



**Parent/Student
Athletics Department Handbook**

2019-2020



Voyager Academy
Athletic Department

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I. PHILOSOPHY

Voyager Academy Mission Statement

The Voyager Academy will offer traditional curriculum while instilling character values and leadership development within a positive, challenging learning environment. Students, staff, and parents are encouraged to lead by example through their positive impact on and service to each other, their school, and their community. We will endeavor to promote and foster excellence, wisdom, integrity, and perseverance within our students to enable them to be successful in today's complex and diverse society.

The Voyager Athletic Department will strive to develop and maintain a comprehensive Athletic Program based on the philosophy of the Voyager Mission Statement. We want to challenge our athletes to develop an appreciation for the concepts of preparation, hard work, commitment, teamwork, and sportsmanship. While we want to promote a winning attitude, we must keep in mind that our primary goal is to instill in our athletes the importance of embracing Voyager values, all of which can be achieved through sports: courage, teamwork, respect, integrity and wisdom. It is our hope that through athletics we are able to make a positive, valuable, and lasting impression on our athletes, and that their involvement with Voyager Athletics will benefit them in all areas of their lives.

Voyager Athletics aims to inspire, empower, and legitimize the dreams of all our student-athletes.

II. Voyager Athletics – GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Integration of Core Values in Athletics

- Respectful treatment and interactions with opponents, guests, officials, and fans
- Persistence and work ethic
- The belief that failure is one step closer to success.
- Developing and fostering a growth mind set among student athletes

Balance

- Maintaining the proper relationship between academics, athletics, and family
- Support of each and every player on the team
- A balanced out of season conditioning and training policy

Teamwork

- Athletic department, athletic director, and coaching staff collaboration
- Coaching staff is unified on multi-sport participation
- Sharing of people, space, and resources
- Partnering with parents

Faculty and staff adapt to better serve community

- Flexibility, preparedness, and willingness to change as needed
- Professional development
- Assessment and evaluation

III. SPORTSMANSHIP CODE

It is recognized that independent school interscholastic athletic events must be conducted in such a manner that good sportsmanship prevails at all times. It is therefore necessary that administrators and coaches be individually and collectively responsible for taking every possible step to promote good sportsmanship at every interscholastic event. These steps include the provision of such things as safe and adequate facilities for participants, spectators, and officials; the best possible officials for events; and adequate control of spectators, players, and pre-game/post-game activities. Every effort must be made to promote a climate of wholesome competition.

Athletic competition is guided by the following ideals:

The Players

1. Play within the rules of the game,
2. Win with humility and lose without excuses,
3. Respect officials and accept their decisions,
4. Never play with intent to injure an opponent,
5. Remember that they represent their schools, their coaches, and their families as well as themselves,
6. Respect the property and facilities of their opponents.

The Coaches

1. Inspire in their players a love for the game and the desire to win,
2. Teach that it is better to lose fairly than to win unfairly,
3. Show restraint and respect when dealing with officials, or any adverse situations or people,
4. Serve as positive role models for their players,
5. Hold their players accountable for unsportsmanlike behavior.

We have the responsibility to treat officials, opposing teams, and their spectators as guests. We have a responsibility to educate our supporters to cheer the strengths and victories of their own teams and never denigrate the performance of an opponent or official.

During athletic contests, we will not tolerate any spectator, either adult or student, whose behavior is disrespectful toward players, officials, or other spectators.

We will not permit any type of spectator behavior that detracts from the proper conduct of the game or puts a player or team at a disadvantage.

IV. Behavioral Expectations

- Student Handbook provides guidelines that are to be followed during practice and competitions.

Athletic Department Expectations for Student-Athletes and Coaches in classroom, practices and competitions are listed below.

- Grateful
- Honest
- Humble
- Hard Working
- Goal Oriented
- Results Driving

V. ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

The purpose of an academic eligibility policy is to ensure that our student-athletes are reminded of the importance of balancing athletics and academics.

Middle and High School Eligibility Policy Per NCHSAA Standards

Academic

A student must have passed a minimum load of work during the preceding semester to be eligible at any time during the present semester. The semester is normally considered half of the academic year. All students must also meet local promotion standards, set by the LEA and/or the local school.

(a) A minimum load is defined as five courses in the traditional school schedule, so students must pass 5 of 6 courses in traditional schedule – for a block schedule student must pass three of four 90 minutes courses taken during a semester to be eligible the next semester.

(b) Any student, including seniors, must pass that minimum load, even if they need fewer for graduation. A minimum load as defined by NCHSAA is 3 of 4 block 90-minute courses. Also, according to NCHSAA a student must be present in 3 of 4 courses to be eligible to practice or play in an athletic contest. Middle school student-athletes must be present for over half the day to be eligible for athletic practices or contents.

Discipline

(a) School-assigned consequences for disciplinary infractions must be served as assigned, even if this causes a student to miss an athletic event or practice.

(b) Athletes who are suspended from school 2 or more times in one school year that student-athlete will be deemed ineligible for the remainder of the school year.

Athletes who are suspended for aggressive or violent incidents may be immediately removed from participation for the remainder of the school year.

The Athletic Director and school administration maintain the right to suspend or remove an athlete from the team if necessary. Athletes suspended from school may be ineligible to participate in Voyager Academy sports for the entire year.

Additional Eligibility Requirements/Rule

- (a) Residence – Student’s primary residence must be within a 25-mile radius of Voyager measured by an NCHSAA designated computer program or within the county limits of Durham.
- (b) Age – Student’s 19th birthday must not come on or before August 31st their senior year. Middle school students whose 15th birthday would fall before August 31st their 8th grade year are allowed to play at the high school level even though they are not in high school.
- (c) Pre-Participation Packet – The mandatory NCHSAA Pre participation packet with medical examination no older than 365 days must be turned into Athletic Trainer or Athletic Director before eligible to participate in any sports related activities, including but not limited to conditioning, practice and/or tryouts. Eligibility requirements are located on the athletic website www.voyagerathletics.com for the 2019-2020 school year.
- (d) Transfers – Any student that transfers to Voyager following their 9th grade year, must sit out one year, or apply for the NCHSAA 365-day ineligibility waiver.

Middle School – Only 7th and 8th graders may participate in athletics. Sixth grade students can be managers however on game days they are required to dress distinctly different from those in uniform.

VI. PHYSICALS AND PARTICIPATION FORMS

The Athletic Department will confirm each player has an updated physical form, and completed participation packet. **NO student may participate in any activity without an updated/current physical exam and completed participation packet.**

Each coach must submit a roster before the start of each season to the Athletic Office. The complete roster is due 24 hours after the completion of tryouts, unless you are awaiting the end of another sport. In that case, your complete roster is due one week from the time of the last arriving player from another sport. Rosters are to be provided on the eligibility form available in Google documents

VII. TRY-OUT/CUT POLICY

All sports may have limited number of roster positions, as such; students will need to try out for teams. Each coach will determine his or her team, player position, rotation and minutes played. Neither Voyager Academy coaches nor any member of the Athletic Department will ever discuss other student-athletes with anyone other than families of that athlete. Coaches are encouraged to create try-out rubrics, in order to specifically

discuss areas student-athletes can improve in the future. Your coaches are trained and knowledgeable and have been instructed to keep only players that they feel have the ability to earn playing time and help the team either this season or in future.

VIII. PARTICIPATION AND STUDENT-ATHLETE AFTERSCHOOL CARE FEES

Flat athletic fees for all sports - HS \$135 first sport \$95 each additional sport.
MS \$105 first sport and \$75 each additional sport

During Season Athletic After School Care - The after-school care program in conjunction with National Honor Society members will provide tutoring and homework assistance in subjects should there be a need for student-athlete supervision between school and practice/game. No student-athlete will be allowed to stay on campus between the end of school day and practice/game without this supervision.

These funds are used to cover costs associated with providing officials; venues and coaches for each sport. With that said, however we do not want this cost to prevent participation in multiple sports from student-athletes. Should fees become an issue, please those issues with Athletic Director so that accommodations can be made. Those families that qualify for free or reduced lunches will be provided a discounted rate.

Fees are to be paid prior to first contest to be deemed eligible to dressing or participating in any interscholastic contest.

Voyager no longer accepts personal checks; all fees should be paid through orgsonline.com just like you would do for hot lunch, field trips or before/after school care.

IX. LEVELS OF COMPETITION

Middle School teams may have students in grades 6th -8th grade only. This is considered the introductory level of interscholastic competition for Voyager Academy students. While student-athletes are expected to have a certain base level of skill and understanding prior to joining any Middle School team, there is a strong emphasis on skill development, individual/team improvement and the building of self-confidence.

High School teams will consist of 9th-12th graders; unless birthday dictates that a student will not be able to compete as a senior as discussed above. High School sports focus on increasing base level skills, understanding, skill development, individual/team improvement and confidence building. These goals are only accomplished through learning and applying new definitions of work ethic, perseverance, responsibility, dependability and goal setting in an effort to develop a goal-oriented results driven student-athlete, both inside and outside of school and athletic setting.

X. DUAL SPORT POLICY

High school students are permitted to participate in multi sports in the same season, provided they have a contract completed and filed with the Athletic Director.

Middle school student-athletes are only permitted to participate in one sport during the same sports season. Participating on two teams during the same season would mean that a student-athlete would miss practices and possibly games/meets for one sport while participating in the other. This would create an unequal situation for team members, as well as place an incredible amount of pressure (athletic and academic) on the dual sport athlete.

Student may participate in sports outside of school but their first commitment is to Voyager Academy, if there is an overlap in the schedule then the Voyager Academy sport takes precedence. No student-athlete may miss Voyager Academy practice for an outside sport, if they do then they will not be allowed to participate in games/matches that week at Voyager.

XI. EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT-ATHLETES

1. Student-athletes must know that practice and game attendance are mandatory. Individuals who miss practice will not be allowed to participate in the next competition if there is not another practice prior to the game. Student-athletes are required to attend practices or games that might be scheduled on weekends, holidays, or breaks. Outside club teams, AAU, leagues, etc. are secondary to Voyager Academy sports teams.
2. Student-athletes are responsible for punctuality and preparedness for class, practices, and games. Unexcused tardiness or absences **will not** be tolerated and will be dealt with by the head coach and/or athletic director at their discretion. Exception to this would be student-athletes seeking academic help or makeup. It is expected that student-athletes communicate with the coaching staff prior to missing practice. Student-athletes who are injured should still attend practice unless otherwise notified or cleared by their head coach.
3. Voyager Academy student-athletes, parents, and spectators alike are expected to exhibit the highest-level of sportsmanship at all athletic events (home and away).
4. No athletic jerseys will be worn to school without approval from the Athletic Director and Principle. No uniform shall be worn outside of athletic competitions.
5. Athletes must be in attendance for **over half (2.5 of 4 block classes or 4 of 6 traditional)** of the school day in order to participate in a sporting event (practice or game) that afternoon. (Based on new High School bell schedule students must arrive before 11:00 am or stay until 11:50 on Monday and arrive before 11:50am and stay until 12:30pm Tuesday through Thursday to be deemed in compliance.
6. Any student-athlete who commits to a team must complete the season, by attending a majority of the practices and all competitions. If a student-athlete does not follow this policy or discontinues his/her role with the team then he/she can be ineligible to participate in the next sport season (the next sport that the student would participate in) until the prior season is completed. Exceptions to this policy are medical or family emergency challenges and will be handled case by case.

XII. TEAM PICTURES

A photo day will be scheduled for all teams per season. The Athletic Director will set up a picture day the first Monday following team selection. Both team and individual pictures will be taken at this time. Athletes will have the opportunity to order and purchase these photos and envelopes are available to student-athletes prior to picture day via our website www.voyagerathletics.com or from Athletic Director.

Should a team have a scheduling conflict on assigned photo day, it is the responsibility of the coach to set up a subsequent make up day with the school approved photographer. *Pictures will take place on one day only.* The date of pictures will be communicated to parents through coach.

XIII. AWARDS

The athletic department supplies three awards for athletes of teams greater than ten participants. These awards will be presented by coaches at celebrations held by individual sports or at middle school awards nights. These ceremonies are encouraged to take place no more than two weeks following the completion of the season. Each student-athlete is encouraged to attend the ceremony. This is a special event and attendees will dress appropriately, dress pants, shirts, ties, dresses or skirts. The middle school will have an awards celebration the Thursday following the CMMS conference tournament for each respective season.

XIV. PARENTAL BEHAVIOR

1. Respect the decisions of the coaching staff.
2. Under no circumstances are you to approach the team, your student-athlete or coach during competition, including half time.
3. Respect officials and accept their decisions,
4. *Respect and obey all rules of the venue:* Remember that you represent the schools, the coaches, and your families as well as yourselves,
5. Your coaches are trained and knowledgeable; do not confuse your son/daughter by teaching them techniques that are contrary to what they are being instructed to do by the coaches.

XV. MINIMUM REQUIRED PARTICIPATION

Voyager sponsored teams required a minimum number of participants in order to qualify for Voyager funding. Minimum required participation levels are based on required starters plus two substitutes, this minimum will be calculated by submitted eligibility rosters.

An individual is permitted to participate, as an individual, in a sport that does not meet participation qualifications. In such a case, the athlete must complete all requirements of other athletes of the same season and the parents or privately funded coach must adhere all NCHSAA requirements.

Athletic participation fee will be waived but all other requirements must be met; e.g. certified coach, pre-participation packet on file with athletic department, preseason student/parent/coach and Athletic Director meeting attendance. Securing facilities, scheduling and all expenses associated with sport as well as fulfill all NCHSAA coaching requirements become the responsibility of the parent/guardian. Examples of requirements are provided below.

Examples:

- Cross Country requires 7 runners for varsity thus must have 9 runners.
- Baseball requires 9 starters to play a game thus team must have 11 players

XVI. SCHOOL PROVIDED TRANSPORTATION

Voyager Academy will only provide transportation only for team playoff games/matches with travel distance greater than 100 miles. All regular season contest, and playoff games within the 100-mile radius will dictate that transportation be the responsibility of the team members or individuals participating.

XVII. GAMES AND PRACTICE OVER SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

At the High School level, the high number of mandatory conference games makes it impossible to prevent scheduled contests over breaks or the rescheduling contest that are to be played during school holidays and vacations. As such athletes are expected to be present at practices and competition during holiday and school breaks.

Should a student-athlete have a conflict her/she should inform the coach of this conflict no later than the 1st week of the season.

At the middle school level, the athletic department will make every effort to avoid scheduling dates over time periods when school is not in session.

XVIII. VARSITY LETTER REQUIREMENTS

Each High School Varsity Coach will create a written policy outlining the qualifications for a varsity letter. Those that meet these qualifications will be awarded a varsity letter and can be picked up from athletic department. Lettermen jackets can be ordered through Neff online at www.neff.com

XIV. UNIFORMS

- Teams Uniforms are provided for the following teams currently
 - HS- Volleyball, Men's and Women's Soccer, Women's Basketball, softball, baseball, wrestling, Men's Basketball
 - MS - Volleyball, Boys and Girls Soccer, Boys and Girls Basketball, softball, baseball

- Teams that purchase own uniforms - xc, tennis, golf, swimming and lacrosse (HS- 13 total sports, MS - 11 total) 23 total sports team
 - A five-year rotation has been established which would require approximately 5 new, uniforms a year - Varsity teams will pass down used uniforms to Junior Varsity Team in the sports that have JV teams.
 - Athletes will be required to purchase competition uniform pants and/or shorts. This should be done using the BSN website created at the beginning of each season for your team.
- Uniforms provide by Voyager
 - Uniforms provided by the Athletic department, are property of Voyager Academy Athletics, as such it becomes the student-athlete and parents responsibility to care for uniforms properly. Student-athletes are to return those to coaches within 1 week of the last game played. Failure to do so will result charges equal to the cost of replacing the uniforms. The cost of uniform replacement will be included in care and collection contract provided by each coach.
- Coaches Responsibilities
 - Coaches are now responsible for collecting and creating uniform agreement with athletes. Agreement is to include establishing a collection date and time and a hand out of proper care for uniform. Any student-athlete that does not return or returns uniform that has not been cared for properly will be charged for replacing the uniform.

XX. TEAM SELECTION PROCESS WITH OVERLAP OF SEASONS

At Voyager we are allowed to begin basketball on October 17th and begin playing games on October 31st, however Soccer regular season ends October 24th and state championships are not completed until November 19th. This overlap has presented issues in the past however moving forward Student – Athletes that are participating in other sports will be given the same time and opportunity to make the teams as those that did not participate in previous sports.

XXI. Game Practice Cancellation or Change Policy

- All practices, games and location changes or cancellations by the school will be done no later than 2:00pm for MS practices or games that begins directly after school or 3:00pm for any other games or practices. These changes, and/or cancellations will be posted on the Voyager and Voyager Athletic website and in communication with coaches to student-athletes or parent representatives. After this time changes are at the discretion of the officials/umpires assigned to contest or coaches regarding practices.
- **Early Release Policy**
Schedules for all sports will be available on Voyager Athletics website and will include release time, game time, address and venue if different than host schools.

Inclement Weather – High School Policy on Heat Illness Prevention:

Will follow NCHSAA protocol as listed in Voyager Academy Athletics Emergency Action Plan. Weather conditions will be measured on site using a Wet Bulb Globe Thermometer. This factors in air temperature, sun intensity, air flow and humidity. This may result in delayed practice time due to outdoor weather conditions that are unsafe. Any delays will be communicated to the respective team head coach, who will inform the team members.

Inclement Weather – Middle School Policy on Heat Illness Prevention:

Will follow the same protocol as NCHSAA Heat Guidelines listed in Voyager Academy Athletics Emergency Action Plan, with a change made in weather monitoring method. Due to earlier dismissal and limited transportation options, it is difficult for Middle School students, parents and coaching staff to adapt to restrictions in activity. Therefore, outdoor activity status will be determined by the Athletic Director no later than 1pm daily. If the “Feels like” temperature as reported by Weather.com for ZIP Code 27704 is listed as 103 and above, all outdoor activity is cancelled for the remainder of the day. If an outdoor game is scheduled, it will be left to the discretion of the Athletic Director to continue as scheduled. Parents and students will be notified by an in-school intercom announcement and email to parents.

XXII. Banners

- Banners will be provided for High School teams that win a conference championship, conference tournament, and regional championship. Should team win more than one of the above championships years of championships will be added to the existing banner
- Banners for Middle School teams that win the conference tournament and finish the season undefeated will be place in gym.
- Only North Carolina provided championship banners will be displayed in the gym. A picture of team, or individual State Champions will be on Jeff White & Family the wall of fame outside the gymnasium. Large team pictures will not be displayed in the gym.