

**NEW GARDEN FRIENDS SCHOOL**



**ATHLETIC  
HANDBOOK**

**2022-23**

# NEW GARDEN FRIENDS SCHOOL ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

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## NGFS MISSION STATEMENT

*New Garden Friends School seeks to be an inclusive, innovative educational community guided by Quaker beliefs and committed to honoring and developing each person's gifts.*

## NGFS SPORTS PHILOSOPHY

Interscholastic athletic competition at New Garden Friends School (NGFS) should demonstrate a high standard of ethics and sportsmanship and represent the values that guide the Quaker beliefs that are referenced in our NGFS mission statement. We believe that true victory is accomplished when our student/athletes compete to the best of their abilities while honoring our "I. C.A.R.E" system that makes up our Athletic Code of Conduct. The Athletic Code of Conduct is designed to help protect the S.P.I.C.E.S of our Quaker school community, which are the six Quaker Testimonies (Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Equality, Stewardship) that make up the foundation of what we represent on and off the field of competition.

***"A Quaker testimony is not a belief, but it is a description of committed actions."***

Our Athletic Department and teams should be an embodiment of this statement. The NGFS Athletic Program is a platform that allows all members involved in an opportunity to truly teach and live out the Quaker testimonies within the NGFS community.

The "I. C.A.R.E" system represents five principles: Integrity, Commitment, Accountability, Respect, and Effort. When student-athletes approach their athletic experience with a common goal of living up to these five principles, it ensures that our sports program is doing its best to live out the SPICES while helping to develop students and grooming them to be strong leaders in the communities they will go on to serve.

### **The "I. C.A.R.E" SYSTEM**

**INTEGRITY**- A personal quality of fairness that we expect each member of our athletic program to uphold. It means doing the right thing in a reliable way and overall having a moral compass that doesn't waver.

**COMMITMENT**- Sustained dedication to a decision to be a part of a team and to represent yourself and the NGFS school community as a whole.

**ACCOUNTABILITY**- Acknowledging and assuming responsibility for actions/decisions; most importantly, having a willingness to own the consequences that are a result of those actions/decisions.

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**RESPECT-** Treating every member of our NGFS athletic community in a positive manner that acknowledges them for who they are and what they are doing. “We give respect to get respect.”

**EFFORT-** Knowing your “true best” and being committed to giving your personal best at all times.

## **ROLES OF ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT MEMBERS**

### **Athletic Director - Dwon Clifton**

The Athletic Director (AD) is responsible for administering the Athletic Program at NGFS. His duties include but are not limited to: hiring and training coaches, coordinating the athletic budget, scheduling games and coordinating practice schedules with the head coach of each sport, approving and scheduling transportation and officials, conflict resolution, and overseeing all aspects of the Department of Athletics. He will advise staff, teams, coaches, and parents/guardians of any changes and work in collaboration with the administration to meet the needs of the Athletic Department.

### **Assistant Athletic Director - Serena Witherspoon**

The Assistant Athletic Director works in partnership with the Athletic Director to maintain, organize, and administer the overall athletic program and ensure compliance with conference and school policies, rules, and regulations. She may help with managing coaches as well as share responsibility for the overall direction, coordination, and evaluation of the Department of Athletics. Her duties include but are not limited to: compiling, maintaining, and updating game and practice schedules; coordinating transportation and officials; and assisting with event planning for tournaments, athletic banquets, senior night, sports pictures, and any other athletic events. Additionally, she will attend and supervise athletic events, manage athletics-related communications materials, and assist in other areas as needed.

### **Coaches**

Coaches are responsible for creating a fun, safe, and challenging environment in which student-athletes will receive a high level of instruction and competition. Coaches are responsible for turning in a roster prior to the season, distributing and collecting uniforms and equipment, completing injury and/or incident reports, and communicating with parents/guardians. They must also ensure that student-athletes are exhibiting good behavior at all times.

The coach is expected to be a positive representative of the NGFS Athletic Department. This includes ensuring that coaches conduct themselves in a manner that will bring

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honor and respect to our teams and school. They are expected to make decisions based on the collective interest of the team, while also developing each student-athlete to their fullest potential. The coach must be clear in expectations and available to student-athletes for positive mentorship on and off the field/court. A coach is expected to maintain high personal standards, motivate the players, and promote sportsmanship at all times.

## **Student-Athletes**

The student-athlete is expected to be a positive addition to the NGFS Athletic Department. If a student-athlete must discuss an issue with the coach, they must communicate in a respectful manner to try and find a solution. If a solution cannot be reached, the Athletic Director may assist.

Student-Athletes will be representing NGFS on and off the court/field and are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will reflect positively upon our program and school. Student-Athletes are expected to uphold the "I CARE" system at all times.

If a student-athlete fails to conduct themselves in a manner that will bring honor and respect to our teams and school, they may be subject to penalties which may include game suspensions, ineligibility, or dismissal from the team.

Any player who is ejected from a game will automatically be suspended for the next athletic contest.

## **Parents/Guardians**

Parents/guardians play a vital role in the NGFS Athletics Program. Parents model attitudes and behavior for their children. We invite all parents to attend home and away games, support the teams, and encourage their children to practice and play hard.

We are appreciative of the assistance parents/guardians provide for their children in their athletic endeavors, whether driving them to an athletic event, volunteering, and/or sacrificing family time to accommodate athletic schedules. We also appreciate the support parents/guardians provide our coaches in their efforts to create a valuable athletic experience for all participants. It is important for parents/guardians to be mindful of and respect what the coaches are trying to do by avoiding interference or public criticism, especially in front of their children, other teammates, and community members.

At games, parents/guardians are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will bring honor and respect to our teams and school. At no time should a parent/guardian display inappropriate behavior toward an official, coach, administrator, or student-athlete. This expectation of conduct extends to online forums as well. Any

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Spectator/Parent/Guardian who acts in a disruptive manner will cause a game to be suspended until the situation is resolved or the spectator is removed.

## GENERAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

We want our student-athletes to learn the value of being on a team and the contribution each member must make. Team members have a responsibility to themselves, their teammates, and their coaches to learn and perform their role on the team. Teamwork requires the development of many interpersonal skills such as listening, following directions, accepting constructive criticism, being respectful, and supporting teammates and coaches. Student-athletes have an obligation to participate in practice sessions and games with full commitment and enthusiasm.

### Grade Eligibility

Participation in athletics is a privilege. Students can earn the privilege through hard work, dedication, desire, and self-discipline. All students who are currently enrolled in grades 5-12 and attend NGFS are eligible to participate in athletics. All students in grades 5-8 are eligible to participate in Middle Division sports. All students in grades 7-12 are eligible to participate in JV/Varsity Upper School level sports. At the discretion of the Athletic Director, Middle School students (grades 7-8) will be eligible to participate in Upper School sports per NCISAA rules that state, *“To be eligible to participate in non-football VARSITY sports in the NCISAA, student-athletes must be enrolled in grades 7 through 12 and recorded on the official school enrollment roster.”*

### Academic Eligibility

New Garden Friends School seeks to provide its students with a range of opportunities to excel both inside and outside of the classroom. Though we wish for every student to be able to fully participate in extracurricular athletics, it is important that we maintain standards of achievement within our classes and within our community. As a Quaker school, we seek to honor the individual gifts of each member of our community and we are cognizant that a single eligibility policy does not allow us to address the needs of all students.

Students will remain eligible for participation in extracurricular athletics unless it is determined to be in their best interest to take a break from these activities. This determination will be made as necessary and on a case-by-case basis by the Head of Upper or Middle School in conversations with the student, the student’s parents/guardians, and appropriate members of staff, such as the student’s advisor, the athletic director, and coach.

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## **Procedures to Support All Students at NGFS**

1. A report of students with a cumulative GPA below 2.0 is generated and shared with the staff biweekly.
2. Staff communicate with advisors and the Head of the Upper and Middle School regarding any behavioral or academic concerns that they have.
3. Staff discusses any students about whom they have academic, behavioral, or social concern during their weekly division meetings.
4. Staff and the Head of the Upper and Middle School meet with students who are deemed to be in need of further support and discussion to develop a plan of action. These meetings include parents/guardians when appropriate.
5. Suspension of athletic eligibility is a measure available to the Director of Athletics in collaboration with the Head of Upper and Middle School Typically, this is more of a tertiary step used for serious academic situations or severe behavioral infractions.

## **Study Hall Requirements**

All student-athletes participating in JV/Varsity level sports are required to attend study hall immediately following the end of school. They must remain in study hall until 4:30 p.m., or until it is time to attend their team's practice/game. This rule only applies on the days when a team's practices/games take place at least 30 minutes past the time of school being dismissed. Failure to report to study hall on time, work quietly, and remain in study hall for the full duration of time necessary, will lead to the following:

1. The first offense will result in a notification being sent to the AD and Coach, and the student-athlete will receive a warning.
2. The second offense will result in a notification being sent to the AD and Coach. The parents/guardians of the student-athlete will be notified that their child has received their second warning.
3. The third offense could result in dismissal from the team.

## **Team Membership**

### **Middle Division (Grades 5-8):**

NGFS is committed to providing all Middle Division students interested in competitive athletics the opportunity to participate. We recognize that middle division athletics provides the introduction to competitive sports at NGFS. Therefore, it is important to have student-athletes learn the fundamentals correctly from the beginning. The emphasis of the Middle Division program will be developing physical skills, intangible skills, and good overall behavioral habits. The level of future success that we will ultimately achieve in high school athletics is directly related to the skills developed through the Middle Division program. Failure to attend practices or abusing the privilege of participation, can lead to disqualification of being on the team.

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We recognize that not all of our Middle Division level student-athletes develop at the same rate. Therefore, in the spirit of our school's mission statement that, "we are committed to honoring and developing each person's gift", there may be some student-athletes who possess physical gifts that warrant encouragement to move up to the next level of competition.

## **Upper School (JV and Varsity) Sports:**

Student-athletes will not be cut from a team in high school sports, unless they abuse the privilege of participation by failing to respect the rules that are set forth in the NGFS Athletic Handbook. All teams may have player limits set forth by the Athletic Director. In the event that the roster size for any JV/Varsity level sport is too limited, there will only be one Varsity team established. Failure to attend season opening evaluations or practice can lead to dismissal from a NGFS team.

## **Team Selection/Playing Time**

It is our goal to find opportunities not only for participation, but more importantly, for development and success. Placing each student-athlete at the level where they can contribute and gain positive feelings from their efforts is important to the coaching staff. Disappointments are inevitable and it is very important that student-athletes feel the support of teammates, parents, and coaches.

We believe in our coaches. Their job is to manage and direct a specific sport. Their responsibilities include evaluating and selecting students for teams, as well as determining the degree to which each student-athlete will participate in official games. They do this with considerable thought and sensitivity. During the evaluation process, coaches will assess and cultivate skill level, athleticism, physical conditioning, positional play, trainability, punctuality, and other characteristics that contribute to positive experiences in athletics.

## **Required Athletic Forms**

Prior to the start of each season, all parents and student-athletes must complete the following:

1. NCISSA Consent to Participate and Release form
2. NCISAA Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation form
3. NCISAA Concussion form
4. Athletic Handbook Acknowledgement Agreement (sign and return last page only)

The first three forms can be found on the [NGFS Athletics homepage](#). Failure to complete all forms required for participation will result in the student-athlete being declared ineligible to participate.



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## Club/Select Teams

NGFS Athletics will take precedence over club or league competitions and practice sessions. Student-athletes will not be excused from NGFS athletic practices or games in order to attend games or practice sessions for club or league teams. It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to communicate their participation on club or league teams prior to the start of the season so that any potential conflicts may be worked out. Failure to communicate before the season may result in the removal of a student-athlete from the team.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance and punctuality is critical to success at school and within our athletic program. Thus, student-athletes should attend all practices/games unless they are sick. A doctor's note should be provided to excuse the absence. We understand that there are other personal commitments that must be made throughout the year. We ask that families make an effort to plan around the practice/game schedules that are posted. In the event that a student-athlete is unable to attend a practice, meeting, or athletic contest, the coach or AD must be notified at least one day prior to the event being missed. Any student-athlete who has more than three absences (excused or unexcused) could result in probation, or removal from the team. Practice is held rain or shine unless otherwise noted by the coach or AD. If a student-athlete is absent from school or arrives after 10:00 a.m., they could be declared ineligible to practice or play in a game that day. Any student-athlete who leaves an athletic event without the permission of the Head Coach will be subject to suspension from the team.

## Holidays

In order for teams to remain cohesive, effective, and competitive, student-athletes may be expected to play and/or practice during non-religious holidays and time periods (i.e., Winter Break, Spring Break, Summer Break, Labor Day, etc.). These dates and times will be announced by the coach and placed on the NGFS online school calendar as early as possible in an effort to allow families to plan accordingly. If there is any question and the dates have not been announced, please contact the coach and/or AD. Student-athletes will not be required to play and/or practice on a day of religious observation.

## Illness & Injury

**During the current pandemic, Covid 19 Pre-Screening policies will be followed prior to students being allowed to participate in the falls sports program each day.**

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All injuries must be reported to the coach and/or athletic director at the time they occur so further injury can be avoided. If a student is injured, the following procedures must be adhered to:

1. Tell the coach and/or athletic director that you are injured before leaving the court/floor/field.
2. No one shall miss practice without a doctor's note. A second notice from the doctor should be given to the coach to end physical restrictions.
3. Student-athletes are expected to attend team practices each day that they attend school, even if they are injured.
4. Anyone who becomes sick, nauseated, dizzy, and/or very hot during a practice or game, should notify the coach and/or athletic director immediately.

## **Classwork**

On occasions when student-athletes must miss class to participate in scheduled athletic events, they are responsible for turning in class work that is due that day and making up any missed work in a timely fashion. If a student-athlete arrives home late from an athletic contest or misses class the day before a test due to an athletic contest, it is at the teacher's discretion to allow the student-athlete to test at an alternative time. If the student-athlete must leave class early on a testing day due to an athletic contest, it is the responsibility of the student-athlete to reschedule the test for a date that is agreed upon by the teacher.

## **Dropping/Dismissal from a Sport**

There will be times when some student-athletes make the decision to leave a sport before, during, or after the season, although we highly discourage it. Whatever the reason, a student-athlete must follow the steps listed below:

1. The student-athlete must talk to the coach to see if a solution can be reached. A conference with the parents/guardians, student-athlete, coach, and athletic director, or any combination thereof, may be required and is highly recommended before a student-athlete leaves the team of a sport.
2. If a student-athlete decides to leave the team of a sport, they must officially check out of the sport by notifying the athletic director/coach. In addition, all equipment must be turned in clean and undamaged. The student-athlete must pay for any equipment not turned in.
3. A student athlete will not be permitted to participate in a new sport if they leave the team of a sport to join another that competes in the same season. For example, if the student-athlete were to quit the volleyball (fall sport) team to join the cross country team (fall sport), they will not be permitted to

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participate in cross country. In this example the student would be welcome to participate in cross country the next fall.

4. If a student repeatedly begins and then quits a sport, or violates the attendance policy, future participation in extracurricular athletics may be in jeopardy. The athletic director may request a meeting with the student and parents/guardians.

## PARENT & COACH COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

### Parent Meeting

The AD, Assistant AD, and coaches (if available) will hold an interest meeting for parents/guardians before each sports season (Fall, Winter, Spring). At least one parent/guardian is required to be in attendance. The meeting will allow parents to meet the coach, ask questions, and receive all information pertinent to the season.

### Communication Procedures

Due to the fact that some of our coaches are part-time employees with other full-time jobs, it can pose a challenge for them to communicate as often as they would like. Therefore, our coaches in conjunction with the AD/Assistant AD, will communicate regularly with parents and student-athletes in person or via email ([athletics@ngfs.org](mailto:athletics@ngfs.org)). If parents would like to communicate via email with the coach of their child's team, we ask that you please CC the NGFS Athletic Director in that email. NGFS App notifications will also be used, especially for time-sensitive communication such as game time changes, canceled practice, etc. Please reserve the use of a phone call as a means of communicating with the AD for time-sensitive, urgent matters only.

### Handling Concerns/Issues

**Step1:** One of the greatest opportunities for student-athletes is learning skills for effective conflict resolution. When there is a concern, student-athletes are encouraged to speak with their coach directly. It can be very satisfying for all parties involved when student-athletes and their coach are able to collaborate to find mutually agreeable solutions.

**Step 2:** If the coach and student-athlete are unable to resolve the issue together, then parents/guardians may contact the coach. If a parent/guardian has a concern to discuss with the coach, the parent/guardian should contact the coach at an appropriate time for both parties. *An upset parent should wait at least 24 hours before approaching a coach or parent after an athletic event. Under no circumstances should a parent approach a*

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coach or another parent in a harsh manner at any time, particularly immediately before, during, or immediately after a practice or a game. Honest and respectful communication and taking time to reflect on the situation should allow for more effective dialogue ensuring a more successful experience for everyone. It is not appropriate for a parent to request feedback from the coach about team strategy (including playing time), play calling, or other student-athletes. It is appropriate for a parent to contact the coach with concerns about their child's behavior or assessment/progress report of their skill development.

**Step 3:** If discussion with the coach does not resolve the issue, parents/guardians and coaches may contact the Athletic Director to discuss the situation. The matter, if unresolved at this point, may be taken to the Head of School.

### **Athletic Website**

All athletic information will be posted on the athletic page of the NGFS website at <https://www.ngfs.org/school-life/athletics.cfm>.

The information found on the website will include: sports schedules, athletic forms, coaches information, and other Athletic Department information.

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## Student-Athlete and Parent/Guardian Participation Agreement

We acknowledge that we have read and agree to fully respect the terms of the NGFS Athletics Handbook. Failure to respect/uphold the policies set forth in the handbook may result in suspension and/or dismissal from a sports team and, potentially, a student-athlete's dismissal from the extra-curricular sports program for the 2021-22 academic year.

We understand that by signing below we acknowledge that we have reviewed and agree with the policies set forth. This signed agreement must be returned to the Athletic Director or head coach prior to being included on a team roster.

Print Student-Athlete Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student-Athlete Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_