



**2023-2024 Lee Academy
Student Athlete Handbook**

LEE ACADEMY ATHLETICS PROGRAM

MISSION STATEMENT AND PHILOSOPHY

The Athletic program at Lee Academy is dedicated to encouraging the physical, social, and emotional growth in our student athletes. It is intended to be a complimentary aspect to the educational programs at our school and is ultimately designed to affirm and promote the overall mission and vision of Lee Academy. We believe the development of our students is enhanced by their participation in one or more sports. Our athletes will be taught how to take responsibility for personal growth by developing character, loyalty, pride, integrity, and commitment.

It is the goal of our athletic program to provide a structured opportunity for every student-athlete to be taught disciplines that will serve them throughout their lives, such as: mastering the fundamentals of any endeavor you may undertake; placing group goals ahead of personal ones; setting and achieving personal goals; and by making a personal contribution to the general welfare of the team. We will teach participants how to control emotions, exhibit and promote sportsmanship, self-discipline, and the benefits of hard work. It is the goal of the Lee Academy Athletic program to teach students how to win and lose with grace and dignity.

LEE ACADEMY OBJECTIVES OF THE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

The Lee Academy Athletic Department is responsible for providing an environment where student-athletes may develop mental and physical skills, test those skills through practice and competition, develop leadership abilities and practice good sportsmanship. These characteristics are to be directly instilled by the coach(es) of each sport in our athletic program. The Lee Academy Athletic Director is responsible for communicating and instructing the athletic program policies and performance evaluation of each Coach.

Sporting events and competitions provide the school and local community with the opportunity to come together and support the efforts of Lee Academy and their student-athletes.

Student-athletes experience the privilege of membership on a team and learn their responsibilities to each other, the coach, spectators, their school and their opponents.

Goals of the athletic program:

- To develop positive relationships and attitudes through working with others
- To help students develop and recognize the importance of overall physical coordination and physical fitness in their lives
- To develop school spirit, morale, and loyalty
- To expose students to a variety of situations that will help them to develop sportsmanship, team cooperation, courtesy, and self-control
- To develop the concept of goal setting and goal achievement through hard work and self-discipline

Lee Academy is working to promote the six pillars of character among our student body. By embracing these six pillars of character, the entire school community will reach our fullest potential when we focus on these core principles: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Good Citizenship. We will use the following principles to guide our athletic program and all involved:

- It is the duty and responsibility of the school board, school administration, coaching staff, teachers, and parents to promote sportsmanship by teaching, enforcing, and advocating for the six pillars of character.

- In order to promote the six pillars of character the Lee Academy athletic program must be conducted in a manner that enhances the academic, social, emotional, physical and ethical development of student-athletes and teaches them life skills to promote success in their personal life and to become socially responsible.
- Participation in Lee Academy Athletics is a privilege, not a right. To earn a privilege, student-athletes must follow school policy and conduct themselves both on and off their field or court in a positive manner which exemplifies good character.
- The importance of character, ethics, and sportsmanship should be emphasized in all communications between all members of the Lee Academy Athletic Department, student-athletes, and parents.
- The school board, administration, coaching staff, teachers, and parents must understand that the first priority of student-athletes is their education and developing the academic skills and character needed to succeed at Lee Academy. All stakeholders must assure that education and character development responsibilities are not compromised to achieve sports performance goals, and the academic, social, emotional, physical, and ethical well-being of student-athletes is always placed above the desire and pressure to win.
- The Lee Academy Athletic program prohibits the use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and performance-enhancing substances.
- All coaches of the Lee Academy Athletic Department understand that the profession of coaching is a profession of teaching. Coaches not only focus on the mental and physical components of their sport; they also strive to build character in their athletes by teaching them to be trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring, and good citizens.
- The school administration must ensure that coaches are competent to coach. Competency is based on the following:
 - Character building aspects of sports including technique, methods of teaching, and reinforcing the six pillars of character and good sportsmanship.
 - Knowing and understanding the physical capabilities and limitations of the age group being coached
 - Principles, rules, and strategies of the sport

Coaches are encouraged to involve all of their team members in the games as much as possible. This is true at the Jr. High and “B” team level where one of our main goals is to instruct athletes in the skills of the game. As players develop and advance through the Lee Academy Athletic programs, another goal comes into play. It becomes necessary in a team sport to put an individual’s needs aside for the greater good of the team. This type of teamwork must be taught and is a valuable skill for life. Playing time will not be guaranteed based on grade level or seniority. Players will be taught to accept their roles and support their teammates in any way they can, even from the bench if necessary.

DEFINITION OF ATHLETIC TEAMS AND ATHLETES

Athletics and athletes at Lee Academy are defined as all interscholastic sports teams and cheerleading squads. The word athlete will mean all members of the above mentioned teams and squads.

ELIGIBILITY

All student-athletes must meet the criteria set forth by the MAIS (MidSouth Association of Independent Schools) for establishing eligibility for the school year. The rules state that all athletes must pass four major subject areas the previous school year; this may include summer school and/or a certified correspondence course approved by Lee Academy.

High School Eligibility

1. A student shall not have reached his/her 19th birthday before August 1 in the school year in which he or she wishes to participate.
2. Upon entering 9th grade, a student will have four consecutive years of eligibility in interscholastic contests on the high school level.

Junior High Eligibility

1. A student shall not have reached his/her 16th birthday before August 1 in the school year in which he or she wishes to participate.
2. Upon entering the 7th grade, a student will have three consecutive years of eligibility in interscholastic contests on the junior high school level.

Eligibility - Absences from school

A student who is present for four full class periods or more will be considered present for the day. A student present for less than four full class periods will be ineligible for extracurricular activities that day, unless prior approval is granted by the school administration.

ATHLETIC PRACTICE

Attendance at practice and contests is MANDATORY. Coaches will provide students with a schedule of practices and athletic event dates and times (when available). Student-athletes may only be granted permission to miss a practice or event if an excuse is provided to the coach well in advance. Outside of emergency situations, last minute requests to miss a practice or game will be denied. Athletes commit themselves to attend all practices and games and should plan all other activities around them during the season. There will be consequences for missing a practice or contest without prior notification and without an excused absence.

Students who leave school early due to illness are not permitted to return to school for practice of athletic contests.

All Lee Academy sanctioned practices are closed to the public and the parents.

UNIFORMS

School owned uniforms must be returned to the school at the end of the season in acceptable condition as determined by the coach. Student-athletes will be held financially responsible for all items not returned or damaged beyond the normal wear and tear.

SENIOR ATHLETIC BANNERS

No senior banner picture will be taken unless the student played the sport for the entire season their Junior year.

EJECTIONS

As fans of Lee Academy Athletics, we must respect players, coaches, and fans of opposing teams and never confront them at any time. Lee Academy fans should NEVER interact with an official / umpire before, during, or after a game; MAIS rules state that game officials are “off-limits.” We should never cheer against or degrade game officials, opposing players, teams, coaches, or fans. We attend our games to support our athletes and teams, not belittle opponents and yell at officials.

Any fan ejected from a game shall be expected to be barred from all MAIS events until the individual has fulfilled sanctions and conditions imposed by the MAIS. Furthermore, Lee Academy reserves the right to impose its own sanctions and conditions in addition to the MAIS. MAIS mandates that if a fan is ejected, he or she will:

- 1) pay a minimum of \$250 fine
- 2) not be allowed to attend any sporting event for 7 days - the 7 day suspension starts the day after the ejection occurs
- 3) write a letter of apology to the appropriate parties
- 4) school will be placed on probation for one year
- 5) school will also be fined a minimum of \$300

In the event Lee Academy is fined due to a fan's actions, the fine will be paid by the fan that was ejected, the amount being considered indebtedness to the school. If the fan has a child participating in Lee Academy athletics, the child will become ineligible to participate until the fine/indebtedness is paid.

Any player ejected from a game shall follow these policies:

- 1) first ejection schools are responsible for discipline of the athlete involved
- 2) second ejection-student athlete will be ineligible for participation for two weeks
- 3) third ejection-the student will be banned for the remainder of the school year

Fines for player ejection are second, third, fourth and fifth \$100, \$300, \$500, and \$1000 respectively. These will all be paid by the student athlete. Lee Academy is not responsible for player ejection fines.

ATHLETES PARTICIPATING IN MULTIPLE SPORTS DURING THE SAME SEASON

Student athletes are encouraged to participate in as many sports as possible. Lee Academy encourages multi-sport athletes. If a student wishes to participate in more than one sport during the same season, the coaches of the involved sports must mutually agree before he/she will be allowed to do so. In some situations, it is impossible to play multiple sports in the same season due to conflicting schedules, practices, or events. Student athletes should consider the time commitments of participating in multiple sports during the same season and the impact this will have on their academic performance.

Should an athlete be permitted to participate in multiple sports during the same season, the coaches should then devise a schedule of practices and games that the athlete will attend daily. Athletes playing multiple sports must fulfill the obligations of each team as set by the coach in order to participate in each sport. If the coaches cannot come to an agreement on a particular date, this information should be forwarded to the Athletic Director, and he will make the decision as to what sport the athlete will attend on the date in question.

In NO INSTANCE will the athlete or his/her parents make the decision as to what he/she will participate in on a particular date.

In the case where an athlete desires to participate in a sport in which he/she plans to participate prior to the conclusion of the first sport, the athlete's primary responsibility is to the first or seasonal sport. No athlete will be taken from one sport at the expense of another sport at Lee Academy. The head coach of the in season sport has the right to deny or grant permission for the athlete to participate in some activities on a limited basis.

QUITTING A SPORT DURING THE SEASON

The purpose of these guidelines is to reinforce a commitment to finishing what you start and loyalty to the sport, your teammates, and program. These guidelines prevent athletes from changing sports for inappropriate reasons: quitting toward the end of an unsuccessful season to start a new sport; or to reinforce players that may have taken a limited role on the team that there is an obligation that goes with being on a team.

If a student athlete begins the season with a team and subsequently quits the team, he/she will be unable to participate with any other athletic teams until the season of the team he/she quits has completed. In the case where an athlete is competing in multiple sports during the same season and quits one of the teams, he/she will be allowed to continue to compete on the other teams he/she was already a member of.

The coach of the team that an athlete quits does have the authority to give permission for the athlete to begin participating with another sport if he/she so desires. This is REQUIRED to be cleared through the Athletic Director before the athlete can begin any activity with another sport.

IN SCHOOL OR OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION

Any athlete receiving in school suspension will not be allowed to participate in practice or any athletic contests the day he or she is scheduled to have in school suspension. Any athlete receiving out of school suspension will be additionally suspended from all athletic participation including practice and athletic contests. The student may not attend any athletic competitions during the period of suspension. The athlete may be reinstated for athletic participation by the Lee Academy administration.

TEAM TRANSPORTATION TO ATHLETIC EVENTS

Transportation of all athletes to and from athletic events will be arranged by the Athletic Director. The mode of team transportation will be either by school vans, charter bus, or parents. The Athletic Director will work closely with each coach in determining travel arrangements. All team members of a sport are expected to travel to each event in the school arranged transportation. In the case of an unusual circumstance an athlete may request to travel to a competition in a manner other than that arranged by the school. This request must be submitted in advance to the Athletic Director.

Athletes not riding home in the school arranged transportation may ONLY be released to his/her parents or their designee following a competition. The Athletic Director and Coach should be sure the parents have made contact prior to the sporting event before the athlete will be released from the arranged transportation. Once the student athlete has been released to his/her parents, Lee Academy and the coach have been relieved of all liability and responsibility. If an athlete is to be transported by another adult (other than the parent), the AD and the coach must secure permission from the parent by personal contact prior to the date of the athletic

competition. No student athlete will be released or allowed to ride with a non-adult. Student athletes not following this policy risk being suspended from the next athletic competition.

ROLE OF THE PARENT

The role of the parent in educating the whole child is vital. The support shown at home is often evident in the ability of the students to accept the opportunities and responsibilities presented to them at school and in life. There is a value system for student-athletes - it is ESTABLISHED at home and NURTURED at school. The nature of athletic competitions can be detrimental to the development of the student-athletes when parents become too involved as aggressive spectators and/or when they act as “agents” or “side-line coaches” who choose to publicly second-guess coaching decisions.

Parents can also fall into the trap of placing blame on the coach for poor play or lack of performance by their student-athlete or team. When this type of behavior occurs, student-athletes may feel excused from their effort, or lack thereof, and a poor attitude toward the coach or the team may develop as a result of these behaviors or thought patterns. Parents need to trust the school and the coach as PARTNERS in the education and development of their student-athlete. Coaches are certainly fallible people who will make mistakes at times. There must be a mutual trust in knowing that the coach is doing everything possible to help the student-athlete to grow as a player and a young adult. When mutual trust, respect, and encouragement among coaches, parents, and student-athletes is demonstrated, the result will be a high quality athletic program at Lee Academy.

When a problem arises parents should feel free to have an open, constructive conversation with the coach on issues pertaining to their student-athlete. Parents should expect that coaches will respond with honesty, respect, and a mutual concern for the well-being of the student-athlete.

COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

The Lee Academy Athletic Department is committed to communicating the mission and objectives of the athletic program, eligibility rules, and expectations of all student-athletes. If more information is required, or should a concern arise during the season the procedures listed below should be followed:

1. The student-athlete should first schedule a meeting with the coach of the sport involved
2. If further clarification is required the student should then schedule a meeting with the Athletic Director
3. If the issues remains unresolved, the parent should then communicate with the Athletic Director
4. The final step is for the parent to contact the Head of School. Once this contact has been made, the Head of School will work in conjunction with the Athletic Director to resolve the issue.

It is important to understand that Lee Academy acknowledges a 24 hour grace period concerning discussions with coaches. Do not confront a coach before, during or after a game or practice (24 hour grace period). These can be busy and emotional times for coaches, students, and parents. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution. Productive meetings require calm, rational attitudes.

If a problem involving a policy of the Lee Academy Athletic Program cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved, a written request should be made and submitted to both the Athletic Director and the Head of School stating the reasons for dissatisfaction. The written request will be reviewed, and if necessary, a meeting involving all parties will be called for clarification. If there is no resolution after these procedures, the

Chairperson of the Athletic Committee from the Lee Academy School Board will be notified and informed of all issues to this point.

Student-athletes will meet individually with coaches to discuss any conflicts or issues. These meetings will be scheduled at mutually agreed upon date and time and should avoid being scheduled during the following:

- Immediately before or after an athletic competition
- During an active practice
- When other student-athletes are present
- When it is apparent that there is not sufficient time to complete a productive meeting