

# Lubbock Homeschool Christian Athletic Association

## Policy Handbook

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### Mission:

To God's glory and as ambassadors for Christ, out of love for our children, we desire to organize Homeschool athletics in order to promote Godly character, excellence, and witness; and to provide the South Plains area Homeschool athletics an association with structure for accountability, direction, and communication, so athletics for homeschoolers can grow and thrive in a positive way.

### Purpose:

Lubbock Homeschool Christian Athletic Association (LHCAA) was organized by families of homeschooled children to provide athletic opportunities for their children. We are a Christian membership organization that provides assistance in organization, fund raising, communication, and leadership. By virtue of participation in LHCAA activities, students and their families voluntarily accept the behavior standards set forth in the LHCAA handbook. In addition, each sport under the LHCAA umbrella has the freedom to implement additional standards or policies that are relevant to their sport. Because we compete in a variety of venues, it is sometimes necessary for one sport to have a policy unique to their sport. The handbook provides the broad policies of our organization or minimum standards that all activities (or sports) are conducted. When necessary, additional policies may be adopted by each sport to provide additional guidance, clarity, or to meet venue specific rules. AT NO TIME should a sport adopt a policy that is in direct violation or contradiction to the policies set forth in this handbook.

### Statement of Faith:

LHCAA is a Christian organization. Our coaches are Christians and instruct from a Christian viewpoint. While we do not require parents to agree with our statement of faith, they must read it and sign that they have read and understand it.

- We believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God without error and the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of man. The Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).
- We believe that there is only one infinite God manifested in a triune Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy

Spirit.

- We believe that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin birth, lived a sinless life as fully God and fully man, died and shed his blood on a cross, and was resurrected for our atonement and resurrection.
- We believe the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, to convict the world of sin, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service.
- We believe that each person has an eternal soul – the believer in Christ Jesus to an everlasting dwelling with God and the unbeliever to an everlasting conscious hell without God.
- While we do not represent any one denomination, we do hold that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6).

### **Competition:**

LHCAA offers primarily competitive sports. Due to the competitive nature of LHCAA, teams will be chosen to compete well against public, private, and other homeschool teams. Individual playing time is not guaranteed for any player. Playing time will depend on a player's effort, practice time, positive attitude, team-player mentality, sportsmanship, and skill level. When appropriate, LHCAA offers sports in an academy style. The academy style is used to introduce young players to a sport focusing on basic skills and concepts needed to play the sport. It is important to note that we do not offer recreational athletics.

### **Athlete Eligibility:**

This league is open to students who are home educated. Students are eligible even if their home education is supplemented with classes from private or public schools. Both parents will be required to sign a document stating that their child is 51% home educated (\*See LHCAA Family Membership Form) Students attending private or public schools full-time are not eligible for LHCAA athletics. Students are NOT eligible to play with LHCAA if they have participated in another competitive sports organization during the same academic year (August 1 through July 31). A coach may refuse to allow a student to transfer from a competing athletic or educational association into a Titan sport if that sport has already begun its competitive season. Exceptions for transfer students and unique situations will be dealt with by the board, on a case by case basis.

\*Players must live with their parent/parents or legal guardians.

Head Coaches are subject to the following additional eligibility requirements: All Titans coaches that are designated as a Head Coach of a particular Titans sports program are not allowed to participate in, or have a student athlete for whom they are responsible, enroll or participate in another sports organization during the same academic year (August 1 through July 31) during which that Head Coach is active with Titan Sports. This provision excludes club teams (and select teams) that do not ordinarily compete directly against Titans sports programs, do not run concurrently, and do not operate under the same governing bodies.

We are a Christian-Faith based organization and based on that we recognize that God created Male and Female with biological and physiological differences. In respect to that, girls will only play girls sports and boys will only play boys sports unless the board specifies a sport as coed. A player is eligible to play in gender designated sports that correspond to the gender recorded on the player's original birth certificate. Sports offered are Girls Volleyball, Boys Football, Girls Basketball, Boys Basketball, Girls Cheer, Boys Cross Country, Girls Cross Country, Boys Golf, Girls Golf, Boys Track, Girls Track, Boys Baseball, and Co-Ed Soccer. Sports offered by LHCAA may change from year to year but the gender policy remains in effect until explicitly updated.

- **Age-Based Restrictions:**
  - Youth
    - Several LHCAA sports offer youth teams - age eligibility requirements are specific to those sports' eligibility requirements and are not determined in this handbook.
  - Junior High/Middle School
    - Student athletes no younger than 10 years of age and no older than 14 years of age by September 1 of the current school year, may participate in LHCAA Junior High/Middle school competitive athletics. Some teams may have more restrictive age requirements, in which case the most stringent requirements will apply.
  - High School
    - Student athletes no older than 18 years of age by September 1 of the current school year may play in LHCAA competitive High School athletics. Some teams may have more restrictive age requirements, in which case the most stringent requirements will apply.
    - Any student age 19 by September 1 of the current school year shall not be eligible to play in LHCAA athletics.
    - Once a student has graduated or gone through a graduation ceremony, they will no longer qualify to play in LHCAA athletics regardless of their age.
- **Required Classification Declaration:**
  - Classification declarations are LHCAA-wide and apply across all sports. (i.e., You cannot be a freshman in one sport and a sophomore in another.)
  - All student athletes participating in LHCAA athletics will be required to declare a classification of grade level if they are 14 years of age or older by September 1 of the current school year, or entry into LHCAA, whichever comes first.
    - If a student athlete is 14 years of age by September 1 of the current school year, a level of either 8th or 9th must be chosen. Student athletes classified as 8th grade may not play up onto a High School team (with the exception listed below under "EXCEPTIONS"). Student athletes classified as 9th grade may not play down onto a Junior High/Middle School team, under any circumstance.
    - This classification cannot be changed or appealed to reclassify down. A student athlete is, however, allowed to make an appeal to reclassify up to graduate early. It is the organization's recommendation that a student athlete be classified based on their age, rather than their academic level. (i.e., If a 14 year old as of September 1 of the current school year is working mostly at an 11th grade academic level, it is recommended that said student athlete be classified as a 9th grader, rather than an 11 grader. This allows for 4 years of athletic eligibility, with the option of reclassifying up if needed to graduate early, without shortening their available 4 years based on age.)
    - High School competitive athletic classification is considered to be 9th grade through 12th grade, allowing for a max of 4 years of player eligibility. Once an athlete classifies as a 9th grader, their four years of eligibility will begin.
  - Classification restrictions are as follows:
    - 9th grade: 15 years of age or less by September 1 of the current school year, or as determined by a previous public or private institution if the athlete is transitioning to homeschooling; max of 4 years of player eligibility.
    - 10th grade: 16 years of age or less by September 1 of the current school year, or as determined by a previous public or private institution if the athlete is transitioning to homeschooling; max of 3 years of player eligibility.
    - 11th grade: 17 years of age or less by September 1 of the current school year, or as determined by a previous public or private institution if the athlete is transitioning to homeschooling; max of 2 years of player eligibility.

- 12th grade: 18 years of age or less by September 1 of the current school year, or as determined by a previous public or private institution if the athlete is transitioning to homeschooling; max of 1 year of player eligibility.
- EXCEPTIONS:
  - ONLY events that are homeschool-exclusive OR age-based will not affect a Junior High/Middle School athlete's number of eligible years. (i.e., If an 8th grader is needed to play up onto a high school basketball team for a homeschool state or national tournament, that player's high school eligibility will not be affected. Their four years of eligibility would not begin until they become a 9th grader the following school year.)

#### **Transfers:**

- Students who have been removed from a public or private school will not be allowed to play on an LHCAA team without first having an interview with the coach, parent, and student. Any such transfer will be on a probationary period for the first season.

#### **Fees:**

- Fees are due according to the deadline of each individual sport. Players may not participate in a sport for which they have not paid their fee.
- Fees are non-refundable.
- Other fees may include uniforms, referees, rental for gym or other facility, accrued costs for nationals, etc.
- We do welcome and accept donations to cover expenses. All donations are tax-deductible and greatly appreciated. We also welcome fundraiser activities and appreciate parents' help organizing in this area.
- Players, coaches, and parents must be in good financial standing with all sports to be able to qualify to play in any LHCAA sport. An outstanding balance in one sport makes you ineligible to participate in another sport/team.

#### **Letter Jackets:**

Players must be a sophomore, junior, or senior and must have played varsity in their sport. Lettering will be at the head coach's discretion. Measurements and ordering will occur in the spring and will be received in the summer at a board presentation.

#### **Approval of Head Coach:**

Our high school head coaches set the tone for their entire program. The board will interview all new head coaches prior to their taking charge of their respective sport. We want to see a larger degree of dedication to faith in God and a commitment to a longer term of service in the head coaching capacity than other coaches.

#### **Conduct:**

The parents are completely responsible for their child/children at all LHCAA events. You are the parent of your child (children) and are responsible for their actions at all times, whether or not you are present. Children are to show respectful obedience to coaches and LHCAA volunteers. Parents, please realize that your child's coach is the only one that should be coaching the team. It is important that respect be shown for coaching decisions and judgments. When students are left without supervision during any LHCAA activity, we must have a reliable phone number to reach a parent in case of an emergency. It is the parent's responsibility to inform coaches when their child will be absent from any scheduled event.

We believe that it is possible to have healthy social interaction and mature Christian relationships. For the protection of our families, our Christian fellowship, and our testimony within the community, it is vital that we conduct ourselves with godliness at all times and adhere to moral purity. We ask that at all LHCAA activities

the behavior between the opposite sex be above reproach by avoiding the appearance of wrong doing. In addition, all students should dress in a manner that demonstrates personal restraint. Clothing should be appropriate to the sport that is being played. At no time should undergarments be visible. Each Coach (or Board member) has the right to make a final determination of what is considered satisfactory conduct.

Standing on item one of our statement of faith, we acknowledge that God designed men for women and women for men. Expressions of unnatural relationships are not allowed at Titans events. This includes coaches, athletes, and parents. Misconduct in this regard will be grounds for removal of the family from LHCAA membership.

Causing excessive conflict or division within the organization may be grounds for suspension or removal of the family from LHCAA membership.

#### **Conflict Resolution:**

All participants are expected and encouraged to exercise personal self-discipline, restraint, and genuine kindness toward others. In dealing with any offense that may arise, it is the desire of our organization that the Biblical approach to discipline be applied as found in Matthew 18:15-17. The first step should be to go to the person with the concern. There is so much fruit in truth and conflict resolution, especially before it escalates. If that is unsuccessful, the involvement of the coaches or point of contact for each sport should be the next attempt at resolution. The final step of resolution rests with LHCAA board of directors and mediation. The desire of our organization is to uphold the Christian standards and integrity of the Titan organization in all aspects.

#### **Disciplinary Action:**

A time may arise when coaches may need to take disciplinary action with individual players or the team. Each coach has the authority to take the appropriate disciplinary action in those situations. The Discipline may include but are not limited to:

- Loss of playing time
- Additional workout
- Probation (Loss of Privileges)
- Fines – cost to repair or replace property damaged by individual
- Suspension – removal from the organization with opportunity to return after a specific period
- Dismissal – the last resort and means of permanent removal from the program. A dismissed individual may not be present in any LHCAA activities without the permission of the Board. Dismissal may only be levied by the board of directors.

Should a parent or adult guardian have issues with the disciplinary measures taken, they may appeal a disciplinary action to the point of contact for that sport. If necessary, the point of contact may solicit the board's advice for problem resolution. The Board has the final authority over all disciplinary actions.

#### **Organizational Structure:**

LHCAA is a Texas Corporation and maintains a tax-exempt status recognized by the State of Texas and the Internal Revenue Service. Our organization can accept and encourage tax deductible gifts from individuals and businesses. LHCAA is a membership organization. There are two classes of members:

- **Regular Member** – families with a child enrolled in an LHCAA sanctioned sport.
- **Sustaining Member** – families that are a member of LHCAA, but they do not have a child enrolled in an LHCAA sanctioned sport.

The board of directors governs LHCAA based on the organizational bylaws. Eleven board members are elected by the members of LHCAA. Each member family is entitled to one vote per family.

Ultimately, the success of the organization is dependent on the cooperative effort of our members. Please pray and put feet to prayers so we may meet the needs of Homeschool families in our community.

**Insurance:**

All programs must have insurance and a stated process in their handbook for parents to access that insurance. If your child is injured while participating in a sport, that sport will assist in filing a claim.

**LHCAA COACH/PLAYER/PARENT EXPECTATIONS**

**LHCAA expects its Coaches to:**

1. Be in good standing financially with LHCAA, including membership fees and sport related dues.
2. Be responsible for their own behavior and also the behavior of their team members, their parents, and fans.
3. Lead by example in being respectful of other players, coaches, fans, and officials at all times.
4. Place the emotional and physical well-being of their players ahead of a personal desire or external pressure to win.
5. Never publicly demean a player, official, opposing coach, or parent.
6. Ensure that their players are supervised by a coach or another designated adult and never allow their players to be left unattended or unsupervised at a game, meet, or practice.
7. Never knowingly permit an injured player to play or return to the game.
8. Take reasonable steps to see that all equipment used by their players is safe and conforms to standards.
9. Take the initiative in resolving any known or suspected conflict relating to a player or family.
10. Accept positive and negative feedback graciously as from the Lord.
11. Communicate expectations, including these LHCAA expectations, clearly to players and parents.
12. Take care to prevent being alone with an athlete in a private setting unless the athlete is a sibling, child, or legal dependent.
13. Not share a sleeping room with an athlete, regardless of gender, that is not their own sibling, child, or legal dependent.

**LHCAA expects its Players to:**

1. Be in good standing financially with LHCAA, including membership dues and sport related dues.
2. Be courteous to opposing teams and treat all players, officials, and coaches with the utmost respect.
3. Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.
4. Demonstrate good sportsmanship before, during, and after games. Stay composed and exercise self-control.
5. Show respect to all officials, whether or not you agree with a call.
6. Respect the privilege of using playing facilities by cleaning up benches, locker rooms, stands, and grounds after a practice or a game.
7. Refrain from use of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs.
8. Avoid profanity or demeaning speech on all occasions, even in the "heat of competition".
9. Understand that the TEAM comes before the desires of an individual player.
10. Be willing to serve in any role to build TEAM success.
11. Show up for practice on time, with proper equipment and ready to play.
12. Make reasonable efforts in advance to be excused from any scheduled classes or activities that conflict with practices, games/meets, or team functions.
13. Communicate to the coach ahead of time when a practice or game/meet will be missed.
14. Dress in a manner that demonstrates personal restraint and is appropriate to the LHCAA activity.
15. Tell the coach of concerns or problems with practice or games/meets instead of talking to teammates about them.

16. Seek to resolve personal conflicts with teammates, following biblical steps of conflict resolution. (See Conflict Resolution)

**LHCAA expects its Parents to:**

1. Be in good standing financially with LHCAA, including membership dues and sport related dues.
2. Trust the coach to coach the team.
3. Volunteer to help with team needs whenever possible.
4. Let the officials and umpires call the game, remembering that they too are only human. Rarely is the outcome of a game determined by a bad call.
5. Demonstrate exemplary sportsmanship at games by using only positive cheers and never laughing at errors or jeering an opponent.
6. Advocate a sports environment that is free of drugs, tobacco, alcohol, and abusive language including profanity, and refrain from their use during all LHCAA events.
7. Assist athlete(s) to show up to practices and games/meets on time, with proper equipment, and ready to play.
8. Direct athlete(s) to communicate with the coach in advance of any anticipated missed practices or games/meets.
9. Speak to the coach privately (and not to others) about any issues concerning any aspect of the family or athlete's participation on an LHCAA team.
10. Speak to an LHCAA Board member about any issue not adequately resolved with a coach.
11. Fill out the postseason evaluations (if any) with truth and love.

The terms of this Handbook may be updated from time to time as voted on and implemented by the LHCAA Board. All terms of this Handbook voted on and implemented by the Board at the time a particular sport commences its competitive season will be binding on that team for the duration of that sport's competitive season. For example, Sport A starts its competitive season on November 1. All terms of this Handbook in effect on November 1 will control for Sport A's entire competitive season. "Competitive Season," as used in this paragraph, commences no later than a particular sport's first competitive event for that academic year and concludes no earlier than the sport's last competitive event for that academic year. This provision becomes effective beginning August 1, 2025.