

# ATHLETICS HANDBOOK

2013-2014



EPISCOPAL DAY SCHOOL

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*Foundations for Life*

Dear Parents, Students, and Coaches:

Welcome to another fantastic year of Interscholastic Sports at Episcopal Day School!

Thank you for taking the time to read through the Interscholastic Athletic Handbook. Please note that this is an extension of the EDS 1st – 8th Grade Handbook, and that all policies and procedures of the Episcopal Day School must be followed.

Interscholastic athletics is an important part of the overall educational program. It affords students the opportunity to challenge themselves both physically and mentally. We believe athletic participation plays an integral role in educating the whole child. Athletes develop skills that they will use throughout their lifetime. Dedication, commitment, sacrifice, determination, perseverance, and teamwork are important elements in successful seasons and will also serve them well in whatever career path they choose.

Too often, winning games has been considered the measure of athletic success. Developing the will to win is certainly a part of the total development of an athlete; however, of considerably more importance is developing athletes as whole individuals and affording each student the opportunity to fulfill his or her potential.

The Episcopal Day School Interscholastic Athletic Program is dedicated to athletic excellence and academic achievement, to offering diverse and compelling experiences to our student-athletes and the community, and to encouraging a school environment steeped in integrity and values.

It is our goal to create a healthy, safe, and exciting atmosphere where good sportsmanship is encouraged. Please extend your respect to the officials, coaches, players, and other spectators.

Parents, thank you! Your contributions to Interscholastic Sports over the years have not gone unnoticed. We appreciate your involvement and your willingness to invite others to join you in supporting our student-athletes.

Most importantly, come out and enjoy a game!

Sincerely,

Jaye Cohen, CAA  
Go Panthers! Grrrrr!

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# MISSION AND STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

## Mission

The Episcopal Day School was established by the Church of the Good Shepherd to provide an enriching education which encourages spiritual growth, explores discovery of self, and promotes service to others.

## Statement of Beliefs

We believe . . .

- in the Episcopal tradition we are called to create an open and nurturing academic community of faith for all.
- the school, the church, and the family work together to guide all children to the realization of their God-given potential.
- striving for academic excellence is a community responsibility.
- children grow, develop, and learn at different rates and stages. The growth and development of each child involves many dimensions: heart, mind, body, and soul.
- each child is uniquely created in the image of God, and we are called to respect the dignity of every human being.
- diversity is a part of God's creative plan, and we are called to manifest the kingdom of God by actively promoting a community that is racially, religiously, and socio-economically diverse.
- faculty and staff should serve as positive role models for students.
- with Christ as our center, we are called to love and respect one another and to build a foundation for a rewarding life of service to God and others.

# **PHILOSOPHY OF THE ATHLETIC PROGRAM**

The Episcopal Day School Athletic Program has been created to further promote the School's overall mission "to provide an enriching education which encourages spiritual growth, explores discovery of self, and promotes service to others." Competitive interscholastic athletics is a vital part of the total educational program of older children and is made available to EDS students to create a positive, supportive, non-threatening environment where each student is encouraged to discover who she or he can be. Through our team and individual sports, we strive to promote and develop team cooperation, good sportsmanship, a sense of fair play and pride in one's self and community.

To make an appropriate contribution to a child's overall development, this competitive interscholastic sports program will provide the participating athletes the opportunity to increase their knowledge about the sport of their choice; to develop habits of good sportsmanship by learning to compete fairly and to their utmost regardless of the outcome; to improve their skills and increase their level of physical fitness; and to embrace teamwork and demonstrate leadership in school spirit.

Parents are expected to follow guidelines to model appropriate behavior and positively support athletes. Teams will be supervised by experienced coaches who have a primary interest in the development of young people into happy and successful adults.

The primary goals of the Episcopal Day School athletic program are:

- To provide an athletic program that is responsive to the needs, interests, and abilities of the students and is consistent with available facilities, equipment, and staff.
- To provide students with a qualified staff to coach and supervise the athletic program.
- To provide an athletic program that satisfies the competitive and recreational needs of the students.
- To provide an athletic program that promotes physical well-being and positive attitudes in leadership and sportsmanship for both participants and spectators.

# **INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC TEAMS**

## **FALL**

Boys Cross Country  
Girls Cross Country  
Girls Volleyball  
Golf  
Football  
Boys Tennis  
Girls Tennis  
Cheerleading

## **WINTER**

Girls Basketball  
Boys Basketball  
Boys Swimming  
Girls Swimming  
Cheerleading

## **SPRING**

Boys Baseball  
Boys Track & Field  
Girls Track & Field  
Boys Soccer  
Girls Soccer



# ORGANIZATION

## General Overview

The Athletic Department at Episcopal Day School offers students in grades six through eight the opportunity to participate in competitive and interscholastic athletics. This handbook outlines the basic structure and guidelines for this program.

## Varsity

The varsity level of athletic competition is the culmination of each sport's program. Obviously, the goal at the varsity level is to prepare to win and to strive for victory in each contest. However, it is important to know that there is also a focus on team play and sportsmanship.

A sound attitude and an advanced level of skill are prerequisites for a position on the varsity team. The number of participants on any given team is based on how many are needed to conduct appropriate practices and to play the contests. Further, the number of roster positions is relative to the student-athletes' acceptance of their individual roles in pursuit of the team's goals. Students should give serious consideration to the dedication and commitment necessary to participate on a varsity team. Practices and contests require a commitment, and this commitment may be extended into vacation periods throughout the school year. In addition, a specified amount of playing time at the varsity level is never guaranteed.

Being on a varsity team requires rigorous dedication and desire. At this level, coaches reinforce advanced skills, pursue the intricate interaction of the positions and implement complex offensive and defensive strategies.

Varsity teams at Episcopal Day School are composed of players from the sixth, seventh and eighth grades.

## Junior Varsity

The junior varsity level places emphasis on team play, sportsmanship, physical conditioning, and refinement of basic skills. This program prepares student-athletes for the varsity level of competition by working toward an achievement of balance between team and player development and striving for victory. At this level, the outcome of the contest becomes a consideration. Adequate playing time for all team members is strongly encouraged; however, a specified amount of playing time is never guaranteed.

These teams will begin to move players beyond the basic foundations of the sport and prepare athletes for more advanced competition. They will reinforce some basics while introducing more advanced skills and help athletes to develop skills in positions that maximize their talents and provide a broader strategic understanding of the game. Most learning takes place in a practice environment, and they do not play as many games as the varsity teams. However, they do face several interscholastic opponents in order to implement and test their new skills and knowledge.

Junior Varsity teams consist of sixth and seventh graders; and, under special circumstances and consultations between parents and the Athletic Director, eighth graders. JV teams will be developed in a variety of manners; however, the main reason is dependent upon other schools in our league. If schools in our league have jv teams to compete with then we may create a jv team. Competitions enhance the learning experience so athletes can understand and implement the practiced skills in real event situations.



### **Fifth Grade Athletes**

Fifth grade students may participate on the cross-country and track & field teams. Exception to this will be at the discretion of the Middle School Head, Athletic Director, and the specific team's Head Coach.

### **Dual Same Season Participation**

Student-athletes are permitted to participate on more than one team per season. However, approval from the athlete's parents, both Head Coaches and the Athletic Director needs to take place before participation can happen.

### **Playing Time**

When it comes to playing time, athletes need to ask themselves the following questions:

- Am I giving 100% at practices and games?
- Am I on time for practice?
- Have I had any unexcused absences from practice?
- Am I always prepared for practice?
- Am I working with my team?

Set up a time to meet with your coach and discuss your concerns and how you can work together to receive more time on the playing field.

PLEASE NOTE: A student may NOT participate on any athletic team without the proper medical forms as required by Georgia State law. Once a student has expressed interest in playing a sport, the Athletic Director will work with the School Nurse to ensure all forms are completed and on file. If anything is missing, a parent will be notified with follow up procedures.

All athletes *must have both health forms* completed. (the All-School Health Form and the 5<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> Physician Health Form) These forms can be found on the school website under the "Parents" tab, click on "Forms and Information", and then click on Health forms.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Episcopal Day School uses a variety of means to communicate all pertinent information to parents and respond to questions and concerns in a timely manner. The following are the primary methods used:

- Athletic Handbook: Revised throughout the year and posted on the website under Athletics.
- Coach-Parent Meeting: At the onset of each season, a mandatory meeting will be held to discuss any changes in the athletic program and meet with the coaches of that season's sports.
- Coach-Parent Emails: Weekly emails will be sent by coaches regarding the team's progress and any other pertinent information needed for that sport.
- Weekly Announcements: Special notices regarding athletics are emailed each week as part of the "Panther Prints."
- Hotline: daily updates with practice and game schedules and any changes associated with them; the number will be posted on the website under Athletics.
- Athletic Director Phone/Email/Meetings: the Athletic Director always checks his voicemail and email several times a day and responds at his earliest opportunity. If on campus, always feel free to pop in his office as well, should he be available.

### **Parent-Coach Relationship**

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. Establishing an understanding of each role helps us to accept each other's actions and provide greater benefits to our athletes. Parents whose children become involved in the EDS Athletic Program have the right to understand what expectations are placed on their children. This begins with clear communication from the coach of the child's program.

### **Communication to Expect from the Coach**

- Coaching philosophy
- Expectations the coach has for all players on the squad
- Locations and times of practices and games
- Team requirements, team rules, special equipment and
- Off-season recommendations for improvement of skills

### **Communication Coaches Expect from Parents**

- Concerns expressed directly to the coach
- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
- Specific concerns with the athlete's development or well-being

### **Discussing Concerns with Coaches**

It can be very difficult for parents to accept if their child is not playing as much as they had hoped. Please remember that coaches are professionals who make judgments based on what they believe to be the best practice for all student-athletes involved. Therefore, certain topics can and should be discussed between a student's coach and his/her parent or guardian. Other topics must be left to the discretion of the coach; see the lists below for guidelines on appropriate topics of discussion.

### **Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with Coaches**

The mental and physical treatment of the student  
Ways to help the student improve  
Concerns about the student's behavior

### **Issues Not Appropriate to Discuss with Coaches**

Playing time  
Team strategy  
Play calling  
Other student-athletes

### **Procedure on How to Discuss Concerns with Coaches**

Some situations may require a conference between the coach and the parents. These are to be encouraged. It is important that all 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 issue of concern:

1. Call the coach to set up an appointment.
2. Please do not attempt to confront a coach before, during, or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach and places the athlete in the middle. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.
3. If the coach cannot be reached, call the Athletic Director at ????. He will set up the meeting for you.
4. If the meeting with the coach does not satisfy you, you should schedule a meeting with the Athletic Director.

5. Should you need more intervention for your specific issue and are not satisfied with the coach or Athletic Director's response you may contact the Division Head for further discussion to resolve the issue.

**Please Allow:**

Players to play  
Coaches to coach  
Officials to officiate  
Fans cheer for their team

*Coaches make decisions that are in the best interest of all members of the team or program. Please be supportive of their decisions.*

**Evaluation of Coaches**

We believe that feedback is always necessary to ensure a program stays healthy and strong. At the completion of each season, parents and players may visit the website under "Athletics" and complete the coach evaluation form.

## **LOGISTICS**

**Forming Teams/Level of Play**

Episcopal Day School wants all students with any interest in a sport to feel comfortable that they can participate in order to explore fully both their capabilities and their level of enjoyment. *To ensure the highest level of instruction and growth for the athletes, Episcopal Day School strives for a player-coach ratio of no more than 10:1.*

There will be a review process for several days and will be conducted by all the coaches of each sport. During the review process, coaches for each sport will evaluate the players. At the end of that time, players who demonstrate the necessary physical skills, knowledge of the game and emotional maturity will be selected for the more competitive varsity teams. If possible, the remaining players will be assigned to more developmentally focused junior varsity teams.

Coaches must take into account the level of skill for each participant because Episcopal Day School participates in the Augusta/Aiken Private Middle School Interscholastic League, whose member schools organize their teams in the same way, providing relatively equitable competition. Our teams will continue to play against other local independent schools, which may or may not use the same formula for creating their teams. In both swimming and cross country the teams will also get to compete for a state title. During these competitions, the Athletic Director will try to schedule the most appropriate opponents for maximum equality of competition.

After making a team, any athlete that decides to quit during that team's season will not be permitted to participate on any athletic team in an upcoming season, i.e. if a player quits a fall sport, that player will not be permitted to play in a winter sport. Special circumstances will be reviewed by the coach, parent, and Athletic Director.

**Academic Standards**

Episcopal Day School has not established minimum academic standards for participation in athletics. The School will, however, support parents who do find it advantageous in their individual situation to withhold

their children from games, practices or even full seasons in order to spend more time with their academic work.

Academic success is an important component of the School's mission. Discussions between the coaches, parents, students, Division Head and Athletic Director will determine what action is in the best interest of the student athlete should she/he find herself/himself falling behind in an academic situation.

Early releases from academic classes are scheduled on a limited basis so that classroom disruptions and the necessity for players to make up work are kept to a minimum.

### **Practices**

Practices are held at the end of the day, Monday through Thursday. Games will usually require players to participate later into the afternoon and may sometimes require Friday participation.

In joining these teams, players make a commitment to attend every game and practice. Students are *not* prohibited from simultaneously playing for or participating in other community-based activities; *however*, it is expected that they will first honor their commitment to the school team. In case of a schedule conflict, they will be expected to be at Episcopal Day School practices and games. Failure to do so may result in a loss of playing time or removal from the team.

### **Scheduling of Games**

Games will be scheduled Monday through Thursday, with the possibility of games on Fridays and a few on Saturdays. Most games are scheduled for the late afternoon so that they rarely interfere with the academic day, provide continuity for carpool schedules, and still get players home in time for evening meals and homework obligations.

### **Attendance at Practices/Games**

Students who do not arrive at school by noon with an excused reason will not be allowed to play in school games for that day. However, as a member of the team, they will still attend the game to observe unless excused by the coach or Athletic Director and then only for an extenuating reason. Late arrivals must still attend practice if no game is scheduled. Injured athletes should attend all games and practices to observe, if the injury allows.

Students who are absent on a game day are ineligible to play in the game that day.

Students who miss a practice the day prior to a regularly scheduled game will be ineligible for participation in that game. Any exceptions will be at the discretion of the Athletic Director.

Discipline and academic requirements take precedence over the practices and games. If a player is required to complete school work, or serve detention, the rule regarding practices and games continues to apply.

### **Transportation**

Episcopal Day School will provide bus transportation for players to all athletic practices/games. Coaches will meet the players at the field of play and players will not be permitted to leave the bus until a coach is present. (*Parents that are not current season coaches are not acceptable substitutes*).

Players must be picked up at the practice/game by a parent or carpool to take them home. *If a carpool is being created by a variety of families, notification to the Athletic Director MUST be made in advance.* The Athletic Director

will forward this information to all coaches. A coach must have visual contact with a parent, guardian or designated adult before any player is released from the field of play.

It is the responsibility of the coaches to make sure all players have been picked up after a practice/game. At least one coach will wait until all players have received rides. If no transportation has arrived at the appointed time, players may call home to resolve the situation.

### **Other Expectations of Athletes**

We expect all EDS community members to represent our school in a manner that is respectful of other on and off the field of play. It is our aim and desire that we develop and maintain the highest standards of courtesy, emotional discipline, and good sportsmanship as both hosts and guests.

We encourage and endorse enthusiastic support by our parents and friends. So that all attendees of athletic contests can enjoy themselves to the fullest extent, we expect adults to uphold the same high standards that we ask of our students. The school does not favor any behavior that detracts from the proper conduct of the game and that gives a player or other team an advantage. Any spectator, athlete or coach whose behavior is disrespectful toward any other spectator, athlete, coach and/or official will not be tolerated.

Student athletes are expected to exercise self-discipline and good sportsmanship at all times. Any fighting or other unsportsmanlike conduct may result in suspension or dismissal from any team. In severe cases, the student may be suspended from participation in the athletic program for the remainder of the year. Conduct unbecoming of an EDS athlete will be discussed with the athlete, parent and team coach. Decisions on suspension from athletic teams/program will be at the discretion of the Division Head, Athletic Director and, ultimately, the Headmaster. Examples of such behavior may include, but are not limited to: use of profanity and/or obscenities, insubordination, tardiness, unexcused absences, and failure to abide by team rules.

The Athletic Department follows and supports the EDS Code of Conduct and will support any action taken by School Administrators with violations towards the School's Code.

### **Injuries**

In the case of an injury to an athlete, play will be stopped and the injury attended. Coaches will follow all regular school guidelines regarding appropriate procedures. For minor injuries, such as a bruise or twisted ankle, coaches will make a conservative assessment before allowing any athlete to re-enter a practice or game. For more serious injuries, no player will be allowed to practice or play without appropriate parental and/or medical approval. For any injury that necessitates attention, even if no emergency action is required, the parent will be notified at the end of the day. Any students whose injury requires a trip to an emergency room or a physician will require a physician's note stating the student is cleared to return to his or her activity. In emergency cases, parents will be notified as soon as possible.

All coaches are encouraged to renew their CPR and First Aid certification every year.

### **Risk Factor in Sports**

Participation in sports involves a certain degree of risk of injury. Such physical injuries can occur in any type of sports activity and vary in nature and severity. Athletic injuries can run from minor injuries, such as bruises and scrapes, to more serious injuries, such as fractures, dislocations, concussions, paralysis, and even death. Before going out for a team, students should be aware of the risk so they are better able to reduce their chances for injury. Partaking in preseason conditioning, learning proper skills and techniques, and understanding rules and safety factors all help reduce risk of injury.

### **Weather**

Practices will usually be held regardless of the weather. If fields are unplayable, practices will take place in the gym or in classrooms for video or chalkboard instruction.

Games may be canceled or postponed due to inclement weather. The Athletic Director or a designee will make that announcement as early as possible and no later than 1:00 p.m. if the weather conditions exist early. Otherwise, the decision may be made at the start of, or during, a game. The update will be made to the Athletic Hotline, as well as an email blast.

No games or practices will take place when the school has been closed for poor weather or any other school closure.

## **UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT**

### **Required Practice Attire**

Players will dress for practice every day. Players will wear the required equipment or uniform as requested by the coach. If no actual equipment is necessary, players will wear the EDS attire as asked to wear for Physical Education classes.

Failure to wear appropriate attire or to dress for practice will result in a reduction of playing time.

Game uniforms may NOT be worn for practices.

### **Required Game Attire**

Students must be prepared with their uniforms on the day of a game. The uniform includes: jersey, shorts, socks, athletic shoes, and any necessary playing and protective equipment for that sport. On game days, players may wear their uniform jersey with regular school uniform on the bottom half.

If a player arrives at school without his/her uniform, he/she may borrow a uniform from the Athletic Department for that day if available. The player must come to the Athletic Office no later than 1 pm to borrow the uniform.

Players must be in uniform at the time the school bus departs. If a player is not in uniform, he/she will not be allowed to play in that day's game, but will be expected to sit on the bench and observe the game as a member of the team.

Unless specifically indicated as otherwise, all uniforms and equipment are the property of Episcopal Day School. *All issued items must be returned to the coaches upon conclusion of the season.* For any items not returned two weeks after the final game, a replacement charge of \$75 will be assessed. Transcripts may be withheld for not returning Episcopal Day School uniforms and/or equipment.

## **AWARDS**

At the end of the school year an Awards Banquet will be held to acknowledge all athletes who played in any sport during any season. More information about this can be found on our website under "Athletics."

# **REMINDERS for EDS Athletes / Spectators / Coaches**

## **Student Guidelines**

- You are responsible for your conduct. Show that you know what good sportsmanship is all about by controlling your temper, playing fair, encouraging your teammates and using only appropriate language with teammates, opponents, coaches and officials.
- Cooperate with and respect your coaches. Pay attention, listen, and learn. Do as they ask.
- Respect the game officials. On the field or court, they are in charge. It is the coach's responsibility to deal with the officials.
- Put forth the effort to learn the skills and do the best you can.
- Remember that you are part of a team. Show team spirit by telling your teammates what you like about the way that they play.
- When someone else makes a mistake, be supportive and do not get upset or show displeasure. They are trying just as hard as you.
- Be on time to practices and games with all of the necessary equipment.
- Violation of these guidelines may result in loss of playing time and squad membership.
- Disciplinary responses to violations may be appealed to the Athletic Director, Division Head and Headmaster.

## **Spectator/Parent Guidelines**

- Be enthusiastic and encouraging at all times. Cheer for your son or daughter and the team regardless of how they perform.
- Focus on skill development. At this level winning is less important than participating in and fostering interest in healthy activity.
- Respect the game officials. Their job is not an easy one and they can make mistakes just like you.
- Use this activity to help teach your child the importance of what it means to be part of a team. Praise the child for playing hard, for being gracious to teammates and opponents, and for improving athletic skills. Do not offer bribes. Kids should try hard for the pleasure of doing well, not for the reward.
- Help teach your child what good sportsmanship means. Remember that the best way to teach sportsmanship is by example.
- Refrain from loud or profane language on the sidelines.
- Teach your son or daughter, by example, to respect the coach. Let the coach coach. Do not second-guess him/her in front of your child.
- Get involved! The coach and children cannot do it alone.
- Make sure that your children arrive at practices and games on time with the proper equipment.
- Alcoholic beverages or tobacco products are not to be brought to or consumed at any practices or games.

## **Coach Guidelines**

- Each coach should have a demonstrable level of skill and knowledge in the sport they are coaching.
- Be enthusiastic at all times. Let young athletes know when they do well.
- Focus on skill development. Teach basic skills and build on them.
- Involve the learner in the process.
- Make discipline appropriate. Do not belittle or make fun of a student in front of others and do not discipline them by making them do extra drills. (We want them to learn to enjoy the sport.)
- Strive to allow all players an appropriate amount of playing time in each game.
- Teach and model desirable personal and social skills.

- Teach the students how to get along and encourage each other. We want our students to learn what it means to be part of a team.
- Stress and demonstrate good sportsmanship. A must for all students and coaches. Remember that the best way to teach sportsmanship is by example.
- Maintain open communication with parents. Tolerate no obscenities or arguing with or criticizing of game officials. Tell them you will talk to the other coach if there are problems with a player on the other team, but they are not at liberty to chastise the player themselves. The School expects parents to exemplify good sportsmanship on the field and at home.
- Be organized. Have a plan for every practice; arrive for practices and games on time. Designate an assistant coach and a team manager before the season begins. Include warm-up and conditioning exercises along with the sport specific drills at every practice.
- Be a friend. Make practices and games fun. Make children feel worthy even if they do not win every game. Use praise instead of pressure to get the children to make their best effort
- Choose a parent for team manager. Make it clear what you need and what you expect.