

Athletic Department Handbook and By-laws



2024-2025 School Year

Dear Athletes, Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to Beacon of Hope athletics. Thank you for your interest in representing Eagle Nation. It is our hope that this year will be a positive one for you. We, as administrators and coaches, are committed to doing all that we can to insure your success on and off the field of play. In order to accomplish this goal, Beacon of Hope has implemented the following core values for its athletic program.

CORE VALUES - CLAW

1. **C- Christ.** Christ is central to all we do at Beacon of Hope. We, as athletes, coaches and administrators, will exhibit a Christ-like attitude in our words, actions and thoughts. We will treat teammates, opponents, coaches, referees and fans with dignity and respect. Sportsmanship and fair play are trademarks of Beacon of Hope. These characteristics should be a reflection of the athlete's discipleship in Christ.
2. **L- Leadership.** Athletics provide a perfect environment for leadership development and growth. At Beacon of Hope, the expectation is for student-athletes to be leaders in and out of the arena of sports. The student body, the community and other schools judge Beacon of Hope by how we conduct ourselves on and off the field of play. Our leadership should be evident spiritually, academically, and in acts of service.

3. **A- Academics.** The label student-athlete is an important one. We emphasize the student first because we feel academics must supersede athletics. Sports are a privilege and not an expectation. Participation in the athletic program requires a large amount of time and commitment; therefore, it is vital for the student-athlete to budget and manage his/her time in a way that allows for the academic responsibilities to be given the priority they deserve. Coaches, parents and teachers work in partnership with the student to make sure that all assignments are completed and turned in on time.

4. **W- Winning.** Beacon of Hope will never adopt a “win at all costs” mentality. Winning is never the ultimate goal or ambition of the program but the result of diligently following steps one, two and three of our core values.

When we win, we do so with grace, class and humility. When we lose, we view it as an opportunity for self and team improvement. We will always display true sportsmanship and congratulate our opponents win or lose.

Beacon of Hope will at no point attempt to embarrass, humiliate, shame, ridicule or belittle its opponent.

In victory or defeat, we will take full responsibility for our actions and words on the field of play. In doing so, we are neither saying nor insinuating the outcome of the contests was determined by anyone or anything other than our decisions.

There are no shortcuts to success. A great athletic program is not built in a short amount of time. It takes hard work by many individuals (coaches, players, administrators, parents, etc.) over a period of time to bring Beacon of Hope to the standard we all believe it can achieve. Beacon of Hope strives to be the flagship program of North Florida and FICAA.

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the Beacon of Hope Athletic program is to bring glory to God through interscholastic competition. 1 Corinthians 10:31 teaches that “whatever we do to do it for the glory of God.” Paul echoes that same message to the Colossians writing, “and whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him...whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters” (Colosians 3:17, 23).

Secondly, athletics provide an opportunity for character development, relationship building and critical problem solving skills. The Beacon of Hope Athletic Department gives students an outlet to grow in areas that few other disciplines afford. Studies have shown that participation in school sponsored sports is one of the best ways to guarantee and predict future success for students in other areas of life.

GOALS

1. To provide a way for students to showcase their athletic talents and gifts in a way that brings glory to God and positive attention to Beacon of Hope.
2. To provide an array of sports and activities that appeal to a broad spectrum of our student body.
3. To provide a platform for Beacon of Hope students to be seen as positive role models in the community.
4. To present students with opportunities to deal with both successes and failures.
5. To create an environment that fosters unity, cooperation, responsibility, accountability and discipline among the students for the expressed purpose of achieving team and individual goals.
6. To have fun and strengthen relationships among the students.

FICAA

Beacon of Hope is a member of FICAA, Florida Independent Christian Athletic Association. The stated mission of FICAA is “to serve the Christian schools in the state of Florida through athletics according to Biblical standards that would seek to glorify God first.” FICAA operates with the vision to "Build Champions Inside and Out." FICAA hosts and/or sponsors regional and state tournaments in all endorsed sports for girls and boys. Beacon is in the North Region of FICAA along with other area schools.

Retired Numbers

Beacon of Hope has a rich history of great teams and great players. Below is a list of student-athletes who have been honored by having their jersey numbers retired at Beacon of Hope. This distinction comes with great appreciation of accomplishments on the field of play but also recognizes the character of the person. There are strict criteria for a student-athlete to have their jersey retired including: 1. Stellar Sports Stats 2. Character (good behavior) and Academics (good student) 3. Stickability (Min. 3 years in program and also a Beacon graduate). 4. Intangible (Must have something extra that sets them apart from others).

#4 - Tilden Whitfield (2007-2011) - Basketball (retired 2011)

#1 - Joshua (J.J.) Pickney (2012-2017) - Football (retired 2017)

#11 - Vernon “Tre” Pickney (2010-2015) - Basketball (retired 2024)

Eligibility

1. Students wishing to participate in Beacon of Hope athletics must be enrolled at Beacon of Hope Christian School. Students who are enrolled through distance learning/on-line at Beacon of Hope or have dual-enrollment with Beacon of Hope may play Beacon of Hope sports.

Students who attend schools other than Beacon will not be considered for Beacon of Hope athletics. Homeschool students will be considered provided there is a need to fill the roster once the student meets all academic, behavioral, medical and financial requirements. Any exceptions to the non-Beacon of Hope students policy must have administrative approval and also obtain FICAA approval to become eligible for sports.

2. Students will be considered ineligible until all paperwork, forms, consents and releases have been completed, returned and processed. Sports fees must be paid before students are allowed to participate in team activities.

3. Students must maintain a 2.0 grade point average (GPA) or higher in all classes for the prior semester in middle school and cumulative in high school to be deemed academically eligible. Students whose grade point average (GPA) drops below 2.0 on a quarterly report will be allowed to practice and travel with the team but can not dress out for any games until the next quarterly report.

4. Students shall be deemed ineligible if they earn a negative (D) or extreme negative (F) report on the biweekly “Character Counts” report.

Student-athletes may practice and travel with the team but will not be allowed to dress out or play in any games until the next “Character Count” score is tallied.

5. Students must attend classes for the day of games unless there is no school (school holiday, teacher workday, etc.). Exceptions can be made for doctor’s appointments with doctor’s note or family emergencies (funeral, accident, etc.) with some form of official documentation (program, accident report). A parent note will not be accepted.

ACADEMICS

At Beacon of Hope, the classroom comes before the playing arena. It is the duty of the student-athlete to be a student first and an athlete second.

1. It is the responsibility of the student to finish all classwork, quizzes, tests and projects for all classes before concentrating on athletic endeavors.
2. If a student knows he/she is going to be absent from a class for any reason, it is incumbent upon the student to make arrangements with his/her teachers for the completion of work.
3. Ample opportunities for finishing homework and assignments will be given in the time between after school and before practices. Students should take advantage of this time to work, ask for assistance and complete as much school work as possible.

FORMS, CONSENTS and RELEASES

All paperwork, along with a sports fee of \$150, must be completed, returned and processed before a student can participate in any team activities. If a student is interested in playing multiple sports, the forms need to be completed only once.

1. Beacon of Hope Sports Program Permission Form
2. Beacon of Hope Activity Waiver Form
3. FICAA Athletic Waiver/Release Form
4. FICAA Medical History and Physical Exam Form or the FHSAA equivalent.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Student-athletes are expected to be Christian role models on the field of play, in the classroom and in the community. The actions, words and decisions made by Beacon of Hope student-athletes are a reflection of not only the student-athlete but of his/her family and Beacon of Hope Christian School. Students who violate the code of conduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action as outlined in the Beacon of Hope Athletic Handbook.

1. Student-athletes will be held accountable for content they share on their personal social media platforms or in any public domain (chat room, blog, Snapchat, TikTok, X, etc.). Posting memes, pictures or sharing posts that promote nudity, explicit sexuality, gang activity, violence, drug and alcohol use or anything that can be deemed as inappropriate will be considered a violation of the code of conduct.
2. Student-athletes must use discretion when texting or sharing information via electronic means. The use of vulgar, disparaging, discriminatory, and hurtful language towards teammates, coaches, opponents, administrators, fans, parents, and/or game officials will not be tolerated and will result in violation of the code of conduct.
3. For the safety and privacy of our student-athletes, coaches and administrators, the use of cell phones inside the locker room and communal

bathroom is strictly prohibited. Cell phones are allowed in your personal bag but must be used outside the locker room only.

4. Beacon of Hope is a bully-free school. Therefore, a student-athlete found to be harassing or bullying (verbally, physically, emotionally, electronically, etc.) a fellow student will be immediately disciplined. Examples of bullying and harassment include, but are not limited to:

- a. Unwanted and unmerited physical acts of aggression
- b. Hurtful name-calling, especially racial and sexual in nature
- c. Coercion to perform undesired and dangerous acts
- d. Rumors and gossip spreading
- e. Purposeful exclusion and isolation from a group
- f. Threats to do violence toward a person or intimidation
- g. Attempts to publicly embarrass a person

5. The following acts are not exhaustive but represent the nature of activities that would be sufficient cause for violation of the code of conduct.

- a. Vulgar, profane, racially and sexually offensive language. This includes spoken words, written words, and words expressed through music.
- b. Disobedience or defiance of school officials and teachers.

- c. Possession, use, and/or sale of alcohol, drug or tobacco products and/or paraphernalia in any form. This includes vapes of all kinds.
- d. Possession, use and/or sale of any weapon or firearm.
- e. Vandalism, destruction or defacing of property, including graffiti.
- f. Theft or stealing, whether it be a criminal offense or not.
- g. Participation in gambling of any kind.
- h. Academic infidelity, including cheating and plagiarism.
- i. Arrest or detainment by law enforcement due to criminal activity.

DISCIPLINE

The discipline outlined in the Beacon of Hope Athletic Handbook neither overrides nor replaces the discipline that may be administered by school officials for actions taken by student-athletes. Those corrective measures will be given at the discretion of the principal and school administrative staff. Disciplines can be altered based on the nature of the offense.

1. A student-athlete that is serving either an out of school suspension or an in-school suspension will also be ineligible to participate in any team

activities for the duration of the suspension. It is at the discretion of the athletic director and coach to determine whether the student-athlete can return to the team following the suspension.

2. Any student who is placed on a Behavioral Probation Agreement will be ineligible to participate in sports until the agreement is successfully completed.
3. A student who violates the code of conduct will be subject to one of the following consequences, based on the nature of the offense and the number of offenses committed by the student-athlete.
 - a. A written disciplinary warning. This warning will state the exact nature of the violation, the date and approximate time the violation occurred. The warning will be signed and dated by both the player and the coach. It will be kept on file with the Athletic Director/Athletic Department as well as the student's school records
 - b. 25%-33% game suspension. The student-athlete serves a suspension of one set (volleyball) or one quarter (basketball, flag football) of the next scheduled game. The nature, date and time of the violation will be recorded and filed with the Athletic

Director/Athletic Department as well as the student's school records.

- c. One game suspension. The student-athlete is suspended for the next scheduled game. The student-athlete will practice, travel and sit on the bench with the team but will not dress out. The nature, date and time of the violation will be recorded and filed with the Athletic Director/Athletic Department as well as the student's school records.
- d. Half-season suspension. The student-athlete is suspended for one half of the season. This is to mean, one half of all games on the season schedule and not games remaining on the schedule, including any and all postseason games. If one half of the season has already been completed at the time of the violation, the student will be suspended for the remainder of the season. Whatever games are left on the suspension will be served at the beginning of the next season. A student serving this type of suspension will not be allowed to participate in any team activities except the Awards Banquet.

If the violation occurs before the midway part of the season, the student will practice and travel with the team but not be allowed to dress out for any games during the suspension. Once the student has finished serving the suspension, he/she may resume all team activities at the coach's discretion. The nature, date and time of the violation will be recorded and filed with the Athletic Director/Athletic Department as well as the student's school records.

- e. Season suspension and removal from the team. The student will be suspended for the remainder of the season and removed from the team. The student will not be allowed to participate in any team activities except the Awards Banquet. The nature, date and time of the violation will be recorded and filed with the Athletic Director/Athletic Department as well as the student's school records.

3. A student-athlete choosing to self-report a violation of the code of conduct to a coach, athletic director or member of administration may have his/her discipline reduced based on the nature of the infraction.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

1. Conflict resolution.

- a. Beacon of Hope operates on the “24 hour rule.” If there is an issue, question or concern for a coach, we ask that you give 24 hours from the end of the game or practice before addressing it.
- b. The ultimate goal is for a conflict to be resolved between a coach and a student-athlete.
- c. In attempting to bring resolution to conflict, a meeting should be scheduled between the student-athlete and the coach at a time and location that is convenient for both parties.

2. Chain of Command. If a conflict can not be positively resolved between a coach and a student-athlete, then there is a chain of command that must be followed to resolve said conflict.

- a. A meeting between the Athletic Director and the player at a scheduled time and place that is convenient for both parties.
- b. A meeting between the parent and the coach can be scheduled at a time and place that is convenient for both parties.
- c. If the conflict still finds no agreeable conclusion, the parent may request a meeting with a member of administration (Athletic Director or Principal).

3. Issues that should not be addressed as concerns with a coach or administration included but are not limited to:

- a. Playing time. At the High School/Varsity level, playing time is not guaranteed for all players. The amount of time is determined by the coach and is based on a number of factors.
- b. Strategies/Coaching styles. A coach will lead his/her team in the way that he/she feels is best for the team. It is not fitting or appropriate for a parent or student-athlete to question the decisions of a coach.
- c. Player comparison. A coach is not at liberty to discuss one player with another or with the parent of another player. However, the coach can give pointers and advice to a student-athlete on areas to improve which may increase skill level and in turn result in more playing time.

COACHES

1. All coaches, head coaches and assistant coaches, must be professing and practicing believers in Christ.
2. All coaches need to be CPR and First Aid certified. This certification needs to be current and a copy of the completed course will be kept in the athletic department office/records.
3. Coaches lead their teams by example. They set the standard for the team.

4. Coaches are to exhibit integrity, self-control, and Christ-like character at all times. This does not intend to limit the passion and intensity with which a coach is allowed to lead or instruct his/her team. However, as a coach, be mindful that you represent God and Beacon of Hope in all your actions.
5. Coaches may institute team rules in addition to those listed in the Beacon of Hope Athletic Handbook. It is expected for all student-athletes to adhere to all school, athletic department and team rules.
6. Team captains can be chosen at the discretion of the coach. The requirements and process for captain selection is left to each coach.

PRACTICES

1. The Athletic Director has worked to schedule practices indoors at various gyms. Those days, times and locations will be announced through email, text loop and/or posted on the Beacon of Hope Sports Facebook page.
2. Transportation to and from practice will be provided by the Athletic Department. It is expected that all student-athletes ride the bus to and from the practice site. Any parent/guardian wishing to take or pick up a student to or from practice must contact the coach or athletic director in advance so that arrangements can be made.
3. Practices are only open to players, coaches and official team personnel.

4. It is expected that student-athletes attend all practices. If a player needs to miss a practice, he/she must notify the coach in advance to inform the coach of the date and reason for the missed practice.
5. Since gym and practice time is precious, it is expected that coaches and players use practice time wisely and judiciously.

GAMES

1. It is expected that all eligible players be available to dress and play on all game days. If a student is not available for any reason, it is the responsibility of the student-athlete to notify the coach as soon as possible to inform the coach why he/she can not play.
2. Transportation to and from all games will be provided by Beacon of Hope Athletic Department. It is expected that all student-athletes ride the school bus to the game site together.
3. All students will be dressed in full uniform on the bus before departing from Beacon of Hope Christian School. This allows the team to begin to warm up immediately upon arriving at the game site.
4. Bus transportation will only be available for players, coaches, administration and official team personnel. Any other students, parents or friends who would like to attend must provide their own transportation.

5. Players are to remain on the bench during the game when they are not actively participating in the game. No other persons are allowed in the bench area except those deemed necessary by the coach and athletic director.
6. Players will not engage with opponents in any form of trash talking.
7. Student-athletes, coaches, administrators and team personnel are to demonstrate sportsmanship.
 - a. All Beacon representatives will shake hands and congratulate our opponents following every game, whether in defeat or victory.
 - b. All Beacon representatives will show proper respect to the pregame player introductions, prayer and national anthem.
 - c. Players will never openly disagree or argue with game officials.
 - d. Student-athletes will be attentive and respectful to their coaches.
 1. Players will listen when being instructed on the bench.
 2. Players will accept the decisions of their coaches when it comes to playing time and strategies.
 3. Players will take responsibility for their shortcomings and work to improve in their areas of weakness without making excuses or deflecting to other players.
 4. Student-athletes will not demean or make derogatory comments about teammates, coaches, opponents or game officials.

e. All Beacon representatives will accept the final decisions of game and FICAA officials. A proper appeal process will be made by the athletic director if a game decision needs to be reviewed.

f. All uniforms will be returned to Beacon of Hope athletic department personnel at the conclusion of each game. No uniform is to go home with any player or parent for any reason.

g. Student-athletes wishing to ride home with a parent/guardian must be properly signed out with Beacon of Hope Athletic Department personnel. Male student-athletes riding school transportation will be dressed in khaki/dress pants at the waist with belt and a collared shirt. Female students will be dressed in appropriate length skirt, dress or dress pants with an appropriate top or blouse. No midriff, cut off or halter tops. School spirit shirts or team apparel would be appropriate to wear if available.

FICAA TOURNAMENTS AND OVERNIGHT TRIPS

1. When possible, teams will participate in postseason tournaments. By playing in these tournaments, students are given the opportunity to travel and create bonds with their teammates and coaches.

2. All school, athletic department and team rules are enforced for the duration of the trip. Any violation of the code of conduct will result in disciplinary action being taken immediately.
3. Transportation to and from tournaments will be provided by Beacon of Hope Athletic Department. It is expected that all student-athletes, coaches and team personnel ride together to and from the tournament. Transportation is only for players, coaches, administrators and official team personnel. Any parent, student, or fan wishing to attend must make their own arrangements.
4. Accommodations will be made and provided by the Beacon of Hope Athletic Department. These accommodations are only for players, coaches, administrators and official team personnel. Any parent, student, or fan wishing to attend must make their own arrangements.
5. A packing list will be provided to every student-athlete and parent/guardian in advance of any overnight trip. It is the responsibility of the student-athlete and parent/guardian that items on the list are in the luggage of the student.
6. All luggage and bags are subject to search by coach, athletic director and school administrator for the duration of the trip for any reason. Those failing to comply with a simple search will be asked to call a parent/guardian for pick up and will be removed from the team immediately.

7. Rooms are subject to search by coach, athletic director and school administrator for the duration of the trip for any reason. Those failing to comply with a simple search will be asked to call a parent/guardian for pick up and will be removed from the team immediately.

UNIFORMS

1. Uniforms are the property of Beacon of Hope Athletic Department.
2. Uniforms will be stored and labeled in the appropriate closet when not in use. No student should have access to uniforms without the consent of the athletic director or school administrator.
3. Uniform numbers will be assigned to players at the beginning of the season by coaches. The number and player name will be recorded so that the player wears the same number for every game throughout the season. Number preference will be given to players in higher grades and captains first.
4. Uniforms will be returned to the head coach at the end of each game. The uniform will be washed and made available to the player for the next game. Under no circumstance should a student-athlete or parent take a jersey home.

END OF SEASON AWARDS AND BANQUET

Beacon of Hope Athletic Department strives to recognize team and personal achievements. The belief of Beacon of Hope is that honor should be given to whom honor is due.

1. A sports banquet is to be held at the end of each season. This banquet is open to all players, parents, coaches, administrators and team personnel.
2. Please be sure to RSVP all attending guests so that proper seating and food can be arranged.
3. The sports banquet is an opportunity for the team to reflect and celebrate what has been accomplished during the season.
4. Team and individual awards will be given during the sports banquet.
5. The coach of each team is encouraged to present several individual awards. Examples of awards include: Player of the Year, Most Improved Player, Best Teammate, etc.
6. Players who qualify as “lettermen” or “letterwomen” will receive their pins during the sports banquet.
 - a. Varsity athletes must participate in one-half of the scheduled team games. This does not include any postseason or tournament games.
 - b. Varsity athletes must remain eligible throughout the season.

7. The Soaring Eagle Award

- a. The Soaring Eagle Award is given to one player on each varsity team.
- b. The Soaring Eagle Award is the highest honor a player can be given as an active student-athlete at Beacon of Hope Christian School.
- c. The recipient of the Soaring Eagle Award must display leadership on the field of play, in the classroom and in the community.
- d. The person receiving this award exemplifies the core values of Beacon of Hope Athletic Department.
- e. The Soaring Eagle Award winner is chosen by the coach(es) in conjunction with the Athletic Director, teachers and school administration.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Complete and return all paperwork and pay all fees before the season begins.
2. Be actively involved and engaged with your student academically. Be sure to know when tests, quizzes and assignments are due. Provide adequate time and place for students to complete assignments at home. Speak frequently with teachers about your student's progress and areas of weakness that need to be addressed.

3. Participate in any school sponsored fund raising activities. The financial success of the Beacon of Hope Athletic Department rests on our cooperation and participation in fundraising campaigns.
4. Along with coaches and administrators, parents set the example for showing respect to opponents, other fans, officials and coaches.
5. Encourage their students to try new things and take risks. Sports present an opportunity for students to venture outside of their comfort zones. Parents should never put pressure on their students to perform at a level beyond their ability or skill. Students should feel accomplished because they are a part of the Beacon of Hope sports family.
6. Endorse the Beacon of Hope Athletic Department Handbook and Code of Conduct. Parents should not make any negative comments about the policies of Beacon of Hope or its Athletic Department.
7. Attend all games when possible. As a parent, you are given the chance to watch your student represent Beacon of Hope. Your attendance and presence at these events is invaluable to your students.
8. Volunteer. The Athletic Department is looking for parents to be directly involved during the season. Some of the jobs we need to fill are scoreboard operator, line judges (volleyball), official scorekeeper (volleyball, basketball,

flag football), stats (volleyball, basketball). If you are interested in helping in any way, see the Athletic Director.

BOOSTER CLUB

- 1.** The Beacon of Hope Booster Club is the financial arm of the Athletic Department. Sports banquets and awards, facility rentals, equipment and uniform upgrades along with travel expenses are all paid through the efforts of the Booster Club.
- 2.** All parents and guardians are encouraged to be involved with the Booster Club. If you have questions or are interested in joining the Booster club, see the Booster club president.
- 3.** The Booster Club will have several fundraisers through the school year.
- 4.** The Beacon of Hope Booster Club sells concessions at all home games.