

**ATHLETIC HANDBOOK**

A Communication Guide for Student-Athletes

And Parents of the GPLHS Family

2021-2022



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**Introductory Comments**

Welcome to the Athletic Department of Great Plains Lutheran High School. The Faculty and coaching staff hope that your experience with us in athletics will be a blessing to you as you grow in Christ. This handbook has been prepared to help you better understand our school’s purpose of our Athletic Department, and your responsibilities as an athlete or parent. This handbook should serve as a communications guide regarding athletics and its policies among students, coaches, administrators, and parents.

**Mission Statement of GPLHS**

Great Plains Lutheran High School provides a Christ-centered education to assist families in nurturing students as lifelong disciples of Christ

**Purpose and Philosophy of Athletics**

The purpose of athletics is naturally part of nurturing students for lifelong service. Part of this is the physical training and care of our bodies. In his letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul reminds us of the sanctity of the body. “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? … for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). We have a clear directive to take care of God’s temple, our body. Our athletic program will help train students how to properly take care of their bodies through physical exercise and other health-conscious practices.

Through athletics we can offer opportunities that challenge our students spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and physically in various settings that cannot be duplicated in a classroom or anywhere else. Within our athletic program it is our goal to provide opportunities for student-athletes to develop self-discipline, leadership skills, intrinsic motivation, good sportsmanship, and proper social interactions. These opportunities come through teamwork, sacrifice, cooperation, loyalty, and fair play. All instruction and development will strive to do all for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

We strive for excellence throughout our entire athletic program. We will emphasize instruction, growth, and the person over performance. It is also our goal to pursue excellence in performance. We will remember and take to heart the tremendous responsibility and privilege that has been entrusted to us – the training of God’s children. We will strive to lead our student-athletes in their pursuit of excellence by developing and using all of their God-given talents.

**Responsibilities of Coaches**

1. Be a role model of Christian faith to everyone involved with athletics
2. Enforce the rules, policies, and regulations included within this handbook and school handbook.
3. Follow the rules, policies, and regulations set forth in the Coaches’ Handbook.
4. Do all things to the glory of God.

**Responsibilities of Student-Athletes**

All students of GPLHS are encouraged to participate in the athletic programs of Great Plains Lutheran. Being a part of a team is a privilege extended to those students who meet the requirements and are willing to assume the following responsibilities:

1. Witness your love for your Lord by representing Him, your family, school, team, and yourself in a Christian manner.
2. Display respect for rules, officials, coaches, and all in authority
3. Display a spirit of sacrifice, cooperation, and teamwork.
4. Follow the rules, policies, and regulations of our school.
5. Follow team rules as presented by coaches.
6. In short, do things the “Panther Way”.

**Responsibilities of Parents**

1. Parents will realize their role as ambassadors for the Savior and school and as role models for their children.
2. Parents will support GPLHS, its coaches, and its programs.
3. Parents will avoid the temptation to “coach” their children from the sideline during games. Cheering and encouragement should be team-focused and general in nature. Specific instructional comments directed at individual players should be avoided. Players’ attention needs to be solely focused on the game and coach’s instructions.
4. Parents are expected to avoid negative speech about coaches, other athletes, or officials.
5. Parents are encouraged to support GPLHS teams with positive, enthusiastic cheering. Cheering against other teams or officials is inappropriate. Cheer for our teams, not against opponents or officials.
6. Parents will strive to understand the role their child has on the team and support the goals of the team.

**South Dakota High School Athletic Association Policies**

GPLHS is a member school of the South Dakota High School Athletic Association. Please visit sdhsaa.com for information on the following topics:

* **Eligibility**
  + *Note: GPLHS eligibility standards normally supersede those of SDHSAA.*
* **Open Enrollment**

For open enrollment rules go to sdhsaa.com under handbook/open enrollment or request a copy from the school office.

* **Independent Team Rule**

It is the philosophy of the SDHSAA that when a student elects to be a member of a high school team, that student’s loyalty and allegiance shall be directed to the school and to the team of which said student is a member.

* **Section 7 Non-school Team/Individual Participation**
* **Regular and In-Season Defined**
* **Team membership**

A student becomes a member of a school athletic squad when the student first participates in a practice session. The student ceases to be a squad member when membership on a squad is terminated or after final state championship event (district, region, state) for that classification in the sport.

* **Out-Of-Season**

See sdhsaa.com for information about out-of-season training rules.

* **Out-Of-Season Competition: Leagues, Games, and Tournaments (See Out-of-Season above)**

**GPLHS Academic Eligibility**

*Note: GPLHS eligibility standards normally supersede those of SDHSAA.*

**Guidelines**

1. A student must maintain a 2.0 grade point average and have no F grades to remain eligible for co-curricular activities. They must also be complete and current in their work. The grade point average used to determine eligibility will be based on grades reported on mid-term reports and grades earned during the previous quarter.
2. The faculty and administration reserve the right to determine special eligibility criteria for students with a demonstrated need and for special circumstances.
3. The period of ineligibility will be from the posting of the ineligible list to the end of the mid-term or quarter.

**Consequences**

During the first two weeks of the period of ineligibility, the student will not be permitted to attend any group or team practices, rehearsals, or meetings. During this time the student will be in after school study hall Monday through Thursday until grades improve. Following the two weeks of ineligibility and the required improvement of grades, the student is expected to attend all group or team practices, rehearsals, and meetings, unless the season ends before the reinstatement date. If a student is in an event which is a single presentation, that student may or may not be allowed to complete that obligation (for example: a drama presentation).

**Reinstatement**

A student identified as ineligible due to a low grade point average will be reinstated at the close of the eligibility term unless grades indicate continued ineligibility according to the procedures set by the school administration.

A student may submit an appeal to be reinstated if they have raised their grades after the first two week period of ineligibility. All appeals will be reviewed by administration in a timely manner.

A student who transfers into Great Plains Lutheran High School and is ineligible according to GPL standards upon entry will remain ineligible until the end of the eligibility term.

**GPLHS Code of Conduct**

Note: Refer to the GPLHS Student Handbook for Code of Conduct policies and consequences.

**Code Policy XVI: Activity Policies**

Coaches and advisors may establish further policies for the effective operation of their activity. These policies also become part of the Code of Conduct.

**General Information and Policies**

**Sponsored Athletic Programs**

Fall Sports: Girls and Boys Cross Country, Football, Girls Volleyball, Football Cheerleading

Winter Sports: Girls Basketball, Boys Basketball, Basketball Cheerleading

Spring Sports: Girls and Boys Track and Field, Girls and Boys Golf

**Awards Policy**

**Rationale**

Great Plains Lutheran High School’s Athletic Department will recognize qualified athletic performance with varsity letters and pins, with other special individual and team sports awards, and with career sports awards. The rationale for this policy is to recognize our student-athletes’ use of their God-given physical and intellectual talents to the best of their abilities, as well as to recognize the hard work and dedication given by our student-athletes in representing our school and our Savior through athletic competition.

**Award Explanation**

Great Plains Lutheran High School will acknowledge student-athletes with the following awards:

1. Participation – Participation will be recognized with a Certificate of Participation.
2. Lettering – Lettering will be recognized with that sport’s specific pin. The “GP” letter is given to an athlete upon receiving their first letter in any activity.

**Special Awards**

1. Team Awards (MVP or MIP awards etc.) will be the sole responsibility of the head coach/director of each activity.
2. The Panther Award – given to a student who displays high character, leadership, service traits – will be the sole responsibility of the head coach/director of each activity.
3. Panther Career Athlete Award will be the responsibility of the athletic director, the coaching staff, and faculty.
4. Other Awards – All Conference, All-State, and other awards will be presented as selected by various entities.

**General Policy**

Awards will be given to GPLHS student-athletes participating in GPLHS sponsored athletics.

In order to be eligible for any athletic award from GPLHS the student-athlete must finish the season “in good standing” (minimal code or training rule violations) with the team. Injuries or other similar hardships would not breach the “in good standing” status.

**Elastic Clause**

The head coach has the authority to determine if a student-athlete may letter even if he or she has NOT met the requirements of the written policy.

The head coach (in conjunction with the athletic director) has the authority to determine if a student athlete may NOT letter even if he or she has met the requirements of the written policy.

**Varsity Lettering Policy**

**Basketball and Football**

Complete the season “in Good Standing, AND

Play in a minimum of 60 percent of the quarters throughout a season

(20 games = 80 quarters; 60% of 80 = 48 quarters needed)

**Cheerleading**

Complete the season “in Good Standing”, AND

Cheer in 90% of the games.

**Cross Country**

Complete the season “in Good Standing”, AND

Qualify for the state meet as an individual, OR

Qualify for the state meet as a scoring team member, OR

Medal in four meets.

**Golf**

Complete the season “in Good Standing”, AND

Compete in 60% of the varsity matches.

**Track**

Complete the season “in Good Standing”, AND

Qualify for state meet as an individual, OR

Earn approximately 3 points per meet, OR

Be a top performer in his/her event(s) at GPL.

**Volleyball**

Complete the season “in Good Standing”, AND

Play a minimum of 60% of games throughout a season.

**Purpose of Junior Varsity (JV) Teams**

GPLHS offers sub-varsity competition for many sports. Emphasis at this level is very much on development of skills, knowledge, and decision making. JV coaches will strive to embrace the process of teaching the game to student athletes. Coaches are highly encouraged to play all students in accordance to their abilities and preparation in practice. It is probable that playing time will not be equal, but it should be available for all.

**Purpose of Varsity Teams**

GPLHS offers varsity competition as well. Head coaches will select athletes that are prepared for the highest level of competition. The emphasis at the varsity level is to put the best possible team together in the goal of victory. God encourages his people to strive to do their best. One way this is done is by competing to the very best while honoring Him with proper conduct.

**Cooperation and Playing Time**

The talents, abilities, determination, and level of commitment of athletes differ, and consequently, so does the amount of playing time. A coach has the responsibility of putting together the best team possible, first of all to glorify our Lord, and secondly to achieve the goal of team victory.

The coach also has the responsibility to give every student-athlete as much time as possible. The coaches at GPLHS are mindful of their responsibilities and try to live up to them. Every effort will be made to give all student-athletes as much participation as possible, but the athletes must be willing to sacrifice their own wishes in favor of the needs of the team.

**Communication Process: Player – Coach – Parent**

*“My dear brothers take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.”* James 1:19

Great Plains Lutheran High School sponsors and encourages student participation in co-curricular activities as a means of providing opportunities for personal growth, skill development, socialization, creativity, and competitive experience. The value of athletic activities is recognized as important to the total educational process.

It is the position of Great Plains Lutheran High School that involvement in co-curricular activities is a privilege with accompanying responsibilities, roles, and expectations. These responsibilities, roles, and expectations can possibly lead to misunderstanding. Gossip, backbiting, and all negative approaches to a problem do nothing but make it more difficult to solve. The solution for misunderstanding, concern, and questioning is open communication among athlete-coach-parent.

Regular, open communication with players is an essential part of effective coaching. Players need to feel free to communicate with coaches and trust that coaches will not mistreat them for expressing themselves. If a player has a question or concern he or she is encouraged to go to the coach and discuss the matter before discussing it with anyone else. Parents can promote this communication process by encouraging, by being supportive of all athletes and coaches, and by being positive role models as spectators. Therefore, to facilitate this communication process, the following communication guidelines have been established.

1. Coaches will operate under an “open door policy” where they will candidly respond to questions and concerns.
2. If a player has a question or concern he or she should bring the matter directly to the coach before discussing it with anyone else. One of the learning and maturing opportunities that athletic involvement provides for a young person is dealing with and solving problems individually instead of relying on a parent or a friend to solve them. This would also be in keeping with how our Lord has instructed us to live according to Matthew 18.
3. If a parent wishes to discuss a question or concern with a coach the following procedure should be followed:
   1. Contact with the coach should be made at an appropriate time. It should not happen immediately following a contest or late into the same evening. Please wait until the next day to address the coach.
   2. Communication by all parties will be done in a spirit of Christian love. If the discussion cannot be carried out in a rational, calm, and mature manner the meeting will be suspended immediately. Please understand the inherent difficulty in discussing topics such as playing time, strategy, and decision-making. The head coach has the ultimate and final responsibility for the strategy of the game and the use of personnel in accomplishing that strategy.
   3. In the majority of cases, we are confident the parties involved will arrive at an amiable solution to most questions and concerns.
   4. If the athlete, parent, or coach cannot mutually agree upon a satisfactory solution, the subject should then be brought to the athletic director (first) and then to the principal for mediation.

**Practices**

As a general rule, all practices conducted at GPLHS are closed to the general public and to nonparticipating students. This policy has been established for obvious safety and distraction reasons. Members of the GPLHS family are welcome to observe practices as long as that observation is done in a non-interfering manner. Coaches reserve the right to close practices at their discretion.

**Transportation**

Transportation will be arranged for student-athletes to all off campus contests. Under normal circumstances, the team travels to and from games in the team vehicle. Under special circumstances, players may leave from the contest site with their parents, guardians, or another adult (18+ years old and a high school graduate) as long as parental consent has been furnished to the coach or bus driver. Please use the “Transportation Permission Form” located in the back of this handbook. (Note: This form needs to be filled out for each occurrence; it is not a year-long permission form) It is helpful to communicate with the head coach ahead of time.

**School Work/Denial of Participation**

The student-athlete is responsible for all schoolwork he or she may miss due to athletic events. Normally schoolwork should be handed in before the student leaves for the contest. If an athlete is delinquent in his or her school work responsibilities, the teacher in conjunction with the coach and Dean may deny athletic participation until the matter is rectified.

**Medical Examinations and Forms**

**Introduction**

Our current Board policy states that ALL students (not only athletes) attending GPLHS should have a physical examination every two years. The “normal” schedule for most students would be to have a physical examination for their freshmen and junior years. Transfer students’ examinations also need to fall within a two-year period. Please note that athletes are required to submit specific forms each of their four years.

Please not the deadline for these forms:

1. Note: See forms at the back of this handbook.
2. Please see that all forms are completed and returned to the school office by the given deadline. Students will NOT be allowed to participate (including practices) until these completed forms are returned to the office per SDHSAA policy.
3. There are also forms for concussions. All our students who receive a concussion during the school year will be cleared to return to play by medical personnel using impact testing.
4. Please feel free to speak with the athletic director or school office with any physical examination or form questions

**Other Points of Interest**

1. Doctors of Chiropractic are eligible to conduct physical examinations.
2. Physical examinations completed after April 1 count toward the next 2 years.
3. Students will NOT be allowed to participate (including practices) until these completed forms are returned to the office. This is a liability issue and a SDHSAA rule.

**Deadlines**

1. For students participating in fall sports (CC, FB, VB) forms must be received in our office before the first scheduled practice.
2. For all other students, these forms are due in the office by the first day of school. We would appreciate them as soon as possible.

**Athletic Trainer Services**

Big Stone Therapies (BST) provides regular athletic training services. Properly trained personnel visit GPLHS weekly to check injured athletes. BST personnel also attend all home football games to provide care for injured athletes.

**Insurance**

GPLHS has catastrophic insurance through SDHSAA that covers all students while involved in school-sponsored activities on and off campus. However, this coverage is secondary to any health/accident coverage retained by parents or guardians. If an accident occurs, the claim for coverage should be made against any family insurance coverage that applies. Any balance remaining could then be claimed against the school’s coverage.

**Facility**

The Lord has blessed GPLHS with a tremendous campus including the classroom building and the gymnasium. We ask for everyone’s cooperation in maintaining our facility. Anyone playing on the floor should wear proper shoes, and we request a limited amount of “play” after games and other events. GPLHS personnel will manage the control of lights, backboards, bleachers, and other equipment.

**Training Rules**

Each sport will have training rules explicit to its given sport. Training rules are part of the athletic code and will be published for parents and athletes. Training rules will require the signature of the athlete. Generally, training rules will include the following items: General Code of Conduct Guidelines, Practice Procedures, Eligibility Rules, Sport-Specific Procedures, Curfew Times, and Dress Code Guidelines.

**Conference Affiliation**

GPLHS is a member of the Eastern Coteau Conference (ECC).

**Forms**

Specific forms that need to be returned to the office before participating in a sport are:

1. SDHSAA Physical form and related documents (concussion, Big Stone Therapies, etc)
2. Parent permission form
3. Transportation form
4. Emergency form

Forms may be obtained from the school office if you have not received them.

[gplhs@gplhs.org](mailto:gplhs@gplhs.org) or 605-886-0672

Transportation Permission Form

Here is the Athletic Transportation Permission Form. This form is to be filled out each time your student athlete has your permission to return to school, or to head home, after a contest. Please do not fill this out now, as it is not intended to be filled out once for the entire school year. The bus driver will have copies of this form at each contest, and they can be filled out there. Each activity’s head coach has the discretion to make any other rules for obtaining parent permission to not return on the team vehicle.



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***a Christ-centered education***

***to assist families in nurturing students***

***as lifelong disciples of Christ.***

**Athletic Transportation Permission Form**

By signing below, I give permission for my child, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, to ride with

(child’s name)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ after\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(name of driver) (event)

on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(date)

*IT IS HEREBY understood that I/we release Great Plains Lutheran High School, its Board of Directors, employees, agents and representatives from any claim we may have resulting from any illnesses or injuries sustained by our child while under the supervision of the above named individual who is transporting my/our child. We further agree to hold harmless Great Plains Lutheran High School, its Board of Directors, employees, agents and representatives  from any injury or damage which may be caused by my/our child(ren).*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(parent/guardian)    (cell phone)