

# Oak Mountain Academy Athletic Handbook



*Oak Mountain Academy provides a challenging college-preparatory education in a safe family environment. The school nurtures the ethical, spiritual, and physical development of students as they become confident leaders inspired to serve.*

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## **Introduction**

Welcome to the Oak Mountain Academy Athletic Department! Thank you for your time and effort in leading our sports program. At OMA, athletics play a very important role as we continue to improve on physical development of our student athletes. Our goal is to provide each student-athlete with an experience which will build character, teach important life skills, develop fundamentals and provide competitive teams which represent the OMA community. Our coaches will always strive to maximize our student-athletes' potential. To ensure this goal, we will always provide a safe and positive environment for learning while focusing on encouragement, building fundamental skills, maintaining high expectations, and providing sportsmanship in our actions. This handbook is designed to assist each of us during a student-athletes journey at OMA as we participate against athletic competitors across Georgia. Each of the guidelines found in this handbook are key to modeling the Warrior Way of honesty, respect, and responsibility.

## **Governing Bodies**

Oak Mountain Academy offers middle school and varsity interscholastic teams in Volleyball, Soccer, Swimming, Cross-Country, Basketball, Tennis, Golf, Track & Field, and Cheerleading. Interscholastic competition conforms to requirements of membership in the Georgia Independent School Association (GISA) and the Georgia Independent Christian Athletic Association (GICAA). Additionally, lower school and middle school students may participate in recreational league basketball.

## **Department Philosophy**

It is our belief at Oak Mountain Academy that a strong and competitive athletic program is paramount for a successful school. The Athletic Department will encourage and support broad participation from as many boys and girls as possible, whose teams will compete without sacrificing sportsmanship, scholarship, and the general welfare of the student. However, to have a successful athletic program, there must be a collaborative partnership between the administration, faculty, parents, and the athletic department which consists of a mutual respect for each other's role in the total school experience for our students. Oak Mountain Academy's student athletes are students first. If an individual player does not focus on his/her scholastic responsibilities (acceptable grades, behavior, and attendance), the student will not have the privilege to showcase his or her athletic talent.

## **Department Goal**

Our athletic department goal is to offer all our athletes a safe, positive and rewarding experience while fostering strong character development. We will focus on maintaining a healthy balance among the following: academic excellence, building competitive teams, quality coaching, development of school pride, family involvement, and community support.

## **The Coach's Role:**

- Embrace the mission of Oak Mountain Academy.
- Strive to develop and maintain a comprehensive athletic program, which seeks the highest development of all participants and respects the individual dignity of every student-athlete.
- Organize, direct and promote an interscholastic program that is in harmony with and contribute to the total school experience.
- Cooperate with administration, faculty and staff in establishing, implementing and supporting school policies.
- Uphold all GISA and GICAA policies and enforces GISA, GICAA and region rules and regulations.
- Uphold the honor of the coaching profession in all relations with students, parents, administration, colleagues, coaches and officials.
- Avoid using position for personal gain or influence.
- Seek opportunity for professional development at local, state, and national levels.
- Display great sportsmanship to teammates, faculty/staff, administration, spectators, and opponents.

## **The Athlete's Role:**

- Uphold the mission of Oak Mountain Academy.
- Perform in and out of the classroom to the best of their ability, along with setting high expectations. Grades and attendance can determine the athlete's status on any team he or she represents.
- Respect all coaches, faculty/staff, parents, officials, and opponents.
- Acknowledge that athletics is a privilege, and they represent themselves, parents, OMA, and the community.
- Play hard and within the rules, along with exercising self-control on and off the playing venue.
- Model great sportsmanship to teammates, coaches, faculty/staff, parents administration, officials, spectators, and opponents.
- Understand that playing time is determined by their coaches and earned by the athlete.

## **The Spectators'/Parents' Roles:**

- Support the mission of Oak Mountain Academy.
- Serve as ambassadors of Oak Mountain Academy.
- Approach the coach first if there is a question or concern, before reaching out to administration.
- Respect the judgement and strategy of the coach and do not criticize players, coaches, or officials for the loss of a game.
- Show compassion for all injured players; applaud positive performances; and avoid the use of obnoxious language and behavior.
- Respect the authority of those who administer and officiate the competition.
- Understand that the player's coach determines playing time, and the coach takes into consideration many factors and prioritizes what is best for the team first and then the individual.
- Handle all conflicts or concerns professionally with the coach and/or administrator present.

## **Expectations**

Student athletes should understand that by joining an athletic team they are committing to Oak Mountain Academy's athletic program. They will have the benefit of participating and representing the school, as well as the responsibility and commitment of team membership. Expectations may vary from coach to coach in different sports, but Oak Mountain Academy has high expectations for all athletes on every level. Students who fail to display proper behavior or who show poor sportsmanship before, during, or after an athletic practice or contest may receive disciplinary action at the discretion of the coach, Athletic Director, or Administration. Improper behavior or poor sportsmanship may include suspension from further participation. Penalties such as probation or suspension from one or more games may be imposed depending upon the severity of the offense.

Spectators/Parents who display poor sportsmanship or improper behavior at any athletic contest may be asked to leave the field or gym. For severe displays of inappropriate behavior, the person(s) may be barred from attending any games for the remainder of the season.

As in all school matters, we encourage students to manage their own issues. If a student- athlete has a concern, he or she should approach his or her coach to communicate the concern, and parents should encourage their child to follow this procedure. If a situation develops where a parent finds it necessary to intervene on a child's behalf, the parent should contact the coach about the problem. If a parent is unsuccessful in working out the issue with the coach, he or she should notify the Athletic Director. When a parent feels compelled to address an issue with a coach, he or she should wait at least twenty-four hours after the contest or practice where the issue happened before contacting the coach. Coaches are discouraged from engaging in lengthy email or text dialogues with disgruntled parents, but they are encouraged to communicate clearly their expectations and policies either in a personal face to face discussion or by phone.

## **Cut Policy**

In an effort to provide OMA students with an opportunity to participate in any or all of our athletic programs, Oak Mountain has a no-cut policy. Any student who wishes to participate in a sport can as long as the student follows attendance, grades, and behavior guidelines for student athletes. The No-cut policy allows the student athlete to participate but does not guarantee playing time. Playing time is determined by the coach of each individual sport and the commitment of the student athlete.

## **Multiple Sports**

In some instances, students over extend themselves by participating in too many sports during a single season therefore, student athletes at Oak Mountain Academy are allowed to participate in multiple sports during a season. Student athletes will be allowed to play one team sport and one individual sport during a season. Students are allowed to play two individual sports during a season. The Head of School and Athletic Director can remove a student athlete from any sport at any time if they feel the participation in the sport is affecting the student athlete's academic performance.

## **School Attendance/Athletic Participation**

All students are expected to attend school each academic day. Participants in an extracurricular activity, such as athletics, drama, etc., must be present in class a minimum of four periods on the day of the event in order to participate. In unusual circumstances, exceptions to this policy may be granted by the Headmaster.

## **Physicals**

In order to participate in athletics at Oak Mountain Academy, students must have a pre-participation physical evaluation form and waiver/release form at the beginning of each school year or before they participate in a particular athletic season. Updated forms are located on the OMA web-site. Completed physical evaluation and waiver forms must be signed by a physician and parents, then turned into the Athletic Director. No student may begin any phase of the athletic program (workouts, practices, or other activities) without a physical evaluation and waiver form on file in the athletic office. Oak Mountain Academy will offer free physicals during the summer.

## **Athletic Schedules**

Athletic schedules are created but may change daily for a variety of unexpected reasons. For the most current updated changes, please visit Oak Mountain Academy's calendar website, by clicking on the calendar tab on the school website for updated changes: <http://www.oakmountain.us/>

## **Sportsmanship**

Oak Mountain Academy has a tradition of excellence in its interscholastic athletic program, but we strive to instill the concept of sportsmanship. Good sportsmanship is expected during all athletic competitions, starting with practices. Opposing teams, their fans, and officials will be treated as honored guests when they visit Oak Mountain Academy. When Oak Mountain Academy teams and fans travel to other schools, they will model "The Warrior Way" at all times. Coaches, players, students, faculty, administration, parents, and other fans should keep in mind at all times that they represent Oak Mountain Academy and the highest standards of sportsmanship. We encourage enthusiastic support of all athletics. However, adults and students both bear the responsibility of upholding high standards and representing their school with pride as they demonstrate their spirit. OMA will abide by the standards outlined in the GISA/GICAA Rules and Guidelines, as well as the OMA standards of conduct. The GISA sportsmanship statement is: *"The GISA encourages and promotes sportsmanship by student-athletes, coaches, and spectators. We request your cooperation by supporting the participants and officials in a positive manner. Profanity, racial, ethnic, or sexist comments, or other intimidating actions will not be tolerated and are grounds for removal from the event."*

Administrators, faculty, and qualified coaches are essential for a successful educational athletic program. A coach's conduct on the field or playing court sets the competitive tone for players, students, and spectators. A coach sets the standard for good conduct for athletes and spectators.

## **Middle School and Varsity Eligibility in Sports**

Students in 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades may participate in sports. Students participating in athletics must meet all eligibility requirements prescribed by the Georgia Independent School Association, Georgia Independent Christian Athletic Association, and standards set forth by OMA. Students must pass a minimum of five subjects, all of which must be grades of record, including dual enrollment courses, with no more than one D. The five subjects must include at least three courses in any combination of English, History/Social Science, Foreign Language, Mathematics, or Science. Students may be placed on academic probation at the discretion of the Headmaster in consultation with the Athletic Director and have subsequent limits placed on their ability to participate in athletics and other extracurricular activities.

### **Other Athletic Resources:**

**Georgia Independent School Association:** <http://www.gisaschools.org/athletics/>

**Georgia Independent Christian Athletic Association:** <http://www.gicaasports.com/>