CHICAGO JESUIT ACADEMY

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK & CODE OF CONDUCT

2026–2027

Our Purpose: CJA Athletics is an extension of the school day and of our mission. Sport gives students a concrete place to practice the Grad-at-Grad values, learn to compete with joy and integrity, grow through adversity, and become people for and with others.

AMDG

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam — For the Greater Glory of God

1. Philosophy & Purpose of CJA Athletics

Chicago Jesuit Academy views athletics as an essential extension of student learning. The purpose of our athletic program is not simply to win games, but to form young people through meaningful competition, teamwork, disciplined practice, relationships, and reflection. Student-athletes should experience joy in sport while learning habits and values that matter far beyond the final score.

By participating in CJA Athletics, students are challenged and supported in their mental, social, religious, and physical growth. Teams provide a community in which students learn to move beyond self-interest, contribute to a shared goal, respect people with different abilities and experiences, and receive feedback that helps them grow.

The CJA Standard: We compete to do our best, not to prove that we are better than someone else. Winning is not the end goal; our formation of student-athletes is much more important. The way we practice, compete, respond to adversity, treat others, and represent CJA is part of the education.

Athletics Through the Grad-at-Grad Values

Open to Growth: Try new things, accept coaching, respond to mistakes and losses with reflection, and use feedback to improve.

Intellectual Excellence: Be a student first; meet academic expectations; learn rules, strategy and technique; prepare carefully and pursue improvement.

Religious: Begin team experiences in prayer when appropriate and recognize teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, and spectators as children of God deserving dignity and respect.

Loving: Build healthy relationships, include others, sacrifice for the team, encourage teammates and opponents, and care for the whole person.

Committed to Doing Justice: Compete fairly, reject prejudice and demeaning behavior, respond to adversity without diminishing others, and celebrate the accomplishments and dignity of every participant.

2. Participation & Eligibility

Participation in CJA Athletics is a privilege and a commitment. Student-athletes are students first and must remain in good academic, behavioral, and attendance standing. Participating students also must have an active sports physical on file in CJA's Nurse's office.

- Fifth- through eighth-grade students may participate when they are in good academic, behavioral, and attendance standing. Third- and fourth-grade athletic opportunities, when offered, are governed by grade-level programming and administrative approval.
- Participation in practices, games, tournaments, and special athletic events is contingent upon successful daily school attendance and meeting grade-level academic and behavioral expectations.
- For seventh- and eighth-grade students, participation in games and competitions is contingent upon passing grades in all subject areas. The student's instructional team communicates eligibility concerns with the student, family, and coach. Fifth- and Sixth-grade teachers would also communicate any eligibility concerns to the student, family, and coach.
- A significant behavioral incident, including a fight or removal from classroom spaces, may make a student ineligible for participation in athletics until logical consequences and restorative repairs have been completed.
- Eligibility also depends on a student's commitment to and progress in the Grad-at-Grad values during practices and competitions. A student who does not demonstrate these values may be ineligible for future athletic participation.
- When academic or behavioral support is needed, a student may be assigned study hall or a similar intervention in lieu of athletics after consultation with the instructional team and school administration.
- Students who are injured are encouraged, when appropriate and medically permitted, to remain connected to their team. However, coaches will abide by any medical restrictions.

Attendance & Commitment

Joining a CJA team means making a commitment to teammates and coaches. Practices are instructional time. Student-athletes should attend consistently, arrive on time, communicate unavoidable absences, and come prepared. Repeated or uncommunicated absences may affect a student's role or playing time.

CJA understands that students may participate in other activities. Families should communicate known conflicts early. When a conflict arises, the expectation is that the student's CJA commitment takes priority. Coaches and the Director of Programs will make decisions that protect student well-being while also honoring the commitments students make to their CJA team.

3. Teams, Development & Playing Time

Every athlete contributes to the team. Ability levels will vary, but no student should be treated as less important because of skill. Coaches should teach fundamentals, create meaningful roles, build team belonging, and provide developmentally appropriate competition.

- At developmental levels (5-6 grades), the emphasis should be on learning, participation, fundamentals, joy, sportsmanship, and continued growth.
- At more competitive middle-school levels (7-8 grades), playing time may reflect attendance, effort, attitude, preparation, execution, team needs, and game situations. Coaches should still make a meaningful effort to develop and involve every rostered athlete.
- When multiple teams are necessary, roster decisions will be made by CJA based on student age, eligibility, prior participation when relevant, team needs, safety, and developmental considerations.
- Any decision for a student to play above grade level must be approved by CJA and should be driven by team need, development, and safety—not simply by a desire to maximize competitive advantage.

4. Student-Athlete Code of Conduct

A CJA student-athlete represents themself, their family, teammates, coaches, and Chicago Jesuit Academy. The following commitments apply at school, practices, games, tournaments, transportation, and any location where a student represents CJA.

1. I will compete in the spirit of CJA's Grad-at-Grad values.
2. I will be humble in victory and gracious in defeat.
3. I will put the good of the team ahead of individual attention or statistics.
4. I will listen to coaching, accept feedback, and learn from mistakes.
5. I will respect teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, spectators, facilities, and hosts.
6. I will accept officials' decisions without arguing, taunting, gestures, or disrespect.
7. I will encourage teammates and recognize good effort and play by others.
8. I will use language and behavior that reflect the dignity of every person. Trash talk, bullying, intimidation, discriminatory language, and retaliation have no place in CJA Athletics.
9. I will care for equipment, uniforms, locker rooms, benches, gyms, fields, buses, and all spaces entrusted to our team.
10. I will meet my responsibilities as a student and communicate honestly when I need support.
11. I will respond to setbacks, limited playing time, mistakes, and losses in ways that demonstrate the Grad-at-Grad values.
12. I understand that participation may be limited or suspended when my academic, attendance, behavioral, safety, or team commitments do not meet CJA expectations.

5. Coaches: Formation, Care & Professional Expectations

The coach is an educator. The physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and developmental needs of student-athletes take precedence over the win/loss record. Coaches are expected to model CJA's Grad-at-Grad values before, during, and after competition. Coaches are expected to:

- Have the knowledge and preparation necessary to lead the team effectively and teach the sport safely.
- Provide a physically and emotionally safe environment for practices and competition.

- Place student health, well-being, development, and dignity ahead of competitive outcomes.
- Model honesty, integrity, fair play, sportsmanship, self-control, and respect—even when a call, result, opponent's words/actions, or circumstance is disappointing.
- Maintain a professional demeanor with student-athletes, families, officials, opponents, colleagues, league representatives, administrators, and the public.
- Coaches should review the handbook and code of conduct with student-athletes before competition begins.
- Be committed to students' education and support academic expectations.
- Use developmentally appropriate instruction, motivation, conditioning, and practice design.
- Know and follow injury, emergency, concussion, and risk-management procedures; know the location of first-aid supplies and an AED when available.
- Be on time, fully engaged, and prepared with a structured plan for practices and competitions.
- Communicate schedules, directions, league rules, arrival/pickup times, fees, uniform needs, and changes to families in a timely and professional manner.
- Use responsive, relationship-centered approaches to accountability and provide transparent feedback tied to CJA values.
- Never use humiliation, threats, degrading language, retaliation, or unsafe conditioning as discipline.
- Address concerns proactively. Coaches should make a documented effort to resolve ordinary student/family concerns and involve the Director of Programs when additional support is needed.
- Complete all CJA-required screening, volunteer/employment, safe-environment, and training requirements before coaching.

Conflict of Interest / Outside Coaching

During the term of the coaching season, a CJA coach agrees to take no outside employment whatsoever, nor outside studies unrelated to his/her position of employment, without the prior approval of his/her supervisor. A CJA coach who also coaches or trains CJA students for pay outside the CJA program must disclose that relationship to the Director of Programs. Outside relationships may not influence roster decisions, playing time, access, or treatment within CJA Athletics, and participation in a private program may never be required as a condition of CJA team participation.

6. Family & Fan Code of Conduct

Families and spectators are essential partners in creating the kind of athletic environment CJA wants for students. The game belongs to the student-athletes. Adults should model the composure, respect, perspective, and care we ask students to demonstrate. Families and fans are expected to:

1. Cheer for CJA and encourage good play; do not cheer against, ridicule, or demean an opponent – regardless of their actions or words.
2. Treat all athletes, coaches, officials, spectators, hosts, and league personnel with dignity and respect.
3. Do not use profane, threatening, discriminatory, taunting, or intimidating language or gestures.
4. Do not coach from the stands or sideline unless you are an authorized member of the coaching staff.
5. Respect officials and their authority. Families and spectators should not confront or debate officials; officiating concerns should be directed through the coach or Director of Programs.
6. Do not confront a coach immediately before, during, or after a game or practice about playing time, strategy, or another concern. Use the issue-resolution process below.
7. Never ridicule or yell at a student for a mistake or loss. Emphasize effort, learning, teamwork, character, and growth.
8. Support decisions that protect the physical and emotional well-being of all athletes ahead of an adult's desire for a particular result or role.
9. Ensure guests attending with your family understand and follow these expectations.
10. Understand that CJA may ask a spectator to leave an event or restrict future attendance when behavior undermines safety, dignity, sportsmanship, or the school's mission.

Fan Guideline: Cheer for our team—not against theirs. Celebrate effort and excellence without diminishing another child, coach, school, or official.

7. Communication & Issue Resolution

CJA expects proactive, professional communication between student-athletes, coaches, and parents/guardians, and assumes that concerns can usually be resolved through respectful conversation. Questions about a student's safety or immediate well-being should be raised right away. For concerns about playing time, strategy, roles, or interpersonal issues, use the following process:

1. Student voice when appropriate: Student-athletes are encouraged to speak respectfully with their coach and ask what they can do to grow, improve, or better serve the team.
2. Family–coach conversation: A parent/guardian may request a meeting with the coach. Do not initiate a confrontation immediately before, during, or after a practice or game. Allow at least 24 hours after a competition before requesting to discuss a non-safety concern. Please allow a 48-hour response window from coaches.
3. Director of Programs: If the concern remains unresolved, contact the Director of Programs – mason@cjacademy.org
4. School Administration: If additional resolution is necessary, the Director of Programs may involve the appropriate member(s) of the CJA administrative team.

Concerns involving abuse, harassment, discrimination, threats, serious safety issues, or other matters requiring immediate school action should be reported immediately to the Director of Programs.

8. Conduct, Accountability & Removal

Athletic accountability should be consistent with CJA's school-wide expectations and focused on student formation, safety, repair, and growth. CJA considers the nature and seriousness of the behavior, patterns of behavior, student reflection and repair, safety, academic/attendance status, team commitments, and progress in the Grad-at-Grad values.

- A student may lose practice or competition eligibility for academic, attendance, behavioral, safety, or team-related reasons.
- A serious incident may result in immediate removal from a practice or competition while CJA reviews the situation.
- When appropriate, coaches and school staff will provide feedback, opportunities for reflection and repair, and a path toward rejoining the team.
- Removal from a team should occur only after consultation with the student's instructional team and family and approval from the CJA administrative team, except when immediate removal is necessary for safety.
- Harassment, bullying, intimidation, discriminatory conduct, fighting, threats, and other behavior that compromises safety or dignity are not tolerated.
- Adults and spectators associated with the CJA community who engage in unsafe, threatening, abusive, or persistently unsportsmanlike behavior may be removed from an event and may lose the privilege of attending future CJA athletic events.

9. Uniforms, Equipment & Facilities

Uniforms and equipment issued by CJA remain school property unless explicitly designated otherwise. Student-athletes and families are responsible for appropriate care and timely return. Lost, unreturned, or damaged items beyond ordinary wear may result in a replacement charge.

Teams are guests in every gym, field, school, and facility they use. Athletes, coaches, and families should leave spaces better than they found them, follow host rules, clean team areas, and treat equipment and property with respect. Stewardship of shared spaces is part of representing CJA.

At CJA, there is no food, gum, or drink (other than water) allowed in the gymnasium, multi-purpose space, or classrooms. Students are also not permitted to use their phones unless they have permission from their proctoring adult to contact their family for transportation needs.

10. Health, Safety & Concussion Policy

Chicago Jesuit Academy is responsible for the care and education of its students. A concussion is both a medical and educational concern, and every concussion and recovery process is different. CJA's priorities are prompt recognition,

removal from activity when a concussion is suspected, communication with families, appropriate medical evaluation, academic support, and a safe return to full participation.

Recognizing & Reporting a Possible Concussion

Parents/guardians, staff, spectators, coaches, and student-athletes share responsibility for reporting a participant who may have suffered a concussion during a practice, game, or athletic event. If anyone believes a participant may have suffered a concussion, the concern should be reported immediately to the coach or CJA staff member present. Signs of a concussion may include: headache, dizziness or confusion, inability to recall events prior to or after a hit/fall, feeling sick (nausea/vomiting), coordination or balance problems, blurred vision, sensitivity to light or noise, or trouble thinking or remembering.

If a coach or staff member believes a student may have suffered a concussion, the student will be immediately removed from practice or competition. The family will be notified promptly. The student should be evaluated by an appropriate healthcare professional.

Recovery & School Participation

Concussion recovery may affect learning, attendance, physical activity, and emotional well-being. CJA will collaborate with the student's family, healthcare provider, and appropriate school personnel to determine necessary academic accommodations and a safe progression back to school and athletics.

A student who misses class because of concussion recovery may not participate in school athletic activities on that day unless specifically cleared through the school's concussion/medical process. Student-athletes recovering from a concussion are not expected to attend practices or contests when rest or medical restrictions indicate otherwise.

Return-to-Learn / Return-to-Play Progression

A student who is believed to have suffered a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate healthcare professional and the healthcare professional must provide documentation to CJA confirming the evaluation took place and describing any medical restrictions. Pursuant to that documentation, the return-to-learn and return-to-play progression shall be as follows:

- Phase 1: No school or activities when medically indicated; complete cognitive and physical rest as directed.
- Phase 2: Partial school attendance with recommended accommodations.
- Phase 3: Full-day school attendance with recommended accommodations.
- Phase 4: Full-day school attendance without accommodations, as appropriate.
- Phase 5: Full school and extracurricular/athletic involvement after CJA receives medical clearance from a healthcare professional and consent from the student's parent/guardian.

When in doubt, sit them out. A suspected concussion is not a situation to "play through." Return to athletic participation must follow medical guidance and State of Illinois compliance procedures.

Continue to final page for Acknowledgment & Commitment Form

CHICAGO JESUIT ACADEMY

11. Acknowledgement & Commitment

By signing below, the student-athlete and parent/guardian acknowledge that they have read and understand the Chicago Jesuit Academy Athletic Handbook & Code of Conduct, including the concussion policy, and agree to support its expectations.

Student-Athlete Printed Name: _____

Student-Athlete Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

CJA Athletics Commitment

We compete with joy and integrity. We grow through challenges. We treat every person with dignity. We serve the team. We pursue Magis.

Do More. Be More. For God & For Others.