

Middle School Athletic Handbook

The Purpose of Our Middle School Athletics Program

The purpose of our middle school athletics program is to provide athletes with an ENJOYABLE learning experience in which they can PRAISE God in this area of their lives too. Our desire is to inspire and challenge athletes to develop their God-given talents in a joyful manner so that they desire to remain active even after graduation from Credo. The environment should be a POSITIVE environment with a focus on FUN and GROWTH.

In all things, including athletics, we are called to strive to do our best. Outcome goals, however, include improved skills/knowledge about a sport, the development of a POSITIVE sports attitude and the development of a personal responsibility in growing POSITIVE relationships with others. In so doing, athletes will learn character development, leadership skills, humility, service, courage, responsibility, and cooperation.

These attributes are put to use as a citizen in God's kingdom where athletes play to his glory and out of THANKFULNESS to him. We acknowledge God as the creator and giver of all talents and abilities and seek to bring him glory in everything we do. As our school athletics is often the face of the school in our local community, we seek to be ambassadors for Christ as we engage in these activities.

Characteristics of the Middle School Child

- Peer acceptance is very important
- Their values and perceptions are influenced by peers, celebrities, media
- Their emotions have many highs and lows
- Their decisions tend to be impulsive
- There is a wide range of maturity and development
- There is a wide range of intellectual and athletic capabilities
- They are high energy and super fun!!

Foundations of our Athletics Program

- To provide a space to use athletic skills to PRAISE God
- To provide an ENJOYABLE experience in a POSITIVE environment
- To mirror the values and expectations of the classroom
- To provide opportunities to grow in skill and knowledge of a sport
- To teach and model appropriate attitudes to winning, losing, and competing well
- To teach and model relationship skills towards teammates, coach, opponents, officials
- To have FUN!!

EXPECTATIONS

The middle school's extracurricular program is an important part of the cultural fabric of the school, as well as a focal point for the school community at large. Thus, it is important that we outline clear expectations for all participants.

1. Academics

The academic side of schooling remains a priority and therefore academic achievement takes precedence over extra-curricular involvement. This means that students are expected to:

- Complete all homework assignments.
- Approach subject teachers in advance of an absence to determine what material may be missed.

Incomplete assignments, failed tests or other unacceptable academic progress may, at the discretion of the administration, become grounds for removing a student from his or her participation in the activity.

2. Attendance

Any absence from regular classes on "event day" for reasons other than medical appointments may disqualify the student from participating in the event that day. Attendance records will be reviewed and students with recurring attendance issues place their participation in jeopardy.

3. Commitment

A high level of commitment is required from those who participate in extracurricular events. Participation at all practices and events is very important. Students must understand that continued absence may jeopardize a position at that extra-curricular activity. Clear communication with coaches is expected of students and parents.

3. Behaviour

Participation in athletic activities is a privilege for students in our school. Each student who participates on a school team is a representative of our school and a representative of Christ. As a result, Credo expects a high standard of behaviour and attitude from the athletes. Students must demonstrate the use of appropriate language, dress, and conduct. Matters of self-control and respect for other participants, and actions consistent with developing a healthy Christian lifestyle, are needed both on and off campus. Students will treat officials with respect at all times.

Any student, while serving a school suspension, will not be permitted to participate or attend any extracurricular events. Permission to continue as a participant after a school suspension may be granted after a written request from the student has been reviewed by the Administration.

Choosing Athletes

One of the primary goals of our athletic program at the MS level is to provide an opportunity for students to develop their abilities and potential, so it is essential to create protocols which enable as many students as possible to have meaningful playing experiences. We want to enable each student to optimally develop their skills.

With this in mind, the focus of Credo's Middle School Athletics Program will be primarily on skill and knowledge development by providing opportunities for all students who wish to participate and grow. To do so, the following guidelines as students move through the grades have been established:

- **Grade 6:** students will participate in various tournaments during the school day – participation is a part of the PE curriculum
- **Grade 7:** all students who are interested may participate in the leagues after school; no cuts will be made. Day tournaments will also be included and participation in these is a part of the PE curriculum.
- **Grade 8:** all students may try out for the teams. If there are more students than necessary, the coach (after discussion with the Athletic Director) may cut the team to an appropriate number to make coaching manageable and to allow students enough playing time to develop their skills. All students who tried out are welcome to continue to participate in practices, but the amount of involvement in each practice will be at the coach's discretion. Those students who were cut from the roster will be welcome to attend HOME games (they may sit on the team bench in their street clothes) provided they follow all expectations and respect the team and coaches. If the student chooses to join practices, they are expected to commit to all practices. If there are not enough grade 8 students to fill the number of athletes required to field a team, grade 7 students may be invited to try out and, upon administration approval, may be added to the grade 8 team. In accordance with BC School Sports, the number of grade 7 athletes may not exceed the number of grade 8's.

We hope that this provides as many students as possible with meaningful opportunities to develop their skills as they look forward to their high school experiences, where the teams usually become much more competitive in nature. As our students grow, they will be learning to identify and develop the gifts they have been given.

Playing time

Teams at the grades 6-8 level are encouraged to have equality of playing time as this is a time of development for all players. This means that for grade 6 and 7 teams every effort will be made to share playing time equally. For grade 8 level coaches should strive for equal playing time. Players can expect to have playing time every game, however equal playing time does not need to happen in every single game but should even out over the season. Playing time variance may be used at the coach's discretion in a playoff or championship game setting.

Parent Approval

Parents are to be aware of these policies and must consent to having their child participate by signing the Parental Consent for Student Participation. All Parent Consent forms must be submitted prior to any participation (will be sent via *Permission Click*).

Parents are expected to be supportive of the school's philosophy and practice in athletics. When attending athletic events, both home and away, parents are seen as ambassadors of Credo. Conduct must reflect Christian standards.

Communication

Athletic involvement can be highly emotional and intense. Communication is key to ensure that there are mutual understandings of expectations and standard protocols. In the event that a student or parent feels that there has been some form of injustice, the student or parent should address that by following the teachings found in Scripture (Matthew 18 and Ephesians 4).

Should a student or parent wish to discuss a concern, one is to begin by first discussing the concern with the coach. If the matter is not resolved, then discuss the concern with the coach and the Athletic Director, and finally with the principal. The following considerations are to be followed for such a discussion:

- Select an appropriate time and make an appointment to engage in the discussion.
- Avoid a "spontaneous confrontation" by allowing 24 hours to pass following the event.
- Be sure the conversation can be held privately. Confidentiality regarding these discussions is paramount of the integrity of our relationships.

Fees

Fees (applicable only to the Grade 8 teams) will be determined before practices begin. The athletic department uses these fees to pay for uniforms, transportation, officials, registration fees and other costs to the athletic program. Different rates are charged for different sports due to the different costs associated with each activity.

Please note that extra tournaments may require additional funds; coaches will share those expectations with parents as soon as possible.

A player who has not submitted his/her fee and Parent Permission is not permitted to play.

Athletic fees are as follows and are due before the first game of the season:

- Volleyball \$125
- Basketball \$125
- Cross country \$20
- Track and Field \$50

Transportation

If a bus is not available, parent drivers will be used to transport the team. Parents are responsible for their child once the event has ended. Coaches are not required to transport athletes back to Credo.

Uniforms

A uniform will be provided to each player for each sport requiring a school uniform. It should be returned, cleaned, at the end of the season. Any cost incurred due to willful damage to jerseys will be passed on to the student at the end of the season.