

# OakTree Academy Athletic Handbook



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## **PHILOSOPHY OF ATHLETICS**

The mission of the OakTree Academy Athletics Department is based on the belief that interscholastic athletics are an integral part of the academy's overall educational program and contribute to the development of students. Participation in physical activities will be encouraged for each student. By providing proper direction and motivation, the Athletics Department is committed to helping students develop the skills necessary to be successful in life as they grow academically, athletically, socially, and spiritually. OakTree Academy is committed to providing all student-athletes an equal opportunity to learn and be successful in an environment that promotes academic and athletic excellence. In and through athletics we want to live out our mission statement as we **Celebrate Christ, Celebrate Family, Celebrate Life.**

### **Mission Statement:**

OakTree Academy exists to love and glorify God, to support parents and promote strong families, and to help students reach their full potential by guiding them in developing spiritually, morally, socially, and academically.

### **Founding Verse:**

“So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.” Isaiah 61:3

### **Mascot:**

Grizzly Bear

### **School Colors:**

Black, White, and Gold

## **MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS:**

OakTree Academy is a member of VISSA (Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association) and HRAC (Hampton Roads Athletic Conference).

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Athletic Department of OakTree Academy recognizes that student-athletes often hold a unique place in society and that they are under considerable pressure to not only perform in athletics, but in the classroom. Student-athletes are often looked upon as public role models. They must develop and maintain outstanding levels of achievements and athletic endeavors and adhere to the highest standard of ethical behavior and sportsmanship. The way a student athlete conducts himself/herself is a direct reflection, not only of themselves, but of OakTree Academy as well.

### **The athlete is expected to live out the school's mission by:**

1. Be courteous to visiting teams and officials
2. Respect the integrity and judgment of officials, and accept their decisions without question.
3. Respect the facilities of the host school and the trust extended in being a host.
4. Play hard and to the limit of potential and ability regardless of discouragement.

Each should realize that the true athlete does not give up, nor do they quarrel, cheat, or grandstand (showboat).

5. Encourage their teammates and speak highly of them when talking to others.
6. Be modest when successful and be gracious in defeat. A true sportsman does not offer excuses for failure.
7. They should always keep in mind that they are representing God, their family, and the school at all times.

“And don’t let anyone put you down because you’re young. Teach believers with your life: by word, by demeanor, by love, by faith, by integrity.” I Timothy 4:12

**The coach is expected to live out the school’s mission by:**

1. Exemplify behavior that is representative of the educational staff of the school and be a credit to the Christian teaching profession.
2. Demonstrate the highest ideals, desirable attitudes in personal behavior, good habits of courtesy and demand the same standards of players.
3. Recognize that the process is as important as the end product and, in fact, has a major bearing on the outcome of the product God wants to produce. Remember that the most important values are derived from playing the game fairly, and teach players that it is better to lose fairly than to win unfairly.
4. Maintain self-control at all times, accepting adverse decisions without loss of emotional control. Demonstrate to players how to work officials to improve performance without humiliating them or being disrespectful.
5. Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.
6. They should always keep in mind that they are representing God, their family, and the school at all times.
7. Be responsible to turn in a pass/fail grade for each athlete for each sport they coach no later than 2 weeks after the last game is played. Grades should be based on a combination of attendance, attitude, and skill improvement.

“In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.” Titus 2:7-8

**The spectator is expected to live out the school’s mission by:**

1. Realize that they represent the school just as distinctly as the players on the team. Therefore, he/she has an obligation to be a true sportsman, encouraging through personal example the practice of good sportsmanship by others.
2. Understand that good sportsmanship involves applauding good team play, individual skill, and outstanding examples of sportsmanship and fair play exhibited by either team.
3. Treat visiting teams and officials as our guest, seeing this as an opportunity to be a witness for Christ to unbelievers and so extending to them every courtesy.
4. Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.
5. Respect the judgment of officials, realizing that their decisions are based on fast moving game conditions as they observe them from their vantage point.

6. They should always keep in mind that they are representing God, their family, and the school at all times.

“Direct your children onto the right path,  
and when they are older, they will not leave it.” Proverbs 22:6

## **SAFETY**

The Athletic Department strives to provide students a safe enjoyable environment in which to participate. Consequently, all coaches and administrative personnel have a responsibility to reduce and/or eliminate all potential safety hazards. It is vital to understand that participation in athletics involves inherent risk.

Coaches and administrative personnel are obligated to act in a prudent manner in order to prevent foreseeable accidents and injuries. They should respond to unexpected circumstances according to guidelines set forth in this handbook.

## **INSURANCE AND ATHLETIC PHYSICALS**

Adequate insurance coverage for an athlete is the responsibility of the parent and/or guardian. No student may begin any phase of the athletic program (try-outs, practices, or other activities) without the completion of the Medical Liability Release Form. A physical for each athlete is **highly recommended** but not required. A new physical is recommended to be completed after May 1st for each upcoming school year. Copies of the Medical Liability Release Form will be issued to the coaches to carry with them to all games. Blank copies of the Athletic Physical form can be found on VHSL's website:

<https://www.vhsl.org/vhsl-physical-form>

## **OTA ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Student athletes are subject to the eligibility requirements of OakTree Academy. To be eligible to compete on a team, an athlete must attend a member school and not have reached his or her 19th birthday on or before August 1st. OTA REQUIREMENTS: (Grades 6 through 12) To be academically eligible to participate in athletics, a student must meet the following requirements: At the end of each grading period (OTA has 4 Quarters), students must have a “C” average 2.0 with no more than one (1) failing grade. Students failing to meet these requirements will be put on probation. Probation begins the day report cards are issued. Students on probation may practice with the team, but they are ineligible to participate in athletic contests (home or away) the first two weeks of probation. A committee consisting of the Principal of OakTree Academy, Athletic Director, teachers and coaches will evaluate students every two weeks to determine each student’s probation status.

## **CLASS ATTENDANCE**

In order to practice or participate in an athletic contest, students must attend all classes that day. Funerals, college visits and religious holidays are examples of exceptions that are granted by the Athletic Director on an individual basis. The student or parent should request an exception as early as possible, preferably at least one day in advance.

## **ATHLETIC FEES**

Every student-athlete will be expected to pay an athletic fee. With OakTree Academy being a private school, these fees are necessary to help defray the rising cost of officials and the upkeep of uniforms and equipment. The fee is \$100.00 for each individual per sport.

## **UNIFORM FEES**

We made a policy change not to charge a uniform fee. However, if uniforms are damaged, lost, or not turned in a family will be charged the costs of replacing the uniforms (cost of uniform, shipping, taxes, etc.).

## **ATHLETIC PRACTICE DATES**

Practice and try-outs for the Fall Athletic Season will start around the first week of August. Parents and students should note these dates on their summer schedule and be available for practice and/or try-outs in August.

The Winter Season begins the first week of November and is interrupted by Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays. Practices may be scheduled on Saturdays and holiday breaks, but will be optional for those who will be out of the immediate area.

The Spring Season will begin the first week of March and is interrupted by Spring Break. Again, optional practices may be scheduled, as all are required to attend if in the immediate area.

## **PRE-SEASON PARENT AND COACHES MEETING**

The Athletic Director and the coaches may conduct a required pre-season meeting at the beginning of each athletic session. The dates and times of these meetings will be released by the coaches at least one week in advance. Parents are required to attend the pre-season meeting in order to allow their son or daughter to continue as a member of the team. If for some reason, neither parent can attend the scheduled meeting, they must be responsible to obtain the information themselves from other players/families. Coaches will be able to discuss their goals, along with team rules and regulations. Lines of communication with the coach and parents will be established at this time.

## **LINES OF COMMUNICATION**

Coaches are encouraged to establish a line of communication with the parents during try-outs. When problems arise, the parent and/or student-athlete should talk to the coach first. Most areas of concern can be solved at this level. If problem resolution does not occur when talking with the coach, parents or students should then contact the athletic director if they feel that additional communication is necessary. If the Athletic Director is unable to solve the problem, then a meeting with the Principal of the school and the Athletic Director may be scheduled.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

It is the responsibility of the parents and/or guardians of each athlete to provide transportation to all games and practices.

## **SPORTS STUDY HALL**

A sports study hall will be offered for each sports season. The study hall will coincide with the length of each sports season. This will be a free study hall and the responsibility of the parents to enroll their students in it. This study hall is only available for athletes, their siblings, and/or their car pool classmates and the school offers it to help families limit their transportation needs. The study hall will be run just like a class. Class attendance will be taken and rosters will be kept. Athletes should complete HW in these study halls. If students are finished with their HW they may bring a magazine or book to read.

## **TRYOUTS**

Tryouts will be held during the first official week of each sport. Any students who meet the OTA eligibility standards may try out. Announcement and letters as to the starting dates for each sport will inform the student body and parents.

## **TEAM SELECTION**

In accordance with our philosophy of athletics and our desire to see as many students participate in the athletic program as possible while enrolled at OakTree Academy, we encourage coaches to keep as many students as they can without unbalancing the integrity of their sports. Time, space, facilities, equipment, personal preferences and other factors will place limitations on the most effective squad size for any particular sport.

## **TEAM REDUCTION POICY**

Choosing a member of athletic squads is the sole responsibility of the coaches of those teams. Prior to trying out, the coach shall provide the following information to all candidates for the team:

1. Extent of tryout period
2. Criteria used to select team
3. Number to be selected
4. Practice commitments if they make team
5. Game commitment

When a team reduction becomes a necessity, the process will include three important elements. Each candidate shall have:

1. Competed in a minimum of two practice sessions
2. Performed in at least one intrasquad scrimmage
3. Been personally informed of the cut by the coach, including the reason for the action. Coaches will then discuss alternative possibilities for participation in the sport, or other areas in the athletic program.

## **PRACTICES**

All athletes are expected to be present and on time at all practices called by the coach during the season of a particular sport. They are expected to attend practices and stay for the duration until dismissed by the coach, unless other arrangements have been made in advance. This does not warrant an athlete to leave practice on a regular basis to attend an outside activity, unless the head coach agrees to the situation. It is the sole discretion of the Head Coach to determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused.

Other school activities such as band, chorus, or drama, etc. will be dealt with in the appropriate manner. It is the students' responsibility to inform the coach and activity director what their major and minor activity will be and the correct concessions will be made. This should be done before tryouts are to take place for any activity.

Once your child commits to a team, they are required to attend all practices and/or games that are scheduled, unless excused by a coach. Consequences will occur if your child does not communicate with their coach. We do not want our student-athletes and coaches who are committed and dedicated to a particular sport, and the team as a whole, to suffer from the lack of commitment of a certain few individuals.

The opportunity to participate in OakTree Academy athletics is a privilege and not a right and should be treated this way.

### **PLAYING TIME**

Determining how much playing time each player earns is at the discretion of the Head Coach. Playing time is a privilege and should be earned. The coach should be notified in advance, when a student will miss practice. Below are some of the general goals for which we strive.

- a. JJV/Middle School – Instruction and active participation is our primary concern and it is our goal that every athlete participates in every contest as long as they are regularly attending practice and abiding by team rules. Coaches are expected to play all eligible players in each game. However, this does not state that every player will receive an identical amount of playing time.
- b. Junior Varsity- Concepts of competition and role-playing within a team setting enter in more, and may result in some athletes' not playing in games. Coaches are encouraged to play as many players possible but the goal is to put the best team on the field.
- c. Varsity- Coaches should play as many players as feasible but there will be players who may not receive playing time in games. Playing time on this level is based on coaching decisions made during practices and games. The coaches will again put the best team on the field.

### **QUITTING ATHLETIC TEAMS**

Our athletes take a sense of responsibility when they agree to participate on our athletic teams. Therefore, we hold our athletes accountable for their commitment to their teammates, coaches, and our school. If a student-athlete quits a team, that student will not be allowed to try out for any other sports that particular school year. The student will then be re-evaluated the following school year. Some circumstances arise that are beyond the students' control and will be taken into account.

### **PLAYING FOR OTHER TEAMS/PARTICIPATING IN CONFLICTING ACTIVITIES**

OakTree Academy expects athletes to play only for the school team if playing for another team or participating in other activities creates conflicts with school, practices or games.

The recommendation to allow athletes to participate in conflicting sports or other activities will be made by coaches and the athletic director. Student-athletes are required to discuss with the coach during or before tryouts if they are participating on another team or activity, in order to come to a mutual decision before the team is selected.

### **CANCELLATION OF PRACTICES/GAMES**

Cancellations of games and or practices due to inclement weather will normally be made after 1:00 p.m. Athletes should always come to school prepared to play or practice that afternoon. It is better to be prepared than not. Do not assume a cancellation based on the weather in the morning. Decisions about cancellations after 3:00 p.m. will be made at the game/practice site. If possible the school will use the school alert system to communicate these changes.

### **AWARDS**

Procedures:

1. Varsity award winners may purchase a letter jacket and/or letters at the end of the sports season after receiving their award certificates.
2. JV award winners will receive their certificates at an awards banquet or awards assembly as determined by the school.

### **STANDARDS FOR LETTER AWARDS:**

In all cases, the judgment of the head coach working with the athletic director will be the deciding factor in determining who will become a candidate to be awarded a letter, however, the general standards is the Varsity Letter Award shall be presented to students who have satisfied the participation requirements, complete all team obligations, finishes the season in good standing and/or receives the recommendation of the Head Coach.

### **JUNIOR VARSITY AND JUNIOR HIGH AWARDS**

Junior varsity and junior high awards are given on the recommendation of the coach to all students who complete the season. They will receive these certificates at the sports banquet at the end of the school year.