

2024-2025

**EAST TEXAS  
HOMESCHOOL SPORTS  
HANDBOOK**



# Table of Contents

- I. Statement of Faith**
- II. Mission Statement**
- III. Athletic Philosophy**
- IV. Expectations - Coaches and Parents**
- V. Expectations of Programs**
- VI. Athlete's Responsibilities**
- VII. Eligibility Responsibility**
- VIII. Physical Examination**
- IX. Injuries**
- X. Athletic Policies**
- XI. Team Selection**
- XII. Board of Directors**
- XIII. Closing Statements**



# I. Statement of Faith

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (*Matthew 28:18-19, Mark 12:29, John 1:4*).

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary (*Matthew 1:20-23*), and is true God and true Man (*John 1:1, 14*).

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, inerrant, and only infallible, authoritative Word of God, which exercises final and ultimate authority in faith and life, over the individual, the Church, and human reason.

We believe that man was created in the image of God (*Genesis 1:26*), that he sinned and thereby incurred not only the physical death but also spiritual death which is separation from God (*Genesis 2:17, 3:6; Romans 5:12*); that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and are sinners in thought, word and deed (*Romans 3:10-23*).

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins to satisfy divine justice (*Romans 5:9*), was buried and bodily rose from the dead according to the Scriptures (*I Corinthians 15:1-4*). We believe that He died as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified by grace alone through faith, on the basis of His shed blood (*John 3:16, Titus 3:5, Hebrews 7:25*).

We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of, and indwelt by, the Holy Spirit and, thereby, become the children of God (*John 3:3, 14:16-17*). We believe that regenerate man must walk in dependence upon the Holy Spirit in order to please God (*Galatians 5:16*).

We believe in “that blessed hope” — the personal return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (*John 14:1-3, I Thessalonians 4:13-18*), and in the bodily resurrection of the just and unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the just, and the everlasting punishment of the unjust (*I Corinthians 15:51-52, Revelations 20:11-15*).

We believe that the Church, composed of all those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior, is the Body and Bride of Christ. We believe that Christ is head of the Body, the Church (*Ephesians 1:22-5:22*); that all believers are part of the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit, and having thus become members of one another, we are responsible to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (*I Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:3*).



## **II. Mission Statement**

The mission of East Texas Homeschool Sports is to bring glory to God by providing an opportunity for homeschool students to develop Christian character and athletic skill while participating in competitive athletic programs under Christian leadership.

## **III. Athletic Philosophy**

We believe that participation in competitive athletics can play an important part in the physical and spiritual growth of homeschool students. It is an educational experience that teaches the value of hard work, discipline and determination, respect for others, handling adversity and honoring God. It contributes to good character development, good sportsmanship and the development of God-given talents and abilities. We expect our student-athletes and coaches to work hard, enjoy the competition, respect each other and their opponents and honor Christ in all they do. We will strive to teach and train homeschool students how to use their God given talents to compete with intensity (“Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training...” 1 Corinthians 9:25a), integrity (“The integrity of the upright guides them...” Proverbs 11:3), and for the glory of God (“And whatever you do..., do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Colossians 3:17).

Although God has given parents the primary responsibility for the spiritual growth of their children, we believe that God often uses committed Christian coaches to make a lasting impact for Christ in the lives of young student-athletes. We are committed to providing quality coaches who teach fundamentals and train for competitiveness while remaining pure in their motives and actions before God.

Because we participate in competitive leagues, winning will always be one of our goals but we believe that God cares far more about how we compete and how we respond to winning and losing than about the outcome of a competition. We believe that it honors God to compete with maximum effort and then to demonstrate humility in winning and respect for the opponent in losing. We require our coaches and student-athletes to dedicate themselves to this goal. We recognize that losing can present a beneficial learning experience. We will strive to stand in contrast to a sports world that all too often emphasizes winning at any cost.

We believe that every member of a team plays an important part in the team’s success regardless of the amount of playing time that they receive. However, we are committed to finding coaches that will balance the goal of winning with the goal of providing playing time for each athlete and that will teach fundamentals and develop each athlete to their full potential.



## **IV. Expectations - Coaches and Parents**

### **Communication you should expect from your student/athlete's coach:**

1. When and where practices and contests will be held.
2. Expectations the coach has for team members.
3. Requirements to be a part of the team: equipment, etc.
4. When your student/athlete is injured while participating.

### **Communication coaches expect from parents:**

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach.
2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
3. Support and commitment to the program.

### **Things to discuss with your student/athlete's coach:**

1. The treatment of your student/athlete.
2. Skill improvement and development.
3. Concerns about your student/athlete's behavior.

### **Inappropriate things to discuss with your student/athlete's coach:**

1. Lack of playing time
2. Team strategy
3. Play calling
4. Other student-athletes

### **If you have a concern...**

1. Make an appointment with the Coach. This meeting will include an assistant coach and Athletic Director. This will not be a 1 on 1 meeting with the coach.
2. If the coach is not reachable, or does not respond in a timely manner, then contact the Athletic Director to set up a meeting.
3. Please do not attempt to confront a coach before, during, or after a practice or game. These are emotional times for both the parent, player, and the coach and this period does not promote objective analysis of the situation.



## V. Expectations of Programs

### Goals of the Junior High Program:

- A quality experience for all student/athletes involved
- Development of skills to progress as a player
  - Be consistent with Varsity Coach Expectations
  - Increase the number of Athletes
- Sportsmanship on and off the field/court
- Enjoyment of the game and of the team-building experience

Each of these goals has equal weight in the Junior High program. Winning is an outcome of the accomplishments of these goals. The desire to win is fostered; however, winning is a nice thing that happens at this level-it is not the driving force that governs the program.

### Goals of the Sub-Varsity Program:

- Development of skills and refinement to prepare for Varsity competition
- A quality experience for all student/athletes involved
  - Be consistent with Varsity Coach Expectations
- Sportsmanship on and off the field/court
- Enjoyment of the game and the team-building experience

At this level, a primary focus is development of players to compete at the Varsity level- but not at the expense of the other goals. The desire to win is more strongly encouraged, but again not at the expense of the other goals.

### Goals of the Varsity Program:

- Refinement of skills to create a competitive team
- Sportsmanship on and off the field/court
- Develop citizenship and leadership
- A quality experience for all athletes involved
- Enjoyment of the game and the team-building experience

Winning at all costs is not a concept that is promoted within ETHS Varsity programs. However, there is a higher expectation to win. Coaches will make team decisions that will affect individuals on the team differently in an effort to win, but not at the expense of the other goals.



## **VI. Athlete's Responsibilities**

### **Responsibilities to yourself**

The most important responsibility is to broaden yourself and develop strength of character.

### **Responsibilities to your coach**

East Texas Homeschool Sports cannot maintain its reputation of being an outstanding organization unless you do your best in whatever activity you wish to engage in. Bring effort everyday to practice and games. Personally contact your coach if there is any issue regarding missing practice or games.

### **Responsibilities to your teammates**

As a member of a team you share a responsibility to your teammates. It is also important to remember that the younger students in our program are watching you. They will copy you in many ways. Set Christ-like examples for them and do not let them down.

### **Athletes' Code of Conduct**

- Athletes will refrain from unsportsmanlike behavior at all times - this includes any social media posts.
- Athletes will model appropriate behavior and interactions with officials, coaches, and other players.
- Athletes will honor and uphold all ETHS policies.
- We expect our coaches and athletes to talk in a respectful manner. Using profanity at any time is inexcusable.

East Texas Homeschool Sports will be judged by the behavior of our athletes, especially when we are at away contests. Trash talk, negative comments about other teams or players, inappropriate language and other demonstrations of such behavior are not Christ-like and are inappropriate.

As an athlete representing ETHS, it is your responsibility to promote positive relationships amongst athletes, regardless of who they are affiliated with.

Should an athlete be found to be neglecting their responsibilities or to be violating the code of conduct, that athlete will meet with the Head Coach to assess the situation and determine the proper course of action.



## **VII. Eligibility Policy**

All students who wish to participate in activities at East Texas Homeschool Sports are required to abide by the eligibility rules set by the ETHS board. ETHS extends eligibility to homeschool students as well as private school students whose school does not offer competitive sports and/or a specific sport in which the student athlete desires to participate.

All student athletes are subject to the eligibility rules as outlined below.

### **Definition of a Homeschool Student-Athlete:**

1. "Homeschooling" is when a student's education is administered at home and parent-directed.
2. As such, the parents shall be directly involved in their child's education, playing role of the headmaster thereby (1) selecting curriculum, (2) selecting and/or approving course materials and study schedules, and (3) selecting tutors, coop's, teachers, dual enrollment options, and/or resources for their child's education.

### **Definition of a Private School Student-Athlete:**

1. Enrolled as a full-time student in good standing in a private school.
2. Enrolled as a part-time student at a private school supplemented by dual-credit classes at an accredited college or university.

### **Gender Requirements:**

Boys and girls will participate on separate teams.

### **Age Requirements, Classification, and Graduation:**

ETHS student athletes are classified based on age as of September 1 preceding the start of the sports year. For avoidance of doubt, the sports year starts on September 1 and concludes on May 31. We realize that home and private school educated students can have varying academic classification based on the academic progress of the student. Our policy is intentionally designed to align academic classification to athletic classification.

Any student athlete who is 19 years of age on September 1, preceding the sports year, is ineligible to participate in ETHS sports programs. Any student who has graduated high school is ineligible to participate in ETHS sports programs regardless of age. All student athletes will be allowed 4 consecutive years of high school level participation. A student athlete who is 14 years of age on September 1, and participates as a 14 year old in high school level sports, officially starts their 4 consecutive years of high school level participation. A student athlete who is 14 years of age on September 1, and elects to participate in junior high sports due to alignment with academic classification (8th grade), will still be allowed 4 consecutive years of high school level sports participation officially starting with the next sports year. As a homeschool organization, ETHS relies on parents to provide proper academic





classification. Therefore, all student athletes who are 14 years of age on September 1 must declare a classification that will determine the official start of their high school level participation.

In addition and in exception, a 14 year old with an 8th grade classification will be allowed to play high school level sports without starting their 4 year participation under the following conditions:

- 1) ETHS does not offer a Junior High team in the specific sport. (Example: ETHS does not offer Junior High football)
- 2) ETHS cannot field a team without the participation of the 14 year old who is academically classified as an 8th grade student.

This is commonly called “playing up” and is at the sole discretion of the parents, coach, and with approval of the athletic director.

The following table will determine classification:

<b>Age on September 1</b>	<b>Classification</b>
19	Ineligible
18	Senior
17	Junior or Senior
16	Sophomore or Junior
15	Freshman or Sophomore
14	Junior High or Freshman
13	Junior High
12	Junior High

## **VIII. Physical Examination**

Every two years, each student athlete is required to complete a physical examination before participating in sports to ensure there are no underlying injuries that can not be seen from the surface. Without a prepared physical form from a doctor, ETHS can not be held liable for any health issues that may arise in practice or competition. The coaches and athletic director need to be made aware of any issues that may come up.



## VIII. Injuries

Any athlete who goes to the doctor with an athletic-related injury should contact the coaches first if at all possible. Documentation of injuries needs to be made so the coaches are aware and can follow protocol as needed.

## X. Athletic Policies

### Equipment

All equipment issued to a student by ETHS is the student's responsibility. The athlete is expected to keep it clean and in good condition. Any loss or intentional damage to the equipment is the student's financial obligation. Students who do not return ETHS equipment/uniforms will not be allowed to participate in activities until they satisfy their obligations. This includes any facility use that ETHS is currently using.

### Attendance

Promptness and attendance are expected at all times. If you must be absent, call and talk to one of your coaches before the allotted practice time or game time. Coaches will have the option of establishing a reasonable make-up policy for absences from practice and games. This policy should be clearly stated at the beginning of the season and have prior approval by the Athletic Director.

### Conduct

Composure during the course of a competition is critical. We expect you to conduct yourself in a Christ-like manner at all times. This means you are to follow all rules of ETHS. You are expected to act properly, giving all adults full courtesy and respect. Failure to adhere to our expectations will result in a conference and possible dismissal from the program.

### Conflicts in Extracurricular Activities

A student who attempts to participate in several extracurricular activities will, undoubtedly, be in a position of a conflict of obligations. We understand that each student shall have the opportunity for a broad range of experiences in the area of extracurricular activities. It is the **student's responsibility** to notify the coaches involved immediately when a conflict does arise.



## Hazing

Texas statute defines injurious hazing as “any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health of a student enrolled in a public school.” It is our feelings at ETHS that injurious hazing activities of any type, by any student, staff member, group, or organization affiliated with ETHS, are inconsistent with what ETHS stands for and shall be prohibited. No student or athlete shall plan, encourage, or engage in hazing activities. Violators of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension from East Texas Homeschool Sports.

## Substance Abuse

We have a duty to encourage responsible behavior to keep our student-athletes safe. The following policy was developed to encourage our athletes to make decisions that will keep them safe and, as role models, promote others to make safe decisions as well.

### Possession/Consumption/Use/Arrests

1. Use or possession of alcoholic beverages, drugs, and other mind altering substances by athletic program participants are prohibited.

- First violation- suspension from squad for five weekdays, which will include at least one game.\*
- Second violation- will result in suspension from ETHS for the remainder of that sports season (can extend into the next sport season).\*
- Third violation- will result in suspension from all athletics in ETHS for one calendar school year.\*

\* In all cases the parents/guardians will be notified.

2. Any athlete arrested for a felony offense will be suspended from contests until proven innocent.

3. Any athlete arrested for a misdemeanor may continue to play until proven guilty. If proven guilty, the Head Coach and Athletic Director will make a decision regarding continued participation, taking into consideration the individual involved and the nature of the offense. Should said student be arrested a 2nd time, he or she will be suspended for the duration of the year.

4. Any athlete who causes, in the opinion of the Board or Athletic Director, embarrassment to East Texas Homeschool Sports that does not involve arrest or law enforcement involvement may be suspended at the discretion of the Head Coach and the Athletic Director. Each case will be handled on an individual basis. This includes any social media posts that are brought to the attention of the Board or Athletic Director.



## **XI. Team Selection**

In accordance with our philosophy of athletics and our desire to have as many students as possible participate in East Texas Homeschool Sports. Time, space, facilities, equipment and other factors will be some of the determining factors as to the most effective team size for a particular sport.

### **Tryouts**

Choosing the members of our athletic teams is the sole responsibility of the coach. Before trying out, coaches shall provide the following information to all candidates for the team.

- Extent of tryout period
- Criteria used to select the team
- Number of players/participants to be selected
- Practice commitment if they make the team
- Game/contest commitment

### **Dropping/Quitting a sport**

It is the philosophy of East Texas Homeschool Sports that student-athletes should finish what they begin. The following procedures should be followed in order to drop/quit a sport:

- Examine the situation before a decision is made.
- Talk to the coach to see if a solution can be reached. (A parent conference may be required)
- If the decision to quit is made, the student athlete must check out of the sport through the Athletic Director/Head Coach. All clothing/equipment issued to the student-athlete must be returned in the same shape as it was when it was issued to the athlete. Payment for any lost or damaged clothing and equipment will be required. This matter must be resolved before a student-athlete begins participating in the next sport.

Coaches in conjunction with the Athletic Director, reserve the right to prohibit any athlete from joining a team or sport if that athlete has routinely failed to complete seasons in other sports that they have started, whether due to conduct, attitude, or poor academic performance. Routinely quitting sports may result in dismissal from the athletic program.



## **XII. Board of Directors**

The ETHS Board of Directors has sole authority to create, enforce, change, and interpret policy for the organization. The board also maintains sole authority and discretion regarding participation in ETHS sanctioned activities. Behavior by participants deemed detrimental to the values and mission of ETHS will be reviewed by the Board of Directors and resolved through biblical dispute resolution processes.

## **XIII. Closing Statements**

While the purpose of this booklet is not to cover every possibility that might occur in our athletic program, we do hope to let each person who is concerned about our program know what we expect of the athletes, coaches, and parents. Each Head Coach will have some specific rules that will apply to their sport. We feel that if parents and athletes alike understand our policies, conflicts are not as likely to arise. We urge every parent to help us to guide your child in the proper direction. Your influence is a valuable aid to us as we attempt to do this.

If anyone, parent, guardian, or athlete, has any questions about our program or beliefs, please feel free to come and talk with us. We want the involvement of the parents and we feel very strongly about what we are trying to do.

**Vicki VanDeCarr**  
*Athletic Director*

## **EAST TEXAS HOMESCHOOL SPORTS ATHLETIC HANDBOOK**

---

**Student/Athlete Name**

---

**Grade**

---

**Student's Signature**

---

**Date**

---

**Parent/Guardian's Name**

---

**Parent/Guardian's Signature**

---

**Date**

