



A Ministry of Life Church

Athletics Handbook

2026-2027

"We are shaping tomorrow, today."

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is. His good, pleasing, and perfect will." Romans 12:12

LCA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its programs

Revised 07/15/2025

Revised 04/23/2026

Revised 09/15/2026

Rev. Scott Tischler
Lead Pastor/Superintendent
stischler@visitlifechurch.com

Pastor Alison Hurley
Head of School
ahurley@lca-eagles.net

Hillary Grubbs
Athletic Director
hgrubbs@lca-eagles.net



Life Church

An Assemblies of God Fellowship

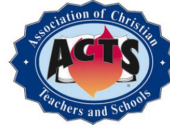


Table of Contents

Athletics Philosophy, Mission Vision and Core Values.....	4
Section A- VISAA Conference.....	5
VISAA Conference.....	5
VISAA Eligibility.....	5
Section B- Participation in LCA Athletics.....	6
Sports Offerings.....	6
VHSL Sports Physicals.....	6
Team Fees (25-26 school year).....	6
Team Rosters.....	7
Try Out Policy.....	7
Uniform Policy.....	8
Practice Policy.....	8
Playing Time Policy.....	8
Section C- Student Conduct.....	9
VISAA/ LCA Player Conduct Expectations.....	9
Additional LCA Athlete Conduct Expectations.....	10
Academics.....	10
School Attendance.....	11
Transportation.....	11
Anti Hazing Policy (as stated in Virginia Code).....	12
Section D-Sports Injury Procedures.....	12
Section E-Team Communication.....	14
Coaches/Player/Parent Communication.....	14
24 Hour Rule.....	14
Section F- Role of Administration, Athletic Director, and Coaches.....	15
Communication Channels.....	15
Role of the Athletic Director.....	15
Section G- Role of Coaching Staff.....	15
Expectations Regarding Coaching Staff.....	15

Athletics Philosophy, Mission Vision and Core Values

We make every attempt to offer athletic options as the student body desires to participate in. We have been able to consistently grow our athletic department over the last few years and look forward to continuing the same growth and development.

We offer athletics because we believe in the overall benefit of competition for the mind, body and soul.

- We trust our coaching staff to uphold the same Biblical principles that LCA adheres to daily.
- We believe in building dependable Kingdom builders/leaders through athletics and trust that our athletes learn to operate as the body of Christ while learning his/her chosen sport.
- We value integrity in all deeds.
- Excellence in our overall goal and we seek to provide an opportunity for students to experience growth, not only in their physical ability but their mental toughness and grit.

Section A- VISAA Conference

VISAA Conference

VISAA Mission Statement:

The Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association will provide accredited member schools with the resources and competitive environment in support of education-based athletic programs that establish a foundation for excellence founded on integrity, sportsmanship, and leadership.

VISAA Vision Statement:

The Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association will develop athletic programs that are nationally recognized and provide student-athletes with quality opportunities for participation, competition, achievement, and the development of character.

VISAA Eligibility

- **Academic Requirement-**The student must be: a. a regular bona fide student in good standing at the member school, and b. enrolled and in attendance at the member school at least 30 days prior to the date of the commencement of the VISAA championship in that sport.
- **Age Requirement-** The student shall not have reached the age of 19 on or before August 1 of the school year in which he or she wishes to compete. (This rule is not subject to appeal).
- **Grade Level Requirement-** Students in grades 8-12 are eligible for VISAA Events. Students below the 8th-grade level are ineligible for VISAA Events.
- **Reclassification of a Student-** A student wishing to repeat a grade (or reclassify) must do so for non-athletic reasons and in compliance with all conference requirements, as applicable. The change in grade status must be reflected in all school records and publications as soon as practicable following the date of reclassification. A student may not complete the graduation requirements of a school for any diploma category and receive athletic eligibility in the following year.
- **Senior Status Requirement-** Attending academic classes while classified as a senior at any school marks the student's last year of eligibility for VISAA Events. A student who has been classified as a senior at any school, who then transfers to a VISAA member school or another VISAA member school, is eligible for VISAA Events during that

transfer year only. The student may not gain additional eligibility thereafter.
Post-graduates are ineligible for VISAA Events.

- **Gender.**

- ❖ a. If a school maintains separate teams in the same sport for girls and boys during the school year, regardless of the sports season, girls may not compete on boys' teams, and boys may not compete on girls' teams. If a school maintains only a boys' team in a sport, girls may compete on the boys' team. Boys may not participate on a girls' team in any sport. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the BoD determines that boys' opportunities for participation in athletics have been limited in the past, boys may participate on a girls' team, unless the sport involved is a contact sport.
- ❖ b. To maintain competitive fairness in VISAA championship events, participation shall be determined by a student's biological sex rather than gender or gender identity. For any regular season competition, such decisions are entrusted to the participating schools. VISAA will provide reasonable accommodations to this policy to the extent required by law.

For a full list of rules please visit the visaa.org website.

Section B- Participation in LCA Athletics

Sports Offerings

- Sports offerings will occur during the fall, winter, and spring seasons.
- During each season, at least one male and one female sport will be offered.
- Male sports are:
 - Football
 - Basketball
 - Wrestling
 - Baseball
- Female sports are:
 - Volleyball
 - Wrestling
 - Cheer

VHSL Sports Physicals

- Each student who wishes to participate in any sport at LCA MUST have a current VHSL physical completed and signed by a healthcare professional
- Current physicals must be turned into admissions **BEFORE** the first day of practice. Students without current physicals will not be able to participate without a current

physical on file and will be considered ineligible until their VHSL physical form has been turned in.

Team Fees (25-26 school year)

- Athletic Fees are as follows:
 - Football: \$300
 - Varsity Basketball: \$300
 - JV Basketball: \$200
 - Middle School Basketball: \$100
 - Girls' Volleyball: \$70
 - Varsity Cheer: \$100
 - Varsity Baseball: \$300
 - JV Baseball: \$200
 - Middle School Baseball: \$100
- Sports fee payments will be distributed over the course of the season (i.e. a football player will pay \$100 over the three month season, etc)
- Athletes who do not pay their sports fees will have academic records withheld until payment is made.

Team Rosters

- In the interest of player development, rosters will be limited within the confines of certain sports. Rosters can be changed at the discretion of the athletic director and the coach depending on the situation. They are as follows:
 - Football- 20 players
 - Volleyball- 12 players per level
 - Basketball- 12 players * an exception can be made for our middle school team
 - Wrestling: N/A
 - Varsity Cheer: 14 players
 - Baseball: 21 players per level
 - Softball: 21 players per level

Try Out Policy

- Students are expected to attend all try-out sessions as communicated by the coach and AD.
- Students who are multi-sport athletes will be able to attend try-outs without penalty from either the in-season or out-of-season coach.
- Students will be evaluated on their ability to perform, their overall commitment to the team, their character and their coachability. This criteria will take precedence over grade level and/or years of experience.

- Any questions or concerns regarding the try-outs would be withheld until after the 24 hour rule has been observed.
- Students who are in grades 9th-12th should be the one initiating contact with the coaches regarding their try-out performance.

Uniform Policy

- Order of Distribution
 - Returning players who desire to keep their previous year number
 - Returning players who desire to choose a new number
 - New players in grade level order (i.e. seniors new to the team will be able to choose over a new sophomore, etc.)
 - In the event that sizing becomes an issue, the coach and the AD will determine the best course of action for the distribution of numbers attached to specific sizes.
 - The care of the uniform is the direct responsibility of the student

Practice Policy

- Practice is a critical element of sports preparation and performance; therefore, it is expected that all student-athletes will regularly attend practices.
- If a student-athlete must miss a practice, he/she must contact the coach in advance of practice time.
- A practice missed by a student-athlete without a valid reason will result in limited playing time for the following game. Additionally, student-athletes who miss practice may not be allowed to be in the starting line-up.
- If a student-athlete has repeatedly missed practices, he/she will be required to attend a meeting with the Administration and/or Athletic Director and Coaches to discuss their commitment to the team and their future status, up to and including potential dismissal from the team.

Playing Time Policy

- The LCA Athletic Department desires to see student-athletes succeed on the field or court just as much as in the classroom. While everyone would ideally have the opportunity to play in every game, that is not always feasible. Below is LCA's policy on playing time as it pertains to each level.
 - **Varsity**-The purpose of varsity sports is to compete at the highest level available to high school athletics, and ultimately to win as many games as possible.
 - Varsity coaches are instructed to play the individuals that will give them the best opportunity to win.
 - Seniority, age, or number of previous years played does not guarantee playing time.

- **Junior Varsity**- Junior varsity sports are still seeking to compete and win games; however, it is also a developmental level of athletics.
 - With that being said, athletes are not guaranteed playing time, but the goal is for junior varsity coaches to provide each player with opportunities to improve and develop as the season progresses.
- **Middle School**- Middle school sports are meant to be competitive, but the main emphasis is on the development and understanding of the game.
 - Every athlete is expected to be given the opportunity to participate throughout the course of the season. It is up to the coach to distribute minutes for each game.

Section C- Student Conduct

VISAA/ LCA Player Conduct Expectations

Each athlete, coach, parent, spectator, official or other attendees, by participating in or attending a VISAA Event, agrees as follows:

- I will treat any coach, parent, spectator, player, official, or any other attendee with respect regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, religion, sex, or ability.
- I will not engage in unsportsmanlike conduct.
- I will not engage in any behavior which would endanger the health, safety, or well-being of any coach, parent, spectator, player, official, or other attendee.
- I will not use drugs, alcohol, or tobacco while at any athletic event. I will not attend, coach, officiate or participate in an athletic event while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I will not use profanity.
- I will not engage in verbal or physical threats or abuse toward any coach, parent, spectator, player, official or any other attendee.
- I will not initiate a fight or scuffle with any coach, parent, spectator, player, official or other attendee.
- I will not argue with officials or otherwise indicate dislike or disdain for a decision.
- I will not make any degrading remarks about any official, coach, athlete, or school.
- I will not detain or attempt to confront any official to request a ruling or explanation of actions taken by an official.
- I understand that conduct that leads to my removal from a VISAA Event may be considered a serious violation of the Code of Conduct and result in discipline by the BoD.
- I understand that, as a coach or school administrator, the removal of a team before the completion of the game may be considered a serious violation of the Code of Conduct.
- I hereby agree that, if I fail to adhere to the Code of Conduct while attending, coaching, officiating, or participating in a VISAA Event, I will be subject to disciplinary action by the BoD.

Penalties for Violations- Any one or more of the following penalties may be imposed upon a school, coach, spectator, or athlete upon a violation of the Code of Conduct. Violations by

parents, spectators, or other representatives of a VISAA member school may be assessed against that VISAA member school.

Warning – A warning is an official notice that the conduct in question is a matter of record, and any such act must not happen again.

Probation – Probation is a more severe type of penalty and is for a specified time period. A team, individual, or coach on probation may participate in any VISAA Event. An additional violation by a team, individual, or coach on probation will result in suspension.

Suspension – Suspension is a severe penalty that may be imposed for any VISAA Event. A suspended team, individual, or coach shall not participate in any VISAA Event. Suspension may result in termination of eligibility for all VISAA Events for the season (reinstatement may only be granted by the BoD).

Additional LCA Athlete Conduct Expectations

Students are expected to follow the rules and expectations outlined in the student handbook while participating, and traveling to and from any athletic event. Should there be a failure to follow any of these rules and expectations and students are given either OSS or ISS the following protocol will be followed for all athletic events:

- Out-of-school suspensions will result in the student-athlete not participating in or attending any athletic events (practice or games) while on suspension.
- In-school suspensions will result in the student-athlete not participating in any athletic games while on suspension; however, they will be expected to attend practice.
- For any games, the student-athlete is expected to remain with the team, out of uniform, on the bench.

Academics

- A student-athlete must maintain an average of 70 (C-) or above in each class to remain eligible for competition in an extracurricular activity. If a student-athlete does not maintain an average of 70 (C-) or above in all courses, he or she will adhere to the following guidelines:
 - Every Wednesday, each student-athletes' course grades will be reviewed for eligibility. If a student-athlete has earned a grade of 69 or below, the Athletic Director and coaches will be notified, and the athlete will be placed on Academic Probation until the next Monday review.
 - Student-athletes on Academic Probation are required to attend practice and work on course studies.
 - Student-athletes on Academic Probation will be required to attend games with the expectation that they will sit out of competition and out of uniform in the team's designated area.

- This process starts September 1st of each school year.
- The Administration reserves the right to assess a player's right to participate in their seasonal sport after being placed multiple times on academic probation.
- Each semester will reset the student-athlete's grade review, allowing for a "grade reset".
- Student-athletes are allowed only one "Special Grading Request" per year. The "Special Grading Request" is used when a student-athlete, who has been placed on Academic Probation, needs an assignment graded quickly in order to improve their grade average so they can be eligible to participate in a game or competition the week of Probation. Consultation with the teacher will be required to determine if the student-athlete may use their "Special Grading Request"

School Attendance

School attendance is mandatory to participate in both practices and games. Below are the guidelines regarding attendance and school:

- If a student-athlete does not arrive at school BEFORE 10:30AM on the day of a game, they will not be allowed to participate in the game (this may be reviewed by administration and athletic director in special circumstances).
- Similarly, student-athletes may not practice if they do not attend school that day. Refer to the Practice Policy section for further clarification on practice expectations.
- While the necessity of medical and dental appointments are understood, a note from a physician or dental practice must be submitted to the office upon arrival.
- Habitual tardiness or leaving early from school on practice or game days will negatively affect playing time.
- Some away games require travel distances of an hour or more. Part of team commitment is learning time management and the flexibility necessary to complete homework assignments despite a late night.
- Student-athletes are required to arrive at school on time the next school day, despite a late night.
- **If a student-athlete misses school or arrives late the next day without a legitimate excuse, it will result in limited playing time the next game.**
- Additionally, the student-athlete will not be allowed to be in the starting line-up for the next game

Transportation

- **Students are expected to travel to and from all away games and practices on the school provided transportation.**
 - In the event that school transportation is limited students may ride to and from away games and/or practice with another parent provided a liability

waiver/permission form has been completed and is on file. This scenario is only expected in emergencies beyond the school's control (i.e. a bus breaks down last minute, etc)

- Waivers will be on hand with the coach, AD or administration. Forms can be emailed to student's guardians as well.
- In certain scenarios deemed out of the realm of normal operation, exceptions can be made for local practices and games if express, written permission has been given by both parents and administration. The AD is authorized to grant permission as well.
- At no time will students who are not immediate family members be permitted by LCA to ride to any sporting event and/or practices.

Anti Hazing Policy (as stated in Virginia Code)

§ 18.2-56. Hazing unlawful; civil and criminal liability; duty of school, etc., officials; penalty.

It shall be unlawful to haze so as to cause bodily injury, any student at any school or institution of higher education.

Any person found guilty thereof shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

Any person receiving bodily injury by hazing shall have a right to sue, civilly, the person or persons guilty thereof, whether adults or infants.

The president or other presiding official of any school or institution of higher education receiving appropriations from the state treasury shall, upon satisfactory proof of the guilt of any student hazing another student, sanction and discipline such student in accordance with the institution's policies and procedures. The institution's policies and procedures shall provide for expulsions or other appropriate discipline based on the facts and circumstances of each case and shall be consistent with the model policies established by the Department of Education or the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, as applicable. The president or other presiding official of any school or institution of higher education receiving appropriations from the state treasury shall report hazing which causes bodily injury to the attorney for the Commonwealth of the county or city in which such school or institution of higher education is, who shall take such action as he deems appropriate.

For the purposes of this section, "hazing" means to recklessly or intentionally endanger the health or safety of a student or students or to inflict bodily injury on a student or students in connection with or for the purpose of initiation, admission into or affiliation with or as a condition for continued membership in a club, organization, association, fraternity, sorority, or student body regardless of whether the student or students so endangered or injured participated voluntarily in the relevant activity.

Code 1950, § 18.1-71; 1960, c. 358; 1975, cc. 14, 15; 2003, cc. [62](#), [67](#); 2014, c. [627](#).

Section D-Sports Injury Procedures

Throughout the course of the season, student-athletes may receive injuries sustained from participating in an athletic competition. It is extremely important for athletes to make parents and coaches aware of these injuries immediately. Once a student-athlete receives an injury, appropriate medical attention needs to be the first priority. For more serious injuries, a doctor's note is required before an athlete may return to play. An athlete that misses practices or games due to an injury may not return until they have been cleared by a physician,

- Concussions:
 - A concussion is a physical force against the brain that causes a change in behavior, which disrupts the normal functions of the brain. The severity of the concussion is dependent upon how many disconnections happen within the brain.
 - Athletes showing any symptoms of a concussion will be immediately ruled out for the remainder of the contest and immediately placed in concussion protocol.
 - Symptoms of a Concussion Physical:
 - Headache, fatigue, light sensitivity, noise sensitivity, blurred vision, nausea, dizziness, numbness, poor sleep, impaired hearing, seizure
 - Cognitive: Inattentiveness decreased concentration, poor memory, impaired judgment, slowed processing speed, executive dysfunction
 - Behavioral: Depression, anxiety, agitation, irritability, aggression, impulsivity
 - If it appears that an athlete may have sustained a concussion, they will be ruled ineligible to play for the remainder of the game, and will be required to go through concussion protocol before they are allowed to return to ANY practices or games.
 - We will utilize a step-by-step procedure for gradually introducing an injured student-athlete back into athletics on a case by case basis. Each head injury is different; therefore, it must be treated as such. In the step-by-step progression protocol, the 1st step begins usually between 24-48 hours after the incident:
 - Step 1. Directly after being diagnosed with a concussion, the athlete should have limited physical and cognitive activity. A diagnosis of a concussion can only occur from a medical professional.

- Step 2. Light aerobic activity without resistance training. This is usually 5-10 min increments of walking, light stationary or bike riding.
- Step 3. Sport-specific exercise– Light activities without head impact, still not doing any activities at 100%.
- Step 4. Non-contact practice with progressive resistance training. The athlete may be entered into some drills and may begin doing things such as sprints and full-speed non-contact drills.
- Step 5. Full, unrestricted practice
- Step 6. Return to competition after being cleared by a medical professional
- Concussion Protocol from Liberty University's Athletic Concussion Protocol; all recommendations are based on those outlined in the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA)'s Position Statement on Management of Sport Related Concussion. Other statements on concussions and head injuries were derived from the Center for Disease Control

Section E-Team Communication

Coaches/Player/Parent Communication

- Team coaches may communicate with players in a group chat. However, in order to ensure that there is a safe environment, administration reserves the right to look at any player group chats involving student-athletes at LCA.
- Coaches communicate with parents via the Team Snap app. All communication should be directed through this app. There is a feature that will allow you to message the coach separately from the group chat feature.

24 Hour Rule

- When allowing your son/daughter to participate in athletics at LCA, you must agree to abide by the 24-Hour Rule. This rule provides an opportunity to collect thoughts about an issue, while also providing time for tempers to cool as necessary. We believe allowing 24 hours before reaching out to a coach can help prevent many of these potential conflicts. All LCA members are encouraged to use the Matthew 18 principle when dealing with conflict.
- The 24-Hour Rule states that if a parent/guardian has an issue or concern that they would like to discuss with a coach, they must wait 24 hours before doing so. If you still feel that you need to speak with a coach after the 24-hour period, it is appropriate to contact the coach by email or phone to schedule an appointment to discuss the matter at hand.

- Coaches are instructed not to engage with parents/guardians directly after games in any confrontational manner. The only appropriate thing to say to a coach after a win or loss is “good game coach”. Outside of that, we ask that you implement the 24-Hour Rule.
- If you need to speak with the Athletic Director about coaching or playing issues, send an email to schedule an appointment. However, please note that depending on the severity of the situation, either Administration or the AD may require you to speak to the coach FIRST, before setting up a meeting.

Section F- Role of Administration, Athletic Director, and Coaches

Communication Channels

- In order to effectively manage communication and resolve potential problems/issues the following channel should be utilized for communication:
 - After 24 hours, parents and/or players may request a meeting with the head coach.
 - Should a resolution and/or understanding not occur during the initial meeting, the Athletic Director will be invited into the conversation regarding whatever incident and/or problem has arisen.
 - If, after meeting with the coach and the athletic director, players and/or parents may schedule a meeting with the MS/HS principal and/or the Head of School. This will be the final meeting before a final determination is made regarding the issue/problem. The school board may be consulted by administration depending on the severity of the issue.

Role of the Athletic Director

- The AD is responsible for making sure all rules are being followed by coaches and athletes as outlined by VISSA.
- They will help schedule games and/or order equipment
- They are the main point of contact for all athletic teams at LCA.
- ALL disputes with other schools and/or teams will go through the AD
- AD's have the authority to suspend coaches and players from athletic competition.
- The AD will secure the use of the school's transportation for away games and also will secure the officials for each home competition.
- Coaches and/or Parents are welcome to assist the AD in the capacity the AD invites.

Expectations Regarding Coaching Staff

Due to the close nature of coaches and players, there may be times that coaches will give rides to students or possibly be invited to assist a player in a personal nature. The making of a good coach is one who is willing to personally invest in their players and families, however, there is an accepted level of “good practice” when it comes to professional behavior within the athletic world.

At no time will a coach be alone with a player of the opposite gender in a room/environment that is secluded. This applies to offices with closed doors (and no window) vehicles (both personal and school owned) personal homes and/or any environment that would allow for seclusion.

LCA coaching staff is expected to:

- Be loyal to the mission and directives of LCA administration
- Be a person of good moral character with a focus on a relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Refrain from cursing, especially around players and parents.
- Refrain from using tobacco, alcohol and/or other recreational drugs, especially around players and parents.
- Have a clean driving record and background check.
- Be responsible in their use of social media
- Maintain commonly accepted professional boundaries with players and parents.
- Report ALL issues to the AD and/or administration. This includes issues with LCA athletes, incidents involving competition, and/or any concerning behavior that is in violation of our student-athlete conduct policy or student conduct policy of LCA.

Section G- Boosters/Fundraising

LCA does not actively participate in a traditional booster program. ALL fundraising efforts must be first run through the coach and then approved through administration.

- Any fundraising must be approved by administration
- All guidelines given must be followed.
- All donations secured (monetary or physical assets) must be tracked through our online giving platform or our finance department.
- Students must never be in control of fundraising money during the collection process. Parents and/or coaches should assist their player in the securing and handling of money.