Grace Lutheran School Athletic Handbook



"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure."

Hebrews 6:19

Grace Lutheran School
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Revised: Fall 2026

I. School Mission Statement

The mission of Grace Evangelical Lutheran School is to assist parents with the Christian training of their children for life and eternity, while providing academic excellence in the light of God's Word.

II. Athletic Mission Statement

As an extension of our school's mission, we provide an athletic program at Grace Lutheran as an opportunity for our students to use their God-given talents in competition in order to give glory to God. ***1 Corinthians 10:31, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."***

III. Objectives

The goals of our interscholastic athletic programs are the following:

- To lead athletes to recognize their physical skills, talents, and abilities are gifts from God to be used in His service. ***(1 Cor. 10:31)***
- To aid athletes in using their physical skills, talents, and abilities to the best of their ability and to the honor and glory of their Savior. ***(1 Cor. 10:31)***
- To promote Christian sportsmanship and attitudes among fellow teammates, fellow athletes, coaches, officials, and fans.
- To give athletes the opportunity to compete in interscholastic team sports.
- To equip athletes with a higher skill and knowledge of various sports that may better prepare them for future interscholastic or recreational competition.

IV. Sports Offered

Grace Lutheran School offers a variety of athletic opportunities throughout the school year. Students in grades 3-8 (in some cases K-8) are eligible for Grace's athletic program.

- **Fall Sports:** Co-ed Soccer (Grades 3-8); Girls Volleyball (Grades 5-8); WLA Cross Country Meet (Grades K-8)
- **Winter Sports:** Boys Basketball (Grades 3-8); Girls Basketball (Grades 3-8); Girls Cheerleading (Grades 5-8)
- **Spring:** Track & Field (boys and girls K-8); Co-ed Softball (Grades 7-8)

V. Winnebago Area Lutheran League (WALL)

Grace Lutheran School is a member of the Winnebago Area Lutheran League (WALL).
It is the mission of the WALL to:

1. Provide opportunities to glorify God through sports activities.

2. Provide opportunities for Christian sportsmanship, teamwork, and cooperation.
3. Provide opportunities for Christian fellowship among conference schools.
4. Provide opportunities to develop spiritual, physical, social, and mental characteristics of the children.
5. Provide opportunities for exposure to sports in the interscholastic setting.
6. To promote WLA as the primary opportunity for secondary education.

The following area Lutheran schools are members of the WALL:

1. St. Matthew's Lutheran, Iron Ridge, WI
2. St. John's Lutheran, Lomira, WI
3. Grace Lutheran, Oshkosh, WI
4. St. Paul's Lutheran, Mt. Calvary, WI
5. St. Luke's Lutheran, Oakfield, WI
6. Faith Lutheran, Fond du Lac, WI
7. St. John's Lutheran, Fox Lake, WI
8. Peace Lutheran, Green Lake, WI
9. St. John's Lutheran, Montello, WI
10. Redeemer Lutheran, Fond du Lac, WI
11. St. Stephen's Lutheran, Horicon, WI
12. St. John's Lutheran, Mayville, WI
13. St. Peter's Lutheran, Fond du Lac, WI
14. Waucousta Lutheran, Campbellsport, WI

VI. Participation Requirements

1 Corinthians 10:31, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." With these words as the program's motivation, the following expectations apply to all students who wish to participate in the athletic program:

- Participation in our athletic programs is not to be considered a right, but a privilege. Players are expected to uphold the expectations listed in Part VII of this handbook throughout the season. Failure to do so may result in consequences, including removal from the team.
- Students must be able to commit to attending both practices and games, including tournaments. Planned absences should be clearly communicated to coaches as the season gets underway.
- Students that receive a behavioral detention during the school day will miss the following game or meet.
- Students with 3 late assignments in one week will be considered ineligible for athletics for the next 5 school days.
- Students must maintain a C grade average or better and may not have any F's on a mid-term or quarter report. A student declared ineligible at the end of these marking periods will be ineligible for 5 school days after the family is notified. The student's progress will be reviewed by the principal and the classroom teacher. If the student

has demonstrated satisfactory improvement, the student will be reinstated for athletic activities.

- The school recognizes that students are individuals, each one possessing different gifts and abilities. Because of this, there may be times when these eligibility guidelines are tailored to the needs and abilities of the individual. The classroom teacher and principal are responsible for tailoring guidelines when necessary.
- Students must be in school by the end of their classroom lunch period in order to participate in practice or a game *on that day.* Extenuating circumstances will be taken into account. (i.e. significant family events, doctor appointments, etc..)
- Behavior which will cause removal from the team includes fighting, stealing, vandalism, and use of alcohol, drugs or tobacco.

VII. Expectations of Players

"Let your light shine before men so that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. " (Matthew 5:16) When joining a team, the student makes a commitment to which they are expected to follow through. Specific expectations include but are not limited to the following:

- Listen to coaches, give their best effort, and accept feedback with a positive attitude.
- Display Christ-centered respect and sportsmanship at all times to all players, coaches, officials, and spectators.
- Maintain all participation requirements of Grace Lutheran as detailed in this athletic handbook before having the privilege to participate in Grace's athletic program. *(see participation requirements)*
- Respect all property when playing at home or the opposing team's facility.
- Report all injuries to the coach of their sport, whether the injury was incurred at practice, in a game, or elsewhere.
- Players are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities outside of team practices to develop their skills: summer camps, working with parents, open gyms, and the like.
- Due to new guidelines set forth by the Department of Public Instruction and Statute 118.293 (as of 2012) all players are required to sign the athlete agreement form in an effort to recognize and prevent athletic concussions and cardiac arrest. This form **MUST** be signed and returned before participating in each sport season.

VIII. Expectations of Coaches

- Head coaches must be members of a WELS/ELS congregation.
- Coaches, whether lay persons or called workers, are to follow the example of our Lord as described in ***Isaiah 40:11, "He tends his flock like a shepherd; He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young."***

- Coaches should love as Jesus loves us first. Teaching skills and fundamentals should be taught and modeled in the light of Jesus' love. The coach must understand that they are responsible for their behavior at all times and their conduct reflects on Grace Lutheran School and our Savior.
- Coaches should have a general knowledge of the sport they are assigned to coach. At Grace Lutheran, coaches are to develop and encourage athletes at all skill levels.
- The coach needs to show organization, a willingness to improve as coach, and a commitment for teaching the fundamental skills of that particular sport. The coach must understand that they are responsible for their behavior at all times.
- The coach is responsible for the care and discipline of the athletes during the practices and games. At the end of practice and game activities the parent will assume responsibility for the post-game care and discipline of their child(ren).
- The coaches are encouraged to pray with the players before each athletic contest.
- Due to new guidelines set forth by the Department of Public Instruction and Statute 118.293 (as of 2012) all coaches are required to view the "Concussions 101: A Primer for Kids and Parents" video and sign the coaches agreement form in an effort to recognize and prevent athletic concussions. This video **MUST** be viewed and form **MUST** be signed and returned before the coach participates in each sport season.
- It is the policy of the School Board that all Grace coaches complete a background check and receive training on the requirements of Wisconsin Act 89, which governs appropriate communication and interactions between school personnel, volunteers, and students.

IX. Expectations of Parents

- All families with students involved in athletics are required to attend the Grace Athletics meeting before the start of each season.
- Students must be able to commit to attending both practices and games. Planned absences should be clearly communicated to coaches as the season gets underway.
- Parents are expected to set a positive Christian example for their children, fellow Christians, and the unchurched. This will follow the philosophy based on ***Colossians 3:17, "do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."***
- Parents should respect the coaches and officials who give of their time to assist the development of their children. If problems arise, please follow the proper lines of communication in accordance with Matthew 18. See Part XVII of this handbook for details.
- It will be the responsibility of the parents to watch, care for, and discipline their children before and after all home and away games. If the child's own parent is not able to attend the athletic contest, the parent will be responsible for finding a "care-giver" when the child is not under the direct control of the coach.
- The parent will be responsible for getting the child to and from practices and games in a timely fashion. This includes transportation for practices and games, which are held off-campus (See Section XVI). Parents are encouraged to volunteer wherever

the need arises. Areas in need may include volunteering to work at home games and hosting WALL tournament games we are responsible for operating.

- Due to new guidelines set forth by the Department of Public Instruction and Statute 118.293 (as of 2012) all parents are required to sign the parent agreement form in an effort to recognize and prevent athletic concussions and cardiac arrest. This form **MUST** be signed and returned before their child participates in each sport season.

X. Expectations of Spectators

- The behavior of Grace Lutheran spectators will follow the philosophy based on ***Colossians 3:17, "And whatever you do , whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him"***, and our Mission Statement as based on ***1 Corinthians 10:31, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."***
- We would ask that the spectators act only in a positive Christian manner showing courtesy to players, coaches, and referees. Besides modeling proper conduct, Grace spectators should be willing to remind others of proper conduct.
- Spectators who fail to conduct themselves in a Christ-like manner will be asked to leave the premises. Referees have the authority to end the sporting event due to the conduct of fans.

XI. Volunteer Procedures

- Parents of students in our athletic program are required to assist at least once during the winter sports season. Volunteer sessions include: concessions stand, scorebook, score clock, or hallway monitor.
- The Parents, Teachers, and Friends of Grace (PTF) will manage the concession stand and will provide sign-ups for volunteers to participate.
- Volunteers are needed for all home basketball games, Grace-hosted tournaments, and any WALL tournament events that Grace Lutheran School may host.

XII. Levels of Teams/Playing Time

Grace Lutheran School does not cut players from our athletic teams. However, the athletic program includes different levels of competition. All third and fourth graders will have a chance to compete at the C-team level for basketball, soccer, and cheer. All fifth and sixth graders will have the opportunity to compete at the B-team level. All seventh and eighth graders will have the opportunity to compete at the A-team level. In the situation where a level has too many participants for a single team, grade level teams may be used. The following philosophy has been established regarding the different levels of competition and participation in soccer, basketball, and volleyball.

- *C-TEAM:* Practice is the main goal at this level. All players will receive equal attention from the coach in practices and games. A minimal number of games will be scheduled in order to put practiced skills in competition. Coaches will place equal playing time for all players high on their list of priorities.
- *B-TEAM*- Practice is still the main focus. The game competition is stronger than for the C-team. All players will get playing time in every game, but equal playing time cannot always be guaranteed.
- A-TEAM: This level of competition is designed to provide the highest level of competitive play. The primary objective is to field the strongest team for the majority of each game while fostering individual and team development. Every effort will be made to provide each student-athlete with playing time in each contest; however, playing time may vary based on factors such as game situations, effort, attitude, and attendance. In tournament competition, playing time is not guaranteed.

Coaches, at all levels are given the right to make decisions on which players play and how much based on what they see in practice and in the game. Players who do not work hard in practice or fail to attend practice should not expect the same playing time as those who work hard and attend practices consistently.

XIII. "Playing Up" Process

Grace Lutheran School is committed to providing athletic opportunities for its students, and is also committed to ensuring the smooth operation of the Winnebago Area Lutheran League. When our upper level teams are in need of players, families may be asked in the grade level below to "play up". This will only happen if there is agreement between the athletic director, coach, parent, and player. Below is an outline of how this process will take place:

- Volleyball, Basketball and Soccer: Our goal is to have at least 3 players on the bench for athletic contests. When a team is projected to have fewer than the required number of players, the athletic director will contact families of students in the grade level below (6th grade for A-team, 4th grade for B-team) and invite these individuals to "play up". Students may refuse and remain at their level. If they would like to participate, students may play on both their current level and the level above. Details will be worked out between the family and the athletic director.
- When a cheer squad is projected to have fewer than the needed number of participants, the athletic director will contact families of students in the grade level below (6th grade for A-team, 4th grade for B-team) and invite these individuals to "play up". Students may refuse and remain at their level. If they would like to participate, students may play on both their current level and the level above. Details will be worked out between the family and the athletic director.

XIV. Uniform Care

Uniforms should be kept in the best condition possible. In order to help prolong the use of our uniforms, the uniform should be washed according to the washing instructions. These instructions will be given to parents prior to the start of each season.

If a uniform is not returned or is returned in non-satisfactory condition, the family will be charged the cost of the uniform. If students lose a uniform, families will pay for it. Uniforms must be cleaned and turned in by a deadline. These deadlines will be communicated in the Monday Note at the close of each season.

XVI. Descriptions of Other Athletic Seasons at Grace

Soccer (Fall)
Grace's soccer program is comprised of students in 3-8 Grade. A and B level teams will have a full schedule of practices and league games culminating in end of season tournaments. C-team will consist of 3-4 graders. Their season will consist of a few practices and participation in one tournament.

- Practices are held at Winnebago County Community Park in Oshkosh
- Home games are held at Winnebago County Park (625 E County Rd Y, Oshkosh; follow County Park Drive to fields)

Cheerleading (Winter)
Cheerleading at Grace Lutheran School will provide girls in 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade the opportunity for meaningful participation, teamwork, sportsmanship and skill building.

Softball (Spring)
The softball program at Grace will consist of one team of coed players in 7-8 grade. The season will start in April and run until mid May.

- Practices and games will be held off-site, the location to be determined. Grace Lutheran School works with the Oshkosh Park and Rec. department to secure a local field.

Cross Country (Fall)
Grace participates in the cross country run at WLA in the fall. This is open to all students in K-8.

Track and Field (Spring)
Grace participates in the track meet at WLA in May. This is open to all students in K-8. Schedules and information will be released several weeks prior to the meet.

XVII. Chain of Command Reference

Our Lord Jesus Christ has established an orderly guideline to follow when dealing with conflict between Christians. In order to follow the guidelines established in **Matthew 18:15-17**, a chain of command has been established for use by the athletic program.

Order from top to bottom:

1. Principal
2. Athletic Director
3. Coach
4. Parent

If a parent has a concern, he or she should first address the matter directly with the individual most closely involved (e.g., the coach). Parents are encouraged to schedule a mutually convenient time to discuss the concern rather than addressing it immediately before, during, or after a game or practice. If the situation is emotional or contentious, families are asked to observe the 24-hour rule by waiting at least 24 hours before initiating the conversation. This allows time for emotions to settle and promotes respectful, productive communication.

Before involving the Athletic Director or Principal, every effort should be made to resolve concerns directly with the coach. If a resolution cannot be reached after meeting with the coach, the matter may then be brought to the Athletic Director. If the issue remains unresolved after meeting with the Athletic Director, the Principal will become involved.

Parents should not contact the Athletic Director or Principal as the first step regarding concerns. If a parent does contact either administrator before speaking with the coach, they will be directed back to the coach to address and attempt to resolve the concern first.

If a coach has concerns involving a student-athlete or coaching responsibilities, the matter should be discussed with the Athletic Director. Coaches are expected to maintain regular communication with the Athletic Director regarding significant issues. Minor concerns may be handled at the coach's discretion. Major concerns or disciplinary matters should involve the coach, Athletic Director, and, when appropriate, the Principal.

XVIII. In Closing

Any child that participates in the athletic program does so as a student enrolled at Grace and is therefore subject to all the philosophies, policies and guidelines spelled out in this handbook as well as the Grace School Handbook. It is expected that all things be done decently and in order, and that all words and actions may glorify our Savior, Jesus Christ.

It is indeed a great privilege to offer God’s children the opportunity to grow through the means of an interscholastic athletic program throughout their grade school experience. Parents and student-athletes should never underestimate the impact their words and

actions may have on others. Participation in athletics should be viewed as an opportunity to witness God's love through words and actions. God bless you as you go about His work!