

— 2026 - 2027 —

ATHLETICS

— HANDBOOK —



Bell Shoals Academy Student-Athlete Handbook

Table of Contents

1. Mission Statement
2. Philosophy of Christian Athletics
3. Athletics Department Information
4. General Athletic Policies
5. Coach, Parent, and Player Relationships
6. Conduct
7. Conflict Resolution
8. Cut Policy / Team Selection
9. Team Commitment & Roster Participation Policy
10. Dress Code
11. Early Dismissal
12. Good Cause Policy
13. Home School Athletic Participation
14. Transportation
15. Weather Safety
16. Injury
17. “Just Cause” Policy
18. Multi-Sport Athletes
19. Music
20. Name, Image & Likeness (NIL)
21. NCAA Clearinghouse (Eligibility Center)
22. Playing Time Philosophy
23. Service Opportunities
24. Supervision
25. Practice Times
26. Pickup Expectations
27. Team Meetings – Parent and Player
28. Uniforms, Equipment, and Practice Gear
29. Athletics Awards & Recognitions

Mission Statement

Bell Shoals Academy exists to partner with parents to provide an unrivaled Christ-centered education that inspires and equips the next generation.

Philosophy of Christian Athletics

The Bell Shoals Academy Athletics Department exists to support and advance the mission of the school by providing an **unrivaled Christ-centered athletic experience** that develops student-athletes spiritually, physically, and relationally.

Athletics at Bell Shoals are an extension of the classroom, designed not only to develop skills and pursue competitive excellence, but to shape character, build discipline, and grow disciples of Jesus Christ. Every coach, athlete, and family plays a role in creating an environment where Christ is honored in preparation, competition, and response to both victory and adversity.

Our commitment to being “unrivaled” is not defined by comparison to opponents, but by the standard we pursue in Christ. We strive for excellence in effort, unity in teamwork, and integrity in all things, recognizing that our ultimate purpose is to glorify God in how we compete and how we live.

Athletic teams are made up of individuals working together toward a common goal. While competition and winning are valued, they are never placed above our calling to reflect Christ.

Our vision for athletics is to honor God as an act of worship through the way our athletes compete. This is rooted in Epistle to the Colossians 3:23: *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.”*

For Athletes

Effort becomes non-negotiable - We don't coast through drills, lifts, or conditioning. Even unseen work matters because our standard is honoring God in how we prepare and compete.

Consistency over spotlight - This applies just as much to practice as game day. We bring the same focus and intensity every day.

Embrace your role - Starter or role player, we give our best. We're not working for status; we're working with purpose.

Attitude and coachability - How we respond, serve teammates, and handle correction reflects our heart.

Integrity when no one is watching - Preparation, habits, and discipline all fall under the same standard.

Compete the right way - We pursue excellence without compromising character.

For Coaches

Coaches are called to lead beyond wins and losses. Their role is to develop athletes spiritually and competitively, modeling what it looks like to work “as for the Lord.” Every practice plan, conversation, and game decision is an opportunity to build character, instill discipline, and point athletes toward Christ, while still pursuing excellence.

For Parents & Fans

Supporting athletics through the lens of Colossians 3:23 means your role matters just as much.

Encourage effort over outcome - Celebrate heart, discipline, and growth, not just stats or wins.

Model Christ-like behavior - How you respond to officials, coaches, and opposing teams sets the tone. Your example teaches athletes what matters most.

Support the mission, not just the moment - This program is about development, spiritually and athletically. Trust the process, even when it’s challenging.

Create the right environment - Cheer with passion, but with purpose. Our sidelines should reflect encouragement, unity, and respect.

Bell Shoals Academy athletic teams will compete with intensity and a commitment to excellence, while consistently maintaining a Christ-honoring testimony in all interactions, with officials, opponents, and surrounding communities. Any conduct by coaches, student-athletes, or spectators that is inconsistent with this mission will not be permitted and will be addressed appropriately by the athletic department.

BSA teams will demonstrate humility in victory and grace in defeat. We will not initiate conflict nor respond in retaliation. Our desire is to represent Christ in both word and action, ensuring that every individual who comes into contact with our athletic program is encouraged toward a deeper understanding of and relationship with Jesus Christ.

ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

Administrative Supervision

All athletic contests held on campus will be supervised by a Bell Shoals Academy administrator. The administrator is responsible for ensuring a safe, orderly, and Christ-honoring environment for all participants and spectators.

Sub-High School contests may be supervised by designated coaching staff or athletic personnel as assigned by the Athletic Department.

Administrative supervision includes, but is not limited to, the following responsibilities:

1. Oversight of gate admission and concession operations
2. Coordination and resolution of facility or game-day issues
3. Crowd management and maintaining a safe spectator environment
4. Oversight of public address announcements and game-day operations

All game-day operations should reflect professionalism, hospitality, and a standard of excellence consistent with the mission and values of Bell Shoals Academy.

Programs Offered

Competitive Interscholastic Athletic Teams

Fall Sports

Boys - Cross Country, Golf

Girls - Cross Country, Golf, Volleyball (Indoor)

Winter Sports

Boys - Basketball, Soccer

Girls - Basketball, Soccer, Cheerleading

Spring Sports

Boys – Middle School Flag Football, Track & Field

Girls – Flag Football, Track & Field

Junior Panthers (Intramural Program)

The Junior Panthers Intramural Program is offered each quarter throughout the school year. Sports, schedules, and registration information are available on the Bell Shoals Academy website.

Parents must register their student-athlete online through the designated registration platform.

This program serves as an introduction to Bell Shoals Academy athletics and a foundational development experience for future participation in our interscholastic programs. The focus is on teaching basic sport fundamentals, developing athletic skills, and creating a positive, encouraging environment for growth and participation.

Bell Shoals Academy coaches and student-athletes serve as instructors and mentors within the program, investing in younger athletes both athletically and spiritually. Through this model, students are introduced not only to the game, but also to the culture, expectations, and Christ-centered values of Bell Shoals Athletics.

The Junior Panthers Program exists to build confidence, character, and a love for competition while laying the groundwork for future participation in Bell Shoals Academy athletics.

Summer Instructional Camps

Bell Shoals Academy offers a variety of summer instructional camps for elementary and middle school students. These camps are led by Bell Shoals Academy coaches and varsity student-athletes and are designed to teach fundamental skills, develop athletic ability, and foster a love for competition in a positive, structured environment.

Beyond athletic development, these camps provide a unique opportunity to invest in the character and spiritual growth of young athletes. Through coaching, mentorship, and daily interaction, our staff and student-athletes model Christ-centered leadership and disciple young boys and girls both on and off the field.

Camp information, schedules, and registration details will be available on the Bell Shoals Academy athletics website.

GENERAL ATHLETIC POLICIES

Academic Eligibility

The Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) requires student-athletes to meet minimum academic standards to participate in athletics. GPA is evaluated at the end of each semester.

High School (Grades 9–12)

Student-athletes must maintain a **cumulative unweighted GPA of 2.4 or higher** to remain eligible.

Bell Shoals Academy report cards reflect a **weighted GPA**. For athletic eligibility, all GPAs will be converted to an **unweighted scale** using the following values:

- A = 4
- B = 3
- C = 2
- D = 1
- F = 0

The Athletic Administrative Team, in coordination with the school registrar, will review GPAs at the end of each semester to determine eligibility.

Failure to Meet GPA Requirement:

Student-athletes who fall below a 2.4 GPA will be **ineligible for a minimum of one semester** and will remain ineligible until the GPA requirement is met.

Progress Monitoring (High School Only)

Academic progress is also monitored throughout each grading period:

- If a student receives an **F in any core subject at mid-term**, they will be **temporarily ineligible** for extracurricular activities.
- Eligibility may be restored at the end of the grading period if:
 - The student has no failing grades, and
 - The **current unweighted GPA is 2.4 or higher**

If these conditions are not met, the student will remain ineligible until the next mid-term progress report.

During Ineligibility:

Students may not participate in or attend practices, games, or off-season workouts. This time is intended to prioritize academic improvement.

Middle School (Grades 4–8)

Student-athletes must maintain a **semester unweighted GPA of 2.4 or higher** to remain eligible.

GPA is calculated using the same unweighted scale listed above.

Attendance

School Attendance

Student-athletes must be in attendance for at least half of the school day Before (11:30am) in order to participate in practices or competitions.

Student-athletes are responsible for communicating absences to their coaches and, when necessary, consulting with athletic administration regarding potential eligibility concerns.

Exceptions Include:

- FHSAA district, regional, or state tournament travel weeks
- Medical or dental appointments, funerals, or other approved absences (cosmetic appointments are not permitted exceptions)
- Early dismissal for approved school-sponsored activities (field trips, athletic contests, etc.)

See the “Early Dismissal” section for additional guidelines regarding attendance.

Athletic Attendance

Student-athletes are expected to attend all scheduled practices, competitions, and team activities. If a student-athlete is injured, they remain an active member of the team and are expected to

attend all team functions unless receiving medical treatment or otherwise directed by a medical professional.

If a student-athlete is suspended from participation by the coach or athletic department, for non academic reasons, they are still expected to attend all scheduled team practices and games unless otherwise directed by the coach or athletic administration.

Suspended student-athletes are considered part of the team and are expected to remain engaged in the program during their period of suspension.

Failure to attend required practices or games during a suspension may result in additional disciplinary action, which may include an extension of the suspension or further consequences as determined by the head coach and athletic administration.

Every effort should be made to eliminate avoidable conflicts with team commitments, including but not limited to:

- Medical or dental appointments
- Family vacations
- School disciplinary consequences

Excessive or unexcused absences may result in reduced playing time or removal from the team at the discretion of the coaching staff and athletic administration.

Clearance to Participate

Prior to participation in any athletic activity, all student-athletes must be fully cleared through the Bell Shoals Academy Athletics Office.

To begin the clearance process, families must visit the designated athletics clearance portal provided by the school. All required forms, waivers, and acknowledgements are completed electronically through the approved athletic clearance system.

The following documents and requirements are necessary for athletic participation:

- 1. FHSAA EL01- Electrocardiogram (ECG) Form**
- 2. FHSAA EL02 – Preparticipation Physical Evaluation**
- 3. FHSAA EL03 – Waiver of Liability (Electronic Signatures Required)**
- 4. Bell Shoals Academy Waiver (Electronic Signatures Required)**
- 5. FHSAA GA4 – Affidavit of Compliance with Athletic Recruiting Policy**
 - a. Required for all students entering Bell Shoals Academy after the start of 9th grade
- 6. Parent Commitment to Bell Shoals Academy Athletic Participation Covenant**
- 7. Student Commitment to Bell Shoals Academy Athletic Participation Covenant**

Coach, Parent, and Player Relationships

Parent / Coach Relationship

Bell Shoals Academy parents and coaches co-labor in the discipleship, development, and training of student-athletes. Both parenting and coaching are challenging callings that require humility, communication, and trust.

When a student-athlete joins an athletic program, parents are expected to understand and support the expectations placed on their child. This begins with clear communication from the coaching staff regarding program standards, expectations, and team culture. When expectations are unclear, direct communication with the coach is required.

Face-to-face or phone conversations are strongly preferred over written communication when addressing concerns, as they promote clarity, relationship, and resolution.

All communication should begin with the assumption of positive intent. Parents and coaches are encouraged to approach one another with humility, seeking understanding before drawing conclusions. The goal is always unity, growth, and Christ-centered resolution.

Communication Parents Should Expect from Coaches

Parents can expect clear and timely communication from coaching staff regarding:

- Coaching philosophy and commitment to Christ, student-athletes, and families
- Expectations for athletes and team standards
- Practice and competition schedules and locations
- Pre-season parent/player meeting information (equipment needs, conditioning expectations, travel, fees, volunteer needs, etc.)
- Procedures related to injury or medical situations
- Discipline policies that may impact participation

Communication Coaches Should Expect from Parents

Coaches should expect parents to:

- Support team unity and avoid gossip, division, or undermining the program
- Communicate schedule conflicts in advance when possible
- Inform coaches of any medical, physical, or developmental concerns regarding their child

Understanding the Athletic Experience

Participation in athletics provides some of the most rewarding experiences in a student's life. It also includes moments of challenge, disappointment, and growth. During these times, open communication between parents and coaches is encouraged and essential.

Coaches serve in a professional and developmental role and make decisions based on what they believe is best for the team and each student-athlete's growth.

Appropriate Topics to Discuss with Coaches

- The development and treatment of the student-athlete (spiritually, relationally, and emotionally)
- Ways to help the student-athlete improve
- Concerns regarding behavior, attitude, or character development

Topics Not Appropriate for Discussion Outside a Private Meeting

- Playing time
- Team strategy or game planning
- Other student-athletes

Parent / Coach Meeting Procedures

When a meeting is necessary, the following steps should be followed:

- Parents should contact the coach directly to request a meeting
- Parents should not attempt to confront coaches before or after practices or competitions, as these are emotional environments not suited for resolution
- A minimum of 24 hours is recommended before meeting to allow time for reflection, prayer, and clarity for all parties

Communication

Bell Shoals Academy Athletics uses the SportsYou app as the primary platform for communication within each team community. SportsYou is available for free download on both Android and iOS devices.

All team-related updates, schedules, and communication will be shared through this platform unless otherwise directed by the coaching staff or athletic administration.

Conduct

Student-Athlete Conduct

Athletic participation is a privilege, not a right. Bell Shoals Academy student-athletes are public representatives of their team, their school, and Jesus Christ. As such, they are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects integrity, humility, and Christ-centered character at all times.

Behaviors that will not be tolerated include, but are not limited to:

1. Fighting
2. Profane, derogatory, or degrading language or gestures
3. Use or possession of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs (including e-cigarettes/vaping)

4. Unsportsmanlike conduct
5. Defiance or disrespect toward coaches, officials, or staff
6. Taunting opponents or officials
7. Vandalism or destruction of property
8. Hazing, bullying, or intimidation of teammates

Student-athletes who engage in any of the above behaviors may be suspended from participation pending investigation by the Athletic Department.

Student Conduct Alignment (Merits & Demerits)

Bell Shoals Academy Athletics partners with the school-wide student conduct system, which includes a merits and demerits framework used to reinforce positive behavior and address conduct during the school day.

Student-athletes are expected to uphold school standards at all times, as their behavior directly reflects their team, program, and the mission of Bell Shoals Academy.

Because athletics is a privilege, school-issued demerits and conduct concerns may impact athletic participation when appropriate.

Athletic Response to Conduct Concerns

The athletic department will review student conduct information (including demerits, referrals, or disciplinary concerns) when determining athletic eligibility, participation, and team standing.

Depending on the nature, frequency, and severity of conduct concerns, athletic consequences may include:

- Verbal warning or coach-led correction
- Required meeting with coach and/or athletic administration
- Temporary suspension from practices or games
- Reduction in playing time or competitive opportunities
- Suspension from the team for a defined period
- Removal from the team in cases of repeated or serious violations

Athletic consequences will be determined by the head coach in coordination with athletic administration and, when appropriate, school leadership.

Standard of Representation

Student-athletes represent Bell Shoals Academy at all times, not only during athletic activities. Therefore, school-day behavior is considered a direct reflection of athletic eligibility and team culture.

The goal of this alignment is not punishment, but formation, developing student-athletes who consistently reflect Christ-like character in all areas of life.

Hazing, Bullying, or Peer Harassment

Hazing, bullying, or peer harassment that intentionally or recklessly endangers the physical or mental well-being of a student will not be tolerated under any circumstance.

No student-athlete should ever be subjected to behavior that is intended to intimidate, embarrass, or harm another individual for the purpose of team initiation, membership, or affiliation.

Coaches are responsible for maintaining a safe, respectful, and Christ-centered environment for all student-athletes. Students are encouraged to report any instance of hazing, bullying, or harassment to a coach or school administrator immediately.

Any individual found engaging in such behavior is subject to disciplinary action, including removal from the team.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct or Contest Ejection

Unsportsmanlike conduct will be addressed promptly by coaching staff and athletic administration to uphold the standards of Bell Shoals Academy Athletics.

Behaviors such as profanity, disrespect, or threats of physical confrontation toward teammates, opponents, coaches, or officials may result in immediate ejection from a contest.

Ejection from an FHSAA-sanctioned event will result in a suspension of one to six weeks, along with any applicable financial penalties. Egregious or repeated violations may result in permanent removal from athletic participation.

All fines associated with ejections are the responsibility of the student-athlete and their family.

Team Dismissal Offenses

Removal of a student-athlete from a team is considered a last resort and will only occur when continued participation is deemed detrimental to the team culture, unity, or mission.

Behaviors that may result in dismissal include, but are not limited to:

- Stealing
- Lying
- Cheating
- Use or possession of alcohol, tobacco (including vaping), or illegal drugs
- Ongoing behavior that undermines team culture or leadership (attendance issues, attitude, refusal to comply with expectations)
- Inappropriate behavior during the school day or in the classroom

If dismissal is being considered, a meeting will take place between the coach, student-athlete, and family to ensure clear communication and understanding of the situation before a final decision is made.

Spectator Conduct

Team meetings, practices, and competitions are an extension of the educational and discipleship process at Bell Shoals Academy. Athletic events provide a unique opportunity for families and guests to witness that process in action.

The conduct of spectators and fans is a direct reflection of Bell Shoals Academy and our witness for Christ within the broader community. All attendees are expected to help create an environment that is encouraging, respectful, and consistent with our mission.

When attending Bell Shoals athletic events, please observe the following expectations:

- All cheering should be positive, respectful, and supportive of student-athletes
- Support and encourage cheerleaders and spirit groups appropriately
- Treat officials, opposing players, and opposing coaches with respect at all times
- Do not publicly criticize coaching decisions or student-athlete mistakes
- Address concerns or frustrations in a respectful and appropriate manner outside of the competitive setting
- Refrain from any behavior that would create a negative or hostile environment
- Treat all facilities and property (home or away) with respect

Administrative Discipline Process

If spectator behavior becomes disruptive or inconsistent with Bell Shoals Academy standards, the following steps may be taken at the discretion of school administration:

- Discreet verbal correction by a Bell Shoals Academy administrator
- Removal from the athletic venue and potential review of future attendance privileges
- Restriction from attending future athletic events and possible impact on student-athlete participation privileges

Our goal is to ensure every athletic event reflects an **unrivaled experience marked by excellence, respect, and Christ-centered conduct.**

Conflict Resolution

Bell Shoals Academy Athletics seeks to resolve conflict in a Christ-centered manner rooted in **Matthew 18:15–17**:

“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you... If they will not listen, take one or two others along... If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church...”

As a Christ-centered school and ministry of Bell Shoals Church, we are committed to handling conflict in a way that reflects Christ, pursuing truth, unity, and reconciliation with humility and grace.

When conflict arises within the athletic community, all parties are expected to follow a biblical approach that prioritizes direct communication, personal responsibility, and restoration of relationships.

All conflicts should follow the steps below in order until resolution is reached:

Player–Coach Conflict

1. The student-athlete should spend one night in reflection and prayer before addressing the concern
2. The student-athlete should request a private meeting with the coach to respectfully discuss the issue. The coach will provide an opportunity for open communication and seek clarity. At the conclusion of the meeting, both parties should determine whether resolution has been reached or if further conversation is needed
3. If needed, a meeting will be held with the parent, coach, and student-athlete
4. If still unresolved, a meeting will be held with the parent, coach, student-athlete, and Athletic Director

Parent–Coach Conflict

1. The parent should spend one night in reflection and prayer before initiating discussion
2. The parent should contact the coach directly to request a private meeting and briefly identify the concern
3. The parent and coach will meet in person to seek resolution in a respectful and Christ-centered manner
4. If conflict is unresolved the parents should reach out to the Athletic Director to set a meeting to work towards a resolution.
5. The Athletic Office will coordinate a follow-up meeting with all relevant parties
6. If necessary, the Athletic Director will involve school leadership, including the Head of School

Player–Player Conflict

1. The student-athlete should spend one night in reflection and prayer before addressing the issue
2. The student-athlete should address the peer privately, away from team activities, in a respectful and direct manner
3. If resolution is not reached, both student-athletes will meet with the coach present
4. If still unresolved, a meeting will be held with both families and the coach

Important Note on Non-Athletic Conflicts

If a conflict arises between students or families that is unrelated to Bell Shoals Academy Athletics or school activities, families are encouraged to pursue resolution independently. The athletic department will not intervene in personal matters outside the scope of school-related participation.

Cut Policy / Team Selection

Interscholastic athletic participation is an invaluable tool for discipleship, development, and character formation. Because of this, Bell Shoals Academy desires to retain as many student-athletes as is reasonably possible, while also recognizing the practical limits of facilities, staffing, equipment, and program structure.

At the same time, Bell Shoals Academy is committed to pursuing competitive excellence, particularly at the High School level. As such, team selection is based on both developmental and competitive standards. High School rosters are composed of student-athletes who demonstrate the highest levels of skill, work ethic, and readiness to compete at that level. Coaches also seek to maintain appropriate balance within grade levels to support program continuity and long-term competitiveness.

Every student-athlete who participates in tryouts will be given a fair and intentional opportunity to demonstrate their ability, effort, and attitude. At the conclusion of the evaluation process, coaches may need to make difficult roster decisions, including the possibility of cuts, which may be challenging for student-athletes and families.

As student-athletes progress through middle school and into high school, expectations for team selection become increasingly rigorous. Each year, all student-athletes must participate in tryouts and meet the established standard for that level of competition to be selected for a team.

The following criteria are used when evaluating student-athletes for team selection:

1. Competitive skill and ability
2. Attitude and character
3. Effort and work ethic
4. Commitment to the program

Decisions regarding roster selection are never made lightly. Coaches understand the weight of these decisions and approach them with prayer, wisdom, and care, always seeking what is best for both the individual student-athlete and the overall health of the program.

Team Commitment & Roster Participation Policy

Bell Shoals Academy Athletics values commitment, unity, and perseverance as essential components of team culture and student-athlete development. Because athletics is a privilege and not a right, roster participation carries an expectation of full-season commitment.

Quitting a Team (In-Season Withdrawal)

Once a student-athlete has been officially placed on a roster and the season has begun, they are expected to complete the season in its entirety.

If a student-athlete voluntarily quits a team after the season has started, they will be ineligible to participate in the next athletic season immediately following their withdrawal.

For example, if a student-athlete quits a team during the fall season, they would be ineligible for participation in the winter season. If they quit during winter, they would be ineligible for spring participation.

Any exceptions to this policy will be reviewed and determined by athletic administration.

Withdrawal from Bell Shoals Academy / Homeschool Transition

If a student-athlete withdraws from Bell Shoals Academy and transitions to a homeschool or non-enrolled status, they will be required to observe a one-year waiting period before becoming eligible to participate in Bell Shoals Academy Athletics as a homeschool participant.

This policy is designed to preserve team continuity, protect program integrity, and ensure alignment with FHSAA eligibility standards and school participation expectations.

Administrative Review and Exceptions

All eligibility situations are subject to review by the Athletic Director in coordination with school leadership. Exceptions may be considered in cases of documented hardship, family relocation, or other extenuating circumstances.

Standard of Commitment

Bell Shoals Academy Athletics is built on commitment, accountability, and perseverance. Student-athletes are expected to honor their team, their coaches, and their school by completing what they commit to begin.

Dress Code

Game Day Dress

Any game day attire that does not fall within the Bell Shoals Academy dress code must be approved by the appropriate grade-level principal or their designee.

- To preserve the quality and integrity of athletic uniforms, jerseys may not be worn during the school day, unless given permission by the Athletics Department.
- All approved game day dress must be worn as a full team with 100% participation.
- Approved alternatives to long-sleeve team T-shirts may include team polos, collared shirts with ties (boys), or appropriate dresses (girls), as determined by the coaching staff and administration

Game day attire should reflect professionalism, unity, and the standard of excellence expected of Bell Shoals Academy student-athletes.

Athletic Activity Dress Standards

- Student-athletes are not permitted to wear jewelry, including body piercings, during practices or competitions
- Bell Shoals Academy guidelines regarding facial hair and hairstyles apply; coaches may implement additional sport-specific expectations as needed
- Undergarments must not be visible and may not be worn as outer garments in any athletic facility or setting
- All athletic bottoms must include an elastic waistband for safety and functionality
- Shirts must be worn at all times during athletic activity unless otherwise directed within the context of the sport
- Compression shorts, spandex, or similar garments must be fully covered by appropriate athletic shorts

Early Dismissal

The Bell Shoals Academy Athletics Department works diligently to minimize classroom time missed due to athletic participation. However, scheduling factors such as travel time, daylight, weather conditions, and appropriate warm-up periods may occasionally require early dismissal.

Please note the following expectations:

- Student-athletes are responsible for all academic work missed due to early dismissal or athletic participation
- All class time missed for Bell Shoals athletic participation will be excused
- Early dismissal times will be communicated through the official athletics communication platform
- Student-athletes are expected to communicate proactively with teachers regarding upcoming absences or schedule conflicts
- Any last-minute changes to dismissal times will be communicated through school announcements and the athletics communication system

Good Cause Policy

A Good Cause determination is required by the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) to evaluate the eligibility of transfer student-athletes. Students who transfer during an academic year will be reviewed on an individual basis, with final determinations made by the Athletic Director in collaboration with school administration and leadership.

The following factors may be considered in the decision-making process:

1. Timing of the transfer and number of games remaining in the season

2. Availability of uniforms and equipment
3. Reason for transfer

Transfer Considerations

Positive Reasons (May Support Eligibility):

- Full and complete family relocation
- Hardship circumstances outside the control of the student or family

Negative Reasons (May Impact Eligibility):

- Disciplinary issues at previous school
- Poor academic performance

Each case is evaluated individually with fairness, consistency, and integrity in accordance with FHSAA guidelines and Bell Shoals Academy standards.

Home School Athletic Participation

Bell Shoals Academy is committed to serving home school families who desire to participate in a Christ-centered, competitive athletic environment at the High School Level. Home school student-athletes and their families must complete the full admissions process, including academic review and a family interview.

Once accepted and rostered on a team, home school student-athletes are held to the same expectations, standards, and commitment requirements as fully enrolled Bell Shoals Academy students.

Eligibility Requirements

- Home school student-athletes must meet all athletic eligibility requirements established by Bell Shoals Academy and governing athletic associations
- Families must complete all required enrollment and compliance documentation prior to participation in any team activity, including tryouts and preseason workouts
- The annual participation fee of \$350 is due prior to participation of any kind (including tryouts and preseason activities). If a student does not make a team, a refund will be issued upon written request.

Compliance Note

It is important that all home school eligibility documentation is completed as early as possible in the process. Submitting required forms promptly allows time for any necessary adjustments and ensures compliance with governing athletic association guidelines.

Transportation

Bell Shoals Academy Athletics will not provide bus transportation for athletic events. Parents/guardians are responsible for all transportation to and from practices, competitions, and team-related activities.

Student-athletes are not permitted to transport other student-athletes to or from athletic events.

If a student-athlete will be riding home with another parent or guardian following a contest or event, the head coach must be notified in advance and approve the arrangement.

All transportation arrangements should reflect safety, accountability, and clear communication between families and coaching staff.

Hotels and Travel

For athletic travel involving overnight stays, the following guidelines apply:

- Hotel expenses for post-season or playoff competition will be covered by the Bell Shoals Academy Athletics budget, when applicable
- Hotel expenses for regular season travel are the responsibility of families
- Student-athletes are responsible for meals and any personal spending money during travel
- Parents are responsible for making and managing their own lodging reservations unless otherwise communicated by the Athletic Department

Participation in overnight travel is considered an extension of the athletic program and school environment. As such, student-athletes are expected to uphold Bell Shoals Academy standards at all times while traveling.

Disciplinary action for inappropriate conduct during overnight trips may be increased due to the extended nature of supervision and representation of the school.

Inclement Weather / Lightning

Bell Shoals Academy Athletics utilizes the **Perry Weather monitoring system**, including lightning detection and Wet Bulb temperature tracking, to ensure the safety of all student-athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators. The system provides real-time alerts and is used to guide all decisions related to outdoor athletic activity.

Alert Status

When lightning is detected within the designated safety radius (7 Miles), or when weather conditions are deemed unsafe by the monitoring system:

- A warning signal will sound and/or alert notification will be issued
- Outdoor activities must immediately stop
- All participants must seek shelter in a safe building or approved enclosed vehicle

All outdoor athletic activities will remain suspended until the system indicates safe conditions have returned and no electrical activity has been detected within the safety radius for a minimum of **30 consecutive minutes**.

All Clear Status

When safe conditions have been confirmed and 30 minutes have passed without lightning activity:

- The system will issue an “all clear” notification
- Outdoor activities may resume at the discretion of game officials and athletic administration, provided field conditions are safe

Monitoring Weather Conditions

Athletic administration, game officials, and head coaches will collaborate to determine the status of each contest. While updates are often desired by parents and spectators, all parties are asked to allow appropriate time and space for safety-based decisions to be made.

Shelter Procedures

Bell Shoals Academy will provide designated shelter for all game participants, including officials, visiting teams, and home teams.

- Student-athletes, coaches, and game personnel should report immediately to designated indoor shelter areas
- Spectators are strongly encouraged to seek shelter in personal vehicles
- All athletic facilities will be closed during lightning alert status
- Announcements regarding weather delays and safety procedures will be communicated through the SportsYou app or School Communications when available

Additional Safety Note (Wet Bulb Monitoring)

In addition to lightning detection, Bell Shoals Academy utilizes Wet Bulb monitoring technology to track heat index and environmental conditions. Athletic administration reserves the right to modify, delay, or suspend activity based on unsafe heat conditions in accordance with best safety practices and FHSAA guidelines.

Injury

Injury is an inherent risk in all athletic participation. Bell Shoals Academy Athletics prioritizes the health, safety, and well-being of all student-athletes.

When injuries occur, coaches and athletic personnel will respond appropriately and ensure that student-athletes receive proper care and guidance. In situations where medical evaluation is needed, families may be directed to seek care from a licensed medical provider.

The following policies apply to all athletic injuries:

- All instructions provided by coaching staff and athletic administration regarding injury management must be followed
- If a student-athlete is referred for medical evaluation, a physician's clearance note may be required prior to returning to athletic participation
- Any injury resulting in missed practices or extended absence may require documentation from a licensed medical provider
- Final decisions regarding return-to-play status will be made by athletic administration in coordination with school leadership and, when applicable, medical professionals

The health and long-term well-being of student-athletes will always take priority over participation or competition.

“Just Cause” Policy

Bell Shoals Academy views every student-athlete as a ministry opportunity and values each individual as part of a Christ-centered discipleship environment. Interscholastic athletics serve as a tool to develop students spiritually, physically, and relationally.

While families may transfer into Bell Shoals Academy for a variety of reasons, participation in athletics after a season has begun will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by athletic administration.

The following factors may be considered when determining eligibility for participation in an ongoing season:

- Timing of enrollment and how much of the season has elapsed or remains
- Personal hardship or extenuating circumstances
- Family relocation and change of residence
- Whether the sport in question required tryouts or involved roster selection processes
- Whether the student previously participated or suited up for another school during the same athletic season
- Any additional circumstances that may impact the culture, unity, or overall health of a specific team

All decisions will be made in alignment with Bell Shoals Academy's mission, athletic standards, and the long-term development of the student-athlete and program.

Multi-Sport Athletes

Multi-sport participation is a valuable opportunity for developing well-rounded student-athletes.

Benefits of Multi-Sport Participation

- **Physical Development:** Different sports engage different muscle groups and movement patterns. Early sport specialization can contribute to overuse injuries, while multi-sport participation supports balanced athletic development and long-term health.
- **Social & Spiritual Growth:** Competing in multiple sports places student-athletes in varying roles and levels of performance. This fosters humility in areas of challenge and develops leadership in areas of strength, supporting overall character and spiritual growth.

At Bell Shoals Academy, multi-sport participation is encouraged when possible. Sport specialization is not a primary focus of our athletic philosophy.

Overlapping Seasons (Fall, Winter, Spring)

In Florida, athletic seasons may overlap. When a student-athlete desires to participate in two sports with overlapping seasons, clear and ongoing communication is required between the student-athlete, both head coaches, and parents.

General guidelines include:

1. Coaches at Bell Shoals Academy will make reasonable efforts to support multi-sport participation when possible
2. The in-season sport will typically take priority until its conclusion
3. Student-athletes should communicate their intent to participate in a second sport with both coaches prior to tryouts whenever possible, allowing for appropriate planning and flexibility
4. A meeting between both coaches, the student-athlete, and parents should take place prior to the start of the first overlapping season to establish expectations, commitments, and communication standards

Simultaneous Sports (Same Season Participation)

In cases where two sports occur during the same season:

- One sport will be designated as the **primary sport**, and the other as the **secondary sport**
- If one sport is a team sport and the other is an individual sport (e.g., Golf & Volleyball), the team sport will typically be designated as the primary sport

Participation in two simultaneous sports requires a high level of organization, maturity, and communication from the student-athlete and family. Academic performance, behavior, and outside commitments should also be carefully considered before committing to dual participation.

Shared Responsibility for Success

All parties, both coaches and the family, must approach multi-sport participation in good faith, with a shared commitment to what is best for the student-athlete and the health of both programs. While not every situation will be feasible, all discussions should begin with a spirit of cooperation, humility, and a desire to support the overall development of the student-athlete.

Music

Bell Shoals Academy Athletics seeks to promote a culture of community, energy, and positive engagement at all athletic events. Music played at sporting events may include a variety of genres and is selected to enhance the competitive atmosphere, encourage fan involvement, and support the overall game-day environment.

Any music containing profanity, vulgar language, or suggestive content will not be permitted or played at Bell Shoals Academy athletic events.

Name, Image & Likeness (NIL)

The Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) and the Florida Legislature have established policies regarding Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) opportunities for high school student-athletes in the state of Florida.

Bell Shoals Academy faculty, staff, coaches, and representatives of the athletic program are not permitted to participate in, facilitate, or influence NIL opportunities for student-athletes.

NIL agreements are private arrangements between a student-athlete (and their family) and an outside organization. These agreements must be handled independently and in accordance with all FHSAA regulations.

Student-athletes engaging in NIL opportunities may not represent Bell Shoals Academy in any promotional capacity. The use of the school's name, logos, uniforms, facilities, or athletic programs in connection with NIL activities is strictly prohibited.

Violation of this policy may result in suspension or removal from the athletic program for the student-athlete, and disciplinary action for employees where applicable.

Families are strongly encouraged to stay informed on all current FHSAA NIL guidelines and updates.

NCAA Clearinghouse (Eligibility Center)

Student-athletes intending to participate at the NCAA Division I or II level are responsible for completing all requirements with the NCAA Eligibility Center prior to participation at the collegiate level.

Information regarding registration, requirements, and documentation can be found in the NCAA Guide for College-Bound Student-Athletes at www.ncaa.org (select "Eligibility Center").

It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to initiate this process and request any necessary documentation from Bell Shoals Academy.

Bell Shoals Academy guidance counselors are available to assist students and families throughout this process.

Playing Time Philosophy

Bell Shoals Academy Athletics is committed to fielding competitive teams that pursue excellence in every contest. The value of a student-athlete is not defined by playing time, but by their identity in Christ, their development, and their contribution to the team.

Each member of the athletic community, coaches, student-athletes, and parents, is called to approach athletics with a spirit of sacrifice, humility, and commitment to the good of the team.

The following guidelines define expectations for each role regarding playing time and team participation:

The Coach Should:

1. Coach with a commitment to compete and pursue excellence
2. Never compromise competitive integrity due to substitution concerns alone
3. Value every student-athlete and work intentionally toward their development and involvement
4. Challenge athletes to compete at a level that requires depth, preparation, and rotation
5. Make competitive decisions in critical moments based on what gives the team the best opportunity for success

The Player Should:

1. Practice with intensity and consistency that earns trust and opportunity
2. Develop a strong understanding of team systems, both offensively and defensively
3. Work to expand knowledge of multiple positions whenever possible
4. Maintain a desire to contribute in whatever role is assigned
5. Stay mentally engaged and prepared when not actively in competition
6. Support teammates at all times, celebrating both individual and team success regardless of role

The Parent Should:

1. Maintain a long-term, “big picture” perspective, especially early in the season
2. Avoid speech or behavior that creates division or undermines team unity
3. Encourage student-athletes to address concerns directly with the coach first
4. Help their child reflect on expectations, effort, and areas for growth when playing time concerns arise

5. Approach initial conversations with coaches as fact-finding discussions rooted in trust, humility, and positive intent

Service Opportunities

Bell Shoals Academy Athletics thrives because of a servant-hearted community that supports and enhances the overall game-day experience. Volunteers play a vital role in maintaining excellence across all athletic events.

Coaches are encouraged to identify and coordinate volunteers for home contests. Service opportunities may include:

- Team support roles (Team Parent / Team Mom or Dad)
- Admission gate personnel
- Concessions
- Public address announcer
- Scorekeeper
- Scoreboard operator

Families will be required to fulfill at least one volunteer shift per season. To support scheduling flexibility, the athletic department may provide student or approved substitutes to cover volunteer shifts for a fee when a family is unable to attend their assigned time.

If you are interested in serving within a specific team, please contact the head coach. If you are willing to serve across multiple programs or in general athletics support, please contact the Bell Shoals Athletics Office.

Supervision

- Student-athletes must be supervised at all times while participating in athletic activities
- Student-athletes should remain in designated areas and wait for a coach or approved staff member before beginning any activity
- Coaches are responsible for supervising student-athletes until they are officially released and picked up from campus

All supervision practices should reflect a safe, structured, and Christ-centered environment at all times.

Practice Times

- Practice schedules are established by the head coach and communicated to families during the preseason parent meeting
- Any changes, cancellations, or updates will be communicated directly by the head coach through the approved communication platform
- **No Sunday practices or team meetings are permitted**

- High School teams may occasionally have practices or tournaments during school breaks or holidays
- Middle school practices scheduled during school breaks should be considered optional whenever possible
- Wednesday practices will conclude no later than **4:30 p.m.**, and coaches will make every effort to begin and end practices on time to support family planning and consistency
- In the event of school closures due to hurricanes or other natural disasters, all practices will be canceled or postponed. Practices may resume only when campus conditions are deemed safe by school administration

Pickup Expectations

Timely pickup of student-athletes is an important part of program responsibility and respect for coaching staff time.

Repeated late pickups may result in a review of team participation expectations, which could include reduced playing time or additional disciplinary measures at the discretion of coaching staff and athletic administration.

Team Meetings – Parent and Player

Each athletic team will conduct a mandatory parent/player organizational meeting prior to the first competition.

This meeting is designed to clearly communicate expectations, build alignment, and establish a unified team culture for the season.

Topics covered may include, but are not limited to:

1. Coaching philosophy and program vision
2. Spiritual development and discipleship approach within the team
3. Practice and game schedules
4. Team standards, rules, and expectations
5. Costs, fees, travel expectations, and spirit packs
6. Communication and conflict resolution process
7. Volunteer and service opportunities
8. Playing time philosophy and expectations

Attendance at this meeting is required for both parents and student-athletes.

Uniforms, Equipment, and Practice Gear

Uniforms

- Team uniforms are typically replaced on a 3–5 year cycle for high school programs.
- All uniforms remain the property of Bell Shoals Academy and must be returned to the head coach at the end of the season

- Certain sports (such as golf) may require athlete-purchased uniforms or gear that cannot be reused
- Any uniform items that are not reusable or collected (e.g., spandex, polos, socks, swimsuits) are the responsibility of the student-athlete
- On occasion, varsity athletes may be given the option to purchase their uniform at the conclusion of the season; pricing will be determined by the Athletic Director
- Uniforms should only be worn for designated athletic activities related to that sport
- Families are responsible for any lost or damaged uniform items; replacement costs typically range from \$100–\$250 per item

Equipment

- Essential team equipment required for practice and competition is provided through the athletics budget
- Personally preferred equipment, specialty items, or non-reusable equipment is the responsibility of the family

Practice Gear / Spirit Packs

Individual teams may require the purchase of spirit pack items. These may include non-reusable uniform components, shorts, T-shirts, hoodies, bags, practice gear, or other team apparel.

All spirit pack items are purchased by the family and remain the property of the student-athlete.

Coaches should be mindful of overall cost and aim to balance team needs with family affordability. Typical spirit pack ranges are:

- Varsity: \$100–\$300
- Junior Varsity: \$50–\$200
- Middle School: \$25–\$100

Team shoes are not included as part of spirit packs.

Financial Collection Process

The following process will be used for spirit pack payments:

1. Coaching staff will communicate spirit pack details, pricing, and a payment link along with a clear deadline
2. Families will complete payment directly and provide confirmation to the coach as verification
3. In cases of financial hardship, families should contact the designated athletics support contact to discuss available payment arrangements
4. Coaches will coordinate with the athletic office to place orders and track payments
5. Families who do not complete payment by the stated deadline may have the charge added to their FACTS account, including any applicable processing fees

ATHLETICS AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Recognition Ceremonies

Varsity Letters & Pins

Student-athletes who compete at the varsity level and complete a season in good standing are eligible to earn a varsity letter and sport pin.

Each student-athlete will receive one chenille letter for their high school career. Additional recognition includes a sport-specific pin during the first year of participation and a service bar for each additional year in that sport.

To be eligible for a varsity letter and pin, the following criteria must be met:

1. The student-athlete and parent must honor all commitments outlined in the athletic covenant
2. The student-athlete must participate in at least 80% of the varsity season

Disqualifying Protocols

A student-athlete who does not complete the season will not be eligible to receive a letter or pin.

A student-athlete who completes the season but does not demonstrate commitment to team standards may be disqualified from receiving recognition. The following process must be followed for disqualification:

1. The head coach must communicate concerns in person with the student-athlete regarding behavior that violates team expectations. If behavior continues, the athlete may be deemed ineligible for recognition
2. The head coach must notify the parent(s) via phone or in-person conversation
3. The head coach must notify the Athletic Director that a formal warning has been issued
4. If behavior continues, a meeting will be held between the head coach, Athletic Director, student-athlete, and parent(s) to determine final eligibility

Letter & Pin Ceremony

Bell Shoals Academy will recognize varsity letter recipients at the conclusion of each athletic season or during the End-of-Year Sports Awards Ceremony.

Student-athletes will be presented their letters and pins either by their head coach or as part of the formal school-wide athletic awards program.

End-of-Year Sports Awards Ceremony

Bell Shoals Academy Athletics will host an annual End-of-Year Sports Awards Ceremony to celebrate student-athletes, teams, and coaches from all athletic programs.

This event serves as the primary setting for major athletic recognition, including team awards, individual honors, and department-wide distinctions.

Team & Department Awards

The Panther Award

The Panther Award is presented to one student-athlete from each team who best represents the character of Christ.

This is the highest team-level athletic honor at Bell Shoals Academy. It is awarded to the student-athlete who consistently demonstrates leadership in speech, conduct, faith, love, and purity.

Recipients are selected by the head coach and may include input from assistant coaches, teammates, faculty, staff, and administration. Can only win for 1 sport per season.

Sport Most Outstanding Player

This award is presented to one student-athlete from each team who had the greatest overall impact on team success during the season.

This recognition highlights athletic performance, work ethic, leadership, and overall contribution to the program.

Male and Female Scholar-Athlete of the Year

This award is presented annually to one male and one female student-athlete who demonstrate excellence in both academics and athletics.

Recipients must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.75 and demonstrate strong character and leadership within the school community. Preference may be given to multi-sport athletes and those with significant athletic impact.

Male and Female Athlete of the Year

To be eligible for Male or Female Athlete of the Year, a student-athlete must have earned at least one Most Outstanding Player award during their athletic career.

This award recognizes the most complete student-athletes who demonstrate excellence in performance, leadership, character, and contribution across their sport(s).

Selection Process

The Panther Award

Panther Award recipients are selected through a collaborative process designed to reflect both athletic character and school representation.

1. The head coach will first nominate student-athletes based on their demonstrated character, leadership, and conduct throughout the season on the field or court
2. These nominations will then be reviewed and forwarded to Bell Shoals Academy faculty, who will provide input regarding the student-athlete's representation in the classroom and school environment
3. Final selection will be determined through this combined evaluation of athletic character and academic/school-day conduct

Assistant coaches, teammates, faculty, staff, and administration may all provide input into the selection process as appropriate.

Sport Most Outstanding Player

The Sport Most Outstanding Player is selected by the coaching staff of each individual team.

Male and Female Athlete of the Year

The Male and Female Athlete of the Year awards are selected through collaboration between the Bell Shoals Academy Athletic Department and the coaching staffs.

Male and Female Scholar-Athlete of the Year

The Male and Female Scholar-Athlete of the Year will be selected through collaboration between the Bell Shoals Academy Athletic Department, school administration, and faculty.

Selections will be based on academic achievement, athletic performance, leadership, and overall representation of Bell Shoals Academy both in and out of competition.

Bell Shoals Academy Athletics

Student-Athlete Covenant & Handbook Acknowledgement

At Bell Shoals Academy, athletics is an extension of our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Participation in athletics is a privilege and an opportunity to honor God through competition, teamwork, discipline, and character.

As a Bell Shoals Academy student-athlete, I understand that I represent not only myself, but also my family, my teammates, my school, and ultimately Jesus Christ in the way I compete, speak, and conduct myself on and off the field, court, and campus.

I commit to the following:

Student-Athlete Covenant

- I will strive to glorify God in my attitude, effort, sportsmanship, and conduct.
- I will demonstrate respect toward coaches, teammates, officials, opponents, teachers, administrators, and spectators.
- I will compete with integrity, humility, and selflessness.
- I will remain coachable and respond to correction with maturity.
- I will prioritize academics, character, and spiritual growth alongside athletics.
- I will support and encourage my teammates and contribute positively to team culture.
- I understand that playing time is not guaranteed and is determined by the coaching staff.
- I will uphold all standards, expectations, and policies outlined in the Bell Shoals Academy Athletic Handbook.
- I understand that violations of team, school, or athletic department expectations may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or removal from athletic participation.

Athletic Handbook Acknowledgement

By signing below, we acknowledge that we have received, read, and understand the Bell Shoals Academy Athletic Handbook. We understand the expectations, policies, procedures, and standards outlined within the handbook and agree to support and abide by them throughout the athletic season and school year.

We understand that participation in Bell Shoals Academy Athletics is a privilege and that student-athletes are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the mission and values of Bell Shoals Academy and Bell Shoals Church.

Student-Athlete Information

Student-Athlete Name: _____

Sport(s): _____

Grade: _____

Signatures Page

Student-Athlete

I commit to honoring the expectations and standards outlined above and in the Bell Shoals Academy Athletic Handbook.

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian

I have reviewed the Athletic Handbook with my student-athlete and agree to support the mission, standards, and expectations of Bell Shoals Academy Athletics.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____