



Westlake Christian Academy

Athletic Handbook

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For game schedules & locations:

WestlakeChristian.org/athletic-calendar/

## **INTRODUCTION**

The athletic program at Westlake Christian Academy provides opportunity for students in grades 5 – 12 to use and develop their God-given talents in the form of physical competition. Athletics is just one aspect of a student's total educational experience. It is an extension of the school's mission "to disciple students to honor Jesus Christ in thought, word, and deed". The goal of athletics at Westlake is to pursue excellence with character by honoring God, and developing athletic potential.

This handbook is designed to help students and parents understand the role and function of athletics at Westlake Christian Academy. It should serve as a reference to assist anyone in seeking information about the function of athletics at the school.

## **WCA ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY**

The foundation for the athletic program at Westlake Christian Academy is God's Word. Biblical principles should be reflected throughout the athletic program at Westlake. Athletic teams at Westlake are led by coaches who view athletics as a ministry and are intent on making sure athletes are applying Biblical principles on a daily basis throughout their athletic experience.

The overall purpose of athletics at Westlake is to honor God in everything that is done. A God-honoring program does not happen by accident. It is the result of purposeful and intentional actions including the following:

- Athletes must learn the value of sportsmanship while developing the attitude of Christ. They should remember that they represent Christ at all times and seek to be like him in the words and actions.
- Athletes must learn the value of physical activity and hard work, realizing that their bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit and should be treated accordingly.
- Athletes must learn to pursue excellence. Excellence does not mean that they win every game they compete in, but they are striving to do everything with their entire effort to maximize the ability that God has given them.

These building blocks are the foundation for succeeding in athletics as well as in life. Winning from a Christian perspective is not measured by the scoreboard. The results of a successful sports season at Westlake Christian Academy will be measured years from now as athletes put into practice the lessons they have learned on the court and field.

## **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

### **Elementary Level**

The purpose of elementary sports is for students to develop an appreciation and enjoyment of the sport. Priorities at this level are to encourage participation and to build basic individual and team skills. Every athlete will be given opportunity to play minutes that will impact the game. While the goal is to get as many elementary students involved as possible, playing time in games may not be exactly equal. Encouraging participation and building basic skills will strengthen the athletic program in the future.

### **Junior High Level**

The purpose of junior high sports is for students to continue to develop enjoyment of the sport and improving basic individual and team skills. Every athlete should get the opportunity to play minutes that will impact the game. However, playing time will not be equal. Athletes should be introduced to the concept that each player has a specific role on the team. The emphasis at this level should shift toward developing the most competitive team possible.

### **High School Level**

The purpose of high school sports is for students to enjoy the sport by playing a competitive, high level. Athletes should be pushed to attain the highest level possible. Varsity level players are expected to have a solid grasp of the fundamentals, have excellent skills related to their sport, and be in good physical condition necessary to compete appropriately at the varsity level. The concept of teamwork and playing a specific role on a team should be mastered at this level. Playing time decisions for each player at the varsity level are left totally to the coach's discretion. Playing time is not guaranteed and each athlete should understand that God has gifted everyone in different ways. Their goal should be to become the best athlete they can be with those abilities that God has given them.

## **ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS:**

1. Make your commitment to the team a priority and keep priorities in order by having God first, family second, school third, and athletics fourth.
2. Strive for excellence.
3. Treat teammates and others as more important than yourself.
4. Be an example in regards to upholding the rules of the school and your team.
5. Devote yourself to good sportsmanship.
6. Attend all practices, games, and team activities.
7. Be diligent and consistent with schoolwork to maintain eligibility during the season.
8. Be responsible for the proper care of uniforms and equipment
9. Represent Westlake Christian Academy with the highest level of respect, integrity, and Christian character both on and off the field.

## **PARENT EXPECTATIONS:**

1. Understand your role as a spectator. Encourage and uplift your athlete and the team. Officials and opponents should be treated with respect.
2. Support your athlete's commitment by requiring their attendance at all team practices, events, and games.
3. As much as possible, eliminate scheduling conflicts with practices and games.
4. Follow the Biblical method for conflict resolution when a problem arises. Go first to the person involved.
5. Support the athletic program by volunteering when possible to assist with concessions, admission, transportation, or other areas.
6. Pray for and encourage your athlete daily.

## **SPORTS SNAPSHOT**

Westlake Christian Academy is affiliated with the following organizations:

- IHSA (approved school)
- ACSI (state tournaments)

Westlake Christian Academy is pleased to offer the following sports when participation warrants:

**FALL**

JH Soccer (7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>)  
Varsity Soccer  
Elementary Volleyball (5<sup>th</sup>/ 6<sup>th</sup>)  
JH Volleyball  
Varsity Volleyball  
Cross Country (7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>)

**WINTER**

Girls Basketball (5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>)  
Boys Basketball (5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>)  
Girls JH Basketball  
Boys JH Basketball  
Girls Varsity Basketball  
Boys JV & Varsity Basketball

**SPRING**

Varsity Boys Baseball  
Varsity Girls Soccer

*\*\*Sports teams are subject to cancellation if there are not sufficient athletes.*

## **ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION**

Students will not be allowed to practice when the season begins if they have not turned in the following:

1. Physical Form
  - Each athlete must have a current physical exam on file.
  - The form must be properly completed, signed by a parent and doctor, and dated within 13 months spanning the entire season for that sport.
2. Athletic Permission Form
3. Note: the sports fee must be paid before athletes will be issued a uniform.

## **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY:**

Those who participate in sports are students first and athletes second. These guidelines support Westlake Christian Academy's philosophy that all students' academics take precedence over athletics.

Grades will be checked weekly to determine a student's eligibility for athletics. The first check will be three weeks into the quarter. Eligibility checks will be completed on Fridays and the ineligible period will begin the following Monday, ending that Saturday. Students will be declared ineligible for participation in games if they have either two D's or one F at the end of that week. The student will then have the next week to bring his or her grades up. If a student is ineligible for three weeks within one season, the coach will meet with the athlete to determine whether the student should remain on the team.

In order to focus on academics, ineligible athletes may meet with coaches to determine if it is more profitable for them to attend practice or take that time to focus on bringing up their grades.

## **HOMESCHOOL PARTICIPATION**

Full-time homeschool students are welcome to participate in Westlake's athletic program provided they follow the guidelines contained in the student handbook.

## GAME PARTICIPATION

1. A student-athlete must be in attendance for a minimum of four class periods (1/2 day) the day of the contest.
2. If the contest falls on a non-school day, Saturday, or on a day off of school the coach will make the decision regarding participation, keeping in mind the circumstances regarding the absence.
3. If an athlete has been injured and obtained medical treatment, they may not participate in any practices or contests until given a medical release by the athlete's doctor.

## PRACTICE PARTICIPATION

Practice is one of the most important parts of an athletic season. It is in practice that individual skills are learned and developed, and teams learn to cooperate and accomplish goals that are bigger than each individual player. These goals do not happen if all players are not committed fully to the team and their teammates. Because of this, all teams follow these guidelines regarding practice attendance:

1. If an athlete anticipates missing a practice for any reason, prior notice should be given to their coach.
2. A student must be present at school for a minimum of four class periods (1/2 day) in order to participate in practice.
3. An absence from practice that is considered excused would be for the following reasons (but not limited to these reasons):
  - Sickness
  - Death in the family
  - College visit
  - Necessary school work (such as tutoring in a difficult class)

It is expected that athletes will communicate with their coach when they cannot make a practice.

## TRANSPORTATION:

Unless stated otherwise by the coach, all athletes, statisticians and managers will travel to and from games in the school buses or parent driven vehicles, which will be driven by either the coach or another adult with the proper license. Transportation to and from practices are the responsibility of the parents.

Should there be a need for an athlete to return home after a game in a vehicle other than the team vehicle or with his/her parent (e.g. with friend), **a written note signed by the athlete's parent is needed to excuse the athlete.** Since a coach is legally responsible for all the athletes and students involved in their program it is essential that parents and athletes follow this guideline.

Please pick up your athlete from school as soon as possible after the finish of practice or games. We greatly appreciate your promptness in this area as ***coaches must remain at school until all athletes have been picked up.***

Game locations can be found at [WestlakeChristian.org/athletic-calendar/](http://WestlakeChristian.org/athletic-calendar/)

## INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

If school is cancelled or closed on the day of a game or practice due to weather conditions, that day's game or practice will be cancelled as well and will be rescheduled if possible. The administration may make exceptions to this rule if it is considered safe to travel. In this case, athletes will be contacted by their coach.

## CONCUSSION POLICY

A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, **all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly.** In other words, even a "ding" or a bump on the head can be serious. You can't see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

### Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

- Headaches
- "Pressure in head"
- Nausea or vomiting
- Neck pain
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish or slowed down
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Drowsiness
- Change in sleep patterns
- Amnesia
- "Don't feel right"
- Fatigue or low energy
- Sadness
- Nervousness or anxiety
- Irritability
- More emotional
- Confusion
- Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)
- Repeating the same question/comment

### What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion or returns too soon?

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athletes will often fail to report symptoms of injuries. Concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key to student-athlete's safety.

### Return To Play Protocol

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, **without medical clearance.** Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours. The Youth Sports Concussion Safety Act requires athletes to complete the Return to Play (RTP) protocols for their school prior to returning to play or practice following a concussion or after being removed from an interscholastic contest due to a possible head injury or concussion and not cleared to return to that same contest.

You should also inform your child's coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember it's better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the athlete sits out.

For current and up-to-date information on concussions you can go to:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports/>

Adapted from the CDC and the 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport

## **UNIFORMS**

1. Each athlete is completely responsible for the proper care of all uniforms and equipment issued by the school. Any lost, stolen, or damaged items will be charged to the athlete to whom they were issued.
2. Uniforms provided by the school are to be worn solely for game participation.
3. All uniforms and equipment must be returned to the office after the last game of the season.
4. If a uniform is not returned or paid for by the due date, the student will receive one discipline point for each day the uniform is late.

## **COMMUNICATION/ CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

There are times during a sports season when a parent or athlete may have questions and concerns regarding a variety of topics. As with anything at Westlake, parents and students are encouraged to follow Biblical principles regarding conflicts.

Practically, these are steps that should be taken to successfully resolve potential conflicts:

1. Athletes should first seek out his coach and discuss their concerns.
2. If further clarification is required, parents should go with the athlete to discuss the matter with the coach.
3. If the issue is still not resolved, the parents and athlete should meet to discuss the issue with the athletic director.

It is best if these conversations do not take place immediately before or after practices or games. An appointment may be scheduled at a different time to discuss the incident/event.

## **SPORTS FOR ACADEMIC CREDIT**

To receive academic credit for participating in any sport, the athlete must meet these criteria.

1. Must be academically eligible for the whole season.
2. Must attend all practices & games or have an excused absence.
3. Must follow the WCA's Athlete's Code of Conduct.