

# **FHS Policy Handbook**

March 24, 2026

*The Fairfax Homeschool Athletic Association (FHSAA) reserves the right to modify or amend the policies and procedures contained in the handbook at any time as it may deem necessary.*

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## Mission, Vision, and Core Values

(from Bylaws for Fairfax Homeschool Athletic Association)

1. Mission. FHSAA seeks to glorify God by serving home schooling athletes and families through competitive sports.

2. Vision. Create community around a robust athletic program with high quality coaching to develop home school athletes competing at the highest level.

3. Core Values

- SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION. FHSAA is a Christian based organization that will operate on biblical principles. Above all, FHSAA strives to help players, coaches, and families “press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14) and to be an example of Christlikeness to others. Therefore, all Board members, coaches, and staff must be professing Christians and actively living out their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of their lives. Moreover, they must agree with, and adhere to, the FHSAA Statement of Faith.
- OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE. FHSAA seeks to model integrity, transparency, and stability in its finances, communications, and administration realizing that whatever we do, “in word or deed, [we] do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Colossians 3:17). As a non-profit, volunteer organization, FHSAA is built upon the active involvement and support of its members, and is accountable to them to pursue excellence in all areas of its operations.
- COACHING DRIVEN. FHSAA coaches are the front-line leaders for the organization and, as such, are entitled to respect and support from all players and members. They are also held to a high standard through an initial application and interview process, as well as regular evaluations and review. They are expected to lead their teams in accordance with the FHSAA Coach Code of Conduct, and to pursue opportunities for growth and training with a view to developing the skills, competitiveness, and character of their players. (Rom 12:6-8)
- PLAYER SKILLS AND CHARACTER FOCUS. FHSAA will seek to provide players with the skills training and competitive sports opportunities that will enable them to excel in their athletic abilities and grow in Godly character (Colossians Col 3:23)

4. In accordance with these core values and our Statement of Faith, for sports or facilities restricted to a particular sex, all athletes will be classified according to biological sex at birth (Genesis 1:27, 5:1-2; Mark 10:6, Matthew 19:4) and are prohibited from competing in sports restricted to the opposite sex.

## Statement of Faith

(from Bylaws for Fairfax Homeschool Athletic Association)

We believe:

- in One God, eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)
- in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. (Genesis 1:1 and 2, Colossians 1:15-18)
- in the Deity of our Lord, Jesus Christ, God's only Son, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary; (John 1:1, Matthew 1:18, 25, 28:19)
- His death for our sins on the cross through which we receive eternal life; His bodily resurrection and personal return. (Hebrews 9:15-22, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Hebrews 9:27 and 28)
- that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life and no comes to God, the Father, but through Jesus. (John 14:6)
- in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the forgiveness of our sins and life renewed through God's grace and through the sacrifice of Jesus' death. (John 14:15-26, Acts 2:38, 2 Corinthians 5:17)
- in The Bible as the inspired Word of God. (2 Timothy 3:16 and 17)
- God created male and female and that marriage constitutes the union between one man and one woman. (Genesis 1:27 and 28, 2:18, 21-24)

## Player / Parent Code of Conduct

(from Bylaws for Fairfax Homeschool Athletic Association)

To participate in FHSAA, all players and parents agree to follow the FHSAA Player / Parent Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct includes the following points.

- We shall try to discern what is pleasing to God and exhibit behavior on and off the field/court which will glorify Jesus Christ. (Colossians 3:23 and 24)
- We shall not take part in any derogatory, taunting, or bullying activity – in person or via social media / electronic means – preceding, during, or following FHS events. This includes foul language, profane gestures, verbal attempts to distract or provoke opponents, sexual innuendos, “trash talk,” and tearing down of teammates, opponents, or others. (Ephesians 4:29)
- We shall treat the officials, opposing teams, cheerleaders, spectators, and our coaches and teammates with respect – before, during and after all events. (Matthew 7:12)
- We shall address officials’ decisions in a respectful manner (words, tone of voice, facial expressions). (Colossians 4:6)
- We shall respect the property and reputation of our opponents as well as that of our own facilities. (Philippians 2:3)
- We shall not take part in or be party to any form of violence. (Romans 12:18)
- We shall encourage aggressive (hard-working) play, but not tolerate dangerous or out-of-control play. (1 Thessalonians 5:8)
- We shall address disputes in a Godly manner as soon as possible between the parties involved (Matthew 18:15-17)
- We shall refrain from any public or private displays of affection (PDA) while attending and/or participating in FHS events to maintain our focus on glorifying Christ and pursuing excellence in athletics and to ensure our conduct does not become a distraction to ourselves or to others (Ecclesiastes 3:1)
- We shall respect the decisions of our coaches and be teachable at practice, games, and all FHSAA activities. Parents and spectators are expected to refrain from coaching players during games. (1 Peter 2:17)
- We shall not post, send or share negative or inappropriate comments, memes, photos, or videos regarding our program, athletes, teammates, coaches and staff or our opponents, officials, media, spectators or the general public via social media or any other electronic means. (Ephesians 4:29, 1 Corinthians 1:10, James 3:10-12)
- We acknowledge that a players’ use of illegal or performance-enhancing drugs or alcohol will not be tolerated and is grounds for dismissal from all FHSAA programs. (1 Thessalonians 5:6-8)
- We acknowledge that, for players to participate in practices and games, all fees and required paperwork must be submitted to FHSAA on schedule. (1 Timothy 5:18)

Failure to abide by this Code of Conduct can be grounds for corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including suspension of playing privileges or removal from FHS.

## Coach / Staff Code of Conduct

(from Bylaws for Fairfax Homeschool Athletic Association)

To participate in FHSAA, all coaches agree to follow the FHSAA Coach / Staff Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct includes the following points.

- We shall try to discern what is pleasing to God and exhibit behavior on and off the field/court which will glorify Jesus Christ. (Colossians 3:23 and 24)
- We shall not take part in nor tolerate any derogatory or taunting activity. This includes foul language, profane gestures, verbal attempts to distract or provoke opponents, sexual innuendos, “trash talk,” and tearing down of teammates, opponents, or others. (Ephesians 4:29)
- We shall uphold the honor and dignity of the coaching profession in all personal contact with players, parents, officials, opposing teams and coaches, athletic directors, spectators, the media, and the public. We shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct. (Matthew 7:12)
- We shall meet and exchange cordial greetings with the opposing coach to set the correct tone for each event, before and after the contest. (Luke 6:31)
- We shall master the contest rules and shall teach them to our team members; we shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules. (Matthew 6:33)
- We shall treat our players with the utmost respect. Our player’s welfare should be considered in all coaching decisions. (Matthew 7:12)
- We shall respect and support contest officials, avoiding conduct which would incite players or spectators against the officials, and addressing officials’ decisions in a respectful manner. (Colossians 4:6)
- We shall respect the property and reputation of our opponents as well as that of our own facilities. (Philippians 2:3)
- We shall not take part in nor tolerate any form of violence. (Romans 12:18)
- We shall encourage aggressive (hard-working) play, but not tolerate dangerous or out-of-control play. (1 Thessalonians 5:8)
- We acknowledge we have a tremendous influence, for either good or ill, on the development and growth of each player and, thus, we shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character. (Hebrews 12:1-2)
- We shall address disputes in a Godly manner as soon as possible between the parties involved (Matthew 18:15-17)
- We shall not post, send or share negative or inappropriate comments, memes, photos, or videos regarding our program, athletes, teammates, coaches and staff or our opponents, officials, media, spectators or the general public via social media or any other electronic means. (Ephesians 4:29, 1 Corinthians 1:10, James 3:10-12)

## Protection of Children, Youth, and Adults with Developmental Disabilities

1. Introduction. It shall be the policy and covenant of FHSAA to do everything possible to prevent physical, emotional or sexual abuse against children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities who patron FHSAA or activities sponsored by FHSAA. We are committed to being aware of our legal responsibilities, complying with those responsibilities and going beyond them when necessary to act justly in the best interests of those who have been abused or those who are most vulnerable to abuse.
2. Scope. This policy and its provisions shall apply to all staff who have any direct or indirect contact with children and/or youth and/or adults with developmental disabilities who patron FHSAA or activities sponsored by FHSAA. No person under the age of 18 will be certified by FHSAA to work or volunteer, directly with children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities.
3. Ethics Policy. FHSAA staff includes all persons who interact with children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities who patron FHSAA or activities sponsored by FHSAA. Staff shall not engage in sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and physical abuse, physical neglect, lack of supervision, emotional maltreatment, educational maltreatment, and/or moral-legal maltreatment of children, youth, and adult /children with developmental disabilities.
4. Definitions
  - **Sexual Abuse**. Sexual abuse is action or contact of a sexual nature directed toward a child. It is any behavior perpetuated by another child or adult that seeks to gratify a sexual desire. Such behaviors may include viewing sexual material with a child, requesting sexual material/photos from a child, touching, or fondling a child. Sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to: incest, rape, prostitution, any sexual intercourse, deviant sexual contact with, or fondling of a child, youth, or adult with developmental disabilities.
  - **Sexual Harassment**. Sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual advance or demand, either verbal or physical that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating or coercive. Sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship rather than as an exclusively sexual issue. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination on the basis of gender.
  - **Sexual Misconduct**. Sexual misconduct means a chargeable offense.
  - **Physical Abuse / Lack of Supervision**. Any act of omission or an act that endangers a person's physical or mental health. This definition includes any non-accidental physical injury. Physical abuse may result from punishment that is overly punitive or inappropriate to the individual's age or condition. In addition, physical abuse may result

from purposeful acts that pose serious danger to the physical health of a child, youth or adult with developmental disabilities.

- Physical Neglect. Individual in charge does not take adequate precautions (given a child's, youth or vulnerable person's particular emotional developmental needs) to ensure his or her safety in and out of the residence.
- Emotional Maltreatment. Persistent or extreme thwarting of a child's, youth or vulnerable person's basic emotional needs (such as the need to feel safe and accepted)
- Educational Maltreatment. Individual in charge fails to ensure that a child, youth or vulnerable person receives adequate education
- Moral-Legal Maltreatment. Individual in charge exposes or involves a child, youth or vulnerable person in illegal or other activities that may foster delinquency or antisocial behavior.

5. Implementation. Staff shall be provided a copy of this policy and shall receive training at the semi-annual coach / manager training event to assist in the understanding and implementation of this policy.

6. Making a Complaint. Persons who have knowledge of possible violations of this policy by FHSAA staff should report to appropriate supervisors and administrators. The Board of Directors with help of the Athletic Director will take action in investigation, reporting, due process, and take action to seek justice.

7. Screening Staff. Careful screening is one way to prevent the abuse of children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities. Screening calls for a careful gathering and review of information in search of persons who can provide safe contact in a safe environment.

- Prior to acceptance as staff, the Board shall direct each prospective coach to complete an Application and shall facilitate a background check with the use of SafeScreener or YardStick or a similar background check company.
- The Board shall receive the completed forms, reports and references, and review them. If any of the reports and/or references raise questions about the fitness of an applicant, the Board should disapprove the application and notify the applicant. The Board reserves the right to turn away any persons.
- If an applicant is found to have been involved in any activity in which the applicant abused or exploited children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities, the applicant will not be approved. Any conviction of a crime against children, youth or adults with developmental disabilities shall disqualify any applicant.
- Results of screens shall be kept confidential.

8. Training. As part of the semi-annual coach / team manager training, FHSAA shall host training for all staff who have direct or indirect contact with children, youth and adults with

developmental disabilities. All staff shall complete the Sexual Abuse Awareness Training provided by Abuse Prevention prior to serving in any active staff position.

9. Supervision. Supervision and enforcement of policy and procedures regarding all staff who have direct or indirect contact with children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities should be clearly communicated within FHSAA's policies and procedures.

ALL reporting activities set forth by government, State and Federal regulations should be followed. Whenever possible, a team approach should be used with children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities. If the necessity for one-on-one interactions between adults and children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities arises, the interaction should occur in an unenclosed area and with the knowledge of another adult. Staff are encouraged to warn each other when questionable behavior is displayed.

10. Reporting of Incidents. All incidents should be immediately reported to the Board President and/or Athletic Director and an incident report should be filed. The Board of Directors should retain all incident reports for reference. When the necessity of reporting occurs, the protection of children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities must be paramount.

11. Procedures for Reporting, Investigating, and Resolving Violations of Certification Policy

- Report immediately upon receipt of an allegation of violation of policy to the Athletic Director and the Board President. The Board President will facilitate reporting to law enforcement agencies as appropriate according to State and Federal reporting guidelines and shall also notify the Board of Directors.
- The person against whom an allegation has been made ("Respondent") will immediately be suspended
- If a minor is involved, that person's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified of the alleged violation of policy by a person designated by the Board President.
- The Board President shall assist the investigation of the complaint and the process to use to work through the complaint. This may include assistance with legal and public relations issues as well as interviews necessary for the investigation of the complaint. Decisions of resolution shall ultimately rest with the Board.
- The person or persons who first report the alleged violation of policy will be asked to document their knowledge of this incident(s) and provide that documentation to the Board President.
- The Board President will determine who needs to be interviewed to determine the nature of the alleged violation and its impact. All conversations shall be documented including such things as (but not exclusive of) date, time, place, and names of persons involved. In addition, the substance of the conversation shall be documented, with the person interviewed asked to review notes for accuracy and to sign such notes. In

addition, all contacts made, and actions taken by the Board President and Athletic Director are to be documented.

- If a formal complaint is made, the Board President shall provide the respondent with a copy of the complaint.
- Those making the allegations (“Plaintiff”), the parent(s)/guardian(s) of any minor involved, the Respondent, and any persons who supervise such persons shall be notified of any result of the investigation and final decision of the FHSAA documentation shall be retained in a confidential, personal file.
- The Board President will determine when and with whom information needs to be shared. If investigations or allegations of abuse should come to the attention of the media, a response shall come from a spokesperson.
- It shall be the goal of FHSAA to provide supportive care to both the Plaintiff and the Respondent, and to restore such persons to wholeness. Supportive care can include the procedures of the criminal justice system and appropriate counseling referrals.
- If the Plaintiff should desire to appeal the decision of the FHSAA, the Board President or Board of Directors’ legal council will be consulted.

## Safeguarding Guidelines

FHSAA encourages a culture of communication regarding matters that place an athlete at risk. Because sexual abusers ‘groom’ athletes for abuse, it is possible that coaches or volunteers may witness behavior intended to ‘groom’ a child for sexual abuse. If you see or suspect inappropriate interaction with or between athletes, it is your responsibility to report the inappropriate interaction to a coach and the Athletic Director.

All reports or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with state law, to law enforcement, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency (CPS Hotline: 800-552-7096). Failure to do so can result in significant fines and/or imprisonment. For more information on Mandated Reporter Training and Resources see Virginia Department of Social Services.

### 1. Peer-To-Peer Sexual Abuse

Abuse can be defined as any tricked, forced, manipulated or coerced sexual activity for the pleasure of the abuser. Approximately one third of all reported sexual abuse occurs at the hands of other children or minors. Coaches and volunteers have an obligation to report peer-to-peer sexual abuse in accordance with state mandatory reporting requirements. Whether sexual interaction between athletes constitutes ‘sexual abuse’ depends on the existence of an aggressor and whether there is an imbalance of power between the parties (e.g., an age difference between the athletes, disparity in size, or the existence of a physical or intellectual disability). If you have concern that an interaction between minor athletes may constitute sexual abuse, report the interaction to appropriate law enforcement authorities and a coach.

Risk of peer-to peer sexual abuse is highest at:

- Any location that is less easily seen; or
- Any time minor athletes are unclothed or changing clothes, for any reason.

Due to this risk, coaches and volunteers will be aware of locations and facilities that are less easily seen or supervised. These locations and facilities vary per team and activity, and can include practice and competition locations, restrooms, changing areas, locker rooms, dorms and hotels. These areas will be supervised regularly by coaches and volunteers, where possible and appropriate.

### 2. Appropriate Physical Contact or Behavior

Appropriate physical contact between minor athletes and coaches or volunteers is a productive and inevitable part of sport. However, guidelines for appropriate physical contact reduce the potential for abuse and misconduct in athletics – as well as false allegations of abuse.

Physical contact with minor athletes – for safety, consolation and celebration – has multiple criteria that make it both safe and appropriate.

- The physical contact must only take place in public;
- There shall be no potential for (or actual) physical or sexual intimacies during the physical contact;
- The physical contact is for the benefit of the athlete, not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult.

#### Safety

The safety of minor athletes is paramount, and in many instances the athletic activity is made safer through appropriate physical contact. Examples include:

- Spotting an athlete so that he or she will not be injured by a fall or piece of equipment;
- Positioning an athlete's body so that he or she more quickly acquires an athletic skill, gets a better sense of where his or her body is in space, or improves balance and coordination;
- Making an athlete aware that he or she may be in harm's way due to other practicing athletes, or equipment use;
- Releasing muscle cramps.

#### Consolation

It may be appropriate to console an emotionally distressed athlete (e.g., an athlete who has been injured or has just lost a competition). Appropriate consolation includes, publicly:

- Embracing a crying athlete – in a public place or circumstance;
- Putting an arm around an athlete while verbally engaging them in an effort to calm them down ("side hugs");
- Lifting a fallen athlete off the playing surface and "dusting them off" to encourage them to continue competition.

#### Celebration

Sports are physical by definition. We encourage these public expressions of celebration, which include:

- Greeting gestures such as high-fives, fist bumps, and brief hugs;
- Congratulatory gestures such as celebratory hugs, "jump-arounds" and pats on the back for any form of athletic or personal accomplishment.

### **3. Inappropriate Contact and Behavior**

#### Prohibited Physical Contact

Coaches and volunteers must model the behavior expected from minor athletes. Prohibited forms of physical contact between an adult and a minor athlete AND between minor athletes including but not limited to the following:

- Asking or having a minor athlete sit in the lap of a coach or volunteer;
- Lingering or repeated embrace of a minor athlete that goes beyond the criteria set forth for acceptable physical contact;
- Slapping, hitting, punching, kicking or any other physical contact meant to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from a minor athlete;
- “Cuddling” or maintaining prolonged physical contact of a minor athlete during any aspect of training, travel or overnight stay;
- Playful, yet inappropriate contact that is not a part of regular training, (e.g., butt-pats, tickling or wrestling-type “horseplay”);
- Continued physical contact that makes a minor athlete obviously uncomfortable, whether expressed or not;
- Any contact that is contrary to a previously expressed personal desire by the minor athlete for decreased or no physical contact, where such decreased contact is feasible in a competitive training environment.

#### Nudity

Coaches and volunteers that participate in activities should never be nude in the presence of minor athletes. Male coaches and volunteers should avoid the use of urinals in a restroom where athletes may enter.

#### Sexually Oriented Conversations

Coaches and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations (in person or electronically) with or in the presence of any athletes.

#### Electronic Communications and Social Media

All electronic communications between a coach and minor athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about program activities or for team-oriented motivational purposes. The content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with the athlete’s family. Electronic communication between a coach and an athlete must be in a group (include another athlete, volunteer, a parent, or another coach/assistant.) The use of Snapchat (and similar apps) with minor athletes is not permitted.

- All communication is to be public in nature.
- Coaches and minor athletes may “follow” each other in social media.
- Coaches cannot “re-tweet” athlete message posts.
- Coaches and volunteers are not permitted to “direct message” minor athletes.

- Coaches and volunteers are not permitted to post inappropriate off-color content or comment on inappropriate off-color posts.
- If there is doubt, treat the content as inappropriate.

Inappropriate social media and electronic communication use communication by coaches, volunteers, officials, administrators, parents or other athletes (e.g., emotional abuse, sexual abuse, bullying, harassment, and hazing) will not be tolerated.

## Roles and Responsibilities

1. Officers. FHSAA Officers shall be the President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Corporation. The Board of Directors elects all Officers and may also elect a Vice President and one or more assistant secretaries and assistant treasurers. The Board may appoint such Officers as it shall deem necessary. Officers are elected by majority vote of the Board of Directors, serving in one-year terms or until their successors are appointed and qualify in their stead. Officers may be reappointed without limitation as to the number of terms they may serve. Officer roles and responsibilities are described below:

### A. President

- Provide leadership to the Board of Directors.
- Strategic Planning.
- Prepare the Board Meeting agenda.
- Preside at Board Meetings, ensuring they run smoothly.
- Ensure Board members have the information needed to make informed decisions.
- Lead communication with families from the Board.
- Oversee contracting for the storage facility.
- Manage the FHSAA Staff Background Check program.
- Lead interactions with legal counsel for appropriate issues including 501c3 status.

### B. Vice President

- Preside at Board Meetings in the President's absence.
- Assist the President with strategic planning.
- Oversee special projects including coordination with other Board Members.
- Assist with communication with families from the Board.
- Help resolve conflicts or issues brought before the Athletic Director, coaches, and the Board.
- Manage coach and assistant coach Training and Coach Evaluation programs.
- Receive and prepare coach and volunteer applications for presentation to the Board.
- Notify coaching applicants of Board decisions following interviews.

### C. Treasurer

- Maintain FHSAA accounting records.
- Present monthly financial reports to the Board.
- Oversee annual financial review and statement.
- Work with the Athletic Director and head coaches to prepare team budgets, receive and deposit team payments, and disperse funds for team and league expenses.
- Pay Bills.
- Oversee the Annual Federal 990 and Virginia tax filing.

- Weekly mail checks at the FHSAA P.O. Box

#### D. Secretary

- Record minutes for all Board Meetings, Annual Member Meetings, Sports Interest Meetings, Coach / Manager Training Meetings.
- Organize and store FHSAA documentation in an accessible electronic medium (i.e., DropBox) including the following documents:
  - Board Meetings including the Agenda, Athletic Director Report, Treasurer Reports, Minutes and any other documentation presented to or generated by the Board
  - Bylaws updates
  - Policy and Procedure updates
  - Insurance Policies
  - Archive any paper FHSAA documents received or generated during the year

2. Agents. The FHSAA Board of Directors appoints Agents for various roles to assist in the execution of sports activities. Agents are elected by majority vote the Board of Directors, serving in one-year terms or until their successors are appointed and qualify in their stead. Agents may be reappointed without limitation as to the number of terms they may serve. Agent roles and responsibilities are described below:

#### A. Athletic Director

- Oversee team participation in practices, games, and tournaments.
- Secure facilities for practices and games
- Schedule in-league and out-of-league games for all teams
- Arrange for referees/umpires to officiate home games
- Provide support for FHSAA participation in league and other tournaments
- Provide input to the Board regarding policies, procedures, and practices of the organization, its teams, and member families.
- Assist with the nomination and vetting of coaches and training assistants.
- Offer feedback on issues raised by the Board
- Bring questions and concerns of member families to the attention of the Board
- Report to the Board on violations of the FHSAA or League Codes of Conduct and make recommendations to the Board regarding appropriate follow-up
- Provide support to head coaches and assistant coaches and serve as a liaison between coaches and the Board.
- Offer guidance to coaches, parents, and players regarding FHSAA and league policies and practices
- Assist in resolving questions and concerns by coaches, parents, and players and, as appropriate, bringing these to the attention of the Board
- Provide assistance and support to coaches and team managers in the procurement of uniforms, team equipment, safety and first aid items, and trophies

- Support coaches in recruiting and players, team managers, and other volunteers
- Represent FHSAA on the NVIAC Board and in other leagues in which FHSAA is a member. Provide the official interface between FHSAA and Athletic Directors and coaches of league and non-league schools / organizations.
- Attend quarterly NVIAC Board meetings and, as appropriate, regular meetings of leagues in which FHSAA is a member
- Handle administrative issues related to league participation (e.g. submitting award nominations, ensuring league fees are paid, confirming FHSAA standings and tournament participation, etc.)
- Bring questions and concerns of the FHSAA Board to the NVIAC Board for resolution
- Ensure that FHSAA is in compliance with the regulations and requirement of NVIAC and other leagues in which FHSAA is a member

3. Coaches. The Board vets, interviews and approves head coaches and assistant coaches. All coaches are approved by majority vote the Board of Directors, serving for one season at a time. Coaches may be reappointed for subsequent seasons with Board approval. All coaches are required to complete a background check. Additionally, coaches must complete the Staff Registration at the FHS website. Specific coach roles and responsibilities are described below:

#### A. Head Coach

- Provide godly direction to the players in accordance with FHSAA Mission Statement, Core Values, and Statement of Faith to help players, coaches, and families, “press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:14)
- Abide by and ensure that assistant coaches adhere to the FHSAA Coach / Staff Code of Conduct.
- Participate in coach- and sport-specific training as designated by the Board. All coaches must complete the mandatory Concussion Training as well as the Sexual Abuse Awareness Training. All coaches are strongly recommended to complete the Fellowship of Christian Athlete Coach 360 Training course and the 3D Institute Essentials Training course.
- Participate in semi-annual coach/manager training sessions to outline resources and opportunities to help use the team experience to build the character and faith of players.
- Clearly communicate coaching philosophy, expectations, team policies and additional team-related information to players and parents.
- Conduct try-outs and select team members, as appropriate.
- Provide training, skill development, and guidance to all players during practices and games.
- Provide personal care to players, coaches and families and alert the coach to critical issues that could affect his or her team.

- Appoint a team manager and make recommendations to the Board regarding appointment of assistant coaches, and to the Athletic Director regarding appointment of trainers.
- Meet with team staff (coaches, manager, and trainers) at the start of each season to assist in the development of a character and faith plan for the team's season.
- ❖ Conduct pre-and post-game voluntary devotional meetings or prayers for players and coaches.
- ❖ Build appropriate relationships with and pray for FHSAA players, coaches, and families.
- Manage assistant coaches, trainers, and the team manager.
- Attend – or ensure that a qualified assistant coach attends – all practices and games.
- Ensure safety of all players at practices and games.
- Ensure that appropriate rules and regulations are adhered to at all games and practices.
- Maintain open communication with the Athletic Director about problems or concerns that may arise regarding players, parents, or opposing teams.
- Ensure that all players have paid their sports fees by the FHSAA required deadlines. Follows up with parents that are delinquent in paying their fees.
- ❖ These roles can be the responsibility of the head coach or may be assigned to a willing assistant coach.

#### B. Assistant Coach

- Provide godly direction to the players in accordance with FHSAA Mission Statement, Core Values, and Statement of Faith to help players, coaches, and families, “press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:14)
- Abide by the FHSAA Coach / Staff Code of Conduct.
- Participate in coach- and sport-specific training as designated by the FHSAA Board. All coaches must complete the mandatory Concussion Training as well as the Sexual Abuse Awareness Training. All coaches are strongly recommended to complete the Fellowship of Christian Athlete Coach 360 Training course and the 3D Institute Essentials Training course.
- Participate in semi-annual coach/manager training sessions to outline resources and opportunities to help use the team experience to build the character and faith of players.
- Under the direction of the head coach, provide training, skill development, and guidance to all players during practices and games.
- Meet with team staff (coaches, manager, and trainers) at the start of each season to assist in the development of a character and faith plan for the team's season.
- ❖ Conduct pre-and post-game voluntary devotional meetings or prayers for players and coaches.

- ❖ Build appropriate relationships with and pray for players, coaches, and families.
  - Attend practices and games as required by the head coach.
  - Ensure safety of all prayers at practices and games.
  - Ensure that appropriate rules and regulations are adhered to at all games, practices, and facilities.
- ❖ These roles can be the responsibility of the head coach or may be assigned to a willing assistant coach.

4. Team Volunteers. Head coaches identify, interview and select trainers and managers, both of which serve with the approval of the Athletic Director. Trainers and managers may be reappointed for subsequent seasons with Athletic Director approval. Trainer and manager roles and responsibilities are described below:

A. Trainer. Trainers are responsible to the head coach and assistant coaches for all direction and behavior. They will perform all duties as assigned and serve at the pleasure of the head coach and Athletic Director. They must adhere to FHSAA principles and policies, the Coach / Staff Code of Conduct, and observe the applicable rules and regulations for practices, games and facilities.

Trainers can assist in practices in any number of ways, from training athletes in an area of particular expertise or serving as an extra adult presence on the field, court, or track. A coach or assistant coach is required to be present when a trainer is assisting with FHSAA activities. Trainers must complete a Staff Registration at the FHS website, and are permitted on the sidelines or on the bench during games only when approved by the head coach.

Note: Individuals with particular areas of expertise may be invited by the head coach to provide single event trainings to an FHSAA team or members of an FHSAA team. As guests, these individuals are not considered FHSAA staff and are consequently not required to complete an FHS Staff Registration or a background check. Additionally, these individuals must be supervised by an FHSAA staff member at all times when they are interacting with FHSAA athletes.

B. Team Manager. Team managers assist with team organization and administrative support for the head and assistant coaches. They must adhere to FHSAA principles and policies, the Coach / Staff Code of Conduct, and observe the applicable rules and regulations for practices, games and facilities. Team managers must complete the FHS Staff Registration at the FHS website. They are responsible to coordinate volunteers to assist with team responsibilities, including:

- Field / facility preparation, set-up, and clean-up
- Scorekeeping
- Provision of rosters or other team documents at games and tournaments
- Timekeeping

- Line judging or ball retrieval
- Storage and transportation of team equipment.
- Team Photography
- Team VEO Videography (as applicable – high school soccer, basketball and volleyball).
- Season-end party and awards
- Oversee management, maintenance, and care of team and safety equipment at all practices and games.
- Assist head coach in team communications.
- Oversee distribution, collection, care, and inventory of team uniforms.

## Staff and Parent Permissions and Training

The table below illustrates the roles played, permissions held, and requirements for various personnel associated with the FHS athletics program.

	Coaches	Assistant Coaches	Trainers	Team Managers	Parents
Runs practices	X	X			
Present on Sidelines during games	X	X			
Acts as a second adult for conditioning, practices, or team events	X	X	X	X	X
Helps out on the court or field	X	X	X	X	
Permitted to give rides to players without their own child (FHS Team Athlete) in the vehicle					X
Undergoes a background check	X	X	X	X	
Completes <u>Sexual Abuse Prevention Training</u>	X	X	X	X	
Completes an <u>FHS Coach Application</u> to volunteer	X	X			
Interviews with the FHS Board	X	X			
Completes <u>Concussion Training from the CDC</u>	X	X			
Completes <u>3D Essentials Training</u> from the 3D Institute (strongly recommended)	X	X			
Completes <u>Coach 360</u> course from FCA (strongly recommended)	X	X			

## Parent Roles

1. FHSAA recognizes and fully supports a player's parents as the God given authority in their lives. The board, athletic director, and coaches seek to support the position and role of parents in raising and homeschooling their children.
2. Participation on an FHSAA team involves a very high level of commitment from parents and athletes. Absences from practices and games should be a rare occurrence. However, if an athlete must miss a scheduled event, he or she should always tell their coach ahead of time. Practices are the place where skills are taught and team strategy developed. Not attending practices severely limits an athlete's ability to effectively participate in game situations. Athletes who do not attend games severely compromise the effectiveness of the entire team.
3. FHSAA is an all-volunteer organization and requires the generous service of members to function effectively. Volunteers are regularly needed for organization-wide roles like fundraising, social media coordinator, events (e.g., Black and Gold Ball, Homecoming, and Celebrate FHS) and webmaster, and for team positions including coaches, team administrative managers, field preparation, scorebooks, and first aid. There is not a prescribed hourly volunteer requirement for members, but there is a need and expectation that family members will pitch in to help both the association overall and the teams on which their players participate.

## Access to Events

Parents and siblings are welcome to observe any team athletic event (practices and games, as well as special events including scrimmages and team camps) in entirety or as desired, within the following guidelines:

- Children must remain with a parent at all times. No unattended children are permitted at event facilities.
- Only coaches and assistant coaches may run a practice/game or other athletic event.
- Only registered athletes, coaches, and trainers may participate within the playing surface boundaries.
- Observers are asked to refrain from individual communication with athletes and coaches while events (including all types of practices and games) are taking place, so that all participants can remain focused.
- Spectators who materially interfere with the operation of an event may be asked to leave the event. Any such incident will be reported to the Board.
- These guidelines apply to all events (including those hosted by other organizations) in which FHSAA is a participant.

## Coach Applications and Qualifications

1. Coaches and assistant coaches new to FHSAA require an application and two written letters of reference / recommendation, a completed background check, and an interview with the Board before they can be offered a position to coach with FHSAA.
2. For any coach / assistant coach applicant where an 18 month break in coaching for FHSAA has occurred, the Board requires an application, background check, two letters of reference / recommendation, and an interview with the Board.
3. For any coach / assistant coach applying to coach a different sport within 18 months of serving as a coach, the Board will require an application and an interview but no letters of reference / recommendation.
4. For any coach / assistant coach applying to coach at a new level (e.g. MS, JV, Varsity), the Board will require a completed application but no interview or letters of reference / recommendation.
5. In any case where there are multiple applications for a coach / assistant coach position, the Board will interview each applicant.
6. The Board can request a coach / assistant coach interview under any circumstance where the Board feels it is appropriate.
7. All coaches and assistant coaches must complete Concussion training and Sexual Abuse Prevention training before they are allowed to perform as coaches. Completion of the Essentials course from the 3D Institute and the Coach 360 course from the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) is strongly recommended. Completion certificates should be submitted to the Athletic Director.
8. In circumstances where a background check has been submitted, and results can be ascertained that the Federal and State Background Checks are clear, a board interview has been completed with a provisional approval (pending full complete background check), and a check of the Virginia Sex Offender Registry (and/or any neighboring locations (MD, DC, WV) if the individual lives outside of Virginia) proves negative, the Board will allow applicants to act in their requested role (coach / assistant coach) until such time as the county background check is returned.
9. If a coach / assistant coach, manager, or trainer applicant has a legacy background check completed by FHS within the past three years and a new background check has been submitted in our system but not returned, and a check of the Virginia Sex Offender Registry (and/or any neighboring locations (MD, DC, WV) if the individual lives outside of Virginia) proves negative, the Board will allow the applicant to serve in their requested role until such time as the county background check is returned.
10. If a coach / assistant coach, manager, or trainer applicant can identify a background check conducted for another organization within our local area within the past three years and can provide a point of contact at that organization from which we can obtain a copy of that

background check result, and we have submitted a background check in our system that has not been returned, and a check of the Virginia Sex Offender Registry (and/or any neighboring locations (MD, DC, WV) if the individual lives outside of Virginia) proves negative, the Board will allow them to serve in their requested role until such time as the county background check is returned.

11. If a coach has not yet reached age 21, FHS requires that an additional coach who is at least 21 be assigned to the team. In no circumstances should we have a team where none of the coaches has reached age 21.

## Coach Evaluations

1. There are three touch points with coaches during a season.
  - Interview. Effectively determine a coach's appropriateness to hold a head coach or assistant position. The interview is not conducted until an application including two letters of reference / recommendation are received and a satisfactory background check has been completed. At the interview, training requirements (Concussion and Sexual Assault Prevention) are explained as are FHSAA's strong recommendation for completion of 3D Essentials and FCA's Coach 360 training programs.
  - Pre-season. As part of their coaching application, coaches will have signed that they agree with the FHSAA Statement of Faith and Coach Code of Conduct. These will be provided to each coach electronically along with the Emergency Action Plan and the Abuse Policy for the Protection of Children, Youth and Adults with Developmental Disabilities. Before a season begins, the coach will meet (in person or telephonically) with the Athletic Director to explore any questions about policies, procedures or expectations.
  - Post-season. An electronic survey will be disseminated to all parents via the Demosphere system to elicit feedback on coach performance during the season. Questions will focus on provision of godly direction in accordance with the FHSAA Statement of Faith and Code of Conduct, communication effectiveness, conduct of training and skills development, emphasis on player safety, adherence to rules and regulations, treatment of opposing teams and referees, and interest in playing for the same coach again. If warnings are detected through these surveys, follow on discussions with players, parents and other coaches may be appropriate.

These points of connection should lead to a determination of whether to retain a coach or re-staff for a following season.

2. There are several key questions involved in a Board decision to retain a coach for subsequent seasons. These questions should underpin Board member and Athletic Director discussions. They are explained below.
  - FHSAA Mission. Did the coach stay true to the mission laid out for this season? It is important that from the beginning of a coach's journey with FHSAA that they understand the mission of our organization and have agreed to support it. Their support of the FHSAA mission should be clear.
  - Communication. Was the coach responsive to the AD and the Board of Directors? Did they communicate well with the team manager and families? Clear communication is key to the smooth operation of any team. As the AD and Board communicate policy and requests for information, the coach should be responsive, thoughtful and thorough in their responses. Coaches should communicate consistently and clearly to the team

manager and families in order to create an effective organization and minimize confusion.

- Coaching Collaboration. Did the coach connect well with other coaches on the staff? Staff chemistry is key to team chemistry. It is important the staff has strong cohesion when leading the players. There is no problem with disagreeing behind closed doors, but everyone must be on the same page when communicating with players and families.
- Player Relationships. Did they connect with the players? Some coaches fail to connect with the players. This will probably be obvious long before the season is over. If a coach isn't connecting with their players, they probably aren't the type of coach we will want to retain. Players need to feel like they can trust their coach, and that their coach values them.
- Team Performance. Did the team improve, get worse, or stay the same? Effective FHSAA coaches make a positive impact on team performance which *may* be manifest in competitive results but will certainly be evident in team dynamics and cohesion. Did the coach's leadership and mentoring contribute to improvements to the team? If they didn't make their team better, why not? Is it explainable through injuries or some other reason? Sometimes a coach has potential that isn't being met, and needs to be evaluated for potential growth (further training, clearer expectations, etc.). In this case, will another season allow for more mentorship, and a chance to improve the players next season?
- Trust. Does the Board and the Athletic Director trust the coach? At the end of the day, the most important question to ask is "do we trust this coach to carry out the mission of FHSAA". Does the coach have the best interests of the players and the program at heart or is this merely a vehicle for the coach's child or relative to play?

## Head Coach Scholarships and Travel Reimbursement

In recognition of their significant sacrifice and commitment, FHS offers a 'scholarship' to each FHS Head Coach for each season.

- The scholarship can be applied against the cost of registration for a sport season for one of the coach's children, however it does not have to be in the same sport that the coach is involved in.
- If the coach does not have a child in the program, the scholarship may be used for travel reimbursement, up to the value of the registration in the sport they coach. Travel can include mileage (paid at the non-profit rate), meals and/or lodging. Receipts must be submitted along with completion of the FHS-AA Purchase Reimbursement Request form on the website.
- Alternatively, the coach may choose to apply the scholarship to a player on his/her team or allow an Assistant Coach on his/her team to use the funds for travel reimbursement.

## Coach Terminations

1. In order to create a safe and high-quality program, FHSAA has established a thorough review system for appointing and retaining coaches. Prospective team coaches and assistant coaches must complete a detailed application, agree to the FHSAA Statement of Faith and the Coach Code of Conduct, undergo a third-party background check, provide two letters of reference / recommendation, and be interviewed by the FHSAA Board of Directors.

2. At the completion of each season, coaches' evaluations are requested from the participating families and may be provided by other coaches and the Athletic Director. After the evaluations are reviewed by the Board and if the original appointment requirements continue to be met, coaches can be re-appointed for the following season. If a coach is not re-appointed, the families of the team will be notified and the coach will be offered an opportunity to meet with the Board to discuss the decision. FHSAA will not make public the issues or reasons behind personnel decisions made by the Board unless legally required to do so.

3. Under certain circumstances it may be necessary to consider termination of the role of coach during an active season. If, upon careful review by the FHSAA Board of Directors, in collaboration with the Athletic Director, it is determined that a coach or assistant coach has failed in any of the following areas, prompt administrative action is authorized by the Board. Careful review can include interviews with parents, players, and other coaches.

- Failure to uphold the FHSAA Mission, Core Values, and/or Coach's Code of Conduct.
- Failure to effectively carry out the Roles and Responsibilities of an FHSAA coach or assistant coach.
- Failure to abide by the policies conveyed in the FHSAA Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

There are two administrative actions available to the Board of Directors:

- The coach may be given a warning with expected accountability for improvement to be demonstrated within a specified period of time, as determined by the Board of Directors and the Athletic Director. If acceptable progress is not demonstrated within the allotted period, the coach will be asked to step down.
- The coach may be immediately terminated subject to majority vote of the Board of Directors and the Athletic Director.

## Athlete Eligibility

- Introduction

FHSAA is committed to fairness, transparency, compliance with conference and athletic league rules, and providing a welcoming environment for all eligible participants. As such, eligibility policies are applied uniformly to all families and athletes.

Northern Virginia offers a wide variety of recreational sports opportunities in which homeschool families can participate; however, home schoolers are legally excluded from public school sports teams. Therefore, FHSAA strives to provide athletes with a competitive sports environment where they can develop and hone their skills and compete against private middle schools and high school teams at a high level. By both mission and practice, FHSAA is not designed to serve as a recreational sports organization.

To maintain fairness, program integrity, and compliance with conference regulations and tournament requirements, athlete eligibility is determined according to the student's official educational status as recognized by their state of residence.

- Home School Student Eligibility

A student is considered a **home schooled athlete** for FHSAA purposes if:

- The student is formally registered as a homeschooled student under the home school law of their state of residence, **and**
- The student's state legally recognizes the student as being educated under its home school statute.

Students meeting this definition are eligible for full participation and prioritization in roster decisions.

- Private School Student Eligibility

A student is considered a **private school athlete** for FHSAA purposes if:

- The student is enrolled in a private school (either brick-and-mortar or online), **and**
- The state does *not* classify the student's enrollment as homeschooling under its home school law.

Private school athletes may participate in FHSAA sports **only when their private school does not offer the sport** in which they wish to participate.

- Roster Prioritization and Cuts

Because FHSAA is a homeschool athletics organization, **private school athletes will be released before home schooled athletes** if roster limitations require reductions. This policy applies uniformly, including to students enrolled in online or hybrid private school programs unless they are legally registered as home schoolers. This ensures that home schooled athletes - our primary mission group - receive priority access to participation opportunities.

- Compliance With Tournament Regulations

FHSAA participates in athletic leagues and tournaments that may impose additional eligibility requirements, including verification that athletes are legally registered home schoolers, as well as restrictions on participation by online private school students unless registered as homeschoolers. FHSAA must follow these external requirements to maintain program eligibility for competition. Rostered private school athletes may be ineligible for participation in certain tournaments.

- Required Documentation

To verify eligibility, FHSAA may request the following from participating families: **proof of home school registration** from the state home school authority, or **official confirmation that the student's private school does not offer the requested sport**.

- Athletes Cut From a Private School Team

Private school athletes that have been cut from a particular sport may try out for that sport with FHSAA only if that athlete is needed to fill an FHSAA roster. Direct communication between the FHSAA Athletic Director and the private school Athletic Director would be required to verify the athlete's status (i.e., cut from the private school team) and for their Athletic Director to "release" the athlete to FHSAA. If the team involved competes in VHAC or NVIAC, the player would also need to be granted a waiver from those organizations. Additionally, the private school athlete would be required to register in FHSAA at their same private school grade level. Under no circumstances would a qualified home school athlete be cut from an FHSAA team to make room for the private school athlete. If approved, the private school athlete's status as an FHSAA athlete will only be applicable to this particular sport and season - meaning this registration would not transfer FHSAA athlete status to any other seasons or sports.

- Athletes rostered on an FHSAA team are committed to FHSAA and may not play any sport offered by FHSAA for another home school organization or NVIAC school for the remainder of the current school year.

- Public school students are not allowed to play on FHSAA teams.

- Grade Levels

Grade level when homeschooling is typically a personal decision based on many factors, therefore when initially registering a player, a parent should choose the grade level based

on the number of years remaining before they expect their player to graduate from high school. For example, if their player is expected to graduate in four years then the player is considered to be in ninth grade.

In order for FHSAA athletes to be held to similar standards with the leagues we participate in and other schools we compete against, FHSAA policy states that grade level and expected high school graduation dates, as established upon initial FHSAA registration, cannot be changed without written appeal to the FHSAA Board. Written appeal packages must be accompanied by documented explanation of circumstances and justification.

An athlete's level of eligibility with FHSAA is determined by both their age and grade. An athlete's age is based on the birth date supplied to FHSAA by the parents.

- Athletes in 8th grade or under will try out for Middle School.
- Coaches determine the lower level of registration for their team. The default is 6th grade.
- Middle school Athletes are not eligible to try out for a Junior Varsity or Varsity team. A Junior Varsity or Varsity coach may, with parent approval, ask a Middle School athlete to play up on a high school team, however this must be a coach-initiated arrangement and must be approved by the Athletic Director.
- High school athletes with the emotional, mental, and physical maturity required to participate will not be cut from a junior varsity or varsity team in order to allow a middle school athlete to play up.
- Athletes who turn 15 years of age prior to August 1 of the upcoming school year or are in 9th grade or above are not eligible to play on a Middle School team. Athletes who turn 15 prior to June 1 of the upcoming school year and wish to register as 8th graders should discuss the conference limitations of doing so prior to registration. There are some rules within our homeschool conference and tournaments that would limit participation of such players as 8th graders.
- Athletes in 12th grade are not eligible to play on a Junior Varsity team.
- Athletes who turn 19 years of age prior to August 1 of the upcoming year or have participated in any organization's graduation ceremony or have been recognized as a high school graduate are not eligible to play with FHSAA.
- The number of teams an FHSAA athlete may participate on is not limited. There will be some overlapping seasons between one team starting conditioning/tryouts and another team completing a season, so parents have full responsibility for communicating these scheduling situations to coaches and coaches are encouraged to make allowances for these circumstances. When a player elects to participate in more than one FHSAA team sport during the same season (example Girls' Softball and Girls' Soccer in the spring) both coaches should be informed of this situation before tryouts occur. No coach is obligated to accept an athlete on a team who will not attend the vast majority of practices and games.

## Athlete Registration

- All preseason and regular season registrations are completed and paid online.
- Preseason registration must be completed, and the \$50 fee paid before a player can participate. It is the coach's responsibility to ensure players are registered before allowing them to participate.
- Regular season registrations are conducted 'by invitation'. Preseason registration is a prerequisite to regular season registration.
- Upon receipt of a regular season invitation, parents have 48 hours to complete the registration and pay the \$140 season deposit, at which point a \$30 late fee will be added. Coaches have the option to rescind invitations for players not registering within the 48-hour window. After the budget has been approved, the remaining balance will be added to each athlete's account and full payment is due within 48 hours. Uniforms will not be issued to players until registration is fully paid.

## **Athlete Fees, Scholarships and Discounts**

1. In order for a player to participate in conditioning sessions or to try out for an FHSAA team, the player must be registered on the FHSAA website and pay the Preseason fee of \$50. This fee covers facility rental, liability insurance, and supplemental medical insurance and is not refundable. Some venues used by FHSAA require insurance coverage in order for us to use their facilities.
2. Before each season begins, the athletic director will, with input from the head coach, create a budget to be submitted to the board for approval of season expenses and fees. Built into this budget are facility costs, referee fees, administrative overhead, team equipment, and, in many cases, tournament fees and a uniform replacement escrow. While a cost estimate will be given to families in advance, because these costs can vary depending on the number of players that accept invitations to the team, families will be informed of the final season fees once all athletes have responded to team invites. Each athlete will pay a \$140 non-refundable deposit upon acceptance of the team invitation and pay the balance of the season after the final cost has been calculated. Athletes will not be issued uniforms if there are any unpaid registration fees.
3. In general, FHSAA does not offer family discounts or scholarships. The organization operates on a pretty simple financial model such that team costs are divided evenly between the players for each team. As a general rule, FHSAA does not have significant funding sources beyond the basic season fees.
4. A family may request a hardship provision by petitioning the Board for a payment plan to be considered by the Board by placing a request through the head coach of their team.

## Athlete Tryouts

FHSAA attempts to put the very best teams possible on the court or field for each sport. Therefore, coaches are encouraged to hold tryouts and keep only the players that the coach believes will contribute to the team's success. Most FHSAA teams cut some players at the conclusion of pre-season tryouts.

- At least two tryouts should be offered for each team during the preseason. Individual head coaches determine how many tryouts are required for a player to make the team.
- Players should be asked to review the schedule and let the coach know of any games or practices they will miss before trying out for a team.
- Offers will be sent to players via email as invitations to join a particular team for a regular season.
- Players have 48 hours to accept their offer.
- Only players who have accepted their offer will be included in the player count for determining the season fees.

If an athlete is selected for a team, he or she should be aware that playing time cannot be guaranteed for any player on any FHSAA team. Because of the nature of competitive sports, coaches have the responsibility to put the players in the game that they believe will help the team perform at its best based on individual game situations. This competitive environment means that some players will not have the opportunity to play in some games.

## **Athlete Uniforms**

- Baseball and softball purchase their own uniforms. Registration must be complete in time to order new uniforms. Uniform changes must be approved by the Athletic Director. Purchases can be facilitated through the online store.
- Basketball, Soccer, Volleyball, Tennis, Cross Country, Track and Field, and Flag Football use uniforms that are owned by FHSAA. Uniforms will be sized by Athletic Director and Team Managers after team selection. Team managers will collect uniforms at the last game of the season. Players not returning their full uniform in good material condition will be assessed a \$250 uniform fee. The fee must be paid or the uniform returned before any family member can register for a future sport.
- Team managers should communicate uniform rules to players and parents.

## Athlete Awards

- Varsity Letters are awarded to varsity athletes who are in good standing with the team and play in at least half of the season games. An athlete will receive a Letter and Pin the 1st time they qualify for a Varsity Letter. For subsequent years or additional sports, they will receive a Pin to add to their letter. Varsity Letters and Pins are included in the team budget.
- In order to earn a Varsity Letter in Cross Country, high school athletes must:
  - Attend over half of all the meets (with allowance for not running due to injury)
  - Adhere to FHSAA Player / Parent Code of Conduct and all other policies
  - Be free of disciplinary action
  - Meet one of these cut offs at least twice during the regular season
    - Time: Boys 21:00, Girls 25:00
  - Place: Top seven for FHS
- In order to earn a Varsity Letter in Track and Field, high school athletes must:
  - Reflect Team Culture
    - Demonstrate Christlike sportsmanship
    - Encourage teammates
    - Follow all codes of conduct
  - Commit to Team Participation
    - Attend 90% of practices/meets
    - Communicate absences in advance (e.g., church, family, illness, injury)
    - Be actively engaged in practices and event trials
  - Contribute through Performance or Impact
    - Earn 10 Varsity team points, or
    - Meet a qualifying standard (see chart), or
    - Receive a coach recommendation for meaningful team contribution (e.g., leadership, consistency, spiritual impact)
- Additional awards may be awarded at the discretion of the head coach. These awards should be included in the season budget.
- NVIAC All-League athletes are chosen by their coach for play during the regular season in NVIAC games. FHS awards a medal to NVIAC All-League Athletes. FHS covers the cost of NVIAC medals.

## **Athlete Transportation and Travel**

- Athlete transportation and travel are the responsibility of parents. FHSAA does not arrange travel for athletes.
- Coaches, team managers, and trainers are not allowed to transport athletes. If a coach, team manager, or trainer is also a parent, they can offer transportation as a parent, but not as an official of the organization. In such cases, the coach, team manager, or trainer's own child must also be present in the vehicle. Coaches, team managers or trainers who do not have players on the team cannot transport athletes.
- Team managers can arrange room blocks at hotels, but parents are responsible for booking their own rooms. If parents cannot attend a tournament, they are responsible for finding travel arrangements for their athlete.

## Athlete Safety

If a player is injured, communication between the coach, player, and parents is critical. Players and parents should notify the coach of any injury or illness that will prevent a player from participating in team activities. If a coach observes an injury, the coach will notify the parents. After a serious injury or illness, the coach may require a physician's note in order for a player to once again participate in practices or games. The following rules pertain:

- There must always be two adults present for any FHSAA practice, conditioning, or game. One of these adults must be an approved coach or assistant coach.
- Any injury that could result in a doctor visit requires an injury report (available on the FHS website under FORMS). If 911 is called, the Athletic Director should also be called. Please refer to the FHSAA Emergency Action Plan.
- If a concussion is suspected, parents should be notified and given a concussion info sheet. The player will also need written approval from a medical professional before returning to play. Please refer to the Concussion Awareness and Prevention Policy.
- Coaches should never be alone with a player. Please refer to the Protection of Children, Youth and Adults with Developmental Disabilities policy.

To maintain focus on participation and to maximize learning, team cohesion, and safety, athletes shall not access or use cell phones during FHSAA practices and games unless explicitly authorized by a coach or team manager.

## Concussion Awareness and Prevention

The following policies on concussion awareness and prevention should be understood by all coaches, assistant coaches, managers, trainers, players and parents.

FHSAA is committed to maintaining and promoting a concussion awareness and safety recognition program, including the online Concussion Course offered by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports](http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports).

FHSAA communicates in writing (including by electronic means), their concussion awareness and safety recognition program to all participants, coaches, and parents. It is important to maintain a clear understanding of concussions and their potential consequences, as well as how to recognize concussion signs and symptoms and how to respond.

FHSAA is focused on prevention and preparedness to help keep participants safe and learning the steps for returning to activity after a concussion. FHSAA will take the following five steps if it is suspected that a participant has a concussion:

1. If an athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head or body, remove them from play. Look for signs and symptoms of concussion. When in doubt, keep the athlete out of play.
2. The athlete should be evaluated by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.
3. Record the following information to help health care professionals in assessing the athlete after the injury:
  - Cause of the injury and force of the hit or blow to the head or body;
  - Any loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out) and if so, for how long;
  - Any memory loss immediately following the injury;
  - Any seizures immediately following the injury; and
  - Number of previous concussions (if any).
4. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion. Make sure they know that the athlete should be seen by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.
5. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until a parent, guardian or health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says they are symptom-free and it's OK to return to play. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)—can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in edema (brain swelling), permanent brain damage, and even death.

## Weather

1. FHSAA will always have the safety of our student-athletes and their families as our priority. The following policies apply:

- Follow Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) weather closings for all sports events that take place on FCPS school grounds.
- Follow George Mason University's (GMU) weather policy for all sports events that take place on GMU grounds.
- Follow National (NOAA) Weather Service Lightening Safety Rules for all sports events that take place outside: When thunder roars, go indoors – and stay there for 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder. When lightning is in your vicinity, go quickly inside a closed building or a building with grounded plumbing. If no such building is convenient, get inside a hard-topped vehicle.

2. Coaches should consider using the Weather Bug app to assess weather for outdoor events and/or the National Weather Service Wind Chill Chart as a guide for cold temperatures (summarized below):

- Wind Chill with Precipitation: At or Below 32°F: All outdoor activities canceled.
- Wind Chill without Precipitation: At or Below 25°F: All outdoor activities canceled. At 26-31°F, outdoor activities can occur with consideration to proper dress and level of activity. Seek shelter indoors when appropriate.
- Hot weather temperatures should take into consideration not only the temperature but the humidity and thus the “real feel”.
- If the temperature drops/rises significantly and unexpectedly once an event has begun, the coach may end the event early.
- In hot weather, frequent hydration breaks, longer rest times to cool off in the shade, and cooling opportunities (cooling towels, misters, etc.) are recommended.
- In cold weather, hydration breaks are still important.

3. Coaches should remember many of our athletes travel long distances to participate with FHSAA teams. Weather in other areas will be different than our immediate neighborhoods. Therefore, please be sure to send notifications of cancelation or change in time/location as far in advance as possible.

## Emergency Action Plan

Emergency situations may arise at any time during athletic events. Expedient action must be taken in order to provide the best possible care to the athlete in an emergency and/or life-threatening situation. All coaches should be prepared to follow this emergency plan to help ensure that the best care will be provided.

### 1. Preparation

- If possible, coaches should print out players' emergency contact information prior to players participating in any team event – conditioning, practice, or game. This information should be included in a notebook or folder that should be brought to all games / practices. Keep this information with equipment used for games / practices, so that assistant coaches and managers have this information when the head coach is absent. Injury Report Forms are available on the FHSAA website.
- A minimum of two adults (one over 21 and one over 18) are required at ALL practices, games, and team activities. If two coaches cannot be at an event, the team manager should arrange for a second adult to be present. For safety and liability issues, a coach should NEVER be the sole supervising adult at any team activity.
- Bring a fully-stocked first aid kit to all practices and games. If possible, bring a small cooler of ice – along with Ziploc bags – that you (and if necessary, the opposing team) can use as ice packs for injuries.
- When using a facility (school gym, field, etc.) for the first time, staff should, familiarize themselves with the venue and identify where emergency equipment (e.g., AED) is located.
- Discuss your Emergency Response plan with your team staff before the start of each season.
- For home games, FHSAA head coaches are the designated authority regarding player safety and treatment of injuries. Although most visiting teams bring their own first aid kits, don't assume this will be the case. Coaches should make first aid supplies and ice available to the visiting team—as needed—and provide support to visiting coaches / staff in caring for injured players. FHSAA head coaches should take the lead in initiating the Emergency Action Plan for ANY player, coach, or spectator in attendance at home games.
- FHSAA coaches are the final authority regarding the removal of players from practices and games. When in doubt, keep them out! Coaches may require players to obtain, and provide written evidence of, a physician's clearance for them to resume athletic activities.

2. Emergency Response. During practice and competition, the first responder to an emergency situation is generally a head or assistant coach. However, a team of individuals is needed to respond effectively to emergency situations. An emergency team will likely consist of coaches,

managers, training assistants, team captains, parents, as well as professional medical personnel such as physicians, certified athletic trainers, nurses, and emergency medical technicians. Roles of these individuals will vary.

There are five basic roles associated with an Emergency Response. Head coaches should assign available team members and ensure they understand their roles.

- Establish scene safety and immediate care of the athlete. The first and most important role is establishing safety of the scene and immediate care of the injured athlete. Acute care in an emergency situation should be provided by the most qualified individual on the scene. Individuals with lower credentials should yield to those with more appropriate training. In the event that a physician or certified athletic trainer is not on-site at the time of injury, head coaches should take the lead in assessing an athlete's injury and assign available personnel to the roles below.
- Activation of the Emergency Medical System (EMS). Calling 911 should be done as soon as the situation is deemed an emergency or a life-threatening event. Time is the most critical factor under emergency conditions. Activating the EMS system may be done by anyone on the emergency response team. However, the person chosen for this duty should be someone who is calm under pressure and who communicates well over the telephone. This person should also be familiar with the location and address of the sporting event.
- Emergency equipment retrieval. Equipment retrieval may be done by anyone on the emergency team who is familiar with the types and location of the specific equipment needed.
- Direction of EMS to scene. One member of the team should be responsible for meeting emergency medical personnel as they arrive at the site of the emergency. This person should recruit others, as necessary, to guide EMS to the scene.
- Supervision of the scene and other players. As the emergency team is attending to the injured player and communicating with EMS, it is important to provide safety and security for the non-injured athletes on the team. Players should be moved to a secure location where they will not interfere with the emergency response and where they can be supervised. Opposing team members, spectators, and other personnel should be instructed to remain clear of EMS vehicles and personnel responding at the scene.

### 3. Injury Treatment Protocol

- Step 1: Evaluate the Injury. Do nothing that may cause additional injury. Move the injured person only if you must to prevent further injury or to initiate CPR, or after you have determined it is safe to do so.
  - Initial Assessment:
    - Is he breathing?
    - Is he conscious or unconscious?

- Is the athlete’s head, neck, trunk, or limb in an unusual position that may indicate fracture, dislocation, or other injury?
    - Look for profuse bleeding or swelling.
  - Ask the injured athlete the following questions:
    - Exactly where are you injured?
    - How did it happen?
    - Did you hear any sound such as a tear, rip, snap, or pop?
    - Where is your pain and exactly what type of pain are you experiencing (such as sharp, dull, aching, throbbing)?
    - Are you experiencing any tingling or numbness anywhere in your body?
  - While asking those questions, observe the following:
    - Is he able to communicate easily?
    - Is he anxious and difficult to calm down?
    - Look for deformities or abnormal body positions.
    - Is there swelling?
    - Is there bleeding?
- Step 2: Decide on Response Needed. There are three “Grades” for Injury Response listed below.
  - Grade 3: EMERGENCY → Call an Ambulance (refer to Step 3 below)
    - **Cardiac Arrest.** The athlete could go into cardiac arrest from a severe blow to the heart.
    - **Respiratory Distress.** The athlete is not breathing or is having difficulty breathing or is an asthmatic and cannot get relief through use of an inhaler.
    - **Suspected Neck or Spine Injury.** The athlete may have a loss of sensation or is unable to move body parts.
    - **Serious Head Injury or Concussion.** The athlete experiences ANY of the following symptoms: loss of consciousness (even for a short time), visual disturbance, bleeding, swelling, inability to walk correctly, disorientation, memory loss, nausea / vomiting, numbness / tingling, seizures, headache that worsens.
    - **Suspected Heatstroke.** The athlete may become disoriented or confused, there is an absence of sweating, and the skin is flushed and warm.
    - **Abnormal Position of Extremity or If You Suspect a Fracture That You are Unable to Immobilize to Transport to Hospital.** Examples include a dislocated ankle or displaced leg fracture.
    - **Ruptured Spleen Caused by Blunt Trauma / Impact to the Abdominal Area.** Severe abdominal pains which could become worse. Athlete may have pain in

the shoulder region, usually on the left side. Earlier signs: athlete is pale and has a rapid pulse. Internal bleeding can result in a drop in blood pressure causing blurred vision, confusion, light-headedness, fainting, and signs of shock, including restlessness, anxiety, nausea, and paleness.

- **Severe Bleeding.** Bleeding that cannot be controlled through direct pressure.
- Grade 2: Non-Emergency, serious injury → Send player to ER or Urgent Care facility
- Grade 1: Minor injury → treat and monitor
- **Step 3: Provide Emergency Care.** Members of the Emergency Response Team should administer appropriate first aid care to the injured athlete with the aim of stabilizing his condition until either more qualified medical personnel can provide treatment (in the case of Grade 3 and 2 injuries) or until athletes with minor injuries show significant improvement.
  - **Do:**
    - Take the situation into hand with confidence
    - Stay calm
    - Stay within your knowledge base
  - **Don't**
    - Panic at any time during care
    - Straddle or step over the athlete
    - Carry equipment over the athlete
  - If EMERGENCY (Grade 3) is determined, direct personnel to:
    - **Activate the EMS System:**
      - Call 911 and provide the following information to EMS Dispatch:
        - Name, address, telephone number of caller
        - Nature of emergency, whether medical or non-medical
        - Number of athletes
        - Condition of athlete(s)
        - First aid treatment initiated by first responder
        - Specific directions as needed to locate the emergency scene
        - Other information as requested by dispatcher
        - Do NOT end the call until told to do so by the dispatcher.
    - **Retrieve Emergency Equipment:**
      - As EMS is being dispatched, make sure someone is designated to retrieve any needed emergency equipment from the sidelines.
    - **Direct EMS to scene**

- The person calling EMS should direct someone to meet the ambulance at the designated spot.

- **Ensure supervision of the scene and other players**

- Designate a member of the Emergency Response Team take charge of the team, manage crowd control and keep other athletes away from victim.

NOTE: Once EMS is on-site, the head or assistant coach should contact the athlete's parents to inform them of the injury. If the parents are on-site, check with EMS as to whether they may accompany the athlete in the ambulance. If the parents are not on-site, let them know where their child is being taken by EMS staff.

- If Non-Emergency, Serious Injuries (Grade 2) is determined, send the injured athlete to the Emergency Room or Urgent Care (after stabilizing and providing first aid to the injury), in the following circumstances. Transportation should be provided by a responsible adult.
  - The injury results in immediate or obvious inflammation or swelling.
  - Suspected fracture or dislocation that is not major or likely to induce shock.
  - The injury involves a wound or external bleeding from a laceration or incision that requires stitches.
  - There is a suspicion of possible concussion or head / neck injury (even without symptoms detailed above under Head Injuries).

NOTE: If unsure of the extent of the injury, always protect your athlete and yourself. PLAY IT SAFE and have the athlete visit the ER or Urgent Care to be evaluated.

- If Minor Injuries (Grade 1) is determined, the athlete should be treated on-site and monitored for any worsening of symptoms. Care should be taken in allowing athletes to return to practices and / or games.
- Step 4: Report and Document ALL Injuries
  - Immediately after the game or practice, contact the Athletic Director to report all injuries requiring either a call to 911 or a visit to the ER or Urgent Care, even if the injury was to a player of a visiting team.
  - Submit an Injury Report Form to the Athletic Director on ALL injuries sustained by FHSAA athletes within 24 hours. Also, submit an Injury Report Form for Grades 2-3 injuries sustained by visiting team athletes within 24 hours of home games. These forms are available for download, completion and electronic submission via the FHSAA website.

## Website Photography

1. As an association dedicated to serving homeschooling athletes and their families through competitive sports, FHSAA is committed to providing access to quality game photography for our members, families, and fans. This photography is also invaluable as a recruiting tool for visitors to our website.
2. The FHSAA website hosts team Roster pages with athlete photographs, first names, and grades, as well as Coaching Staff pages for coach, assistance coach, team manager and trainer photographs and mini-biographies. Additionally, the FHSAA website hosts game photo albums under each individual team. All photography on the FHSAA website is accessible by the public without any password.
3. Of note, we maintain some historic FHSAA pictures from years-gone-by posted in a variety of standalone albums around the website. We also have two photograph carousels at the homepage that include current team pictures and other memorable events. These can be updated by the webmaster upon request.
4. Team Albums are intended specifically for game photography and should only include athletes in FHSAA uniform as well as coaches, managers, and trainers. Photographs should never include athletes in unflattering, compromising, immodest, or potentially embarrassing circumstances. Discretion should always rule when selecting pictures for inclusion in a team album.
5. Some FHSAA teams may choose to have a single album for an entire season, while others may want a dedicated album for each game, match, or meet during the season. Albums can be created by the FHS Webmaster using Google Photos with access provided to a team photographer, manager, or coach for uploading pictures. Alternatively, albums can be developed by the team photographer, manager, or coach using an alternative software application like Shutterfly with the webmaster embedding links to those albums in the appropriate section of the website.

## **Conflict Resolution**

Competitive sports can be an environment where conflicts and disagreements can easily arise. FHSAA is committed to resolving conflicts in accordance with the 18th chapter of Matthew. So, we encourage coaches, players, and parents to try to resolve disagreements through direct dialog with the individual(s) and/or parent(s) with whom there is a disagreement. If these attempts to resolve a conflict have been unsuccessful, the problem can be shared with a member of the FHSAA board for review and input. Finally, if the conflict remains unresolved, the issue can be submitted to the Board for resolution.

## FHS HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

Harassment and bullying are disruptive intentional behaviors which interfere with an athletes' ability to participate and perform athletically and/or academically, negatively affect athlete engagement, diminish safety, and contribute to a hostile environment. As such, Fairfax Homeschool Athletic Association ("FHS") prohibits any acts of harassment and bullying altogether. This policy is inclusive of instances that occur as part of any FHS-sponsored events and activities, regardless of location, including through electronic means.

As used in this policy, harassment and bullying are described as intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, written communication, intimidation, or cyber-bullying, including cyber sexual bullying, based on the actual or perceived characteristics of a targeted individual.

To the extent possible, FHS will make reasonable efforts to prevent athletes from being harassed and/or bullied. Moreover, FHS will not condone or tolerate misconduct prohibited by this policy which applies to all staff, athletes, participating family members of athletes, and volunteers. FHS will promptly respond to any complaint of misconduct prohibited by this policy in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent and will take appropriate remedial action, if warranted. FHS staff who witness acts of misconduct prohibited by this policy will take immediate steps to intervene when it is safe to do so.

### Definitions

**Harassment** is identified as a repeated pattern of behavior (physical or non-physical) that is intended to offend, degrade, create a hostile environment, or reflect discriminatory bias. It can include:

- Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments or slurs.
- Physical conduct including assault, unwanted touching, intentionally blocking normal movement or interfering with work or school because of sex, race or any other protected basis
- Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report harassment.
- Deferential or preferential treatment based on any of the protected characteristics listed above.

**Bullying** is repeated behavior or a single, severe incident directed at or about someone under age 18. The behavior is intended or likely to hurt, control, or tear down that person emotionally, physically, or sexually. It can include communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act. Bullying includes one or more acts committed by an athlete or group of athletes that may constitute harassment or creates an intimidating and/or hostile environment, directed toward one or more athletes that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- Placing a reasonable individual in fear of harm to his/her person or property.
- Causing a reasonable individual to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his/her physical or mental health.
- Causing a reasonable individual to experience a substantial interference with his/her academic or athletic performance.
- Causing a reasonable individual to experience a substantial interference with his/her ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by FHS.

**Cyberbullying** is an electronic act that includes the transmission of harassing communication, direct threats, or other harmful texts, sounds, or images on the Internet, social media, or other technologies using a telephone, computer, or any wireless communication device. Cyberbullying can occur in group chats, direct messaging, or social media. It can also include breaking into another person's electronic account and assuming that person's identity in order to damage that person's reputation.

Cyberbullying between FHS teammates falls within FHS purview, even if it occurs separate from FHS events - outside practice or games - because of its impact on team cohesion, athlete mental health, performance and safety, and on FHS culture and reputation. From the FHS perspective, if bullying / cyberbullying affects the team, it's a team issue—regardless of where it originates.

**Electronic Act** means the creation or transmission by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

1. A message, text, sound, video, or image.
2. A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:
  - a. Posting to or creating a burn page. A "burn page" means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in the definition of "bullying," above.
    - a. Creating a credible impersonation of another actual athlete for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in the definition of "bullying," above. "Credible impersonation" means to knowingly and without consent impersonate an athlete for the purpose of bullying the athlete and such that another athlete would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the athlete was or is the athlete who was impersonated.
    - b. Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in the definition of "bullying," above. "False profile" means a profile of a fictitious athlete or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual athlete other than the athlete who created the false profile.
3. An act of "Cyber sexual bullying" including, but not limited to:
  - a. The dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by an athlete to another athlete or student by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in the definition of "bullying" above and includes depictions of a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit image or recording of an individual where the individual is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.
  - b. "Cyber sexual bullying" does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves an FHS-sanctioned activities.
4. Notwithstanding the definitions of "bullying" and "electronic act" above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.

**Complainant** means the individual who reported misconduct in violation of this FHS policy.

**Respondent** means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that violates this FHS policy.

### **Prevention Procedures**

FHS athletes, staff and volunteers are reminded that hateful and/or demeaning behavior is inappropriate and unacceptable in our society in general and our organization specifically. FHS encourages our athletes, staff and volunteers to practice compassion and respect each other. Naturally, FHS staff cannot always be present to observe and intercede when harassment, bullying or cyberbullying incidents occur, so educating coaches about prevention techniques is critical to reduce the risks of harassment, bullying, and cyberbullying. Also, parents/guardians are a vital resource in helping prevent cyber bullying through monitoring the use of electronic communication tools. In all cases, FHS staff will maintain an open-door type policy for victims and parents/guardians to communicate freely.

FHS advises athletes:

- To never share passwords, personal data, or private photos online.
- To think about what they are doing carefully before posting and by emphasizing that comments cannot be completely retracted from the internet once they are posted.
- To remember that nothing is private when sent electronically. Personal information revealed on social media can be shared with anyone including parents, teachers, administrators, and potential employers. Athletes should never reveal information that would make them uncomfortable if the world had access to it.
- To consider how it would feel receiving such comments before making comments about others online.
- Understand the three fundamental rules when faced with cyberbullying: don't respond to the message, save or document the incident through an action such as taking a screen shot, and tell a trusted adult.

### **Education**

FHS's bullying and harassment prevention education discusses the differences between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and includes sample situations to help athletes learn and practice appropriate behavior and to develop techniques and strategies to respond in a non-aggressive way to bullying-type behaviors. FHS has made two resources available on our website under the Coach's Corner to help in the education of our coaches and staff. These are the Coaches Bullying Behavior - Discussion Guide and the Bullying Prevention Handbook for Coaches – both published by the US Center for SafeSport. While review of these documents is not mandatory for FHS coaches, it is highly recommended. Likewise, use of the Discussion Guide as part to facilitate a team meeting is a worthwhile option for increasing athlete awareness. These documents are available to parents via the website as well.

FHS informs our staff, athletes, and parents/guardians of this policy and encourages parents/guardians to discuss this policy with their children to ensure their children understand and comply with this policy.

The following common signs can be indicative that an athlete is a target of bullying including:

- Physical cuts or injuries

- Lost or broken personal items
- Fear of going to practice/games
- Loss of interest in school, activities, or friends
- Trouble sleeping or eating
- Anxious/sick/nervous behavior or distracted appearance
- Self-destructiveness or displays of odd behavior
- Decreased self-esteem

FHS encourages its staff to demonstrate effective problem-solving, anger management, and self-confidence skills for FHS athletes.

### **Misconduct Reporting**

All FHS staff are expected to provide appropriate supervision to enforce standards of conduct and, if they observe or become aware of misconduct prohibited by this policy, to intervene when it is safe to do so, call for assistance if necessary, and report such incidents. The Board requires staff to follow the procedures in this policy for reporting alleged acts of misconduct prohibited by this policy.

Any athlete who believes they have been subject to misconduct prohibited by this policy or has witnessed such prohibited misconduct is encouraged to report such misconduct to a parent/guardian, coach, assistant coach, or team manager so that the athlete can get assistance in resolving the issue in a manner that is consistent with this policy.

Competitive sports can be an environment where conflicts and disagreements can easily arise. FHS is committed to resolving conflicts in accordance with the 18th chapter of Matthew. FHS encourages coaches, players, and parents to try to resolve disagreements through direct dialog with the individual(s) and/or parent(s) with whom there is a disagreement. If these attempts to resolve a conflict have been unsuccessful, the problem can be shared with a member of the FHS board for review and input. Finally, if the conflict remains unresolved, the issue can be submitted to the Board for resolution.

Some cases of bullying or harassment may not be appropriate for a Matthew 18 approach. Since the power dynamics between an aggressor and a victim may be such that direct discussions between the involved athletes are not possible. In these cases, parents of the individuals involved can play a vital role in addressing the circumstances in a Christian and loving manner. If this approach is not successful, involvement of FHS staff is highly encouraged.

While submission of a written report is not required, the reporting party is encouraged to submit a written report. FHS will investigate and respond to all oral and written reports of misconduct prohibited by this policy in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action cannot be based solely on an anonymous report.

FHS acknowledges and respects every individual's right to privacy. All reports shall be investigated in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the integrity of the process to the greatest extent possible. This includes keeping the identity of the reporter confidential, as appropriate, except to the extent necessary to comply with the law, carry out the inquiry and/or to resolve the issue, as determined by the FHS Board on a case-by-case basis.

FHS prohibits any form of retaliation against any individual who files a report, assists, participates, or refuses to participate in any inquiry or proceeding related to misconduct prohibited by this policy. Such participation or lack of participation shall not in any way affect the status, or participation of athletes in FHS activities. Individuals alleging retaliation in violation of this policy should report that situation as quickly as possible.

Knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information related to this process is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.

### **Misconduct Inquiries and Responses**

Upon receipt of a report of misconduct by the Board, an inquiry will be promptly initiated. Inquiries can be better characterized as fact finding activities and involve review of documented screenshots (or the equivalent), timelines and reports. Because of the 'durable' nature of social media content, evidence of misconduct is frequently available for review. As part of an inquiry, review of tangible evidence is invaluable, particularly in comparison with second, third or fourth party testimony or allegations. In some cases, accusations and counter accusations create tremendous anxiety and tension and do not lead to satisfactory outcomes without tangible artifacts that illustrate or highlight the reported misconduct.

Persons involved in fact finding will be guided by the need to determine actual behavior and impact or effect rather than intent. Ultimately, an inquiry is simply seeking to determine where behavior conflicts with FHS expectations as documented in the Player / Parent Code of Conduct, the Coach / Staff Code of Conduct, and the FHS Policy Handbook.

In most cases, an inquiry should take no more than 30 days. If the Board determines that an inquiry will take longer than 30 days and needs to be delayed or extended due to good cause, the Board will inform the complainant of the reasons for the delay or extension and provide an approximate date when the inquiry will be complete.

At the conclusion of the inquiry, the Board will discuss the situation with the complainant and, to the extent possible with respect to confidentiality laws, provide the complainant with information about the inquiry, including any actions necessary to resolve the incident/situation. However, the Board will not reveal confidential information related to other athletes or staff.

### **Misconduct Consequences**

Generally speaking, FHS will only intervene when all three of the following are true: the behavior involves teammates or other FHS staff, it is persistent or severe (not a single awkward comment), and there is demonstrable impact on an athlete's well-being, team dynamics, and an athlete's ability to participate fully in FHS activities.

Possible Board remedies resulting from an inquiry can include: mediated conversations between parents of involved athletes, behavior contracts in alignment with the Code of Conduct, restricted team privileges, suspension from team participation, and removal from FHS.

Athletes or staff who engage in misconduct prohibited by this policy, knowingly make false statements or knowingly submit false information during the grievance process may be subject to disciplinary action up

to and including expulsion from FHS. The Board is responsible for effective implementation of any remedies ordered by FHS in response to a formal complaint.

**Misconduct Incident Recordkeeping**

All records related to any inquiry of complaints under this policy are maintained in a secure location.

FHS will maintain records of any inquiry for at least seven years, unless otherwise prohibited by law. These will include any determination of responsibility; any audio or audiovisual recording or transcript; any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent; and any remedies provided to the complainant.

**HARASSMENT AND BULLYING REPORT FORM**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Alleged Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person(s) you have a complaint against: \_\_\_\_\_ List any witnesses that were present: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did the incident(s) occur? \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe the events or conduct that are the basis of your complaint by providing as much factual detail as possible (i.e., specific statements; what, if any, physical contact was involved; any verbal statements; what did you do to avoid the situation, etc.) (Attach additional pages, if needed):

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

**I hereby authorize FHS to disclose the information I have provided as it finds necessary in pursuing its inquiry. I hereby certify that the information I have provided in this complaint is true and correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I further understand that providing false information in this regard could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination from participation in FHS activities.**

Signature of Complainant \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_

**To be completed by FHS**

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Follow up Meeting with Complainant held on: \_\_\_\_\_

## Budgets

- Team budget worksheets will be sent to the head coach before the preseason. The Athletic Director will enter all required items in the budget. Coaches can add anything additional they need for the season.
- Coaches should have final budgets to the Athletic Director before the end of the preseason. All season expenses should be included in the budget.
- Season fees are determined by the total budget for the team divided by the number of players who accept their spot on the team.
- Included in the team budget is one coach scholarship for the head coach. If the head coach has a player on the team, the scholarship goes to pay for their child. If the coach has a player on another team during that season, the coach's scholarship can be used to pay their fee. Any scholarship funds not used for a player can be used to cover coach's expenses during the season.
- Receipts or a mileage log must be submitted for reimbursement.
- All expenditures must be approved by the Athletic Director before they are made.

## Fundraising

1. Purpose. This policy provides guidelines for the approval and conduct of fundraising activities associated within and for FHSAA. It is intended to govern fundraising activities so that members understand organizational responsibilities of soliciting for funds, accepting funds and handling funds on behalf of FHSAA.

2. Applicability. This policy applies to fundraising by all teams and activities governed by FHSAA that is not already covered by individual and corporate sponsorships.

### 3. Definitions

- Fundraising: any activity conducted for the purpose of collecting money, goods or other support for the benefit of FHSAA.
- Informal Funds: funds collected from within the membership of FHSAA teams for the purpose of conducting team parties or consolidating personal expenses (not covered by this policy).
- Sponsorship: funds paid to FHSAA through the corporate or individual sponsorship program (not covered by this policy).
- Donations: funds donated to FHSAA through the web site or other designations for programs and accepted by the Board (not covered by this policy).

4. Request and Approval. All fundraising activities and events must be requested and approved in advance by the Board.

- Requests must be submitted to the Board via email or in writing at least one week prior to the monthly Board meeting. No particular format for such requests is required, however each request must include the following information:
  - Date and time of event, or date range, as appropriate.
  - Team(s) involved.
  - Any outside organization that will benefit or help the fundraising effort. The applicant(s) must present sufficient evidence that the benefiting outside organization is another §501c3 tax-exempt organization that shares a purpose similar to FHSAA.
  - Sample Communications and other materials which will include the use of the FHSAA logo that will be used for the fundraiser.
  - General conduct of the event (i.e., Bake sale at University Mall).
- The Board will discuss and either approve or deny fundraising requests at the monthly meetings. Applicants will be notified of the Board's decision by email within 24 hours after the Board meeting.
- Applicants will generally be responsible for any and all out-of-pocket costs and fees for participating in a Board-approved fundraising event. Any payment or reimbursement of out-of-pocket costs by FHSAA will be up to the sole discretion of the Board.

Reimbursement requests by the applicants must include a written receipt evidencing the amount of those costs.

5. Conduct. During fundraising events, all participants must understand that they represent FHSAA and conduct themselves with the highest level of decorum and integrity.

- There must be at least two adults present during the entire event.
- Participants may wear FHSAA spirit gear but wear of FHSAA owned uniform items requires advance approval from the Board.
- Participants must be prepared to offer receipts to donors who request them. Contact the Treasurer at least one week before the event on what receipts must state for tax deduction purposes.
- There must be two unrelated individuals who account for the funds collected. The accounting will be completed on a form that facilitates accounting for cash and checks.
- All donations, with the signed accounting sheet, must be turned into the Treasurer for addition into the appropriate team account within 48 hours of the end of the event.

5. Limitations. In accordance with Fairfax Public School System (FCPS) and Fairfax County rules which do not allow fundraising during sporting events, FHSAA maintains a no fundraising rule for all FHSAA competitive events. There is an exception for the FHSAA Homecoming sporting events that are held at the George Mason University RAC.

6. Reporting. Within two weeks after the fundraising event has concluded, the Applicants must provide the Board a written report containing: 1) the total funds raised at the event, 2) the success of the event, and 3) the likelihood of participating in the event in the future. The purpose of the report is to provide objective feedback to the Board and members on such fundraising events for future consideration.

## **FHSAA Hawks Logo**

FHSAA has added a © Copyright to the Hawks logo and developed an approval process to prevent it from being used to imply endorsement for events or messages that are not consistent with our mission and values. The logo may be used by teams and FHSAA members with prior approval of the message and graphics by the FHSAA President or Vice President.

## League Affiliations

1. FHSAA participates in three leagues: Northern Virginia Independent Athletic Conference (NVIAC), Virginia Home School Athletic Association (VHSAA), and Old Line Baseball League. Up to date listings of teams, standings, and tournament information can be found on the NVIAC website (<http://nviac.com>). In addition, FHSAA teams play a wide variety of other teams outside of these leagues.

- NVIAC is our primary league. Their website is [nviac.com](http://nviac.com). Coaches should be familiar with NVIAC procedures as outlined in their constitution and procedure manual.
- VHSAA is a state home school league. Their website is [vhsaa.net](http://vhsaa.net). Tournaments are voluntary and may require teams to play qualifying games.
- All of our leagues follow National Federation of High School (NFHS) rules. Each head coach is given a NFHS rule book before the beginning of their season. All game balls must be NFHS approved.

## Record Retention Policy

1. Proper maintenance of corporate documents and records is critical from both management and legal aspects. FHSAA preparedness for financial or IRS audit, legal action and/or response, and public inquiry, loss by theft or natural catastrophe, among other things, depends largely on keeping accurate records for as long as necessary.

2. The following is a partial list of recommended retention times for several types of corporate records. The list is categorized according to the recommended length of time to retain certain documents. It is not a complete listing but a general overview.

### 3. Permanent Records

- Accounting
  - Audit reports of accountants
  - Checks used for important payments; i.e., taxes, property, etc.
  - Fixed asset records, including depreciation schedules
  - End-of-year financial statements
  - Tax and information returns (State and Federal)
- Legal
  - Articles of Incorporation and bylaws
  - Corporate charter, constitution
  - IRS examinations, rulings comments
  - Litigation — related documents
  - Board and executive committee minutes
  - Tax-exemption application (Form 1023) and approval letter
  - Insurance matters (policies, claims, accident and fire inspection reports)
  - Contracts and leases (active)
  - Leases

### 4. Seven Year Records

- Accounting
  - Bank statements and canceled checks
  - Brokerage statements
  - Donor contributions (numbered receipts)
  - General ledger and journals
  - Sales invoices
  - Credit card statements
- Legal
  - Accident reports (after settlement)

- Contracts and leases (expired)
- Employment tax records

#### 5. Three Year Records

- Accounting
  - Bank reconciliations
  - Invoices (after payment)
  - Monthly financial reports and statements
  - Working papers (accounting, budgets, cash flow, audits)
- Legal
  - Service contracts (after termination)

6. Electronic Documents. FHSAA will maintain a system of records management to manage and archive records from creation to final preservation or destruction. There are several reasons for retaining records, including the satisfaction of legal requirements and the facilitation of operations. The legal requirements for maintaining records do not address all records created by FHSAA. For these records, FHSAA will exercise good business judgment when making retention decisions. Board Members and the Athletic Director will use the FHSAA online storage solution (e.g., DropBox) to store documents such as policies, procedures, financial files and other documents essential to operations.

7. Document Destruction. The President is responsible for the ongoing process of identifying its records, which have met the required retention period, and overseeing their destruction. Destruction of financial and personnel-related documents will be accomplished by shredding or deleting from FHSAA's online storage solution. Document destruction will be suspended immediately upon any indication of an official investigation or when a lawsuit is filed or appears imminent. Destruction will be reinstated upon conclusion of the investigation.

8. Compliance. Failure on the part of Board Members and Athletic Director to follow this policy can result in possible civil and criminal sanctions against FHSAA and possible disciplinary action against responsible individuals. The President will periodically review these procedures with legal counsel or the FHSAA's certified public accountant to ensure they are in compliance with new or revised regulations.

### **Susie Miller Christian Character Award**

The Susie Miller Christian Character Award is named after the founder of our organization and is presented by FHSAA in recognition of an individual or team who demonstrates outstanding sportsmanship, exemplary behavior, or exceptional service to others. Recipients of this award may be players, coaches, parents, officials, or volunteers who exhibit these traits as participants in FHSAA. Nominations for the award may be made at any time before April 30th to the President of FHSAA. The award is presented each year at the FHSAA Annual Meeting.

It can be appropriate to award one Character Award to an athlete, one to a staff member (coach, assistant coach, trainer or manager), and one to another individual like a parent or relative etc..

## Conflicts of Interest

1. Purpose. The purpose of the Conflicts of Interest policy is to protect this tax-exempt organization's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an Officer or Director or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

### 2. Definitions

- Interested Person. Any Director, Officer, or member of a committee with governing board delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.
- Financial Interest. A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
  - An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which FHSAA has a transaction or arrangement,
  - A compensation arrangement with FHSAA or with any entity or individual with which FHSAA has a transaction or arrangement, or
  - A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which FHSAA is negotiating a transaction or arrangement. Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.
- A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest, as a person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

### 3. Procedures

- Duty to Disclose. In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the Directors and members of committees with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists. After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the Board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining Board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.
- Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest

- An interested person may make a presentation at the Board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
- The chairperson of the Board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- After exercising due diligence, the Board or committee shall determine whether FHSAA can obtain, with reasonable efforts, a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
- If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the Board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested Directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in FHSAA's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination, it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.
- Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy
  - If the Board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
  - If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the Board or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

4. Records of Proceedings. The minutes of the Board and all committees with board delegated powers shall contain:

- The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the Board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

5. Compensation

- A voting member of the Board of Directors who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Organization for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from FHSAA for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- No voting member of the Board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from FHSAA, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

6. Periodic Reviews. To ensure FHSAA operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the result of arm's length bargaining.
- Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to FHSAA's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

7. Use of Outside Experts. When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in the Bylaws, the Organization may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the governing board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

## Suspected Misconduct, Dishonesty, Fraud and Whistle-blower Protection

1. FHSAA is committed to the highest possible standards of ethical, moral, and legal conduct. Consistent with this commitment, this policy aims to provide an avenue for employees to raise concerns about suspected misconduct, dishonesty, and fraud and to provide reassurance that they will be protected from reprisals or victimization for whistle-blowing in good faith.
2. Procedure. If any person knows of or has a suspicion about misconduct, dishonesty or fraud, the President should be contacted. If the alleged wrongdoing concerns the President, then another Officer or Director should be notified instead. If the President or other Officer of FHSAA receives information about misconduct, dishonesty or fraud, they shall inform the Board which shall determine the procedure for investigating all credible allegations.
3. Confidentiality. At all times, the privacy and reputation of individuals involved will be respected. There will be no punishment or other retaliation for the reporting of conduct under this policy. If the person providing the information requests anonymity, this request will be respected to the extent that doing so does not impede any investigation.
4. Definition of Terms. For purposes of this policy, the definition of misconduct, dishonesty, and fraud includes but is not limited to:
  - Acts which are inconsistent with ministry policy
  - Theft or other misappropriation of ministry assets
  - Misstatements or other irregularities in ministry records
  - Incorrect financial reporting
  - Misuse of ministry resources
  - Illegal activities
  - Immoral or unbiblical activities
  - Forgery or alteration of documents
  - Any other form of fraud

Record of changes: Initial document, Feb 19, 2024, revised 26 April, 2025.