a coach should accompany the injured athlete and his/her parent to the preferred hospital, emergency room, or medical facility.
- In the event of a suspected head, neck, or spinal cord injury, the coach will call 911 and wait for EMS professionals before attempting to move or treat the injured athlete.
- All full-time coaches should have passed a CPR class within the last two years, and meet all other TCSAAL requirements.

4.2 Forms

Each student-athlete must have a completed physical prior to participating in workouts or practice. This physical needs to be current during the previous 12 months. **All physicals and forms must be turned in to the athletic office prior to participating in a sports season.**

4.3 Transportation/Bus Policies

In the event that student-athletes use the school van, providing safe and reasonable transportation to and from athletic events is an important responsibility of the Athletic office and our coaches. Coaches must ensure that their student-athletes are transported in a safe, timely, and organized manner and that every precaution is taken for the health and well-being of every child.

- Every student must return to school with the bus unless they are riding home with their parent or have permission to ride home with the parent of another player. For student drivers, students may never ride home with another student. A parent must sign out a student if they are not riding the bus back to school.
- Only team members and approved persons may ride the school van.
- In the event we do not have transportation available, parents will be responsible for their child's transportation to and from the game. (According to CCA policies for parent driving)
- When driving students in Covenant Christian Academy buses or vans, all appropriate laws and safety regulations must be strictly adhered to. All passengers must remain seated and use seat belts when available. The attention of the bus driver must be on safe driving; distracting behavior by passengers cannot be accepted.

4.4 Uniforms and Equipment

- Uniforms/Equipment are the property of Covenant Christian Academy and should be worn and treated with respect.
- Our colors are red, gold, and blue.
- Proper accountability of uniforms is the responsibility of the student. Any lost uniforms should be replaced by the student-athlete as soon as possible.
- Any item that the student/athlete will keep should be purchased by the student/athlete. Any items that the students or parents need to purchase will be communicated to athletes and parents before the season begins.
- Athletes are expected to return their uniforms clean and in good repair upon completion of the season. The replacement cost of any lost or damaged uniforms will be the responsibility of the student.
- *Please hang dry uniforms when possible to promote longevity. **Please wash uniforms separately to ensure appearance quality.***

The content of this handbook is subject to change by Covenant Christian Academy when deemed necessary to meet the evolving circumstances or needs of students, families, and the school.