



NOBLE
ACADEMY
BUILDING GREAT FUTURES

FAMILY AND ATHLETE HANDBOOK
2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

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<https://www.nobleknights.org/athletics>

Noble Academy Coaching Staff

Directors

Athletic Director	Ellison Cooper
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Varsity Coaches

Cross Country	Shaun O'Connor
Soccer	Omar Fuentes
Cheer	Samantha Rucker
Basketball	Andre Gills
Golf	Shaun O'Connor
E-sports	Jonathan Gladson
Flag Football	Ellison Cooper

Middle School Coaches

Cross Country	Shaun O'Connor
Soccer	Cullen Williams
Flag Football	Ellison Cooper
Volleyball	Shaun O'Connor
Basketball	Shaun O'Connor

PHILOSOPHY

At Noble Academy, we believe that athletics are a powerful tool for personal growth, confidence-building, and community engagement, especially for students with learning differences. Our athletic program is designed to support every student in their journey to develop physical, social, and emotional skills in a safe, inclusive, and encouraging environment.

Our focus is not on winning, but on the process of improving each and every day. We value effort, perseverance, and resilience, and we celebrate progress, no matter how small. Through participation in sports, our students learn to set personal goals, work as a team, and embrace challenges as opportunities for growth. We aim to cultivate a mindset where improvement is the true measure of success. Noble Academy Athletics is a developmental athletic program. We absolutely want to be competitive, work hard, and win games, but we also believe that students should have the opportunity to participate and develop their skills. Every athlete who practices will receive some playing time in each game. This does not mean equal playing time, as playing time will vary based on the circumstances of the game, effort, attendance, position, and other factors. However, our expectation is that every athlete who practices will have an opportunity to participate.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide a diverse and balanced athletic program.
- Challenge each student scholastically and athletically to the best of their ability.
- Develop and promote the practice of good sportsmanship at all times; including winning with humility and losing with grace.
- Develop and promote the value of physical fitness to encourage sound physical and mental health.
- Increase each student-athlete's understanding and appreciation of the fundamentals and strategies of their sport.
- Teach student-athletes to respect coaches, teammates, opponents, officials, and spectators.
- Develop respected and competitive teams

STUDENT ATHLETE RESPONSIBILITIES

Noble Academy athletics are co-educational programs. Any student in grades 5-12 may participate in athletics as long as they show satisfactory school attendance, academic progress, appropriate behavior and a positive attitude. Students will not be excused from homework detention; however, they will still be allowed to attend practice and/or participate in the game. On days an athlete serves detention, transportation must be

supplied by the parent/guardian if the game/practice is away or at the YMCA.

Participation in athletics does not lessen an individual's academic responsibility. Any student who misses classes because of an athletic event is responsible for meeting with teachers prior to the absence, securing any necessary items required for assignments, and completing their coursework on time. Participation in athletic events is a privilege and not an excuse for late homework or missed tests. Each participant should understand the importance of proper time management and should realize the time commitment required to participate in athletics.

Each student-athlete is an ambassador of the School, and as is expected to exhibit qualities of sportsmanship, enthusiasm, and fair play. Therefore, each Noble Academy athlete shall:

- Abide by all of the expectations outlined in the Student and Family Handbook.
- Lead by example in and out of the competitive environment.
- Exhibit respect for teammates, coaches, parents, guardians, competitors, and officials.
- Exhibit the highest standards of sportsmanship.
- Practice acceptable use of technology, engaging only in positive behavior online (blogs, message boards, social networking sites, e-mail, etc.) regarding communication with students, parents, guardians, coaches, and fans.
- Attend all team functions and activities punctually.
- Exert maximum effort at all times and under all circumstances.
- Abstain from consumption of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, vapes, and e-cigarettes.
- Abstain from using profanity and obscene language or gestures.
- Set realistic personal goals at the beginning of each season.
- Discuss with the Head Coach potential conflicts that might hinder meeting team obligations and give an advanced notice of when a conflict will occur.
- Accept responsibility for equipment and uniforms and return them clean and in good condition at the end of the season. The family is responsible for the cost of any uniforms that are not returned.
- Report all injuries to the coach immediately.
- There should be no team group chats involving students and/or families for official team communication. All official athletic communication should come through the Athletic Director or the coach of that team. This helps us keep communication clear, consistent, and appropriate.

ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

- A student who misses more than half of the school day without an acceptable excuse (e.g., dentist appointment, funeral, etc.) will not be eligible to participate

in a contest that day. Students leaving school early due to an illness or an unexcused absence will not be allowed to participate in athletics that day (practice or games).

- If a student athlete is suspended from school (ISS or OSS), that student will not be permitted to participate in athletics that day (practice or games).
- If a student athlete receives a technical foul or any other extreme penalty such as being ejected from a game or receiving a red card, the child will be assessed a one game suspension. Upon a one game suspension, the student will continue to be able to practice with the team. The Athletic Director, in consultation with the athletic department and student athlete's coach, has discretion to alter the consequence of an "extreme penalty" if in the Athletic Director's judgment the circumstances warrant a more or less severe consequence.

ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

A valid physical packet must be completed and on file with the Upper School front desk before the athlete may begin participating in sports. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY. This packet includes the concussion management form, release of liability form, and code of conduct form. The Physical packet can be found at:

<https://www.nobleknights.org/sportsphysicals>

To create a cohesive team environment, student-athletes are expected to exhibit a full commitment to their team. Our ultimate objective is for every student-athlete to attend 100% of their team's functions and activities. In case of any absence, it is crucial to notify the coach as far in advance as possible. Additionally, missing practices, whether excused or unexcused, may result in reduced playing time. Coaches will determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused. Valid reasons for excused absences include school-sponsored programs and activities, medical reasons, family, doctors appointments, emergencies, weddings, funerals, religious observances, and pre-approved college visits. Students should not plan to join a team if they do not want to be a full participant. We do not have an option to allow students to participate in practices only. **If students are unwilling to be a full participant, they will be asked to forgo their commitment to the team.**

Only students who are participating in the sport during that season may attend practices. We do allow varsity athletes to assist with middle school teams when arrangements have been made in advance with the appropriate coach. During games, only players and authorized coaches/staff are permitted in the team bench areas. This helps coaches maintain organization and allows our athletes to remain focused on the game.

SAFETY CANCELLATION

According to the North Carolina High School Athletic Association, a temperature of 92°F or higher combined with humidity of 90% or higher constitutes an unsafe environment for practice or games. Games or practices will be delayed or canceled if these conditions exist.

For outdoor sports that are canceled due to rain or other inclement weather, Noble Academy Athletics will do its best to notify you of the cancellation by 1:00 PM on the day of the event.

If school is canceled for any reason, all extracurricular activities including sports will also be canceled unless notified otherwise by the Athletic Directors.

TRANSPORTATION

Participants in athletic events that occur off-campus will be transported by staff and parents/guardians on occasion. These circumstances will be communicated by the Athletic Director.

Players may leave athletic events only with their parent/guardian unless the coach has received prior notice from the parent/guardian giving consent for the athlete to leave with another designated person. Adults must see the coach before taking a student from an event and the coach will verify permission.

Students are not permitted to drive themselves to an away event. If you feel a special consideration should be made, contact the Athletic Director.

Parents/guardians are expected to pick up their children on time at the completion of a practice or game.

Students may only walk to the YMCA without supervision with a [signed waiver](#) granting parent/guardian permission. Students cannot go to the YMCA without a completed waiver on file. Please take care of this ahead of time if you anticipate using the YMCA as an after-athletics option.

INJURY POLICY

If a doctor has indicated that an athlete should suspend activity, the player may not participate again until the doctor has provided a written note clearing them for activity. In all situations in which a doctor is not involved, the school's Athletic Director will

make the final decision on a player's readiness to return to activity. In the event of an injury, the following actions will be taken:

- The coach will assess the situation.
- Immediate aid will be given (if possible and/or appropriate).
- An emergency contact will be called, if necessary.
- 911 will be called, if necessary.
- Notification will be provided to parents/guardians.

SPECTATORS

Entry fees to home athletic events will be set by the Athletic Director before each season begins and can vary from year to year based on a financial assessment conducted by the Athletic Directors. Students and Faculty may enter free of charge. If you would like to know what the entry fee will be for each sport before the season begins, please contact the Athletic Director.

By their behavior and reactions, spectators play an important role in their school's reputation for sportsmanship. Student-athletes are friendly rivals as members of opposing amateur teams. All athletes from both teams will be treated accordingly. Spectators must remember that the contest is between the teams engaged in the competition and not between their supporters. All spectators are expected to:

- Model good sportsmanship.
- Respect, cooperate, and enthusiastically respond to the cheerleaders, coaches, and athletes of all teams.
- Censure fellow spectators whose behavior is inappropriate.
- Be positive toward players and coaches regardless of the outcome of the contest.
- If a parent/guardian feels the need to speak with the coach, they should wait 24 hours to do so.
- Respect the judgment and professionalism of the officials and coaches.
- Spectators are to refrain from inappropriate behaviors, including but not limited to:
 - Verbal or physical abuse of officials and coaches.
 - Berating players, coaches, or other spectators through chants, signs, and/or cheers.
 - Interrupting the contest with behaviors such as throwing objects in the playing area, entering the playing/coaching area, and/or rowdy behavior.
 - Inappropriate use of social media.

Spectators who behave inappropriately will be subject to sanctions by school administrators. These may include removal from the contest and suspension from future athletic events.

Parents/guardians are expected to respect the player/coach's practice time. It is acceptable for parents/guardians to watch the last 10 minutes of practice before pick-up, but we request that they refrain from attending for longer periods. Constant attendance can be distracting to the coach, team, and most importantly, to one's child. If a parent/guardian has a concern relating to a player or a team, they should email the Head Coach and Athletic Director, in that order.

24 HOUR POLICY

In the event of a disagreement from a parent/guardian regarding topics that are not urgent in the way that they are managed such as playing time, coaching decisions or altercations, parents are to wait 24 hours before contacting the coach or athletic director with concerns. This policy is to protect both parties from being in an unnecessary altercation in the heat of the moment. It is not appropriate for a parent or guardian to confront a coach on the field or court unless the student athlete's safety is of concern.

GRADE LEVEL CLASSIFICATION

Varsity sports will be offered to students who are in the 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades. If a coach desires to pull up an 8th grader due to skill level or lack of participation, a formal invitation will be sent via email to the students family by the Athletic Director.

ESPORTS

The expectations of an Esports athlete at Noble Academy are the same as they are for any other Upper School athletic sport. There are, however, several items specific to esports that parents/guardians and players should be aware of:

- Students may choose to participate in esports from home. They are allowed to use their home computer/video game system if this is more convenient for the player or family. When playing from home, students should maintain the same school expectations as they would if they were playing on a team on our campus or an opposing teams' campus.

- Discord is the platform we use for team communication. Players are expected to be logged onto the official Noble Academy Esports Discord server when playing from home. Only sanctioned Noble Academy esports players are allowed on this Discord server. This server is maintained and monitored by the Noble Academy Esports Coach. The same school expectations apply when participating in Noble Academy Esports on the Discord server. Any activity deemed inappropriate by the Noble Academy Athletic Director or Esports Coach on the Noble Academy Discord server will result in immediate suspension and an investigation will be conducted. Noble Academy does not (and cannot) monitor the activities of Noble Academy esports athletes on Discord servers other than the Noble Academy Esports Discord server.
- Noble Academy Esports may be asked to participate in off-campus, in-person tournaments. Parents/guardians will be provided a permission slip with tournament information for each off-campus, in-person tournament.

Our goal is to provide our students with a positive athletic experience while teaching them competition, responsibility, teamwork, sportsmanship, and perseverance. We ask our families to partner with us in creating an environment that supports our athletes and respects our coaches, opponents, officials, and fellow Noble Academy families.