Player Handbook

2026-2027

Our Purpose

To develop the Christian character of young men and women, using the lessons learned through both success and failure to live authentically and consistently based on their relationship with Jesus Christ, for the glory of God and a witness to the community.

Our Mission

Participating in a sport is a wonderful opportunity to improve physical skills and athletic abilities, as well as to learn and utilize lessons in discipline, fitness, teamwork, and attitude. We intend to use this blessing from God to enjoy our health and His creation. We also have the great privilege of letting our lights shine before men, as we play this sport to the glory of God through Christ His Son, our Savior. Therefore, let it be our primary goal to glorify God's name and edify one another and our opponents throughout the season. We look forward to learning these lessons together as we walk humbly before our God.

Core Values – The G.O.A.L of Zion Athletics

- **Glorify God –** Praise God in all you do, bring Him honor and glory, strive for excellence and commit your full effort at all times (Matt 5:16, Romans 2:12, 1 Cor 10:31)
- **Obey and honor authority –** Submit to, honor, and respect those in authority (5th Commandment, Hebrews 13:17, Rom 13:1-8, 1 Pet 2:13)
- **Advance others –** Consider others above yourself, value and commit to team goals above personal goals, respect teammates, opponents, officials, and fans (Phil 2:3-4, Heidelberg QA 86)
- **Live in accordance with God's Word –** Know and apply God's Word to you actions and behavior, demonstrate the fruits of the spirit, perseverance, and resilience (Gal 5:22-23, Heb 12:1-3, 1 Cor 9:24)

Expectations for Participation

Attempted fair playing time will be awarded to players participating through the eighth grade. Even so, the coach may elect to have the players he or she feels gives him or her the best opportunity for victory participating in the contest in the final moments.

At the freshman and junior varsity levels, competition will increase to the point that not every player will be awarded equal playing time. Playing time is based on several factors which may include (but is not limited to) skill, ability, coachability, attendance, effort, attitude, etc.

At the varsity level, while it is often in the best interest of the coach to use all of his or her bench depth, it is sometimes necessary that a disparity of playing time between players be in place in order to give the team the greatest chance for success. Varsity coaches have the discretion to distribute playing time in whatever way they feel is best for the team.

Regardless of age, playing time need not be awarded to players who fail to show maximum effort.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is essential to the success of the athletic program. Each year, families of student-athletes are required to volunteer for various shifts, including concessions, admissions, and the sports book/clock. These volunteer roles are necessary to properly staff home games and support the athletic program through gate and concession revenue.

The total number of required shifts is determined annually by the Sports Boosters and may vary based on the number of home games and participating athletes. Volunteers for the book/clock position must be familiar and comfortable with the responsibilities involved.

Families who are unable or choose not to fulfill their required shifts may opt to pay a $75 fee per shift in

place of volunteering. However, the athletic program's primary goal is to maintain active parent participation. In-person involvement is strongly preferred over the opt-out fee.

Parents are responsible for attending all assigned shifts. If a conflict arises, it is the parent's responsibility to find a replacement and sign up for an alternate shift. In addition to admissions/concession/book shifts, families may also be required to assist with at least one carpooling shift, if needed. Carpooling shifts are separate and do not count toward the required volunteer shift total.

After all families have met their minimum shift requirements, remaining open shifts may be made available for additional sign-ups. Parents who pick up extra shifts beyond their requirement will receive a $50 tuition credit per additional shift, issued as a token of appreciation by the Boosters. Families may receive a maximum of $250 in tuition credit during each school year.
Failure to fulfill volunteer shift responsibilities—or to pay the designated fee in lieu of service—may result in the student-athlete being declared ineligible for participation until the requirement is met.
Coaches are exempt from volunteer shifts during the season in which they are actively coaching and their child is participating. Any sport that requires payment to play during its season is also exempt from shift requirements.

The athletic program values strong family involvement and appreciates the ongoing partnership of parents in providing a well-supported, Christ-centered athletic experience for all student-athletes.

Communication

Players will be informed at practice of changes in the schedule. In addition, an email will be sent home to parents. You can also access the Zion website, athletics page, for directions and schedules.

Game cancellations due to bad weather: If school is closed due to a snow day, the athletic contest that evening might still take place. A coach or player will inform you by noon as to whether or not games will be played that evening. Please also watch WOOD TV as cancellations may also be posted with there.

Fan Code of Conduct

The bleachers are a source of fun and encouragement for players, parents, and families. We ask that you keep every game a positive experience for everyone by not speaking negatively about the officials or any player, especially the player of another parent, or our opponents. Fans and players should cheer for their own team and not against their opponents. Attitudes and actions that are inconsistent with Biblical behavior should not be part of our athletic contests. Please let the coaches coach, the players play, and the officials officiate.

Parents should abstain from questioning or reprimanding officials or players from the sideline or by seeking them out face-to-face after the conclusion of the game. Parents should see the coach first with questions and to voice concerns.

Any comments or concerns that you have about this team should be directed to the head coach. If you are not satisfied, you may then contact the Athletic Director.

Please keep these principles in mind as you sit in the stands.

1. **Use the golden rule.** Treat others as you would like to be treated. Luke 6:31-36, "And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them...But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful."

2. **Respect our opponents and officials.** They are our guests and should be treated with thoughtfulness and accorded tolerance at all times. Insults, making fun, taunting, booing, chanting, towards the opponents or officials are not necessary and inconsistent with Biblical behavior. Honor authority and respect others as image bearers of Christ. Restrict your comments to those of encouragement and praise. Proverbs 11:12, "Whoever belittles his neighbor lacks sense, but a man of understanding remains silent."

3. **Gain an understanding of the rules.** If you are uninformed, refrain from expressing opinions on the officials, coaches, players, etc. Recognize that you may be biased toward a particular player or team and that this might interfere with sound judgment. Proverbs 24:23, "These also are sayings of the wise. Partiality in judging is not good."

Team Expectations

Devotions Devotions will be held during practice at least once per week. Coaches and players will participate.

Practice Attire Shirts that are sleeveless, have holes, or rips/tears in them are not permissible practice attire. Shorts should be a respectable length. Boys should leave their shirts on during practice. Practice jerseys will be issued and should be worn to each practice. In addition, each player is responsible for having proper athletic shoes, shorts, and shirts at every practice. Being unprepared for practice will be considered an unexcused absence. Players without the necessary equipment will be expected to be present at practice to observe.

Game Day Attire On game days, players should remain in dress code or in uniform on their way to and from any event, whether they ride the bus or take alternate transportation. Example, boys should not be shirtless or wearing tank tops.

Missing Practice In order to practice or play in a game, a student must be at school the whole day. There are some exceptions that must be cleared by the administration and the head coach.

Players are expected to attend every practice and game and to be on time. Missing practice/game can effect playing time. A player having two unexcused absences from practice/game may be dismissed from the team.

Excused absences from games and practices include only illness (including medical appointments), family emergency, and family vacations. In addition to missing a practice, unexcused absences also include a player leaving practice early or arriving late except for the reasons listed above. Please note that this applies even when written parent permission is given. While we respect the parents' decision to allow the child to leave early or arrive late, it does not make the absence excused. *Only the conditions of the absence deem it excused or unexcused.*

Respect Players may not call the coach by their first name. Players should address concerns with coaches privately and avoid negative gossip or slander of the coach or other players.

Cell Phone Use Cell phone use while on the bus or at an extracurricular event is limited to calling your parents to relay information pertaining to the event taking place.

Music Listening to iPods, MP3s, music players, and using cell phones to listen to music, etc, are not permitted at school or on the bus or at extracurricular activities. Please leave them at home.

Preferences for pre-game warm-up music may be submitted to the Athletic Director for approval.

Transportation When riding on a bus or in a van, different genders should not sit in the same seat or bench. Players should stay seated at all times. Players should not communicate with any other vehicles.

Players MAY go home with their **father and/or mother** after the game without special permission. If a player needs to ride home with someone else, the parent should give written permission to the coach.

Only players, coaches, and assistants may ride to the game on the bus. If parents, family members, or fans wish to ride the bus, they must make a request of the Athletic Director 24 hours prior to departure time.

Playing Time Playing time will not be equal among players as stated in the *Expectations for Participation*. Players wishing to discuss their playing time may contact the head coach before or after practice.

Injuries Please notify the coach of any pre-existing medical conditions and players are responsible for using appropriate braces and protective gear to prevent additional or further injury. Players with injuries

preventing them from playing are still considered important members of the team and are expected to be present at practice and games to observe.

During practices and games, small injuries can happen. Some of the injuries require ice, bandaging, taping, or other medical care. We ask that if a player is receiving medical attention that you trust the staff and stay in the spectator area.

If the injury stops the game, we ask that parents stay in the spectator area until the staff comes to get you. Most of these times the injuries are minor and the player just needs a few minutes of downtime to recover.

Eligibility

Zion Christian School's extracurricular program is based on the premise that physical exercise, competition, and recreation are aspects of the lives that Christians live as prophets, priests, and kings before God. Such activity is part of our mission of living and learning for the glory of God. Participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege and, as such, can often be used to motivate students to higher academic success.

Governance

A) The Athletic Policy Committee consists of the Education Committee Chairman, High School Principal, Athletic Director, and Learning Enrichment Services Director.

B) The Eligibility Committee consists of the Athletic Policy Committee for athletic eligibility issues and the Education Committee Chairman, High School Principal, Learning Enrichment Services Director, and faculty advisor for all "non-athletic" extracurricular activity eligibility issues.

Extracurricular Activities

A) Athletics

   1) All athletic teams

   2) All regular team attendants and officials (statisticians, timers, managers, etc.)

B) Other Extracurricular Activities

   1) Student government representatives

   2) Drama participants

Definitions

A) **Ineligibility** results if a student has not met the academic or citizenship requirements as outlined below. Any ineligible student may try out for, or continue to practice with, an athletic group, but may not participate in any public, scheduled contests or events during this time. Any ineligible student may not attend meetings or help with planning activities for Student Government or Drama. Students participating on athletic teams must also meet the requirements of the Michigan High School Athletic Association to be considered eligible.

B) **On Probation** means that a student may participate in public contests or events, attend meetings, and help with planning activities, but will be reevaluated by the Eligibility Committee. If, in the opinion of the Eligibility Committee, his situation does not warrant reinstatement, the student could be declared ineligible for a time to be determined by the Eligibility Committee.

C) **Scheduled Contest** refers to a contest against another school, not to the date of competition. For example, a baseball or softball double-header will be counted as two contests, because two separate games are played. Volleyball or wrestling invitationals consisting of three, four, or more contests are considered separate scheduled contests, because they are played against different opponents. Track, tennis, or golf invitationals are generally considered one contest since all schools compete simultaneously. If a contest is canceled, it is to be considered as having occurred as it relates to eligibility terms.

Academic Eligibility

A) Criteria

1) A student whose average in a class drops to failing or has more than two "D's" is considered ineligible the following week and all subsequent week(s) until the average rises to a passing grade or only two "D's" remain. The following stipulations also apply:

(a) The course must have had at least three graded assessments completed in the academic quarter.

(b) In the case that a student has been ineligible for one week due to failure and does not have opportunity to improve his grade in the subsequent week(s), the teacher shall recommend to the Eligibility Committee whether the participant be reinstated based upon such factors as requests for assistance, improved discipline in class, or other behaviors indicative of a desire to improve.

(c) Students receiving consultation from Learning Enrichment Services may be considered exempt from this criterion by the Learning Enrichment Services Director if he/she deems it appropriate. This will be evaluated on a student's effort and the degree of his or her ability.

2) A student who receives a failing grade on a report card for either a quarter or semester course is ineligible for the first three weeks of the next marking period.

B) Monitoring and Enforcement

1) The Athletic Director will run eligibility reports on Monday morning for the coming week. The Athletic Director will inform each head coach, student athlete, and his or her parents of ineligibility.

2) The period of ineligibility begins when the coach or faculty advisor informs the student of his ineligibility and will continue until the next grade report. Essentially, ineligibility will be for one week, from Monday to the following Monday. Students cannot regain eligibility midweek.

C) Appeal Process

1) Once per school year, the parent of an ineligible student will be permitted to request that the student be reinstated. The process for doing so is as follows:

(a) The parent must request a review by contacting the Athletic Director.

(b) The Athletic Director or his designee will discuss with the student's teachers the student's record regarding:

(i) performance relative to ability

(ii) attitude toward learning

(iii) completion of daily assignments

(iv) performance in class

(v) effort

2) The Eligibility Committee will make a determination regarding eligibility. If probation or reinstatement is granted, the terms shall include:

(a) the duration of probation or reinstatement.

(b) consequences for future violations if different than those detailed in this policy.

(c) in the case of probation, when the case will be reevaluated.

(d) any other terms deemed necessary by the particular case.

Citizenship Eligibility

All students are expected to represent God, our school, and themselves in a worthy manner. As we seek to promote Biblical values and Christian behavior in our students, we require that each student's Christian character be reflected in his behavior if he is to participate in extracurricular activities. Athletes must act with respect toward others and always exhibit good sportsmanship. Any conduct that results in dishonor to the participant, teachers, coaches, teams or opponents, school or, above all, toward his Lord will not be tolerated and may result in a loss of eligibility. The

participant's Christian character must be reflected in his behavior during the school year as well as during the summer months. The rules below are in effect during the entire year, including the summer months.

A) Criteria

1) Students must attend all the classes for which they are scheduled on any given day to participate in any extracurricular activities on that day. The sole exceptions will be college visits, job shadows, and medical appointments documented by notice from the medical office in which the appointment took place.

2) A student will be declared ineligible for extracurricular activities in any school year in which he has reached 12 discipline points. The student will become permanently ineligible from extracurricular activities after reaching 12 points twice while in high school.

3) A student may not use or possess alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco.

4) A student may not be present at a gathering where alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco are being used by minors.

5) A student may not commit any illegal acts.

6) Any athlete who becomes involved in fighting or flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct will be removed from the contest in which he is involved and will be suspended for at least one additional contest. The seriousness of the altercation will be evaluated by the Eligibility Committee and could be subject to further penalty. Fighting and flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct includes an invitation to fight; following an opposing player during a disturbance; making menacing or taunting gestures or sounds; punching; and wrestling or tackling an opponent as part of an altercation. In addition, no player may leave the player bench or bench area to approach an altercation.

B) Monitoring & Enforcement

1) Any person may bring to the attention of the Eligibility Committee a student who, in his judgment, is in violation of these standards. All violations of the citizenship policy will be brought to the attention of the Eligibility Committee. In case of emergency, the High School Principal may make a judgment subject to full committee approval.

2) If a coach or faculty sponsor is aware of any violation of the citizenship requirements, it is his responsibility to bring it to the Eligibility Committee.

3) The High School Principal will provide the Athletic Director or the faculty head of the extracurricular activity with a list of all students who are ineligible. The Athletic Director will inform each head coach of the ineligible players. The High School Principal or his designee will be responsible for informing each student of his ineligibility after the Athletic Director & coach or faculty advisor have been informed.

4) The period of ineligibility begins when the High School Principal or his designee informs the student of his ineligibility.

C) Appeal Process

1) Parents of an ineligible student will be permitted to appeal a penalty by contacting the High School Principal.

2) The Eligibility Committee will review the case and make a determination regarding eligibility. In case of emergency, the High School Principal will have authority to invoke a temporary judgment. If probation or reinstatement is granted, the terms shall include:

(a) the duration of probation or reinstatement.

(b) consequences for future violations if different than those detailed in this policy.

(c) in the case of probation, when the case will be reevaluated.

(d) any other terms deemed necessary by the particular case.

Additional Athletic Eligibility Provisions

A) A student may be suspended from the team for violating the following rules.

1) An athlete must travel with the team to and from away contests unless he has received permission from his coach to travel separately.

2) An athlete must receive permission from his coach to be absent from a practice or contest.

B) School-furnished uniforms may be worn only during athletic contests and must be returned in good condition immediately following the season. Financial penalty will be levied when uniforms are lost or altered (e.g. discolored or torn) as a result of non-contest use. School-furnished equipment may be used only during practices and contests.

C) Each athlete is required to have a yearly physical administered after April 15 that will cover participation for the following school year. An MHSAA Medical Card must be completed by the physician and submitted to the school office prior to participation.

D) Parents of athletes must complete the school's insurance form acknowledging that they possess a family insurance plan. Zion Christian School does not carry insurance to cover student athletic injuries.

E) Each athlete's parent(s) shall complete an Emergency Medical Authorization Card giving permission for treatment by a physician or hospital when a parent is not available. The card will be kept with the head coach for availability at all practices and games. It is understood that the school will pursue medical treatment for an athlete only in case of an emergency. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible.

F) The coach may assign additional rules and disciplinary actions for conduct other than those listed in this handbook. The Athletic Director must approve all additional stipulations before the first week of practice. The Athletic Director and High School Principal will be advised by the coach regarding violations of these stipulations and the coach must get approval from the High School Principal regarding the disposition of the disciplinary action.

G) State rules demand that every athlete who is a member of a high school team may not, under any circumstances, be a member of any other team in that sport at the same time. This includes church recreation teams, scrimmages, or any other form of competition involving more than one team.

H) Dropping a Sport

1) No athlete shall drop a sport in season and join another team in the same season unless the situation meets one or more of the following criteria:

(a) It occurs before the final cut.

(b) It occurs because of an injury.

(c) It occurs before scheduled competition.

(d) It is by mutual consent by coaches.

(e) It occurs because of unusual circumstances. Unusual circumstances do not include the following: personality clash with the coach, insufficient playing time, or cramped social life. The situation must be serious and must have substantial consequences for the persons involved.

2) Procedure: An athlete wishing to drop a sport to join another sport must request permission from the Athletic Policy Committee. This committee will make the decision after conferring with the coaches involved. The athlete may also present his rationale to the Athletic Policy Committee, if appropriate. Dropping a sport may result in being penalized by missing contests in the next sport in which the student participates or by being denied the privilege of participating in the sport which was dropped in future years. Varsity letters will not be given for a season in which a sport is dropped.

I) If an athlete wants to participate in two sports in one season, he must seek the permission of the head coach for each sport. If permission is granted from the head coaches, the request is then passed on to the Athletic Policy Committee for final approval.