



Cincinnati Classical Academy Athletic Handbook for Coaches

Welcome Letter:

Dear Coaches,

Welcome to Cincinnati Classical Academy Athletics! You have chosen to embark on a journey to help our student-athletes to challenge their minds, bodies, and spirits. As a Classical school, we believe that athletic excellence goes hand-in-hand with the pursuit of virtue. This handbook outlines the expectations, principles, and values that will guide you to be a well-ordered and disciplined coach, striving for excellence both on and off the field.

Together, let us embody the virtues of gratitude, compassion, humility, courage, perseverance, justice, and prudence as we honor the responsibilities and privileges of representing our school.

In the pursuit of excellence,

Mr. Joshua Wellen
Director of Athletics
Cincinnati Classical Academy

Mission:

Our mission at Cincinnati Classical Academy is to develop the minds and nourish the hearts of our students through a content-rich curriculum in the classical liberal arts and sciences, with instruction in moral character and civic virtue.

Vision:

Our vision is to form our students with strong language and reasoning skills; an understanding of the natural world and our nation; and an appreciation of the good, the true, and the beautiful as revealed through our cultural inheritance of the Western civilization.

Purpose of Athletics:

Cincinnati Classical Academy's athletics program is an integral part of our well-rounded Classical education. Athletics foster teamwork, build community, and further the pursuit of a formation in virtue, especially perseverance and humility.

Winning is important, and it is ultimately one measure of success over time. Our focus, however, must remain on the habitual formation of our student-athletes; developing well-ordered individuals through athletic competition will yield wins.

I. Coaching Philosophy

1. Characterological Development

Coaches are expected to prioritize character-building as a strategy for winning. The primary goal is to instill values such as responsibility, humility, discipline, and perseverance in our student-athletes.

2. Academic Excellence

Coaches should actively support and prioritize their athletes' academic progress, understanding that academic performance takes precedence over athletic participation.

3. Teamwork and Sportsmanship

Coaches will model and enforce respect, cooperation, and positive interactions among team members and opponents. Win or lose, athletes must uphold the highest standards of sportsmanship.

4. Physical and Emotional Well-being

Ensuring the safety, physical health, and emotional well-being of student-athletes is a non-negotiable responsibility. Coaches must encourage balanced training, prevent overuse injuries, and be sensitive to athletes' mental health.

II. Responsibilities of a Coach

1. Leadership and Conduct

- Lead by example in professionalism, integrity, and enthusiasm.
- Communicate effectively with students, parents, faculty, and administration.
- Maintain a positive and respectful environment at practices and competitions.
- Understand and enforce the rules and regulations of the sport appropriately.

2. Player Development

- Implement a structured plan for skill development and improvement.
- Provide individual feedback and support for each athlete.
- Encourage a growth mindset and focus on progress rather than perfection.

3. Safety and Compliance

- Adhere to safety protocols, including injury prevention strategies.
- Ensure all athletes are properly equipped and medically cleared to play.
- Follow OHSA and league guidelines for practices, games, and athlete conduct.

4. Team Communication

- Clearly communicate practice schedules, game times, and expectations to athletes and parents.
- Foster an environment where athletes feel comfortable raising concerns.
- Assist with securing personnel for contest support, including, but not limited to: statisticians, student managers, scorebook keepers, scoreboard keepers, line judges, concessions workers, and any other responsibilities as assigned by the Director of Athletics.

III. Code of Conduct

Cincinnati Classical Academy conducts an interscholastic athletics program that aligns with the school's mission and philosophy. We expect our coaches, our student-athletes, and our parents to exhibit behavior that appropriately reflects the culture of the school. Coaches should have positive interactions with referees and with the coaches, players, and parents of our opponents.

1. For Coaches:

- Be a positive role model for athletes in both behavior and attitude.
- Demonstrate respect for referees, opposing coaches, and players.
- Refrain from using foul language, inappropriate gestures, or unsportsmanlike conduct.

2. For Athletes:

- Respect your teammates, coaches, opponents, and officials at all times.
- Strive to achieve your best performance in both academics and athletics.
- Follow the directions of coaches and adhere to team rules.

3. For Parents and Spectators

- Support the team and coaching staff in a positive manner.
- Refrain from coaching from the sidelines or engaging with officials in a disruptive way.
- Demonstrate respect for all players, coaches, and officials during competitions.

Student-Athlete Disciplinary Policy

At Cincinnati Classical Academy, participation in athletics is considered a privilege, not a right. All student-athletes are expected to exemplify the values and virtues of the school both on and off the field, court, or arena. This policy outlines the expectations for student-athletes and the potential disciplinary actions that may be taken for any violations of school rules or athletic program standards.

1. General Expectations

Student-athletes are expected to:

- Abide by all school rules and policies as outlined in the Student/Family Handbook.
- Display sportsmanship, respect, and courtesy to teammates, coaches, opponents, officials, and spectators.
- Demonstrate commitment to their academic responsibilities, ensuring that their coursework and behavior in school meet the academic eligibility requirements for participation.
- Attend all practices, games, and team events unless excused by the coach or sports coordinator.
- Uphold the Seven Core Virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude, humility, gratitude, perseverance, and compassion) in their conduct both during athletic events and in the classroom.

2. Code of Conduct Violations

Any student-athlete who violates school rules or fails to meet the expectations set forth by the athletic program may face disciplinary action, which could include the suspension or revocation of athletic privileges. Violations include, but are not limited to:

- Poor sportsmanship or inappropriate behavior during practices or competitions.
- Academic ineligibility due to poor performance or failure to meet classroom expectations.
- Bullying, harassment, or mistreatment of teammates, opponents, or any members of the school community.
- Disruptive behavior or failure to comply with instructions from coaches or staff.
- Inappropriate or offensive content on social media, especially if it reflects poorly on the school.
- Any use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products.
- Violations of school rules regarding behavior, conduct, attendance, or dress code.

3. Disciplinary Actions

The coach, sports coordinator, or Director of Athletics has the authority to impose the following disciplinary actions based on the severity and frequency of the violation:

- **Verbal Warning:** A first-time or minor violation may result in a verbal warning from the coach.
- **Suspension from Practices or Games:** For repeated or more serious violations, the coach or sports coordinator may suspend the student-athlete from participating in practices or games for a specified period of time.
- **Revocation of Leadership Roles:** Any student-athlete in a team leadership position (e.g., team captain) may be removed from that role if the student-athlete's conduct does not meet expectations.
- **Suspension from the Team:** In cases of serious misconduct or continual violation of the school or athletic program's policies, a student-athlete may be suspended from the team indefinitely or for the remainder of the season.
- **Dismissal from the Team:** For the most severe violations, such as repeated offenses, bullying, or conduct that harms the integrity of the team, the student-athlete may be dismissed from the team entirely. Such a dismissal will not result in a refund, as behavioral violations are made at the student-athlete's will.

4. Appeals Process

If a student-athlete or their parent/guardian disagrees with a disciplinary action, he may submit a written appeal to the Director of Athletics within three days of the decision. The Director of Athletics will review the case and make a final determination.

5. Non-Athletic Violations Impacting Athletic Participation

Any violation of school rules outside of the athletic context, including behavior during the school day, at school events, or in the community, may also result in suspension or revocation of athletic privileges. The Director of Athletics, in consultation with the Headmaster, may decide to impose athletic sanctions for non-athletic infractions.

6. Zero Tolerance Behaviors

Any act of violence, possession or use of illegal substances, or criminal behavior will not be tolerated. Such behavior may result in immediate dismissal from all athletic programs.

Further disciplinary action may be pursued by the school.

7. Compliance with School Policies

Student-athletes and their families must understand that the disciplinary policy for athletics aligns with the overall disciplinary framework of Cincinnati Classical Academy. Coaches and sports coordinators will work closely with school administration to ensure that disciplinary measures in athletics reinforce the school's mission to develop both the minds and hearts of our students.

By participating in the athletic program at Cincinnati Classical Academy, student-athletes agree to uphold these standards and accept the consequences for failing to do so.

IV. Coaching Policies

1. Practice and Game Procedures

- Coaches must arrive at practices and games ahead of time, prepared with a detailed plan.
- Practices should be structured, purposeful, and focused on both individual and team development.
- Game strategies should be communicated and practiced ahead of competitions.

2. Playing Time

- Decisions on playing time should be based on skill, effort, attitude, and team needs.
- Coaches are expected to communicate clearly with athletes regarding their roles and expectations for improvement.

3. Injury Management

- Coaches must immediately address any injuries and refer athletes to appropriate medical personnel if necessary.
- An athlete must be cleared by a medical professional before returning to play after injury.

4. Conflict Resolution

- If issues arise between athletes, parents, or staff, coaches should address them in a respectful and timely manner.
- If conflicts persist, escalate the issue to the Athletic Director for further guidance.

V. Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct

1. Commitment to Ethical Standards

- Coaches are responsible for fostering a culture of integrity. This includes adherence to all school policies and governing bodies' rules.

2. Handling Competition

- Winning should never come at the expense of fairness or respect. Coaches must emphasize effort, learning, and improvement over the outcome of the game.

3. Respect for Officials

- Coaches are expected to maintain respectful interactions with referees and game officials. Any disagreements should be handled professionally and constructively.
- In general, coaches should not complain to the referees during play. Coaches should address any issues with calls during appropriate times – either time outs or between quarters.
- Any discussions had with referees should be polite and respectful. If a coach is upset, frustrated, or angry with a call (or a non-call), the coach should wait until he can compose himself before addressing the referee.
- Coaches should remember that student-athletes (and their parents) are watching the coach during the game. Therefore, the coaches' behavior needs to reflect the mission of the school and should align with Cincinnati Classical Academy's core virtues.

VI. Communication with the Athletic Department

1. Scheduling and Updates

- All practice and game schedules should be submitted to the Director of Athletics in a timely manner. Any changes must be communicated to athletes, parents, and the administration promptly.

2. Incident Reporting

- Any significant incidents, including injuries, conflicts, or violations of the Code of Conduct, must be reported to the Director of Athletics immediately.

3. Reporting Scores

- Scores should be reported to the appropriate resource in a timely fashion.

4. Reporting Virtues

- Coaches should be vigilant during practices and games, watching for students who stand out for living by the core virtues at Cincinnati Classical Academy. When students manifest the core virtues, coaches should take the time to let the Director of Athletics know.
- The athletic department has a shared Excel file for reporting virtuous athletes. Either the Director of Athletics or the sport coordinator will share that file with the coaches each season. This file is meant to make reporting virtuous behavior – either

by an individual or a group of student-athletes – easy for coaches.

VII. Coach Development and Education

1. Continuing Education

- Coaches are encouraged to pursue professional development opportunities such as attending clinics, workshops, or certification programs.

2. Feedback and Evaluation

- Coaches will receive regular feedback from the Director of Athletics or from the sport coordinator based on performance, adherence to the mission, and overall team development.

3. Mentorship and Collaboration

- New coaches will be mentored by experienced staff to ensure a smooth transition and alignment with the school's coaching philosophy.

VIII. Study Tables:

The following is a procedure for coaches to receive their sports teams from the school for study tables that begin shortly after school.

1. When teams have study tables after school, a coach or parent volunteer will need to pick up the students in the foyer just outside the auditorium. From the outside of the building, this same foyer is inside the doors beneath the tower.
2. The coach will need to follow our procedure for entering the building. Go to the blue awning entrance. Ring the doorbell. Wait for the door to buzz. Go to the office. Let Mrs. Schmidt know that you are there to pick up your team. Mrs. Schmidt will have your team called to the auditorium foyer. Exit the office and turn right. Walk through the hall to the entrance by the auditorium to meet your team.
3. The coach should wait until the entire team is present in the lobby by the auditorium before walking the team to the gym. The coach and the team should walk around the outside of the building and use the crosswalk to cross over the street to the gym. In the gym building, there is a room directly ahead of the entrance door that should be used for study tables.

The following are the policies and student expectations for study tables:

Purpose:

Study tables are designed to support academic success and promote well-ordered lives for student-athletes at Cincinnati Classical Academy. Study tables should be used productively to complete assignments, to study for exams, and to seek help on academic topics. We aim to promote focus, responsibility, and respect in a supportive environment as a way of building habitual order in the lives of our student-athletes.

Expectations:

Study tables are an extension of the academic day. Students should follow the same policies and procedures as in their classrooms. Behavior should be the same as a classroom. Students should be well-ordered and respectful of the study table monitor.

1. Dress Code

- Students may dress in school uniforms or practice attire for study tables.

2. Attendance and Punctuality

- Students should arrive on time and be prepared with all necessary materials (books, notebooks, assignments, etc.).
- Students should be respectful of the volunteer monitors. Effective communication about attendance is essential. If you are expected to be at study tables, and you are unable to attend, please have your parents communicate with the study table monitor.
- If you are coming from the Siebenthaler campus, your monitor will check in at the front office to have you called to meet. You will meet the monitor in the Old Narthex Lobby, just outside the auditorium. The monitor will walk you to the gym for study tables.

3. Focus and Productivity

- Study tables are a focused study time; they should not be used for socializing, gaming, or other non-academic activities.
- Students should not have gum, food, or drinks other than water during study tables. Students may use the restroom or drink water during study tables.
 - Students may eat before or after study tables in preparation for practice.
- Phones and other non-study-related devices must be turned off and placed in bookbags during study tables. If a student needs to call or text a parent, that student should ask for permission from the study table monitor before doing so.
- Students should use study table time to complete assignments, study, or read. If students finish early, they should use the remaining time productively by reviewing notes, preparing for future assignments, or reading good books.

4. Respect for Others

- Students should keep noise to a minimum to maintain a quiet study environment. A voice level of 0 or 1 should be used. Talking should be limited to necessary academic discussions.
- Respect the study table monitor and other student-athletes by following instructions and not causing disruptions.
- Handle all provided materials, furniture, and equipment with care.

5. Seeking Help and Collaboration

- If help is needed on an assignment or concept, student-athletes are encouraged to seek assistance from the study table monitor.
- If students need to collaborate on an assignment, they should seek permission from the study table monitor first.
 - Group work is permitted only if pre-approved by the study table monitor and should remain quiet and focused on the academic task.

6. Accountability and Integrity

- Students should always adhere to the school's academic honesty policies. Any form of cheating, plagiarism, or dishonest behavior will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action.
- Coaches and staff may review academic progress regularly. If progress is not satisfactory, additional support or study table hours may be recommended.

Consequences for Policy Violations:

- First Violation: Verbal warning and reminder of study table expectations.
- Second Violation: Removal from study tables for the next session, with a report to the athletic coach and parent notification.
- Third Violation: Meeting with the student-athlete, their coach, and a school administrator to discuss continued participation in study tables and potential additional consequences.

Note: Repeated violations may impact a student-athlete's eligibility to participate in sports.

IX. Teaching Cincinnati Classical's Core Virtues Through Athletics

At Cincinnati Classical Academy, we believe that athletics is a powerful platform for teaching and reinforcing the virtues that are essential for developing well-rounded, principled individuals. By integrating the virtues of honesty, courage, humility, gratitude, perseverance, justice, and prudence into daily coaching, we not only shape better athletes but also contribute to the formation of moral character that will serve our students throughout their lives.

1. Compassion

Athletics teaches students to be compassionate in their efforts and interactions, fostering personal growth and leadership by ensuring that athletes grow into empathetic and respectful individuals through competition.

- Coaches are expected to demonstrate compassion through empathy and understanding in their interactions with athletes, parents, officials, and other coaches.
- Coaches should promote transparency in admitting mistakes or faults, both in individual actions and during competition. In doing so, coaches should address challenges, conflicts, or mistakes with patience and constructive communication.
- Coaches should model compassion by providing truthful and constructive feedback that displays an understanding of athletes' ability to grow.
- Coaches should encourage athletes to remain composed and to be understanding when facing difficult situations such as an opponent's poor sportsmanship or a teammate's mistakes.

- Coaches should teach the importance of resilience and forgiveness, demonstrating that kindness strengthens character in adversity.

Example: Emphasize respect for opponents by teaching athletes to compete with honor and dignity, regardless of the game's outcome. Require athletes to show appreciation for their opponents, officials, and spectators by encouraging proper greetings and sportsmanlike behavior.

2. Courage

Courage is about facing fears and challenges with confidence and determination.

- Inspire athletes to take risks, whether trying a new skill, playing a new position, or stepping into leadership roles.
- Support students in pushing through fear of failure, highlighting the importance of learning from mistakes.
- Coaches should show courage by standing up for their athletes, even in difficult or contentious situations.

Example: Encourage athletes to step up in critical moments, such as taking the last shot in a game, even when they are unsure of the outcome.

3. Humility

Humility allows athletes to recognize that success is a team effort, and improvement is a continual process.

- Teach athletes to be gracious in victory and accepting in defeat, understanding that no achievement is attained solely by individual effort.
- Encourage students to always remain teachable and open to feedback, regardless of their talent or status on the team.
- Coaches should model humility by admitting mistakes, continuing their own learning, and valuing contributions from all team members.

Example: After a victory, emphasize the collective effort rather than individual glory, recognizing the contributions of all players.

4. Gratitude

Gratitude is the foundation of appreciating the opportunities, support, and challenges that come with athletic participation.

- Encourage athletes to express gratitude towards their teammates, coaches, parents, and opponents.
- Create moments of reflection where students acknowledge the support they receive from others, including their health and ability to play the sport.
- Coaches can demonstrate gratitude by recognizing the effort of athletes and the broader community supporting the team.

Example: After games or practices, take time to thank the athletes for their effort, the parents for their support, and the officials for their role in the game.

5. Perseverance

Perseverance teaches athletes to remain determined and dedicated, even when the journey is tough.

- Highlight the importance of consistent effort, even in the face of setbacks, injuries, or losses.
- Reinforce the message that improvement is a gradual process and that setbacks are opportunities for growth.
- Coaches should exemplify perseverance by staying positive and motivated, even during challenging seasons or tough games.

Example: When a player is recovering from an injury, encourage them to take small steps each day, celebrating each milestone on their path back to full strength.

6. Justice

Justice ensures that fairness, respect, and responsibility are at the core of all athletic interactions.

- Teach athletes to treat teammates, opponents, and officials with fairness and respect, even in the heat of competition.
- Ensure that all athletes receive equitable opportunities for growth, participation, and recognition, based on their efforts and dedication.
- Coaches should practice justice by holding all players to the same standards, regardless of talent or status on the team.

Example: In team selection or playing time decisions, make choices based on effort, sportsmanship, and merit, rather than favoritism or external pressures.

7. Prudence

Prudence is the practice of making wise decisions, both on and off the field.

- Teach athletes the importance of thinking before acting, especially in high-pressure moments where impulsive decisions can affect outcomes.
- Encourage athletes to reflect on their performance, setting realistic goals and making thoughtful adjustments to their approach.
- Coaches should model prudence by carefully planning practices and games and by making decisions that benefit the long-term development of athletes and the program.

Example: Before a game, guide athletes in making prudent decisions about how to approach their opponents, manage their energy, and respond to various in-game scenarios.

Incorporating Virtues into Everyday Coaching

1. Integrating Virtue Discussions

At the start or end of practice, take a few minutes to discuss one of the virtues and how it applies to the team's activities for the day. Use real-life examples from practice, games, or the broader world of sports to make these virtues tangible.

2. Leading by Example

Coaches are role models. By demonstrating these virtues in your actions, coaches inspire athletes to follow suit. Upholding honesty, courage, humility, and other virtues – especially our seven core virtues – in a coach's decisions, feedback, and interactions will reinforce their importance to the team.

3. Rewarding Virtuous Behavior

Recognize and celebrate when athletes embody these virtues. Whether a player shows perseverance by working hard in practice despite struggles or demonstrates humility in helping a teammate, publicly acknowledging these behaviors encourages the whole team to prioritize virtuous conduct.

4. Encouraging Reflection

After games or practices, ask athletes to reflect on how they demonstrated (or could improve on) virtues such as courage or prudence. Reflection fosters self-awareness and helps athletes internalize the importance of these traits beyond athletics.

Coaches at Cincinnati Classical Academy play a crucial role in shaping the experiences and development of student-athletes. By upholding the values of the school, prioritizing character development, and fostering a positive and supportive athletic environment, you will contribute to the lasting success of the students both on and off the field. By weaving the core virtues into every aspect of your coaching at Cincinnati Classical Academy, you help cultivate athletes who not only excel in their sport, but also develop into principled, virtuous individuals ready to lead in every facet of their lives.

This handbook serves as a living document and will be updated as necessary to ensure the continued success of our athletic programs. Thank you for your commitment and dedication to our student-athletes and the Cincinnati Classical Academy community.

Last Reviewed: