



**2023-2024**  
**ATHLETIC HANDBOOK**

**COVENANT**

2300 Bartram Rd.  
Jacksonville, Florida 32207  
(904) 265-7474



Dear Parents and Students,

Please review the contents of this handbook and sign the acknowledgement that you have read this to the end. We hope you will realize that the opportunity to participate at The Covenant School of Jacksonville on one or more of our athletic teams is a privilege and not a right. Covenant has adopted the following expectations in an attempt to support the students who participate in our program.

We are extremely proud of our athletic program and strive to prepare our student athletes for the next level by offering a strong counterpoint to collegiate athletic programs. While much of society believes that material gains are the reason that individuals participate in athletics, we hope that our students will understand there are far more important, intrinsic values that are associated with sports, such as camaraderie, self-discipline, teamwork and selflessness to name a few.

Our teams and coaches will respect their opponents and the game officials, and we expect them to be ambassadors of how things are done right in high school athletics. Please partner with us in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Covenant Athletics Department

## Athletic Philosophy

The Athletic Program serves to reinforce Covenant's philosophy that sound moral and spiritual values define the individual in a more significant way than academic achievement alone. The athletic programs provide an integral part of the school's overall educational experience. Our purpose within the athletic programs is to build champions, but not just on the field. It is our desire to build champions in the community, in the classroom, at home and wherever God will take our student athletes upon graduation. We believe that the commitment and discipline required to compete at the high school level will translate well as our students attend college, enter the workforce and start families. Lastly, we do believe that Christians are winners and should strive to win in all sports competitions. However, this does not mean that winning is everything. Sometimes you learn more about yourself and your team when you lose than when you win. As Christians we are called to be leaders and set the tone for those around us, and we believe this holds true in athletic competition.

## Athletic Fee

In order for student athletes to compete in sports, there is a \$300 fee per athlete for their first sport. Each additional sport for the school year will be a \$150 fee. Homeschool athletes will add \$100 to each fee. This fee must be paid no later than the student athlete's first game. Student athletes cannot participate in a competition if fees are not paid. Also, after competing in one athletic game, student athletes will NOT be refunded the athletic fee as fees for uniforms, entry fees, officials, and transportation have already been paid.

## Athlete Physicals

In order to participate in athletics at Covenant, students are REQUIRED to turn in a completed athletic handbook form, transportation form, FHSAA sports physical, consent and liability waiver and concussion and heat related illness form (forms EL2, EL3), and certificates of completion for three necessary courses on nshlearn.com, which are all located on the school website under Athletics. Additional paperwork may be required. All physicals must be up to date prior to participation in practice, competition, and summer workouts.

Per FHSAA Bylaws, every student athlete is required to have medical accidental insurance to cover any sports related injuries.

## Eligibility Regarding Participation in Sports

- 1) A student not currently suspended from interscholastic or extracurricular activities or suspended or expelled from school is eligible to participate in interscholastic and extracurricular activities.

- 2) A student may not participate in a sport if the student participated in that same sport at another school during that school year, unless the student meets the criteria in Florida Statute s. 1006.15(3)(h):
- Children of active-duty military whose move resulted from military orders.
  - Children relocated due to foster care placement or McKinney-Vento Act.
  - Children who move due to a court ordered change in custody due to separation, or serious illness or death of custodial parent.
  - Good Cause:
    - a) Move to a new residence following a parent marriage. The student immediately establishes a new residence that makes it necessary to attend a different school.
    - b) Transfer of school within the first twenty days – i.e., acceptance into Covenant after previously applying.
    - c) Any athletic appeal which will require the Head of School, in conjunction with the guidelines set forth by the FHSAA, to intervene and make a decision on a case.
- 3) A student's eligibility to participate in any interscholastic or extracurricular activity may not be affected by any alleged recruiting violation until final disposition of the allegation.
- 4) Students who participate in interscholastic and extracurricular activities for, but are not enrolled full-time at Covenant, are subject to Covenant's code of student conduct for the limited purpose of establishing and maintaining the student's eligibility to participate.
- 5) The Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) continues to retain jurisdiction over the following provisions: membership in the FHSAA; recruiting prohibitions and violations; student medical evaluations; investigations; and sanctions for coaches; school eligibility and forfeiture of contests; student concussions or head injuries; the sports medical advisory committee; and the general operational provisions of the FHSAA.

### Orientations and Athletics

At the beginning of each season (Fall/Winter/Spring) each team will hold an information session for parents to provide essential information for the season. This meeting will include practice schedules, expectations, fees, and other important information.

Note: All fees will be due no later than the athletes first game. Failure to provide these funds in a timely manner will result in the student athlete being unable to participate in practices or games.

## Recruiting

Both the school and FHSAA policy strictly forbid recruiting student athletes to Covenant. Any act that is performed with the intent to entice, pressure, or encourage students or parents to attend Covenant for athletics is unacceptable. All student athletes interested in attending should be directed to the Covenant admissions office where they can obtain further information and begin the application process. All students admitted to Covenant in Grades 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> will also need to have a completed FHSAA GA4 Affidavit of Compliance with the Policies on Athletic Recruiting & Non-Traditional Student Participation form on file.

## Safety and Athletic Training

The Covenant Athletic Department aims to provide a safe and enjoyable environment in which to participate. But it is critical to understand that participation in athletics involves inherent risk. Coaches and administrators will work in conjunction to ensure that they act in a prudent manner in order to prevent foreseeable accidents and injuries. Coaches and student athletes will be required to take training on safety and injuries.

## Sportsmanship

Covenant continues to cultivate a reputation of excellence and integrity in athletics. We want to be known for fielding competitive teams who are coached well and serve as examples and witnesses to others. Good sportsmanship is required on a daily basis. The Covenant Athletic Department and Covenant Administration expects our players, coaches and fans to behave in a responsible and courteous manner.

Any player or coach who is ejected from competition and/or behaves in a manner that results in the Covenant Athletic Department receiving a fine, will not only be responsible for paying the required fine but may be subject to an extended suspension or punishment by Covenant and the Administration beyond the suggested period of time set forth by FHSAA.

## Team Selection and Participation

Tryouts will be conducted at the beginning of each sports season with the understanding that coaches may be required or choose to limit the number of players on any given team. Our philosophy on team selection and competition at the various interscholastic levels is as such:

### Middle School:

- Middle school teams are comprised of 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. And depending upon the athlete's birthdate, a 9<sup>th</sup> grader may participate in Middle School.
- Middle school teams are considered introductory level teams and every effort will be made to include all who wish to participate. However, certain middle school teams may have cuts to ensure legal roster sizes.

- Middle school teams are members of the FHSAA (Florida High School Athletic Association) and IMSC (Independent Middle School Conference) with possible tournaments at the end of each season.
- Coaches will make every effort to ensure playing time; however, it is not guaranteed.

#### Junior Varsity:

- Junior Varsity will be the transitional level between middle school and varsity.
- Junior Varsity teams be comprised of players from 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- Junior Varsity teams are members of the FHSAA (Florida High School Athletic Association) with possible tournaments at the end of each season.
- The purpose of our junior varsity program is player development. Coaches will make every effort to ensure playing time; however, it is not guaranteed.

#### Varsity:

- Varsity teams will be comprised of players from 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades.
- Varsity teams are members of the FHSAA (Florida High School Athletic Association) with possible tournaments at the end of each season.
- Varsity is our highest level of competition. Each player will serve a vital role on the team; however, every player will be afforded playing time based on talent level and coaches' decision.

A student is NOT required to take part in athletics as a requirement for graduation. Students are encouraged to participate in more than one sport, but will not be permitted to participate in two sports during the same sports season (i.e. Fall, Winter, Spring).

#### Varsity First Approach

Covenant Athletics believes that building from the bottom up is critical to growing our programs. Effective management from the top down will aid this process along and provide varsity coaches with better prepared athletes. As a small school it is imperative that our varsity programs develop success first to inspire the younger generation of athletes at Covenant. Therefore, we will hold tryouts for the varsity team first, and upon selection, the coaching staff, Covenant Athletic Director, and school administration will determine whether or not there are sufficient numbers remaining to field a junior varsity or middle school team.

#### Academic Eligibility

- Covenant will follow the eligibility standards set forth by the FHSAA. Grades will be checked at the culmination of each semester. A cumulative GPA of 2.0 must be maintained to stay eligible for athletics.

## Attendance

- Student athletes are expected to attend all classes.
- Coaches must be notified prior to practice if a student is unable to attend.
- Players are expected to attend ALL practices. If a student misses 3 practices, they will be suspended one competition. If a student misses 5 practices, they will be suspended two competitions. If a student misses 7 practices, they will be dismissed from the team. If injured, students are still expected to attend practice and watch and encourage teammates. You may not attend practice if you are currently suspended.

Note: Rehabilitation of sports medicine injuries will count as practice.

- Students who are absent for more than half a day of classes will NOT be able to participate in practices or competitions for that day.

## Cancellation of Games and Practices

- Cancellation of games or practices will typically be announced before the end of the school day. More information about game cancellation can always be obtained by calling the Athletic Department.
- Student athletes should always come to school prepared for practice regardless of current or forecast weather conditions.

## Communication

- Coaches should always be contacted first regarding issues that have to do with their team. If issues are unable to be addressed at this level, players and/or parents should then contact the Athletic Director.

## Equipment and Facilities

- Do not alter any equipment issued to you.
- Care for all equipment that is provided to you.
- You are responsible for locking and securing all personal valuables. The school will not be held responsible for lost or stolen items.
- All school equipment and uniforms issued to you will be returned to the coach or athletic department within 5 school days of your last contest. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action and may result in grades/transcripts being held.
- Families will be billed cost of replacement for lost equipment.

## Lettering

In order to letter for a Covenant team, an individual must meet one of the following requirements, as determined by the coach and athletic department:

- Compete at the varsity level.
- Complete the season in which he/she participates in good standing with the team.

- Players receive a letter once (regardless of number of sports played) and then a pin/bar in subsequent years.

### Non-school participation

- School sponsored athletics will take precedence over non-school athletic activities.

### Quitting

- If any student athlete quits during a sport season, he/she will not be allowed to play during the next sport season (i.e. if a student quits a fall sport, the student must sit out for winter sports). \*Any exceptions to this will be left to administrative discretion.
- The coaching staff reserves the right to deny any student athlete that quits a team the right to tryout the following year.
- Being expelled from school will have the same result as quitting. All honors and awards will be denied.

### The Athletes

- Can expect to be treated with respect by their coaches.
- Will exhibit respect at all times to all teammates, coaches, teachers, school personnel, and to officials.
- Will not commit public displays of affection between students in the school setting or at an athletic event as it is against school policy.
- Understand that failure to adhere to the above will result in some form of disciplinary measure.
- Will treat opponents with respect.
- Will play hard and give their best effort.
- Will maintain self-control at all times.
- Will respect officials and their calls without arguing.
- Win without boasting, lose without excuses and do not quit.
- Always leave the host school facilities better than they found them.
- Remembers that it is a privilege to represent the school and the community.
- Are responsible for getting all assignments from teachers on early dismissal competition days, and will make up and submit the missed work on the next day.

### The Coaches

- Treat players and opponents with respect.
- Inspire athletes to appreciate and love the game.
- Lead by example.
- Discipline poor behavior.
- Respect officials.



### The Fans

- Understand that they represent the school just as the players do and therefore must display good sportsmanship at all times.
- Show compassion for injured players on either team and do not distract players before or during competition.
- Treat opponents and officials with respect.
- Respect the property of our school, as well as any host schools.
- Behave modest in victory and gracious in defeat.

### Transportation

- All student athletes must ride with the team on school provided transportation, unless otherwise specified by the school.
- Exceptions include: Parent permission in person - OR- a written request in advance to the athletic department, which must be confirmed prior to approval.
- Athletes and coaches are expected to treat vans and van drivers with respect and clean the vans upon completion of the trip.

### Booster Club Membership

- When an athlete is selected for a sports team roster, their parents will be automatically enrolled in a Navy membership for our Booster Club.
- By this enrollment, confirmed with participation on the team, parents agree to help with concessions or admission for a minimum of one game in which their athlete is not participating.
- Parents can be exempted from this duty by purchasing a higher booster membership. Those who choose to not participate, will be charged \$250 and enrolled in our Silver membership.



Athlete's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: All Covenant student athletes must return this form prior to competing in their first scheduled practice.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have read the athletic handbook and will abide by  
Parent/Guardian  
each of the mentioned policies and procedures for the Covenant athletic program  
including the policies on Sportsmanship and Recruiting. My son/daughter  
\_\_\_\_\_ has read, understands, and will  
Athlete Name  
abide by these policies and procedures. We understand the consequences of  
noncompliance and will adhere to all Covenant Athletics and school policies.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Athlete Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_