

HEARTLAND CHRISTIAN SCHOOL



2025 - 2026 ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

GO LIONS!

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Heartland Christian School Athletic Department! As the Athletic Director, it is my pleasure and honor to be leading our programs this year. Our mission is to promote Christ-centered interscholastic programs that are dynamic, enabling every student-athlete to thrive both on and off the field of play.

This handbook serves as a guide to help create clarity and transparency regarding the Athletic Department's expectations, principles, and values for all involved. We believe the information and policies within these pages are essential not only to be reviewed and understood by our athletes and families, but also to be followed.

Participation in sport here at Heartland is a privilege that offers invaluable opportunities for our student-athletes. As we all prepare to embark on another exciting year of sports, it is essential to remember that we are not only representing ourselves, but also Heartland Christian School and, most importantly, our faith in Jesus Christ, our Savior. Our coaches, student-athletes, and families are expected to approach every competition with grace and humility, recognizing that we are continually striving to honor God.

Thank you for your commitment to Heartland Athletics! I wish each of you the most rewarding and memorable season ahead!

Blessings,

Josh Scott

Athletic Director

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MISSION STATEMENT

Heartland Christian School exists to partner with parents in the training and equipping of their children to achieve the fulfillment that God intends for their lives.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of Heartland Christian School is to develop graduates who are Biblically grounded, academically qualified, and **thoroughly equipped to fulfill Christ's calling upon their lives** by providing a unified team that facilitates a comprehensive program of excellence within a nurturing environment.

TENETS OF FAITH

The following tenets are an expression of our religious convictions and form the basis that guides Heartland Christian School in the formulation and execution of policies, procedures, and employment practices:

- We believe the Bible to be the inspired, only infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God (2 Timothy 3:15; 2 Peter 1:21).
- We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:1; John 10:30; Matthew 28:19).
- We believe in the deity of Christ (John 10:33), His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:35), His sinless life (Hebrews 4:15, Hebrews 7:26), His miracles (John 2:11), His vicarious and atoning death (1 Corinthians 15:4), His ascension to the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19), His present ministry of intercession (Romans 8:34), and His return in power and glory (Acts 1:11, Revelation 19:11).
- We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature and that man is justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Christ and that only by God's grace and through faith alone are we saved (John 3:16-19, John 5:24, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:8-9, Ephesians 2:8-10, Titus 3:5).
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life (Romans 8:13-14, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Ephesians 1:13, Ephesians 4:30, Ephesians 5:18).
- We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Galatians 3:26-28).

- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost: the saved unto the resurrection of life and the lost unto the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:28–29).
- We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27).
- We believe that the term “marriage” has one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union as defined in Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4).
- We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including, but not limited to adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).
- We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other state or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Psalm 139).
- We believe that the universe and all living things (including man) were made by the direct creative acts of God. Any biological changes that have occurred since Creation have done so within the original created kinds. The special Creation of Adam and Eve in the image of God and their subsequent fall into sin is the basis for our belief in the necessity of a Savior for all mankind (Genesis 1).

Heartland Christian School Values & Behavioral Standards

(A desire to honor God in all we do as He changes us by the power of The Gospel.)

LIONS PRIDE

HCS Student/Athlete Code of Conduct

L - Love: We encourage all students to demonstrate love and respect. First and foremost, loving God, because God loved us first. “but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”- Romans 5:8 Showing love for one another, treating each person as a valuable creation of God. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind... you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”- Matthew 22:37-39

I – Identity: Students are encouraged to discover and embrace their identity in Christ, understanding their worth, purpose, and values as rooted in their relationship with Him and living out their faith in their actions and relationships. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come.” - 2 Corinthians 5:17

O - Obedience: Students are expected to obey the authority of teachers, administrators, and staff, and submit to authority in a spirit of humility and respect. Students are also expected to follow the established rules and guidelines of Heartland Christian School. “Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.” - 1 Peter 2:13-15

N - Nurturing: We strive to create a nurturing and supportive environment where students feel safe, cared for, and encouraged to grow academically, socially, and spiritually. We desire to cultivate an environment where students are encouraged to nurture and support each other's growth and well-being, spiritually, academically, and personally. “Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” - 1 Thessalonians 5:11

S - Service: We encourage students to develop a servant's heart, seeking opportunities to serve others in the school community and beyond, following the example of Jesus Christ. "Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many" – Matthew 20:28

P - Perseverance: Students are encouraged to develop a spirit of perseverance, remaining determined and resilient in the face of challenges. "And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." - Hebrews 12:1

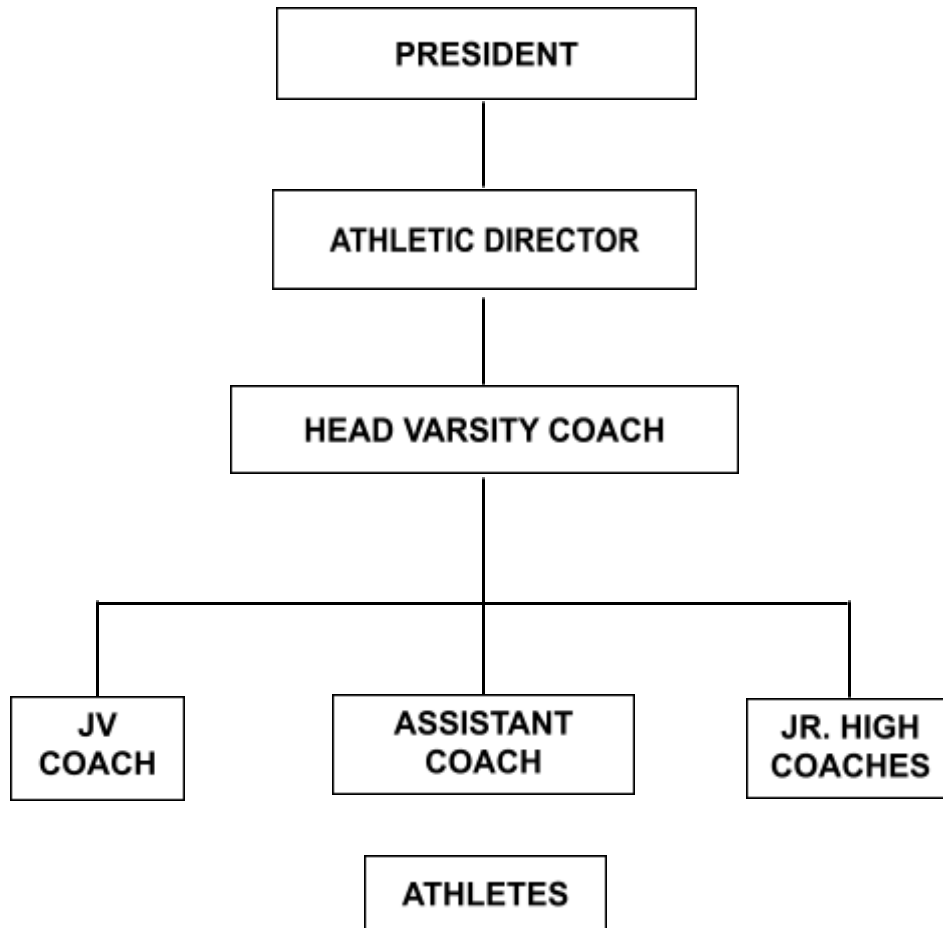
R - Responsibility: We emphasize the importance of taking personal responsibility for one's actions, words, and academic pursuits, fostering accountability and ownership. "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men." - Colossians 3:23

I - Integrity: We emphasize the importance of honesty, trustworthiness, and moral character in all aspects of school life, fostering an environment of integrity. "The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them." - Proverbs 11:3

D - Discipleship: We promote the development of students as Disciples of Christ, encouraging them to deepen their faith, grow in their understanding of Scripture, and actively live out their beliefs. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." - Matthew 28:19

E - Excellence: We strive for excellence in all areas, encouraging students to pursue their academic, artistic, and athletic endeavors with diligence and a commitment to doing their best for the glory of God. "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." - 1 Corinthians 10:31

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT FLOW CHART



EXPECTATIONS FOR FAN BEHAVIOR AT SPORTING EVENTS

- Support and cheer for the Lions
- Bring energy and enthusiasm, and have fun
- Do not yell at the referees, coaches, or athletes
- Do not throw anything onto the court
- Only players, coaches, and referees are permitted on the floor
- Failure to follow the above standards will result in removal from the sporting event.

Please See [Heartland Christian School Athletic Department Parents' Expectations Policy.](#)

PARENT AND ATHLETE RESPONSIBILITIES

- HCS leadership expects coaches to disciple and train each athlete. Playing time is at the coach's discretion. Parents and athletes are asked to respect the coach's decisions for the team's good. If there is a concern, the parent should wait 24 hours and schedule a meeting with the coach. Approaching a coach during or immediately after a game to discuss playing time is prohibited.
- When there is an issue,
 - The athlete discusses this with the coach
 - Parent to coach
 - Parent to A.D.
- A mandatory pre-season parent/student meeting will be conducted to communicate to all involved parents information concerning the following:
 - Athletic Handbook
 - Team Rules (in addition to those included in the handbook)
 - Practice and Game Schedules
 - Goals and Expectations
 - OHSAA updates and rules for the upcoming season
- All coaches, athletes, and parents must read the athletic handbook, sign the Athletic Policy Agreement form, and return it to the athletic department.
- Coaches will work with the Athletic Director to ensure all athletes have a current physical (June 1st of the upcoming year).
 - Completed physical forms will be collected. One copy will be given to the school nurse, and another copy will be placed in the athletic director's mailbox for student files.
 - An athlete may not participate in any scheduled practices or games until forms are completed.

- Physical Forms are on the OHSAA website under www.ohsaa.org/medicine/physicalexamform.
 - Follow the instructions under the “Preseason Physical Exam Forms” link on the left side of the webpage.
- Each athlete is responsible for the equipment given to them. Within two weeks of the last game of the season, each athlete must turn in all equipment to the coach.

GAMES/PRACTICES ATTENDANCE POLICY

- Coaches must provide 48 hours' notice for early dismissals to be considered.
 - Early dismissals require approval, and then the A.D. will communicate with the office with a minimum of 48 hours' notice.
 - These should be minimal.
- Practices are not permitted unless they have been added to the practice schedule.
 - **A coach can ask for the consent of the athletic director to make a change.**
- If you need to make a change due to exceptional circumstances, please notify the athletic director before implementing the desired change.
- Coaches must not leave the practice sites until all athletes have left or there is another adult to wait with them.
- Coaches are not permitted to transport athletes in their personal vehicles. The only exception is if they have written permission from a parent or guardian on file with the Athletic Department.
- Practices are specifically for the athletes in that sport. Anyone who does not participate in the sport is not permitted to be at the practice.
- Coaches must adhere to the scheduled practice times, while athletes must be ready to compete at the scheduled start time. This may mean they must arrive earlier than the listed start time.
- Coaches are not to exceed the practice time; however, practice times may be modified with advance notice to parents and students.
- If a parent is consistently late picking up their child, the athletic director resolves the problem.

- **There will be no practices or games** on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Thanksgiving Day, Good Friday, or Easter. There will be no practices or games on Sundays unless they are an OHSAA tournament sectional, district, or regional game approved by the Board of Education.
- Practice and game dates and times will be posted online at heartlandschool.org/athletics.
- Under no circumstances can an athlete be excused from attending an in-season practice due to an open gym for another sport. **The in-season sport has priority.**
- Excused absences are as follows:
 - Unavoidable emergencies.
 - Sickness.
 - Any dispute between the coach and student concerning unexcused absences will be brought to the athletic director for a final decision.
 - Students and families are responsible for notifying the coach when a student will be absent from practice.

DISCIPLINE

- **Coaches** are responsible for the athletes' discipline during practice sessions, travel, and games.
- **Athletes** must recognize that they are under the guidance of their coaches throughout all athletic activities, including practices, travel, and games.
- **Athletes** are expected to uphold the school's values and behavioral standards.
- **Athletes** who receive a technical foul during a game will receive a penalty deemed appropriate by the head coach.
- **Coaches** who receive a technical foul during a game will be fined \$100 for each technical foul.
- **Parents, Athletes, and Coaches** will all be held to the same standards regarding ejections from athletic events. Ejections result in a two-game suspension.

ELIGIBILITY POLICY

- **Eligibility:**
 - Students with a failing grades in two or more classes at the end of the midterm will be ineligible for the next scheduled game.
 - **Student-athletes who receive a failing grade at the end of a nine-week grading period will be ineligible for the next 2 scheduled games.**

ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES

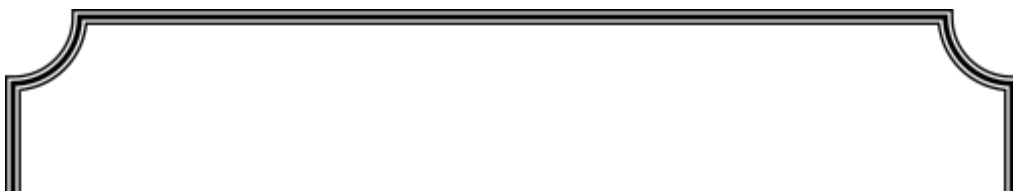
- To be eligible to participate in an athletic event, including practices and games or matches, the student-athlete must attend school for the entire day on the day of the event. If a student-athlete is absent, leaves the school early, or arrives late, they are not eligible to participate in practice or the event.
 - The only exceptions would be for,
 - medical & dental appointments that can't be arranged during non-school hours (this will require a note from the physician's office)
 - severe illness or death of a loved one in the family
 - up to three days for college visitation for juniors and seniors
 - pre-approval for special circumstances
 - other family emergency
- If a student wants to participate in a sport that Heartland does not offer, the student/athlete can request permission to leave up to one period early (it can not be a core class) to attend practices for that specific sport in their local school district. Approval is needed from the AD and Principal.
- There are no approved absences or early departures from school to participate in a club sport.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

- Coaches are responsible for ordering athletic wear that complies with Heartland Christian School's NEAT, CLEAN, and MODEST student appearance policies. If you have any questions, please obtain approval from the Athletic Director and Secondary Principal. **Any athletic wear deemed inappropriate by school leadership will need to be replaced. The school will not cover the cost of replacement.**
- Athletes must dress on game days as directed by their coach or the athletic director.
- Athletes are responsible for keeping their uniforms and warm-ups clean and neat for each game. At the end of each season, uniforms are returned to the coach in the same condition as they were received.
- No jewelry is permitted during practices or games.

GAMEDAY HELP

- The athletic department assigns workers to necessary positions or jobs on game day (e.g., gate, scorebook, statistics, clock, concessions, etc.).
- All food sold at a home game must be purchased through the concession stand to show support for the athletic fundraising efforts.



Parents of each athlete MUST sign up
To work at games
Either in the concession stand or at the gate
OR
Pay a \$25 fee to cover the cost of other workers.

MEDIA

- After each game, coaches or a coach-assigned communicator must call the following newspapers and television stations to inform them of the results of the game:
 - Morning Journal (330-424-9541 ext. 288) Fax # 330-424-7093
 - Salem News (330-332-4602 ext. 2) Fax # 330-332-3084
 - Vindicator (330-747-1471)
 - WFMJ-Youngstown (330-744-8821)
 - WKBN/WYTV –Youngstown (330-788-2456)
 - YSN - (330) 886-0813
- The information provided to the media:
 - Teams involved
 - Scores and Stats
 - Record
 - Next scheduled game

SPORTS RECOGNITION

- Each sport will host its recognition banquet.
- All coaches and athletes are highly encouraged to attend the recognition.
- Head coaches are expected to give positive remarks about their team and the season.
- All athletes will receive an award or certificate for participating in the sport.
- One “Varsity H” letter will be given to a first-time letterman. Athletes will receive only one letter and a corresponding pin thereafter. A letter and/or pins will be awarded to all athletes who participated in the sport-specific required amount of time played in varsity contests.
 - This is generally 50% of the total quarters or periods played, but can also be at the coach's discretion.
 - Athletes receive a sports pin for their first year lettering in that sport and service bar pins for each subsequent year.

HEARTLAND CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ATHLETICS **ATHLETIC POLICY AGREEMENT FORM**

I thoroughly read and understand the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook. I also agree to abide by the policies outlined in this handbook and to show proper respect for the department's prescribed organizational structure.

Please sign on the appropriate line(s) below and return before the beginning of the season.

Athlete: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____

Coach: _____

Date: _____