



Athletic Handbook

2021-2022

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*I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead.
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 3:8 & 13-14 NASB*

MASTER'S ACADEMY ATHLETIC PROGRAM

The Master's Academy Mission Statement reads, "**Master's Academy exists to academically challenge and spiritually develop each student to impact the world for Christ. Master's Academy is committed to excellence in education, the truth and authority of the scriptures, and a Christ-centered worldview.**" In light of this, the goal of the program is to build the character of Christ within each participating student so they will impact the world for Christ. The goal of every Christian, including Christian athletes, should be to share the Gospel with all people in every situation, including athletics. Every athlete is to be a representative of Christ, their family and Master's Academy. Every athlete is to also pursue excellence in all areas of their athletic endeavors both in performance and in character.

THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

The Athletic Director has been assigned by the Headmaster to administer the athletic program. Head coaches are directly responsible to the Athletic Director, who is charged with the supervision of those coaches in relation to the athletic program. Athletics are to be closely coordinated with the general instructional program and properly articulated with other departments of the school. Athletics are to be conducted under the rules of the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA), the Mid Coast Athletic Conference (MCAC), the Sunshine State Athletic Conference (SSAC) and any other organization of which Master's Academy is a member.

MASTER'S ACADEMY ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY

Christians are commanded to be different from the world around them, and this includes the sphere of athletics (Isaiah 55:8-9). The reason for this difference is that we work from a different perspective: Jesus Christ is to be the center of all our attention, both on and off the fields of play. We are to have His attitudes, action and mindset (Philippians 2:5, Romans 8:29). We are to do everything as unto the Lord and not unto men (Colossians 3:23). We do not leave Him, or our faith, at the entrance and then "pick Him up again" after the athletic competition.

According to God's Word, we know that man's ways are not God's ways (Isaiah 55:8-9). Man's meaning of winning does not necessarily align with God's ideas of winning. The effort and character of the student-athlete are much more important than the final result of the competition itself (Colossians 3:17). Jesus Christ is to be the center of our attention both on and off the field of play. We are to have His actions and His attitudes (Philippians 2:5). Furthermore, since Christ loved us so much and gave up everything He had for us (Philippians 2:8), it is natural then for us to give all we have to Him in return.

The athletic program is to supplement, but not take precedence over the academic program of Master's Academy Upper School (middle and high school). Master's Academy recognizes that God has gifted students in a variety of ways, including athletic abilities. We seek to provide an opportunity for these students to develop and use their God-given abilities.

We believe that athletics are a great source of exercise, competition, and enjoyment. Participation in athletics also provides an excellent opportunity to encourage Christian students in their relationship with and witness for Jesus Christ. We expect and insist upon Christ-like character and Christian self-government in ALL ATHLETES, PARENTS, FANS and COACHES. We expect all fans and athletes alike to limit words and actions to those that are uplifting, encouraging, and positive. (Ephesians 4:29-32) We expect this to be your behavior toward each other, your coaches, our opponents, our opposing fans, and game officials, whether "home" or "away," "ahead" or "behind." We expect every person representing our school and our Christ to be committed to excellence and integrity at all times (Colossians 3:23), regardless of what the scoreboard says or how our opponents, game officials, or even spectators, may conduct themselves. We expect a wholehearted commitment to teams and coaches once a season starts. Let us teach our children to think, speak and act in accordance to Biblical principles, especially at our athletic events, where passion and emotion usually run high - and therefore demand control!

COMPETITION LEVELS AND GAME TIME

Master's Academy Upper School can participate in three levels of athletics in the sixth through twelfth grades:

- Middle School
- High School Junior Varsity
- High School Varsity

Each of these levels has objectives and purposes to help develop the overall program.

- A. Middle School:** The objectives of the Middle School (MS) athletics program are improvement through participation, and the development of basic skills. MS athletics will allow each student-athlete the opportunity to participate and grow as coaches teach them the basic rules and principles of the game. Coaches will attempt to give athletes as much playing time as possible. As there are no cuts at this level and playing time will be influenced by the number of athletes on the team. The MS athletic program will also be a feeder program for the next level of competition, either High School Junior Varsity or High School Varsity. MS athletes who qualify may be asked by a Junior Varsity or a Varsity coach to play up when needed.
- B. High School Junior Varsity:** The objectives of Junior Varsity athletics are to engage in a more competitive arena and to help athletes at this level improve in their skills and knowledge. At this level, the student-athlete will be scrutinized more thoroughly regarding character, ability, attitude, and skill. Playing time is entirely at the discretion of the coach. Coaches will communicate with players about their roles, coaches' expectations, and general playing time expectations. The High School Junior Varsity athletic program will also be a feeder program for the High School Varsity program. High School Junior Varsity athletes who qualify may be asked by a Varsity coach to play up when needed.
- C. High School Varsity:** The objectives of Varsity athletics are to engage in the highest level of high school athletics and to help athletes at this level obtain their highest potential in skill and knowledge. At this level, the student-athlete will be scrutinized more thoroughly regarding character, ability, attitude, and skill. The most qualified athletes will be selected for the Varsity team. Playing time will be entirely at the discretion of the coach. Coaches will communicate with players about their roles, coaches' expectations, and general playing time expectations.

STUDENT-ATHLETE STANDARD OF PERFORMANCE

Please review this entire handbook, the Upper School Handbook, and FHSAA rules for specific sports for more detailed information.

As a student-athlete of Master's Academy (whether enrolled or a home school student-athlete), you are subject to the rules and regulations of Master's Academy as set forth in the Student Handbook. You are also subject to the rules and regulations as set forth by the FHSAA and other applicable athletic conferences, and by the rules and regulations governing your athletic event.

1. Athletes should conduct themselves as ladies and gentlemen, and set an example for the rest of the student body. Christian self-government and good sportsmanship are expected at all times.
2. The lifestyle of a Master's Academy student-athlete is expected to be that of a Christian (Christ-like). A Christian lifestyle cannot confine itself to just during Master's Academy athletic events. It must be consistent in all areas of life, as student-athlete lifestyles reflect on the reputation of the school. The following guidelines are in place:
 - A. Do not use profanity or allow it to be used by your teammates.
 - B. Disrespectful behavior (i.e. profanity, boasting, taunting, spitting, etc.) will not be permitted.
 - C. Be careful on all social media sites that comments made about teammates, coaches, and the school reflect the policies, goals and character of the school.
3. **Practice is mandatory, not optional.** The "No Practice – No Game/Match/Meet Participation" rule is in effect for all athletes, with the coach's discretion. Unexcused absences, and even unexcused lateness to practices, will result in consequences that will include any of the following: meeting with the Athletic Director, suspension for games, extra conditioning, expulsion from the team or other consequences.

Excused absences or lateness would be for school related events, like Wednesday help classes, school performances, illness, death in the family and special circumstances taken into consideration by the coach or Athletic Director, IF communicated in advance. If a practice is missed for any reason, the coach must receive some sort of communication, before the practice starts, stating why you are not able to attend practice.

4. Complete the season. Any athlete who quits a team will not be permitted to play another sport until the end of the season of the team sport he has quit, unless some agreement was made with coaches **and** the Athletic Director. The athlete will not be eligible for a varsity letter or pin either. Any athlete that does quit before a season ends will need to meet with the Athletic Director before starting another season regardless of the details for quitting early.
5. Athletes may not participate in a game or practice on a day they are absent due to illness, unexcused or if they have left early for any reason without appropriate permission.
6. Be good stewards of school property including any items given to the athlete for the season, like uniforms, pads, other equipment.
7. An athlete may participate simultaneously on more than one team provided an agreement has been worked out by coaches and the Athletic Director. Athletes should recognize though at the varsity level this will be very difficult and sometimes impossible.
8. Student-athletes must be properly dressed on all road trips to and from competition, keeping in mind that they are a reflection of the athletic program whether it is in a restaurant, a rest stop or some other public location before or after the competition. The spirit of the High School dress code applies in these instances.
9. All areas (i.e. locker rooms, bleachers, vehicles, etc.) must be left neat and clean after their use.
10. A student-athlete serving an in- or out-of-school suspension is automatically suspended from the team for that time period. The student-athlete may not participate in practices or games until the suspension is over and he has been reinstated by the school administration. By definition home school athletes do not receive discipline from Master's Academy like detention or suspensions. But, when something is done contrary to our Athletic Handbook or the Upper School Handbook the home school athlete will receive consequences through the team, like suspension for a game or a practice and these would qualify as unexcused if it was a practice missed.
10. A student-athlete who is suspended or dismissed from a team for disciplinary reasons is ineligible to participate in any sport until granted permission by the Athletic Director. At the minimum this athlete will need to meet with the Athletic Director, but even then there is no guarantee of permission being given to play on another team that year.
11. Any ejections from a game or match by an official will be subject to the FHSAA or other governing conference's disciplinary process, and the athlete will meet with the Athletic Director as soon as possible after the competition. Depending on the reason for the infraction and what consequences the governing body gives, there may be an additional consequence given by the Athletic Director.
12. Any music that is played publically, where one or more people can hear it, needs to have been approved by the Athletic Director. Music that reflects the values of Master's Academy should be the only music played in a public setting. Public settings include game times, practice times, and in vehicles. "Christian" music is encouraged, although other music can be permitted if original song lyrics have been given to the Athletic Director, for approval, more than 24 hours before the event. Songs with swear words and obscenities will not be permitted even if the words are "bleeped" out.
13. Any tattoos, permanent or temporary, must be covered, both in practices and in competitions.
14. Hairstyles should NOT be distracting or unkept. Hair color should not be unnatural, nor distracting. Guys' hair should be above the eyebrows, mid-ear or above, and no longer than the standard shirt collar. Administration reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of hairstyles.

ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible for participation in high school sports (meaning before athlete's first day of practice), the student is required to:

1. Have a completed set of current athletic forms on file in the Athletic Department on or before the first day of an athletic season, or by the deadline established by the Athletic Department. These forms may be obtained from the Athletic Department. These forms include, but may not be limited to:
 - a. Master's Academy Athletic Application (for current school year)
 - b. FHSAA EL2: Pre-participation Physical Evaluation (valid for 365 days)
 - c. FHSAA EL3: Consent and Release from Liability Certificate (for current school year)
 - d. Home Education student forms (Master's Academy Home Education athletic form and FHSAA EL7 and EL7V)
 - e. FHSAA GA 4 form for new athletes in 9th-12th grades.

2. Agree to the standards stipulated in the Master's Academy Athletic Handbook (for current year).
3. Remain academically eligible for athletics. The student-athlete must not have less than 70% in any class. **Any grades below 70% on a Progress Report or a Report Card will result in probation. The student will prepare and complete a remedial success plan with the teacher, coach and Athletic Director. If the grade is not 70% or above on the subsequent Report Card or Progress Report, the student will be dismissed from the team.**
4. Pay the participation fee for that sport's season before starting practice.
5. Any Home School student-athlete, participating for the **first time** in our athletic program, must have an interview with the Athletic Director that demonstrates a commitment to the philosophy and goals of Master's Academy and the Patriots athletic department. This interview should include the athlete and the parents. If too complicated (due to work or travel) to meet with both parents, one will suffice.

It is a privilege to represent Master's Academy as a member of an athletic team. Any student whose habits and/or conduct, either in or out of school, make him unworthy to represent the ideals and principles of Master's Academy, shall be excluded from competing. (See school handbook for information.) Either the Athletic Director or coach will communicate this to the parents of that individual.

FHSAA REQUIREMENTS

Florida High School Athletic Association has all their policy and rules at www.fhsaa.org, including rules for each sport, and it is recommended that athletes and parents research and review policies prior to the start of the season, as they are best equipped to know whether the student is in compliance. This practice will help insure that the team is fully compliant as well.

EARNING HIGH SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION CREDIT

See current High School Handbook for up-to-date information.

ATHLETIC AWARDS

Varsity Letter

- Complete the season in good athletic and academic standing
- Consistent attendance at practices and games unless excused by coach (medical and family conflicts need to be communicated with coach)
- Participation in at least half of the games or half of the regular season

TEAM AWARDS

The coach of each team will award the following awards each season: ***"Mighty in Spirit" Character Award, "Total Heart" Commitment to Excellence Award, "Cornerstone" Team Leadership Award.***

"Patriot" Award – This award is given to the outstanding high school senior athlete who shows the best all-around Christian character, leadership, ability, scholarship, and accomplishment. He/she exemplifies the characteristics and abilities of a "Patriot," which the Master's Academy Athletic Program aims to assist in cultivating.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents, you are an integral part of the athletic program and your commitment is as important as that of your student-athlete. Your support is greatly appreciated and needed to help make your student-athlete's experience a success. We request that parents of Master's Academy student-athletes make these guidelines priorities:

1. Be your student-athlete's number one fan! Attend as many games as possible and support your athlete and the team, whether they win or lose.
2. Commit your student-athlete for the entire season.
3. Practice punctuality: be sure your student-athlete arrives on time to all practices and games. Likewise, be on time to pick up your student-athlete after every practice and game.
4. Positively support the coaching staff and athletic officials.
5. Parents are encouraged to meet with coaches; courtesy dictates that meetings should be pre-scheduled. **Please never approach a coach for a "chat" before, during, or immediately following a game/match/meet. Those times are reserved for team interaction! Please follow the "24 hour rule" which is that if anything happens**

that you feel you need to address the coach on, wait 24 hours from when the incident took place. (Sometimes emotions are very strong in the athletic arena and need to settle down to have constructive conversations.)

6. Remember, you are not the coach. Parent coaching sends “mixed signals” to your child and to the team, lead to confusion and model a lack of respect for appropriate jurisdiction. Please do not communicate instructions or coaching type comments to your student-athlete during a competition, that is the coach’s job.
7. **Parents may not approach an official before, during, or after a game/match/meet, for any reason.** Any decision by an official will be adhered to by the coaches, parents, student-athletes and the school administration without further discussion.
8. Parents are asked to positively support “our team,” not belittle or demean officials or the opponents.
9. Parents should encourage their student-athlete to approach the coach on their own, first, for communication.
10. Every sport competition requires volunteer help, it would be impossible to pay people to do all the jobs each sport needs. Every parent needs to be ready to contribute to the responsibilities of the specific sport. Please be ready to cooperate with the coach, team mom or Athletic Administration when requests are made for help.

COMMUNICATING WITH COACHES

Both parents and coaches have difficult jobs. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to work together for the greater benefit of the student-athlete.

Communication courtesies parents should expect from the student-athlete’s coach:

1. General philosophy of the coach
2. Expectations the coach has for your student-athlete, as well as all of the players on the team
3. Locations and times of practices and games
4. Team requirements, such as fees and special equipment.
5. Procedure followed in the event of an injury during participation
6. Discipline procedures
7. Concerns expressed directly to the parents

Communication courtesies coaches should expect from the student-athlete’s parents:

1. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
2. Specific concerns in regard to a coach’s philosophy and/or expectations expressed directly to coach

It is important to understand that there may be times when things do not go the way you and your child wish. Direct communication with the coach is the appropriate way to address concerns, so all parties involved may reach a clear understanding of the others’ positions. When a conference is necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the concern, keeping in mind the “24 hour” policy.

1. If you have a concern to discuss with the coach:
 - a. Schedule an appointment; it is helpful to state the reason for the meeting.
 - b. If the coach cannot be reached, call the Athletic Director, who will arrange the meeting.
2. After the parent/coach conference, if the parent is not satisfied with the resolution:
 - a. Schedule an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.
 - b. After discussing concerns, the Athletic Director will determine the appropriate course of action and communicate that course to the parents, coach student-athlete, and headmaster.

A word of encouragement for parents is to let the conflicts that come up naturally in the athletic environment be opportunities for growth for your student-athlete. Don’t be too quick to try to “bail them out” of the situation. The athletic environment provides many life lessons that once learned can reap great dividends as the student-athlete grows. This also includes the working out of academic and athletic conflicts with teachers and coaches.

UNIFORMS

1. The coach will issue uniform(s) at the beginning of the season and collect them at the end of the season. The student is responsible to keep uniforms clean and in good shape.

2. Lost or damaged uniforms will be repaid at full replacement cost by the student-athlete. No additional uniforms will be assigned to a student who has failed to return a uniform.
3. Uniforms must be returned within one week from the end of the sport season for which the uniform was worn. Those who do not return their uniform within the specified time will be assessed a late fee.
4. Laundering: All uniforms must be washed in cold water and hung up to dry. Fabric softener must not be used, as it may cause numbers and logos to detach from the fabric. Careful consideration must be used when attempting to remove grass stains. Do not use an iron on the uniform and do not put in the dryer.
5. Uniforms or warm-ups are to be worn only during competition, and at Pep Rallies when authorized by school administration. The uniforms and warm-ups are not to be worn to school, practice, PE or anywhere outside of school.
6. Spandex shorts are not be worn by themselves at either games or practices. Loose fitting shorts should always be worn over any spandex.

FACILITIES

We are blessed to have the use of fine facilities, whether our own or rented. It is important to show proper respect, care and maintenance of the Master's Academy/Pathway buildings and athletic fields, as well as any others we are privileged to use, by being good stewards of God's provisions.

1. Always leave the area cleaner and neater than you found it. Always look for ways to help clean up after practices or competitions. Don't leave without giving a hand somehow.
2. All articles of clothing left behind will be kept for only a limited time.
3. Students cannot be on the premises without adult supervision. Student-athletes need to be picked up at the time indicated by the coach.
4. Student-athletes participating in sports which require the use of the Pathway gymnasium also have the **added responsibility** of taking down and/or setting up the chairs for church services. Those student-athletes are required to help out after practices or games until the job is complete. Parents should assist in this effort. Student-athletes found to be consistently leaving early or avoiding this team effort may be penalized.

CLUB/COMPETITION TEAMS

Participation as a rostered member of a Master's Academy varsity athletic team takes precedence over club or competition team practices, games, or tournaments. A Master's Academy coach has the right to implement a consequence they feel is appropriate for athletes who miss Master's Academy athletic activities for club team activities.