



We coach athletes to follow Jesus

**Athletic Department
Handbook**

Updated August 2023



Harding Academy Mission

To teach students to love others as Christ loves them, to think creatively and learn with open minds, and to live courageously to the glory of God.

Harding Academy Vision

At Harding Academy we are creatively educating the next generation to be strong and courageous disciples of Christ who serve and influence the world for His glory.

Harding Academy's Five Pillars

Discipleship
Academic Excellence
Community
Creativity
Parent Partnership

Harding Academy Statement of Faith

Our statement of faith is available on the website. All employees are asked to affirm the Statement of Faith, Community Covenant, and Statement on Human Sexuality. If you have questions, please contact an administrator.

Harding Academy Guiding Questions

When creating policies and expectations at Harding Academy, administration is guided by the following questions:

- 1: Does it honor God?
- 2: Does it exhibit love of neighbor?
- 3: Does it maintain safety?
- 4: Does it enhance learning?
- 5: Does it promote Harding Academy?

Although our specific rules may change from one level of the school to another, the motivation behind our rules remains constant. Each policy or expectation is linked with one of these questions by our administration. We regularly review these questions and our policies to ensure consistency, and we welcome any feedback or suggestions from our parent community as we review.



Athletic Department Structure

Athletic Director – Seth King
Administrative Assistant – Stacey Miller
Assistant Athletic Director – Omar Ruvalcaba
Assistant Athletic Director – Sloan Scott
Athletic Trainer – Jenn Dorman
Director of Strength and Conditioning – Rob Kurzinsky

Our Deep Hope

Our deep hope for student-athletes is to move to deeper faith, through education-based athletics, under the leadership of discipleship-driven coaches, for the Glory of God and the good of Memphis.

Our Storyline

Serve. Lead. Follow.

Our Vision

We provide education-based athletics, practice excellence in all areas, field fiercely competitive teams in all TSSAA sports, prepare middle school students for varsity competition, promote fundamentals and development to lower school students, intentionally disciple students, and impact Memphis for the Kingdom of God.

Our Core Values

Upside-down leadership
Relentless encouragement
Contagious joy
Fierce competition
Radical hospitality
Immense celebration
Sacred excellence

Our Primary Responsibilities

To lead the **discipleship** of our students, partner with teachers in our athletes' **education**, and ensure the **safety** of everyone entrusted to our care.

Our Future

We believe that God has called us to be a school and an athletic department that is IN MEMPHIS, OF MEMPHIS, and FOR MEMPHIS.

We aim to attract student-athletes and families that will partner with us as we seek to impact Memphis for the Kingdom of God. We work to build and maintain athletic programs that are competitive in all arenas and produce Jesus-following disciples that lead through love and service.



TSSAA Mission Statement

The mission of the TSSAA is to serve its members by providing leadership and coordination for the administration of interscholastic athletics, which will enhance the educational experiences of students. The TSSAA will promote participation and sportsmanship to develop good citizens through interscholastic athletics, which provide equitable opportunities, positive recognition and learning experiences to students while maximizing the achievement of educational goals.

Harding Academy is a member of the TSSAA and adheres to TSSAA bylaws and policies

TSSAA Compliance

The TSSAA handbook and calendar are available at www.tssaa.org.

TSSAA Eligibility – Article II

Generally speaking, students who have been enrolled at Harding Academy for 12 months will be eligible. Students who have transferred to Harding Academy may be subject to the transfer policies of TSSAA. Transfer students are eligible if they have no athletic record in TSSAA for the past 12 months or have or have a bona fide change of address; for private schools, there is a mileage rule regarding changes. Contact the athletic director for clarification. *All matters of eligibility are subject to the approval of TSSAA; Harding Academy will abide by the policies and decisions of TSSAA.*

Note: A student who participates in an independent game during the school season may be ruled ineligible by the TSSAA. For guidance and clarification, contact the athletic director.

Academic Eligibility

Harding Academy maintains higher academic standards than those imposed by TSSAA. Each Friday, the academic office will distribute a list of students failing one or more classes. Any student who is failing a class must complete, on a weekly basis, a Plan-to-Play form and present it to the teacher and principal before resuming practice and contests. Any student who has been failing a class for three weeks will be ineligible to compete in athletic contests. *Coaches may implement higher academic standards.*

Attendance Eligibility

Any student who misses any part of the school day, without a note of clearance from a medical professional, is ineligible for after-school activities. Student services will provide a list of these students throughout the day. Appeals, while rarely granted, may be made to the upper school principal or athletic director.

Medical Authorization

No student may participate in practice or contests until a signed physical examination and parental consent form on file with the athletic trainer or athletic office. Harding Academy requires additional paperwork to be completed. Physicals must be dated after April 15 of each year.

Medical Events and Injury

In the event of an injury, whether school-related or not, please notify the athletic trainer and athletic office so that a recovery plan of action can be in place for the health of the student.



Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drugs

Per TSSAA rules, all athletic events are tobacco-free. Coaches, athletes, and spectators should not use tobacco products during or at such events.

Per Harding Academy rules, the use of alcohol is not permitted before or during school events, and the use of illegal drugs and inappropriate use of legal drugs are not permitted at any time. This applies to all personnel, students, and supporters at on-campus and off-campus events.

Any person found in possession of tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, illicit prescription drugs, electronic cigarettes, or any related paraphernalia may be subject to disciplinary action from the school.

Sports Betting

No student, coach, or parent shall place wagers or bets on any Harding Academy athletic event.

Name, Image, and Likeness

TSSAA amateur rules allow for students to receive payment for instructional services and other activities provided they are not related to performance and do not suggest the endorsement of Harding Academy or TSSAA. No school branding, uniforms, videos, or photos may be used in these activities. For clarification, contact the athletic director.

High Participation

Harding Academy encourages all students to participate in athletics, and we encourage all athletes to participate in multiple sports. As a result, we utilize a no-cut policy, a no-quit policy, and additional policies to promote high participation.

No-Cut Policy

Most sports at Harding Academy utilize a no-cut policy and welcome as many athletes as wish to join. There are some instances when the size of the team or the venue for practices or the high level of interest requires us to make cuts to provide the best experience possible. Each season, there is at least one offering that utilizes the no-cut policy so that any student can participate in athletics year-round.

Playing Time

No athlete is guaranteed playing time on the high school level. On the middle school level, every athlete should have opportunities to compete throughout the season, but there may be some games where not everyone participates. On the lower school level, every athlete should play part of every game.

No-Quit Policy

After the first contest of the season, any athlete that is removed from a team for disciplinary reasons or that chooses to quit a team voluntarily shall be ineligible for all athletics until the completion of that team's season.

Multi-Sport Athletes

Harding Academy encourages athletes to compete in multiple sports. When an athlete is in-season, they are under the guidance of that coach.



Dual-Sport Athletes

Harding Academy allows for exceptional athletes to participate in multiple sports within the same season. The athlete must declare a primary sport and must complete a Dual-Sport Athlete form. This form must be signed by the athlete, parent, both coaches, and the athletic director. Generally speaking, the primary shall have priority; games will supersede practices, and postseason events shall supersede regular season events. In the event of a conflict that cannot be resolved by the athlete and coaches, the athletic director shall have final say over the athlete's participation.

Eighth Grade Participation

An 8th grade student may participate in high school athletics. This requires approval from parents and the athletic director.

Varsity Letters

At the conclusion of the season, coaches will submit a final roster designating the athletes that earned a varsity letter. For clarification on the criteria to earn a letter, athletes may contact the head coach of a sport.

Athletics Dress Code

All students must be properly clothed while participating in Harding Academy athletic events and practices. Athletes must wear shorts or pants at all times. Some sports are permitted to practice and compete in compression on a case-by-case basis. Shirts or properly fitting tank tops are required at all times and must make contact with shorts or pants. Shirts should not have the sleeves removed and large cut out sides. Undergarments should not be visible at any time.

Athletes are not permitted to wear items from other schools when practicing, traveling, and representing Harding Athletics in any way.

Cleats are not permitted in any part of the school building; athletes should always bring additional footwear in the event of a change of practice venues.

Travel Dress Code

When traveling for out-of-town trips or when traveling as a team, athletes should wear Harding apparel.

Coaches Authority

When athletes are at practice and in games, they are under the direction and instruction of the coaches. Parents who obstruct or interfere with this process may be removed.

Locker Rooms

Behavior in locker rooms should always be safe and appropriate. Inappropriate language, joking, actions, or behavior may sanctions including suspension from athletic participation or from school.

Use of cameras or any recording device is prohibited in locker room areas.

At the conclusion of practices or games, all students should move to their vehicle or to Ride Waiting. Students should not loiter in locker room areas at any time before, after, or during school.



Students are encouraged to properly secure and protect personal items at all times. Locker room doors should not be propped open. This is a safety issue for students and for personal items.

Weight Room

All students using the weight room must be under the supervision of a coach.

All in-season athletes are expected to attend **two weight room sessions each week**. Coaches may implement accountability structures to ensure their athletes are meeting this standard.

The weight room will be available each morning before school and during study halls throughout the day. The weight room will not be available to high school athletes after school. All high school athletes should promptly report to his or her sport.

Athlete Behavior

All athletes are representatives of Harding Academy when traveling to and on-site for practices and contests, and athletes are expected to behave according to the rules and expectations of Harding Academy. No athlete should leave their bench, sideline, or team area during competition. Such action can result in ejection, a fine from TSSAA, and removal from postseason competition. Additional disciplinary actions from the school may also apply.

Fan Behavior

Harding Academy fans should be passionate supporters. Any spectator who acts egregiously or demonstrates a pattern of negativity towards an athlete, opponent, official, or anyone else shall be subject to discipline from the athletic office, including, but not limited to, removal from the athletic contest.

Parents and spectators should not enter the playing area or approach the bench areas. These are reserved for athletes, coaches, and officials.

Ejection Policy

In the event of the ejection of a student, coach, or spectator, the head coach shall notify the athletic director at the conclusion of the contest. Suspensions and fines shall be at the discretion of the governing bodies (TSSAA, Shelby League, etc.). All fines shall be paid by the offending party. The school may impose additional sanctions on individuals involved. Suspensions may carry into the next season or the next sport in which an athlete participates.

Social Media

All social media posts that include Harding Academy logos, branding, or representation, posts that originate from Harding Academy property or events, and all posts that refer to Harding Academy in any capacity should be positive in nature and should represent the school well. Posts that reflect negatively on the school, school personnel, or students may result in disciplinary action.

Hazing/Bullying Policy

All forms of hazing and bullying are completely prohibited. Suspected incidents of hazing and bullying should be reported to administration immediately. Hazing or bullying is grounds for immediate removal from all athletic opportunities and further discipline from the school.

**College Signings**

College signing ceremonies may be scheduled through the athletic office.

Facility Usage

Students must have the permission and supervision of a Harding Academy coach to use athletic facilities. Athletes must be under the supervision of a coach after school; loitering in locker rooms, lobbies, and parking lots is not allowed

Transportation

Generally speaking, athletes are expected to provide their own transportation to local competition. Coaches may organize transportation for out-of-town competition on a case-by-case basis.