



Valencia County Homeschool Activities Association 2009-2010 Handbook



You are requested to read this handbook carefully and thoroughly and discuss its contents with your child. BEFORE your child will be allowed to practice and/or compete, the *Physical Examination Record* must be filled out and approved by your family physician. This form, along with the *Parental Verification and Waiver and Authorization for Medical Services* forms must be fully completed and given to your child's coach prior to the first practice. We require a physical examination to insure that your child is physically able to participate in athletics. In the event an accident should occur, we will notify you as quickly as possible.

Purpose

The purpose of the Valencia County Homeschool Activities Association (VCHAA) is to provide a formal structure for planning and implementing social, public service, academic, and athletic group activities for homeschooled youth. At this time, we strive to provide the best possible basketball and volleyball programs for our youth in an atmosphere that promotes safety, sportsmanship, character building, and competition with high standards. We want athletic participation to be a valuable educational experience at all levels. We promote Christian character and behavior and expect the same from our athletes, coaches, and parents.

General Information

VCHAA is a membership-based, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization governed by a Board of Directors consisting of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, an athletic director, and two Directors (or advocates, one for boys and one for girls). You may request a copy of our by-laws from the secretary or the VCHAA website (www.wildcats.com). All people serving in the various positions within the organization do so without pay as volunteers.

Athletic Eligibility

A child must be homeschooled and ineligible to participate in a public school organized sports program or attend a private Christian school that does not have an organized sports program in order to be eligible to participate in VCHAA athletics. A public/private school student who is ineligible to participate in his/her school's sports program for academic or disciplinary reasons is also ineligible for VCHAA athletics.

A child must turn 11 years old by August 1 to be able to participate in volleyball. For basketball, your child must be 11 years old by December 1.

Rules governing "participation based on grades" are to be determined by the parent. We trust that you will be honest in evaluating your child's academics and behavior to determine whether they are eligible to participate.

VCHAA also reserves the right to determine a child's eligibility based on our code of conduct (see *Code of Conduct*).

Fees

For each child who has never participated in VCHAA athletics, a one-time \$10.00 non-refundable fee is required. If a child has participated in one type of VCHAA activity and paid the registration fee and then decides to participate in another VCHAA activity, they do not need to pay the registration fee again.

The activity fee for Volleyball is \$90 per child for the first child in a family. The activity fee for a second child from the same family is \$80. All registration and activity fees are due before the first game of the season.

Basketball activity fees are \$160.00 per child. The activity fee for a second child in the same family is \$140.00. Fees can be reduced up to half by participation in fundraisers. The exact deduction will be determined by the total number of fundraisers scheduled. Fees may be paid in two installments; the first to be paid prior to but no later than the first practice and the second half prior to but no later than the first scheduled game. *Fees are non-refundable after practices start.*

You may mail your registration and activity fees to:

VCHAA
P. O. Box 628
Los Lunas, NM 87031

Upon payment of your fees, you will receive a receipt. Admission to home games for *immediate family members (only)* is free as long as we are able to use the current facility.

Uniforms

Each volleyball player will be issued a team jersey that she is responsible for. *Uniforms must be turned in at the end of the season to either your coach or the athletic director.* Players are required to supply their own shorts. These shorts must be the same color as the team uniform. They may have one visible manufacturer's logo, no more than 2 ¼ inches square. The logo must not exceed this measurement. There are to be *no* logos on undershirts worn under the team uniform. Undershirts or sports bras need to be the same color as the uniform.

Each basketball player will be issued a team jersey and shorts that he/she is responsible for. *Uniforms must be turned in at the end of the season to either your coach or the athletic director.* If the player chooses, they may supply their own shorts. Such shorts must be the same color and material type as the team uniform. They may have one visible manufacturer's logo, no more than 2 ¼ inches square. The logo must not exceed this measurement. There are to be *no* logos on undershirts worn under the team uniform. Undershirts or sports bras need to be the same color as the uniform, i.e., for home games, wear the white uniform and a white undershirt, and for away games, wear the blue uniform and a blue undershirt.

Facility

At this time, VCHAA has been given the opportunity to use the former Century High Gym (formerly the Los Lunas Hospital and Training School). All practices and home games are at this location. If this changes during this season, the Board will contact parents and work to secure a

new facility for games and practices. Regardless of where we practice or play games, our policy is that parents and players help to keep the facility clean, both before and after practices/games.

Fundraisers

VCHAA funds come solely from registration fees, activity fees, fundraisers, and donations. Since we are a 501C-3 organization, donations are tax deductible. Our income goes for facility use, equipment, insurance, uniforms, officials, administration supplies, etc. *All athletes and their families are expected to participate in fundraisers.* This not only helps the organization but also promotes team unity. Our goal is to have as few fundraisers as possible during the actual playing season, and the greater the participation in any one fundraiser reduces the need for more fundraisers.

Volunteers

VCHAA relies on volunteers in various capacities. The areas requiring volunteers include gym clean-up and set-up prior to game, gym clean-up and tear-down after game, admissions, score keepers (scorebook), timekeepers (basketball), scorekeepers (volleyball), security, and concession stand. We need your help!

On home-game days, the parents and athletes of the first team playing help with gym clean-up and set-up and the athletes and parents of the last team playing help with gym clean-up and tear-down.

If you can help by volunteering in any of these or other areas, please indicate this on the volunteer form. Also, please help if a board member/coach approaches you and requests assistance.

General Code of Conduct

1. All players, parents and coaches will act responsibly during all meetings, practices, games, and extra activities (e.g., shoot-arounds).
 - A. No abusive language or gestures at any time towards anyone (e.g., players, coaches, officials, board members, spectators).
 - B. Parents wishing to speak with a coach will schedule a time at both parties' convenience. Time is not to be taken during the game, half-times, or time-outs to confer with a coach.
 - C. Players are to direct their attention to the game and their coach; not to the crowd.
 - D. Players are to inform coaches when unavailable to attend scheduled practices, games, etc.
 - E. Please read the attachment "Parental Conduct" to see the code of conduct expected from parents.

2. No unsportsmanlike conduct will be tolerated from players, coaches, or spectators. Officials will be advised that VCHAA does not tolerate unsportsmanlike behavior. Disruptive or disrespectful behavior from athletes during any VCHAA activity (e.g., practices, games) is not appropriate and will be handled in the following manner:
 - A. *During Practices or Games*
 1. Athletes may be asked to sit out the practice/game and the behavior will be discussed with the parent.
 2. Parents may be requested to attend practices/games.

B. *Technical Fouls*

For technical fouls that are procedural in nature (e.g., the inadvertent wearing of jewelry), this is considered a minor issue. For technical fouls that involve the player's, coach's, or parent's attitude (e.g., losing their temper, verbal outburst), this is a major issue that reflects on the player, team, and VCHAA as a whole. We take very seriously every such loss of control or outburst.

1st time: Player will be asked to sit out rest of game and the board will be informed of the details

2nd time: Player will sit out rest of game plus the next game (in uniform and sitting on the bench with the team.). In addition, the situation will be reviewed by the coach, parent, Director (advocate), and Athletic Director who will recommend a course of action.

3rd time: The athlete, parent(s), and coaches will appear before the board with potential of athlete being suspended from team for rest of season.

More than three (3) incidences will result in expulsion from the team.

C. *Flagrant Fouls*

1st time: Player will sit out rest of game plus the next game (in uniform and sitting on the bench with the team.)

2nd time: Situation will be reviewed by the coach, parent, Director, and Athletic Director with potential of athlete being suspended from team for rest of season.

3rd time: Athlete will be dismissed from the team.

Parental Code of Conduct

The following Parental Code of Conduct is reprinted from "Basketball Parental Guidelines"¹.

1. Please don't shout advice to your player during the game. Shout encouragement? You bet. A steady stream of technique suggestions, though, has no value. Our insightful tips may conflict with my instruction.
2. Please don't harass the refs. Parents that loudly harass the referee are embarrassing to the player and the team.

When a parent makes a spectacle of himself at a game, the player is embarrassed. If the ref is being reamed by a parent for a bad call (by definition, a bad call is any decision made against the parent's child), what does the player learn? He learns that the mistake wasn't his fault. It was the result of poor officiating. This is a bad habit to get into.

3. Don't encourage your child to place the blame for their failures upon others. One of the benefits of playing sports is learning to accept responsibility instead of making excuses.

Sometimes a call is hard to take for whatever reason. Such times are tests of emotional control. If a player can learn to bite his lip and move on, a parent can learn to sit quietly for a moment and let the emotion pass. Learning to cope with disappointment is a valuable life skill.

¹ From the website <http://www.coachlikeapro.com/basketball-parents-guidelines.html> (accessed 12 June 2009)

4. Don't blame the coach for your child's problems or lack of playing time. Your child's struggles to succeed are your child's problems. Let him work them out without your interference. A player has every right to ask a coach what needs to be done to earn more playing time, for example. But a parent stepping in to demand playing time is another thing altogether.
5. Please don't talk badly about the coach in front of your child. The worst thing a parent can do is take pot shots at the coach, criticizing decisions, and complaining about his leadership. Support the coach and stand behind his decisions.
6. Please don't razz the other team's players. The other team's players should be considered off limits. Yelling at or deriding someone else's child is a shameful practice for an adult at a sporting event. Parents who intend to disrupt, distract or upset players exhibit the worst of poor sportsmanship.
7. As a parent, be involved in a positive way. Attend your child's games as often as you can. Cheer for all the kids on the team. Help with fund raising. Assist with logistics. If you're not sure how to help, ask the coach.

There are probably a hundred ways to be a good team member and a good parent at the same time. When the larger definition of team is working well, the experience can be wonderful for everyone involved. People who see our program in action will want to be a part of it. Parents looking ahead to when their child will be old enough to participate will want to fit in and help. This kind of teamwork perpetuates itself. Once it gets momentum, it can be quite a force. It just takes parents who care.

Grievance Procedure

Boys' and Girls' Directors (advocates) may serve as a mediator between parents/players and coaches, if necessary. Any problems will be reported to the Athletic Director, who may also serve as a mediator. Problems will only be presented to the Board after all other means of mediation have been exhausted.

If a member of VCHAA has a complaint against any officer, director, agent or employee of the association, they may register the same with an appropriate officer (board member) or director for resolution on an informal basis.

If a member complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then it shall be presented to the Vice-President for formal resolution. The Vice-President and the Directors (athletic and advocates) of the association shall constitute the primary mediation board of the VCHAA. If they are unable to achieve a satisfactory resolution of a member complaint, then they shall request a "Special Meeting" of the Board of Directors for the purpose of airing and resolving said complaint. The VCHAA voting Board members shall be the final arbiter of all formal complaints.

Loitering

Due to safety considerations resulting from a poorly lit parking lot and the area surrounding the gym itself, we request and will enforce a "no loitering" policy at all games irrespective of the time of day they are played. Loitering is defined as unsupervised young people tarrying outside the building alone or in groups for periods of time longer than five minutes. To be considered supervised there must be an adult over 25 present that is known to a member family. All board

members, the athletic director and responsible adults appointed by the board will request individuals found loitering, to please return to the gym and may escort them into the gym if necessary. If the same individuals repeat this activity they will be asked to go home – even if they are team members. If the young person(s) is requested to leave, we will notify the parents immediately if they are in attendance at the game. If the parents are unable to take the child home due to the responsibilities at the gym (i.e., another child in a game, commitment to scoring, the snack bar, etc.), they will be requested to keep the offending young person with them inside the gym until the opportunity presents itself to take them home. Parents not in attendance will be notified as soon as possible. If there is no one available to take the offender(s) home, the young person(s) will be required to sit with a board member or a responsible adult until the parents can be contacted.

Illegal Activity

Any illegal activity observed directly will be dealt with immediately by local law enforcement and not by our families or their guests. Should you observe this type of behavior, please inform a board member or the athletic director immediately.

Music Policy

The playing of music at practices, or during warm-ups before games, can be very beneficial. VCHAA supports the lawful playing of music at its events with certain guidelines. Violating copyright laws is illegal as well as contrary to Christian values and will not be permitted.

Music at Practices

Any music played during practices must be accompanied by some form of proof of ownership (e.g., original CD, proof of paid/legal download), which is kept by and with the coaches for the duration of the practice(s). Such proof must be available at the gym since legal ownership can be challenged at any time by anyone.

The type of music chosen to be played at practices must promote Christian values/behavior and not be offensive to players or coaches. The coaches are responsible for the choice of music and the volume of the music.

Music at Games

The responsible board member or designee in charge of the music at a game is to have some form of proof of ownership (e.g., original CD, proof of paid/legal download) in their possession duration of the game for any music played during warm-up times or other breaks during games.

The type of music chosen to be played at games must promote Christian values and appeal to a broader audience which includes visitors, parents, relatives, friends, players, coaches, etc. We want the time to be enjoyable for all as much as is possible. While anyone can submit suggestions for songs to be played, at least one voting board member must be familiar with the music proposed for playing and give concurrence that it is appropriate for a general audience.

Ultimately, board members are responsible for the music, and volume thereof, played at games since it reflects on the organization as a whole.

Mentor Program

The VCHAA has a Mentor Program that is designed to provide Wildcat alumni the opportunity to serve with current Wildcat coaches as mentors to the players of the respective teams with which they are involved. This program has been implemented as an instrument for the betterment and continued growth and development of the Valencia County Homeschool Activities Association and is governed by the VCHAA Board of Directors. The intent of the program is multifaceted and is as follows:

1. It gives the coaches the opportunity to continue to provide advice and support to and foster the progress and development of the individual(s) selected for the program.
2. It gives the opportunity for the selected individuals to provide advice and support to and foster the progress and development of those younger players with whom he/she will be working.
3. Coaches will have an opportunity to focus on areas requiring immediate attention while the mentor attends to the less urgent needs of the team.
4. The mentor is given the opportunity to experience “hands-on” training to develop coaching skills required for future coaching opportunities.

The Mentor Program is optional and therefore, it is not mandatory for coaches to implement it in their respective programs. If utilized, the following guidelines should be observed and adhered to at all times to ensure the success of the Mentor Program:

1. Individuals selected for the Mentor Program must be at least 18 years of age.
2. He/she must have been a previous player for the VCHAA Wildcats.
3. Selectees must have the approval of the Board of Directors of the VCHAA.
4. The program will be limited to one mentor per gender for each sport until such time as the program can be evaluated for its effectiveness and success.
5. The individuals selected must be of the same gender as the team with which they will be working. (i.e., male mentors with boys teams; female mentors with girls teams).
6. Mentors will display the conduct, attitude, speech, and appearance that is consistent with the established Code of Conduct of the VCHAA.
7. Since mentors are NOT coaches, they will not 1) conduct practices, 2) replace a coach at games, nor 3) administer any disciplinary actions upon the players of their respective teams. These are responsibilities of the coaches. Therefore, there must be at least one coach present for every practice and/or game to oversee and supervise the mentor. If no coaches are available to conduct the practice and/or game, that practice will be cancelled and/or that game will be postponed, cancelled, or forfeited.
8. The Head Coach is directly responsible for the mentor assigned to his/her team. However, the mentor is responsible to the Head Coach and their assistant coach (es).
9. Disciplinary problems with or violation of any of the above rules by the mentor will be dealt with by the Head Coach and brought to the attention of the Activities Director who will document all such problems. Continued disciplinary infractions by the mentor will be brought to the attention of the board by the Activities Director and Head Coach. The board has the option to vote for the suspension and/or dismissal of the mentor from the program depending upon the nature and severity of the problem.

It is hoped that the Mentor Program of VCHAA will continue to develop and nurture the life skills for the mentor which were presented to them as Wildcat players and that they, in turn, can pass these skills on to the current players. Additionally, it is the desire of VCHAA to see the valuable coaching skills and abilities of its coaches passed on to the mentors.

Letter Award Requirements

VCHAA has established the Letter Award Program for the purpose of recognizing those student-athletes who have demonstrated a significant and consistent contribution to his/her Varsity team. The Letter Award is one which is to be earned by the student-athlete and not given. Therefore, the following requirements have been established to determine player eligibility for the letter award in his/her respective sport(s):

Volleyball

1. Player must be at the Freshman (9th Grade) level or higher
2. Assigned or played up to the Varsity team
3. Must have played in a minimum of 50% of the total number of regular season varsity games, excluding tournaments (NOT matches)

Basketball

1. Player must be at the Freshman (9th Grade) level or higher
2. Assigned or played up to the Varsity team
3. Must have played in a minimum of 75% of the total number of regular season varsity quarters, excluding tournaments

All Sports

1. No record of repeated violations of the VCHAA Code of Conduct indicating a habitual pattern of misconduct.
2. Any student-athlete who quits a team during the year which applies to the award will not be eligible to receive a letter award.
3. Each coach is responsible for explaining to his/her respective team at the orientation meeting held at the beginning of the season the criteria for lettering which have been established for that sport.
4. Letter Awards will be presented at the final team function (banquet, dinner, etc.).

Injuries/Family Emergencies

An athlete who is injured and unable to play due to a physician's order or must miss a game due to a family emergency (e.g., death in the family) will not be penalized (with respect to counting games towards lettering) for that time. Not penalized means that it is as if the game did not exist on that player's schedule. For injuries, the athlete is expected to support their team (if medically allowed, by showing up for practices and games, fund raisers, etc.). As soon as the athlete is cleared by the physician to play, the athlete is expected to resume practice and play.

Team Manager

The Team Manager Program has been established to provide the opportunity for the age ineligible children of VCHAA families to participate with the Wildcat teams in a non-playing capacity. The purpose of the program is to promote Wildcat Athletics with these younger individuals and encourage their future participation as active players. Those individuals selected for the program must meet the eligibility requirements and comply with the regulations established below.

Eligibility Requirements

1. Must be an immediate member of a family which is a current VCHAA member in good standing
2. Must be six to ten years of age by the first game of the season
3. Must have the approval of the Head Coach of the team he/she will be a part of
4. Must have written parental consent to participate in the program

Regulations

1. Must be of the same gender as the team they are a part of
2. No more than two individuals will be selected per gender for each sport
3. Cannot participate in more than one sport per season (Season begins with volleyball in one year and ends with basketball the following year)
4. Will be responsible to all coaches of the team they are part of
5. Must display the conduct, attitude, discipline, and appearance that is consistent with the VCHAA Code of Conduct

Responsibilities

1. Individuals should attend as many games, home and away, as possible however, 100% attendance is not mandatory
2. During the games, individuals are responsible for the following:
 - a. During warm-up time, intermission, etc. will assist in retrieving loose balls and returning them to the players
 - b. At end of warm-up time, intermission, etc. gather all balls and place them in ball bag, ball rack, etc and return them to their proper storage area
 - c. Ensure that all water bottles are placed in the team bench area
 - d. Ensure first aid kit is readily available at the team bench
 - e. Provide players with their respective water bottles as needed
 - f. Refill water bottles for all players as necessary
 - g. Must remain seated on the bench at all times when not required to carry out necessary responsibilities
 - h. At the end of each game, must gather and dispose of all trash (empty water bottles, etc)
 - i. Carry out any additional responsibilities as assigned by the coaches
3. Individuals are not allowed to have family, friends, etc. with them on the court or the team area (including team bench, locker room, etc) at anytime during the game including pre-game and intermission warm-up periods.
4. All individuals who consistently fail to meet the standards of the program may be dismissed from further participation

The Team Manager Program is optional. Coaches, at their discretion, may elect not to utilize the program for their respective sports/teams. Once implemented, coaches may also elect to discontinue the program at anytime during the season, if necessary, to avoid interference with their overall coaching responsibilities.

Associate Membership

VCHAA has established an Associate Membership for those families whose circumstances prevent them from full participation with the organization. Associate members shall observe the following standards:

1. Associate Memberships are limited to those families whose children are homeschooled on a full time basis (i.e.-no private or public school enrollment or participation in any activities)
2. Associate Membership dues are \$20.00 per year/child/sport. Once the membership application has been approved, this fee is non-refundable and is due in full by the deadline established for full membership applicants. There shall be no discounts (multi-child, fundraiser participation, etc) applied to Associate Member dues.
3. Every participant must have a physical examination performed and documented by his/her physician for the year in which they are participating indicating that they are physically able to participate in all physical activities
4. Must complete and sign all application forms including parental consent and liability waivers
5. All participants must be at least 11 years of age and not older than 18 years of age
6. Associate members will be restricted to one day of participation per week and will not be allowed to participate in regular or post season games in ANY capacity which includes sitting on the team bench
7. Members will participate in ALL activities of the team with which they are associated with and will be subject to the supervision, direction, and authority of all coaches
8. Must display the conduct, attitude, discipline, and appearance that is consistent with the VCHAA Code of Conduct
9. Participants who fail to comply with these standards may have their membership immediately terminated

Since Full Memberships receive priority, the total number of Associate Memberships will be determined at the start of each season (beginning with volleyball) and will depend on the total number of full member participation. This number may eliminate any or all Associate Memberships for any given sport during any given season. Associate Memberships are not automatically renewed each season. Therefore, renewal associate membership applications may be denied in order to allow for others to participate at this level.