



2025-26 ECA Athletics Handbook

Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to communicate all aspects of the Excelsior Classical Academy (ECA) athletic program to coaches, athletes, parents, and all other stakeholders. The information contained in the manual is beneficial to understanding the philosophy and overall scope of the ECA athletic program.

The athletic program at ECA provides a variety of individual and team sport opportunities for all students. The aim of the athletic program is to provide a competitive, appropriate schedule of interscholastic contests seeking to build positive rivalries, foster friendships, improve athletic skills, build self-confidence, and teach valuable skills such as discipline, leadership, and teamwork.

We hope that the ECA student body will take advantage of the athletic programs offered by the school, and that the experience is challenging and rewarding.

We encourage parental and family interaction in the athletic program, which results in increased school spirit and beneficial whole-family experiences.

Mission, Values, and Goals

Mission Statement

The mission of the Excelsior Classical Academy Athletic Department is to not only field competitive teams, but to teach student-athletes important values such as sportsmanship, hard work, and perseverance that will help them in secondary school and beyond, while representing and promoting Excelsior Classical Academy in a positive manner in all that we do.

Values

The ECA Athletic Department will be guided by two absolute values: (1) Always tell the truth, and (2) Treat others as we would wish to be treated.

Goals

The ECA Athletic Department will always strive to achieve the following goals:

- Compete with pride, always winning with class and losing with dignity and grace;
- Responsibly manage our resources, both material and financial;

- Comply with all ECA and North Carolina High School Athletic Association rules; and
- Work hard to improve, with the ultimate goal of being the preeminent secondary school athletic department in North Carolina.

Memberships

Excelsior Classical Academy is a member of the 1A classification of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA).

ECA is also a member of the Triangle North Athletic Conference (TNAC), which consists of seven (7) high school athletic programs from the Triangle region. Fellow conference members are: Oxford Prep (Oxford), Henderson Collegiate (Henderson), Vance Charter (Henderson), Eno River Academy (Hillsborough), Discovery Charter School (Durham), Falls Lake Academy (Creedmoor), and Excelsior Classical Academy (Durham).

ECA accepts and abides by all policies set forth by the NCHSAA and the Triangle North Athletic Conference.

Excelsior Classical Academy Athletics Staff

ECA Athletic Administration

David Coates	Athletic Director	david.coates@excelsiorca.org
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The Director of Athletics oversees all aspects of the athletic program. The Director of Athletics is responsible to the Executive Director, is supervised by the Director of Operations, and works with the Middle and High School Dean's and Behavior and Guidance staff when appropriate (e.g. determining student-athlete eligibility).

The Director of Athletics at Excelsior Classical Academy is responsible for the overall functioning of the athletic program.

The Director of Athletics's duties include:

1. Prepare the schedule of contests for all sports. After the conference schedule is completed, non-conference games will be scheduled to fill in the remainder of the season.
2. Book and arrange for payment of officials for all home athletic events, with the assistance of the regional supervisors of officials and school treasurer.
3. Reserve facilities for all practices and home contests.
4. Oversee that all forms required for athletic eligibility and coach compliance are turned in and current, and arrange for the record-keeping and maintenance for said documents.
5. Supervise athletic eligibility and maintain a list of students who have failed to maintain eligibility, turn in the required paperwork, or pay athletic fees.
6. Complete the NCHSAA master eligibility forms for each sport.
7. Inform students, parents, and coaches of the loss or gain of athletic eligibility.
8. Direct or assist in directing any tournaments or multi-team events hosted by ECA.
9. Supervise, or designate supervision for, all athletic events hosted by ECA.

10. Arrange staffing and security for all ECA athletic events, as needed.
11. Hire non-faculty coaches for sports and recommend coaching changes, in consultation with the Executive Director.
12. Ensure that all coaches have completed the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching and Concussion Management courses, as well as ensuring that all head coaches completed his/her respective sport's rules clinic (online or in person).
13. Approve assistant coaches chosen by the head coach.
14. Schedule and lead Athletic Department meetings as needed.
15. Evaluate all head coaches at the conclusion of their respective sport seasons.
16. Maintain and update the Athletic Department's social media presences.
17. Ensure the Department's compliance with all NCHSAA and Triangle North Athletic Conference regulations, and bylaws.
18. Educate all coaches on NCHSAA rules, regulations, and bylaws.
19. Perform any and all other duties prescribed by the Executive Director or the Director of Operations.

ECA Coaching Staff

Jill Sheets	Middle School Volleyball
David Coates	Middle School Volleyball
Summer Gates	High School Volleyball
David Coates	High School Volleyball
Rich Kenny	Middle School Boys Soccer
Megan Shaw	High School Boys Soccer
Homaira Sharf	Middle & High School Boys & Girls Cross Country
Jered Wells	Middle & High School Boys & Girls Cross Country
David Coates	Middle School Girls Basketball
James Mighty	Middle School Boys Basketball
Scott Clayton	High School Boys Basketball
Michelle Dalton	High School Girls Basketball
Olivia Pechulis	High School Girls & Boys Swimming
Megan Shaw	Middle School Girls Soccer

Sean Carroll	High School Girls Soccer
TBD	High School Boys Golf
David Coates	Middle School Boys Baseball
TBD	High School Boys Baseball
Brad Wicker	Middle School Softball
Lisa Carden	Middle School Cheer
Lisa Carden	High School Cheer

Duties of the Head Coach

Coaches employed by Excelsior Classical Academy understand that the athletic program is educational in its purpose and conduct, and that the program is for the collective benefit of the student-athletes and the school.

Prior to employment, prospective coaches will be required to provide ECA with personal information to allow the office staff to conduct a thorough background check. Coaches serve in their positions for one academic year at a time; notification of renewal or dismissal for the next academic year will be given by the Director of Athletics or the Chief School Officer no later than May 31.

Coaches should not only be proficient in the sport for which they are responsible, but also should serve as role models for ECA student-athletes in sportsmanship, teamwork, and appearance before the public. The use of alcohol, tobacco, or controlled substances in the presence of student-athletes or at school functions is prohibited and will be grounds for dismissal. Head coaches should require that assistant coaches and student-athletes represent ECA in exemplary fashion at all times.

Head coaches shall:

1. Submit a team roster to the Director of Athletics immediately following the completion of tryouts.
2. Monitor student-athlete grades and eligibility, with the assistance of the Director of Athletics and/or Dean of Students.
3. Communicate with parents regarding low grades and strategies for improving a student's academic performance.
4. Report all injuries to the Director of Athletics and discuss any suspected concussions or head injuries.
5. Report all ejections and disqualifications to the Director of Athletics.
6. (Soccer only) Track the number of yellow cards accumulated by players and/or coaches, and report to the Director of Athletics if a player or coach accrues five (5) yellow cards over the course of a season.
7. Maintain game records and player statistics on MaxPreps in a timely fashion following each contest.
8. Provide recaps, summaries, and quotes to the Director of Athletics to assist in the writing of postgame recaps or social media postings.
9. Supervise all student-athletes and managers before, during, and after practices and games. Coaches are expected to be the first to arrive and the last to leave any athletic event.
10. Designate a parent to coordinate carpool operations for away games (and practices, as needed).

11. Communicate with the Director of Athletics regarding rules, regulations, and/or any problems that may arise.
12. Attend their sport's rules clinic before the season starts, if applicable.
13. Arrange and attend a mandatory preseason meeting with all players and parents to discuss expectations, schedules, etc.
14. Complete the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching course and Concussion in Sports course prior to coaching in a practice or contest, and ensure that the assistant coaches have completed them.
15. Maintain current CPR/AED certification in accordance with NCHSAA policy.
16. Enforce all ECA and Athletic Department policies, whether at home or on the road.
17. Dress appropriately for the sport he/she is coaching. T-shirts and jeans should not be worn at games.
18. Check and set up all practice and game facilities for general readiness and playability, with the assistance of the Director of Athletics.
19. Keep track of all school-owned athletic equipment being used by the team.
20. Evaluate all assistant coaches at the conclusion of their respective sport seasons.

Duties of Assistant Coaches

Prior to employment, prospective coaches will be required to provide ECA with personal information to allow the office staff to conduct a thorough background check. Coaches serve in their positions for one academic year at a time; notification of renewal or dismissal for the next academic year will be given by the Director of Athletics no later than May 31.

Coaches should not only be proficient in the sport for which they are responsible, but also should serve as role models for ECA student-athletes in sportsmanship, teamwork, and appearance before the public. The use of alcohol, tobacco, or controlled substances in the presence of student-athletes or at school functions is prohibited and will be grounds for dismissal.

Athletics/Extracurricular Sports Participation Policy

Athletics and extracurricular sports include ANY athletic team or Upper School club that represent Excelsior Classical Academy in athletic competition. To be eligible to try out and remain eligible to participate for any sport, extracurricular competition or club leadership role at Excelsior, students must meet the following criteria:

- All students must be enrolled in Excelsior to participate
- All students must be in good discipline status through the entire time of their respective sport season or extracurricular sports activity. This means that if a student is suspended for any period of time, his/her status as a team or club member may be revoked by the Coach or Administration. The student is not allowed to participate or attend any sport or co-curricular events during the time of suspension. Violations of the school's behavior policy are subject to review by the Administration and may cause a student to be placed on probation or removed from the team or club.
- All students absent or removed from school for more than half of the day of a contest for any reason may not be in the contest that school day. In order for a student to be able to participate in a contest, the student must be present for a half day of school. Please review the Attendance section of the handbook for specific times.
- Student athletes must receive a health screening each year (within the last 395 days) by a duly licensed physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant.
- Any athlete who quits a team voluntarily, not including medical reasons, could potentially forfeit being eligible to participate in ECA athletics for a period of one year as determined by

administration. This one-year period also applies to any athlete who has been dismissed from a team by a coach or administration.

- Parents and students are responsible for monitoring the progress of their grades throughout the quarter.
- Concussion Forms must be completed and on file for each school year.

Sports Pre-Participation & Medical Examination Forms

ECA Athletics uses [DragonFly](#) to maintain all paperwork for student-athletes, parents, and coaches. The student shall not participate in any tryout, practice session, or contests until the following paperwork is completed in DragonFly:

- A student-athlete information form
- A medical history and a physical examination, signed by a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant and completed in the last 395 days, subject to the provisions of G.S.90-9, 90-18.1, and 90-18.2. The recommended Sports Pre-participation and Medical Examination Form can be found at:
<http://www.nchsaa.org/pages/464/health-safety-sports-medicine/>

In order to try out, a physical must be valid for the entirety of the current school year.

- A concussion awareness statement, required by the Gfeller-Waller Concussion Law
- NFHS Sportsmanship Certificate of Completion
- An NCHSAA eligibility and consent waiver
- Proof of medical insurance

Academic Eligibility Requirements

Students are required to play only on teams that match their grade levels.

At Excelsior Classical Academy, our mission is to cultivate scholars of character and intellect through a program of academic vigor and high expectations. This commitment extends to every area of school life, including our athletic programs. We believe strongly that athletics should complement-not compete with-the academic growth of our students.

Beginning with the Winter 2025-2026 athletic season, we are implementing new Middle School and High School Academic Requirements to ensure that our student-athletes remain students first. These standards are designed to strengthen the link between classroom achievement and athletic participation, reinforcing habits of discipline, time management, and resilience that prepare our students for success well beyond their playing years.

Key elements of the policy include:

- **Ongoing Grade Review** – All student-athlete grades will be reviewed by the Athletic Director prior to tryouts and midway through each athletic season.
- **Minimum Performance** – A grade of at least “D” in every class and a semester attendance rate of 85% or higher are required to remain eligible.
- **Eligibility** – Any student with one failing grade will enter a two-week Academic Probation period with required teacher sign-off on an Academic Improvement Release Form. Students who do not bring their grade up to at least a D during probation will become academically ineligible.

- **Previous Semester** - Students who do not pass two or more classes in the previous semester will not be allowed to participate. If a student fails a single class, they will be placed on academic probation for two weeks. During this period, if the student's grade does not improve to at least a D, they will become academically ineligible to participate.
- **Early Dismissal** – Students in middle school who are not passing their 7th period class will not be permitted to leave early on game days. It is the responsibility of parents to pick up their child at the end of the school day and transport them to the game until further notice from the student's teacher. Similarly, high school students failing their 4th block class are also prohibited from early release on game days, and parents must ensure they are picked up after school to attend the game until further notice from the student's teacher.
- **Equitable Access** – Students with identified disabilities, IEPs, or 504 plans will receive all legally required accommodations to ensure an equal opportunity to benefit from athletics.

These expectations are not punitive; they are purposeful. By maintaining academic standards, we teach our students that excellence is not confined to the classroom or the court. It is a way of life preparing them for higher education, future careers, and the personal challenges they will encounter as adults.

We ask for your partnership in this effort. Please engage in regular, constructive conversations with your student-athlete about grades, attendance, and the importance of balancing responsibilities. Our teachers, tutors, and coaches are ready to provide support, but lasting success depends on a shared commitment from school and home.

Thank you for helping us uphold the mission of Excelsior Classical Academy: to **foster scholars of virtue and excellence who meet high expectations in every arena**. Together, we will ensure that our athletes thrive not only on the field but, more importantly, in the classroom and in life.

Participation

Excelsior Classical Academy fields both middle and high school teams in most sports it offers. While teaching the values of sportsmanship, perseverance, and commitment is a critically important aspect of our athletic programs, we expect to field the most competitive teams possible in each sport with the objective of winning games and contests. With that in mind, the following policies and principles were established.

Tryouts and cuts

Roster sizes will be determined by the Head Coach of the sport. Students are strongly encouraged to be at each tryout session and must be in attendance for AT LEAST one tryout session to be deemed eligible to make a team. An athlete who does not make a team may try out for another sport provided that the tryout for that sport has not already been completed. Athletes are allowed to play only one sport at a time during a season. Only students who are currently enrolled at Excelsior may attend tryouts.

At the beginning of tryouts, coaches will assign each participant a number. A coach may elect to make cuts to the roster prior to the start of a sport's season. Rosters will be chosen based on student-athlete skills, ability, commitment level, and team dynamic. The decision of whether to keep or cut a player rests solely with the head coach, and the coach's decision is final. Coaches will inform families of all participants of the final roster by the numbers assigned to students at the

beginning of tryouts. This process should occur within 24 hours after the conclusion of tryouts. Additionally, they may offer an opportunity for some students to serve as team managers, which would enable them to practice daily with the team and accompany the team during away games.

Student-athletes who do not attend the regularly-scheduled tryouts for any reason other than an injury may request a special individual tryout from the head coach, but the head coach is under no obligation to grant such a request.

Tryouts are closed to the public, and may not be attended or viewed by parents or spectators unless approved by the head coach.

Injured Athlete Tryout Policy

Injured athletes unable to try out for a team with limited roster spaces must notify the head coach of the sport for which he/she wishes to try out that he/she would intend to try out if not for the injury; this notification must occur before the first day of tryouts. The head coach and the Director of Athletics will determine the status of the injured player.

Playing Time

One of the most emotional issues surrounding an athlete's involvement in athletics is playing time. Being on the roster and dressing out for a contest does not guarantee that a student-athlete will always participate. The coach will determine playing time based on attendance, attitude, commitment, effort, skill, and ability. At ECA, our sports teams are competitive and playing time is not equal across the team. It is the responsibility of each coach to decide who starts a contest, what position the athletes play, and how long they should play. All students, parents, and community members are asked to respect this model and the coach's decision. Coaches are allowed to develop participation policies more inclusive than the one outlined above.

Student-athletes, parents, and guardians are prohibited from speaking to the coaching staff regarding playing time for 24 hours following the conclusion of a contest, and coaches will not discuss any situation or decision that does not directly pertain to the child of the parents and/or guardians.

If a parent or student has a concern about their playing time in a match, a meeting should be scheduled with the coach to discuss the issue. If the parent or student is not satisfied with the resolution, the parent or student should follow the athletic grievance policy set forth in this section of the handbook.

Quitting Policy

If a student voluntarily removes himself/herself from a ECA fall or winter sports team for any reason after having made the team and added to the official roster submitted to the conference, he/she shall be ineligible for participation on any ECA athletic team for the remainder of that school year. If a student voluntarily removes himself/herself from a ECA spring sports team for any reason, he/she shall be ineligible for participation on any ECA athletic team the following fall.

Exceptions may be granted by the athletic director and/or head coach in the event of a season-ending injury or a family emergency or hardship.

A student-athlete will not be thought of as having "quit" if he/she is declared academically ineligible or dismissed from a team by the head coach.

Attendance at Athletic Practices and Games/Matches/Meets

The NCHSAA's three sport seasons generally run for the following dates:

- Fall (Volleyball, Cross Country, Girls' Golf, Boys' Soccer, Girls' Tennis): August 1 – early November
- Winter (Basketball, Swimming, Indoor Track & Field): mid-October – mid-February
- Spring (Boys' Golf, Girls' Soccer, Boys' Tennis, Track & Field): mid-February – mid-May

Any student who tries out and is selected for a ECA athletic team is required and expected to fully commit to that team. ECA teams take precedence over all outside and other extracurricular programs and teams. Student-athletes may ask coaches to make arrangements with the heads of other extracurricular activities so that the student may split time between concurrently running teams or clubs, but the head coach is under no obligation to create such an arrangement. Student-athletes are responsible for punctuality and preparedness for all practices and contests.

During the sport's season, attendance at all practices and games is mandatory. The practice schedule will be made available by each sport's head coach well in advance. Head coaches will have their own policies and penalties regarding missed practices, and the Director of Athletics will fully support the coach's policies and decisions. Students are expected to be in attendance during both practice sessions and contests. Students must be in school attendance for at least one half of the school day in order to participate in practice or contests during the same day or evening. If a student is not in attendance due to illness, injury, or other required school or family commitment, the student should make prior arrangements with the coach for an excused absence. Students will be excused from team practices and/or contests during regular school vacation periods. It is the expectation of the coach and athletic department that the student will notify the coach at least 2 weeks prior to the excused absence.

A participant who fails to attend a regularly scheduled practice session or contest and receives an unexcused absence may be withheld from the next scheduled contest. If an additional unexcused absence occurs, the participant may be dismissed from the team for the remainder of the sport season. Excused and unexcused absences may affect a student athlete's playing time as new plays, stunts and formations may have been missed.

Students absent from athletic practice for five or more consecutive days due to illness or injury must receive a medical release from a physician licensed to practice medicine before remittance to practice or contests. Students with potential head injuries must receive a medical release by a physician licensed to practice medicine before readmittance to practices or contests.

Dismissal from Team by Head Coach

The head coach shall have the right to dismiss a player from his/her team in accordance with policies laid out by the coach at the beginning of the season. The provision regarding "quitting" a team does not apply; if a student-athlete is involuntarily dismissed from a team, he/she shall be able to try out for other athletic teams that year.

Managers

Student managers are held to the same academic requirements that student athletes on an ECA athletic team are. Managers are expected to attend all games and practices and perform the duties assigned to them by the head coach. Managers are limited to two (2) per team.

Behavior Policy

As student-athletes are called upon to represent and be the public face of ECA, all student-athletes are expected to be exemplars of respectful behavior. The penalties for falling short of that expectation are below. Coaches may implement policies more stringent than these, but not less stringent.

- Infractions that carry a 1-game suspension:
 - An in school or out-of-school suspension for any infraction
- Infractions that carry a 2-game suspension:
 - Ejection from a contest
- Infractions that cause removal from the team and ineligibility for all athletics for the remainder of the academic year:
 - Ejection from a contest for fighting
 - Two (2) out-of-school suspensions in one academic year

Student-athletes who are suspended for 1 or 2 games may be present with the team, but may not dress out for contests.

Ineligible Student-Athletes

Student-athletes who are ineligible due to violations of the behavior policy are not permitted to serve as managers or be part of an ECA athletic team in any capacity for the duration of their period of ineligibility. It shall not be the responsibility of the coaches or parents of team members to supervise ineligible student-athletes at practices or games.

Student-athletes who are ineligible for academic or attendance reasons may serve as a team manager, at the discretion of the head coach.

Attendance in School

The NCHSAA does not have a single "attendance requirement" but rather multiple rules regarding student and athlete eligibility, including state-mandated compulsory attendance laws and specific NCHSAA guidelines for athletic eligibility.

The NCHSAA attendance requirement includes both excused and unexcused absences. A student must attend 85% of the school days in the previous semester, meaning they cannot miss more than a certain number of days (e.g., 13.5 days in a 90-day semester), and this count includes all absences, regardless of the reason.

- All absences count: The policy treats all absences equally, including those for illness, medical appointments, or other valid reasons.
- 85% attendance rule: Students must be present for at least 85% of the instructional days in the semester preceding athletic participation.
- Impact of absences: For example, in a 90-day semester, a student can have no more than 13 absences (excused and unexcused) to be eligible for sports in the next semester.
- No make-up: These absences cannot be made up, even by attending summer school or other make-up opportunities.

24 Hour Rule

School parents and coaches will be expected to follow a 24-hour rule regarding communicating with one another. ECA coaches are competitive, and ECA parents are passionate about their children. There may be times when coaches and parents disagree about playing time, position, strategy, or any number of things. The appropriate time to discuss these matters is not immediately following an athletics contest. As a result, parents should not contact a coach within 24 hours of any such contest. Once the 24-hour window has passed a parent may request a meeting with the coach to discuss the disagreement. Parents and coaches should remain cordial and respectful during any such meeting.

Recruiting Statement

Excelsior Classical Academy expressly prohibits coaches, administrators, or stakeholders from recruiting students for the purposes of athletics. All students will be subject to the same admissions criteria regardless of athletic abilities, and should choose to attend ECA for its academic programs and offerings rather than a particular athletic program..

Medication Responsibilities

School coaches must adhere to the School medication administration policy found in the Student and Family Handbook for all athletic events including tryouts, practices, & contests.

Concussion Awareness

On June 16th, 2011 the Gfeller-Whaller Concussion Awareness Act was signed in an attempt to educate student athletes, parents, coaches, and first responders on the symptoms and expectations related to concussions. In order to meet these regulations, student athletes as well as their parents are required to read and sign the *Concussion: Information for Student-Athletes & Parents/Legal Custodians* document included in this packet. This is an annual requirement for participation in Athletics at ECA. The document is meant to help educate families on the symptoms and obligations associated with concussions.

Information regarding the Gfeller-Waller Concussion Awareness Act can be found at <http://gfellerwallerlaw.unc.edu/GfellerWallerLaw/gwlaw.html>

Emergency Action Plan

In keeping in compliance with the Gfeller-Waller Concussion Law, the Department of Athletics has an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) that outlines the steps to be taken by coaches, trainers, and administrators in the event of an injury or emergency at a practice or contest. The Director of Athletics shall regularly update the EAP as needed and notify coaches of any changes. The EAP may be viewed by parents and guardians by request.

Professional Development

In addition to the NFHS courses required by the NCHSAA (Fundamentals of Coaching and Concussion in Sports), the Department of Athletics encourages all coaches to achieve Accredited Interscholastic Coach (AIC) and Certified Interscholastic Coach (CIC) status through the NFHS, and will support all coaches in doing so.

Insurance Coverage

It is recommended that players be covered by adequate medical and accident insurance. A Lifetime Catastrophic Liability Insurance plan is available to middle and junior high athletes through the North Carolina High School Athletic Association.

Uniforms

Athletic uniforms are the property of ECA, and it shall be the responsibility of the student-athletes and their parents/guardians to take care of all issued uniforms and equipment and return them in good condition at the conclusion of the sports season. Students are not permitted to wear their team uniforms to school. Team uniforms are to be during ECA Athletic events only.

Student-athletes are responsible for the care, security and use of uniforms and any sports equipment provided by the school. **Athletic participants will be responsible to pay the replacement fee for equipment or uniform items** issued by the school for use of the student-athlete if those are deemed abused or not returned. **Student-athletes will be withheld from athletics in succeeding seasons and all school events and field/overnight trips until this obligation is met.**

The set of uniforms for teams will be replaced approximately every four (4) years, on a rotating basis, depending on the condition and legality of uniforms.

Vendor

ECA partners with BSN Sports for all uniforms, apparel, and equipment for its sports teams.

Apparel

Student-athletes and their families will have the opportunity to purchase team t-shirts, hoodies, jackets, etc. if the coach wishes to make them available. The head coach may require the purchase of a team t-shirt, but all other additional team apparel shall be optional.

Inappropriate Actions, Behavior, and Conduct

The Coach, Athletic Director, High School Dean, and Executive Director reserve the right to deny athletic participation to any student whose inappropriate actions or conduct are not specifically covered in this handbook or individual team rules.

Unsportsmanlike conduct, insubordination, inappropriate behavior/conduct in school or at home or away contests, etc. are not representative of Excelsior students, teachers, or families and will not be tolerated. Exemplary actions, behavior, and conduct are expected from all parties in attendance. Any

student, parent, or individual that exhibits unsportsmanlike conduct or inappropriate behavior will be barred from any additional athletic events that season. A second offense in subsequent seasons will result in the barring of said individual from any athletic contests involving ECA for the rest of the school year.

Travel and Transportation

Coaches will provide parents with expected arrival times for practice, games, meets, and meetings. It is expected that parents will respect the coaches' time and be prompt in picking up their children. Parents must arrive to pick up their children within ten minutes after the expected arrival times. Any issues with parents failing to pick up their child on time will be handled by the Athletic Director, and the student's ability to participate in practice and future games may be jeopardized.

ECA will provide transportation to off campus venues. Beginning this Winter 2025, ECA Athletics will begin providing transportation back from venues further than 30 minutes away from the school. In conference opponents include: Henderson Collegiate, Vance Charter and Oxford Preparatory. For the remainder of our regular season contests, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to pick students up after practices or games.

Please note that student athletes are not permitted to ride with coaches in personal vehicles regardless of circumstance.

Student-athletes who are licensed to drive may drive themselves (and teammates, if allowed by law) to athletic contests and practices as long as parents have granted parent/guardian permission in the transportation waiver form that's part of the paperwork that must be completed in DragonFly.

Early Dismissal for Athletic Purposes

Due to the relatively late end of the school day at ECA, student-athletes in outdoor sports will occasionally be dismissed from school prior to the end of the school day in order to travel to a contest. It shall be the responsibility of all student-athletes to make contact with the teachers of any class(es) he/she will miss due to an athletic contest to get any important materials and make arrangements to make up missed assignments and/or tests. The Director of Athletics should attempt to arrange the schedule to minimize the number of early dismissals required.

Off-Season Skill Development and Conditioning

Coaches may arrange off-season skill development and conditioning sessions in accordance with NCHSAA guidelines. Student-athletes cannot be required to attend such sessions and are encouraged not to.

Awards

Overall Department Awards

The Department of Athletics shall recognize the following overall awards at the conclusion of all sport seasons in an academic year. The recipients shall be selected with input from the coaching staff and ECA faculty:

- One Flying Lion Award winner, “in recognition of his/her work ethic, determination, good sportsmanship, and for embodying what it means to be a student-athlete.” – the winner shall receive a plaque with this statement included.

Overall department award winners shall be recognized on a plaque in the ECA gym’s main trophy case.

Team Year-End Awards

Each team shall select three (3) award winners:

- Team Player of the Year (soccer may choose an offensive and defensive POY)
- Most Improved
- Coach’s Award – can be given for any reason the head coach sees fit
- Iron Flying Lion Award - The Iron Flying Lion Award shall be presented to student-athlete’s who participate in Fall, Winter and Spring sports during the same school year.

Retired Jerseys/Hall of Fame

A student-athlete who meets the following criteria shall be recognized with a commemorative plaque or recognition on a team-specific display.

- Graduates from ECA
- Remains on the team for which he/she earns jersey retirement through his/her senior year
- Earns ONE of the following merit-based recognitions:
 - Makes a 1st Team All-State team recognized either by the NCHSAA or the appropriate media organization or coach’s association for the sport in question
 - Wins a state championship in an individual sport or event
 - Wins two (2) or more regional championships in an individual sport or event
 - Wins conference Player/Pitcher/Goalie/Runner of the Year two (2) or more times
 - Earns recognition as the Team MVP on a team or relay that wins a state championship

If a student-athlete from volleyball, basketball, or soccer earns jersey retirement, the jersey number worn by the student-athlete for the majority of his/her career shall be removed from circulation.

Awards Recognition

The Department of Athletics shall host a seasonal athletic recognitions each year where team award winners, varsity letters, and other state and conference recognitions will be presented. Athletic Recognition’s will be scheduled at the end of each season (Fall, Winter, Spring).

Athletic Grievance Policy

All problems, concerns or complaints must be addressed in private at a time previously scheduled with the coach. Concerns should not be addressed in front of the other student athletes and must first be addressed to the coach at an agreed upon time and location. If closure is not reached between the parent and coach, then the following grievance address structure should be followed:

1. Coach of Sport
2. Athletic Director, David Coates
3. Director of Operations, Kim Carpenter
4. Executive Director, Dana Coyle
5. School Board of Directors

Inclement/Hot Weather Guidelines for Outdoor Sports

All outdoor sports should follow the Inclement/Hot Weather Guidelines found at: <http://www.nchsaa.org/page.php?mode=privateview&pageID=575>. These guidelines are reviewed/revised annually by the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee of the NCHSAA.

School Disciplinary Action

Students currently under suspension at school will not be permitted to practice or play in games. Students on their second suspension in the school year will not be permitted to play in the next game. At any point in time a student may be removed from the team for disciplinary reasons.

Student-Athlete Social Media Policy

Student-athletes are expected to be exemplary representatives of themselves, their teams, and ECA both at school and in the community. With that in mind, student-athletes shall refrain from posting any content on social media sites that reflects negatively on him/herself, the team, the Department of Athletics, and ECA. Unacceptable content includes, but is not limited to:

- References to drugs, alcohol, or illicit substances
- Content of an explicitly sexual or adult nature
- Open criticism of teammates, coaches, ECA administrators, or opposing players or schools

It shall be the responsibility of the head coach and parents to counsel student-athletes on the nature of their social media content.

Student/Parent/Coach Expectations

Expectations of Parents and Spectators

Without the support and encouragement of our parents, ECA Athletics would not be able to function. In addition to providing material support, parents can help the athletic program by modeling positive behavior for student-athletes both in the stands and at home.

Parents are expected to:

- Not force an unwilling or uncommitted child to participate in sports.
- Model sportsmanlike behavior. There is no place for profanity or the harassment of players, coaches, or officials at any interscholastic event.
- Show respect for the opponents, and applaud good plays by both teams.
- Respect the officials' decisions, and not publicly berate them.
- Respect the coaches in front of your child, even when there is a disagreement. The coach's authority and ability to coach should never be undermined or questioned in the presence of the players, including the parent's own child.
- Not compare their child to other players on the team.

The Director of Athletics or his/her designee shall have the authority to eject from home contests any parent or spectator who fails to abide by the sportsmanship guidelines outlined above, and ban him/her from attending ECA athletic events in the future.

Student Responsibilities

1. Come to practice fully prepared and dressed appropriately
2. Come to all practices and games on time
3. Respect the coach at all times
4. Respect your fellow teammates, opponents and the officials at all times
5. Focus and give 100% effort at every practice and game
6. Represent the school well at all athletic activities
7. Maintain academic eligibility

Parent Responsibilities

1. Ensure your child attends practices fully prepared and dressed appropriately
2. **Pick up your child after every practice and game on time.** Respect the coaches and their time in this manner
3. Respect the coach's decisions at all times
4. Respect your child's teammates, their opponents, and the contest officials at all times
5. Represent the school well at all athletic activities
6. Volunteer as needed at games and practices

The Coach's Responsibilities

1. Be on time at all practices and events for the team
2. Come prepared to run an efficient and effective practice for all of the athletes on the team
3. Act fairly without favoring students during practices
4. Develop strategies and formations that will benefit the team as they strive for success
5. Give 100% effort at every practice and game
6. Respect your student athletes, their opponents, and the contest officials at all times
7. Represent the school well at all times
8. Ensure at least two adults are at every practice or game
9. Escalate parent or student issues to the Athletic Director in a timely manner
10. Stay until the last child is picked up by a parent
11. Monitoring grades per the eligibility requirements. Confirming tutoring has been attended when required.

Extracurricular Substance Abuse Policy

The use and/or possession of tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs, including performance-enhancing products, are prohibited. If use of such substances by a School student club participant or athlete is reported to the school, the following process will occur:

1. An initial meeting will take place with the Athletics Director or Grade Level Dean, the School Counselor and the student to discuss the violation.
2. The student's parents will be notified in a timely manner.
3. The Athletics Director will facilitate a meeting of the student, their parents and a school administrator to determine the validity of the reported violation and discuss consequences.

If the student is found to have violated the Substance Abuse Policy, the following penalties will be imposed:

First Offense: The student will be suspended from active participation with the team for a period of 10 days. The student will attend but not participate in practices/club meetings. Once the suspension has been served, the student will be withheld from participation in the next two athletic contests (if applicable) but will be allowed to practice. The denial of athletic contests cannot be concurrent with the timeframe of the first suspension.

Second Offense: Student is removed from the team or club.

2025-2026 Athletic Offerings

Middle School Sports for 2025-26 School Year (Grades 6-8)

Fall Sports

Boys Soccer
Girls Volleyball
Boys and Girls Cross Country

Winter Sports

Girls Basketball
Boys Basketball
Cheerleading
Swimming (exhibition)

Spring Sports

Girls Soccer
Boys Baseball
Girls Softball

High School Sports for 2025-2026 School Year (Grades 9-12)

Fall Sports

Boys Soccer
Girls Volleyball
Boys and Girls Cross Country

Winter Sports

Boys Basketball
Girls Basketball
Cheerleading
Swimming

Spring Sports

Girls Soccer
Boys Baseball
Golf

ECA Athletics Booster Club

If you are interested in joining the ECA Athletics Booster Club please notify the Director of Athletics at david.coates@excelsiorca.org.

Sponsorships

Several sponsorship levels are available. If you are interested in becoming a ECA Athletics sponsor please visit <https://goflyinglions.com/sponsorships/>.

Topics Not Covered

The Director of Athletics shall have the authority to address and make decisions on issues pertaining to the ECA Department of Athletics that are not directly addressed in this manual.

Head coaches shall have the authority to develop policies that pertain to their respective sports, provided that those policies do not conflict with ECA, Department of Athletics, or NCHSAA rules and regulations.

Annual Review

This athletics manual shall be reviewed following the conclusion of each academic year. All members of the ECA administration and ECA athletic staff may suggest changes, revisions, additions, or deletions to the manual at that time, to become effective on August 1 of the following academic year. The Director of Athletics, the Upper School Dean, the Director of Operations, and the Executive Director shall make the decision on what changes, revisions, etc. are made.