



Student-Athlete Handbook 2023-2024

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT DIRECTORY




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Mission Statement

Participation in our athletics program is a privilege. Student-athletes are role models. We expect our student-athletes to rise to a higher standard. We believe the value of athletic competition complements the mission of AYA. Participation in athletics provides students with an opportunity to grow in the manifestation of Islamic character as they face and conquer challenges faced within the team and amongst the competition. Our student-athletes experience growth as they strive to master traits of selflessness, diligence, self-control, patience, courage, perseverance, humility, and submission. These experiences translate directly to real life during and after these formative school years.

“The best of you is he from whom good is anticipated and safety from his evil is assured; the worst of you is he from whom nothing good is expected and one is not safe from his evil.” (Sahih Tirmidhi)

Athletic Department Philosophy and Goals

It is our belief that the sunnah of our beloved Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) should be implemented in every part of our lives, and sports are no exception. AYA students are expected to play with and have shown heart, spirit, and the best of Islamic character. Every day, every minute, and every second is a blessing, a responsibility, and an opportunity to shine the light of our Iman through our conduct (sportsmanship), leadership, and actions that positively affect the lives of others. The following are the goals of the AYA Athletic Department:

- Instill in the student-athlete a sense of responsibility by demanding consistently high standards of behavior and making the student-athlete aware and respectful of the needs of others.
- Require dedication and commitment in the student-athlete by directing him/her to an acceptance of the goals of the team and an appreciation of the needs of his/her teammates, coaches, opponents, and officials.
- Encourage selflessness in the student-athlete by requiring that their actions on and off the playing field be consistent with the goals of the team and school as a whole and not be directed towards individual honors.
- Further a sense of personal discipline on the part of the student-athlete by demanding abstention from activities that limit his/her athletic, academic, and personal potential.
- Teach life lessons that come through true competition, teamwork, effort, sportsmanship, preparation, dignity, worth, and handling adversity.

Student-Athlete Outcomes

Athletic competition at American Youth Academy will enable the student-athlete to:

- Develop athletic skills.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship, emotional control, honesty, and integrity always.
- Demonstrate respect for coaches, teammates, opponents, officials, and spectators always.

- Accept winning and losing with dignity and a balanced perspective.
- Demonstrate commitment and a willingness to sacrifice his/her time and energy for the goals of the team.
- Gain a sense of community and responsibility.
- Demonstrate discipline by abstaining from activities that limit his/her athletic, academic, and personal potential.

Age Policy

Establishing requirements for athletic eligibility and AYA adheres to these requirements and adds further conditions for the betterment of our student-athletes. Students that American Youth Academy determines are ineligible may not participate in any competition (i.e., games or scrimmages). Eligibility will be determined by the Principal and the Athletic Director. Eligibility issues fall into four main categories:

1. Age:
 - A. 11-13 for Middle School Athletics. 14-17 for Highschool Athletics.
2. Scholastic:
 - A. Student must:
 - i. Have a cumulative G.P.A. of 3.0
 - ii. Have passed all classes
 - iii. Enrolled full-time at American Youth Academy

General Athletic Department Policies & Procedures

In addition to the policies and procedures included below, each team may publish a particular set of rules and/or policies (which must be approved by the Athletic Director) that are added to and governed under the athletic department.

Absences:

Unexcused absences from practices and/or games are not tolerated and are reasons for the student-athlete to be removed from the team.

Attendance at practices and games is mandatory for every team member. Sickness and illness are considered excused absences if the student-athlete communicates their absence with their coach prior to missing the practice/game. Absences from practice due to student events or school retreats will be viewed as excused absences only when the student-athlete has communicated with his/her head coach that he/she will be absent from practice at least 48 hours before the absence. For school retreats and other school-sponsored trips/events, the student-athlete must try to schedule the event at a time that does not conflict with practice or games.

Academic & Behavioral Eligibility – American Youth Academy Policy

After each grading period or end of the week, the Head & Assistant Coach will check the grades of all student-athletes to ensure academic eligibility. If a student-athlete is declared academically ineligible (their GPA is below 3.0), the coach will contact the student-athlete. American Youth Academy follows this protocol regarding a student-athletes academic ineligibility:

- The student-athlete is ineligible to participate for one grading period (one quarter). At the end of the following grading period, the student's ineligibility status will be reviewed.
- During the ineligibility period the student-athlete may practice with the team, but the student-athlete may not participate in any competitions.
- During the ineligibility period, the student-athlete may not miss any school time for athletic purposes (travel to away games, practice, etc.).
- Referrals or Detentions of any kind will result from the student sitting out the partial or an entire game.
- A school suspension will result in sitting out multiple games depending on the # of days suspended with probation. The accountability will be determined by the AD and Coaching Staff.
- Multiple suspensions will result in immediate removal from the team.

Athletic Participation Requirements

Prior to participation in tryouts, every student-athlete must have their Athletic Participation Packet completed and on file with the Athletic Office. The Athletic Packet includes the following forms:

- Pre-Participation Physical Exam
- Waiver, Consent, and Agreement Form
- Concussion, Heat Illness & Cardiac Arrest Certification
- Student-Athlete and Parent Contract

The Pre-Participation Physical Exam Form can be submitted directly to the Head Coach or Assistant Coach. The Athletic Department will not allow any student to participate in tryouts, practice, or competitions until his/her Athletic Participation packet has been completed.

Adherence to these regulations is required of all student-athletes at AYA. Enforcement will be the responsibility of the coaches and the Athletic Director. Students who fail to comply with the regulations are subject to dismissal from the program.

Conduct and Policies for Student-Athletes

Participation in athletics is a privilege and student-athletes must represent AYA in a positive fashion.

- Student-athletes must treat teammates, coaches, opponents, officials, and fans with respect and keep to the highest standards of sportsmanship.
- Taunting, trash-talking, or any other forms of divisive behavior are unacceptable. Coaches of individual teams in conjunction with the Athletic Director will determine sanctions for such behavior; repeated offenses make a student-athlete subject to dismissal from the program.
- Swearing or abusive language will not be tolerated. Coaches of individual teams, in consultation with the Athletic Director, will determine sanctions for such behavior. Repeated offenses make a student-athlete subject to dismissal from the program.
- Team members may not participate during their season in any practices or open gyms for another AYA team unless by prior agreement. Such agreements will be because of a meeting between involved coaches, the student-athlete, and the Athletic Director.
- Student-athletes who are found in possession of or use illegal drugs, tobacco, or alcohol are subject to being declared ineligible and are subject to expulsion as defined by the AYA Athletics Student/Parent Handbook. The length of the period of ineligibility will be determined by the Athletic Director in consultation with American Youth Academy Administration.

Conflict Resolution

Student-athletes and/or parents who have a concern with a coach should follow these procedures:

1. Student-athlete approaches the coach and asks for a time to meet to discuss the issue.
2. If a resolution is not reached, the student-athlete should contact the Athletic Director to arrange for a meeting to discuss the issue.
3. In the rare instance that there is still no resolution to the issue, the Athletic Director will arrange a meeting with the student-athlete, the parent, the coach, and the Athletic Director.
4. School administrators will only be involved to discuss the Athletic Director's handling of the situation.

Drug, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Steroid Policy

As a member of an athletic team, student-athletes will refrain from using alcohol, drugs, and tobacco in accordance with school policy. If a coach or parent becomes aware of any situation involving illegal drug or alcohol use, they should immediately bring the information to the Athletic Director, Dean of Students, or Principal. Student-athletes will be disciplined and/or dismissed from an athletic team if they participate in the use of these substances.

Student Athlete Rules

Evaluations: At the end of each season of sport, every student-athlete will have an opportunity to evaluate their coaches through the Coaches' Performance Evaluation administered by the athletic department.

Facilities: Student-athletes may use AYA facilities only with AYA athletic department approval and under the supervision of an AYA faculty, staff member, or coach.

Hazing: Hazing is prohibited. Any attempt to hold a "rookie night" or any other type of initiation, even if held privately, will be cause for dismissal from the team. AYA affirms the dignity of every student. Hazing is unacceptable conduct, as well as illegal, and will not be tolerated.

Dress Code: Student-athletes must abide by the dress code at all times. Girls Teams: Practice Dress Code - Loose-fitting pants, long sleeve mid-thigh length shirts. Game Dress Code - School-issued uniforms. Boys Teams: Practice Dress Code - Shorts with compression pants underneath, T-shirts with shoulders covered.. Game Dress Code - School-issued uniforms.

Informed Consent

By its very nature, competitive athletics can put students in situations in which serious, catastrophic, and perhaps fatal accidents could occur.

Student-athletes and parents/guardians must assess the risks involved in such participation and make their choice to participate despite those risks. No amount of instruction, precaution, or supervision will eliminate all risk of injury. Just as driving an automobile involves risk, participation in athletics is inherently dangerous.

By choosing to participate or by granting permission to participate in an athletic competition, the student-athlete and the parent/guardian acknowledge that playing or practicing a sport can be a dangerous activity involving the risk of injury. Both the student-athlete and the parent must understand that the dangers and risks of playing, or practicing include, but are not limited to, death, complete or partial paralysis, brain damage, serious injury to virtually all internal organs, bones, joints, ligaments, muscles, tendons, and other aspects of the skeletal system and potential impairment to other aspects of the body, general health, and well-being.

Intercollegiate Athletics

American Youth Academy and our coaching staff seek to encourage student-athletes to set goals and to work diligently to help students reach their goals. When considering participating in intercollegiate athletics, families should expect AYA coaching staff to provide honest feedback regarding a student-athletes potential to participate in college athletics and the proper level for competition.

The American Youth Academy faculty and staff as well as the coaching staff are helpful and knowledgeable regarding intercollegiate athletics and will help in the process of the student-athletes pursuing collegiate athletics. Decisions regarding playing time, systems, formatting, scheduling, etc. are not made with college athletics in mind. Instead, our athletic program exists to teach lessons that can only be learned in an educational athletic forum.

Coaches are not expected nor required to ensure that student-athletes can compete at the collegiate level. However, families will find that coaches at AYA consistently work hard to ensure interested students could pursue their passions at the next level. Student-athletes interested in competing as college athletes should make their desires known to coaches and athletic administration early in their high school career to have as many options as possible upon graduation.

Parent/Spectator Guidelines

We are blessed to have a strong tradition of supportive parents in our athletic program. Often, parents are eager to get involved and help but sometimes do not know how to proceed. There are multiple volunteer opportunities available. Please contact the athletic department (nsaleh@ayatampa.com) for further information.

Expectations of Parents:

- Attend the seasonal Parent Meeting and the team end-of-year.
- Work closely with school personnel to ensure proper academic progress.
- Ensure that your son or daughter attends all scheduled practices and athletic contests.
- Acknowledge the authority of the coach to determine strategy, player selection, and playing time.
- Exhibit and promote sportsmanship from students and other parents.
- Support your son/daughter by attending contests and encouraging his/her teammates.
- Be an active member of the parent volunteer groups.

Spectator Guidelines: American Youth Academy believes that the student-athlete's athletic competition is a significant part of his/her entire educational experience. Everyone involved in our athletic program has a duty to ensure that our programs impart important life skills and promote the development of good character. Essential elements of character building are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core ethical values: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and good citizenship.

The highest potential of sports is realized when all involved intentionally Teach, Enforce, Advocate, and model these values and are committed to the ideal of pursuing victory with honor. The parents/guardians of our student-athletes must play an important role in this commitment. Our good-faith efforts to honor the words and the spirit of these ideals can dramatically improve the quality of the student-athlete's sports experience.

Parents and spectators at all AYA athletic contests are expected to always support these values by displaying good sportsmanship.

The following are some of the ways to ensure you are part of a positive youth sports culture:

- Offer encouragement to all the players and coaches on our teams.
- Show respect for the decisions made by the contest's officials. Refrain from booing, hissing, or making derogatory remarks toward game officials.
- Respect the fans, coaches, referees, and participants from opposing schools.
- Follow all the rules of the host site and follow the directions and rules set by administrators or designees from both schools.
- Avoid criticizing the decisions of student-athletes, coaches, and officials at events or in your home.

The administration and staff at AYA will hold all spectators at our athletic events to the highest ideals of good sportsmanship. Spectators who are unable to exhibit the necessary sportsmanship to attend our athletic events may be subject to some or all of the following disciplinary actions:

- Verbal reminder.
- Removal from the site for the remainder of the contest.
- Meeting with the AYA administration.
- Permanent banning from AYA athletic contests.
- The child is removed from the team.
- The child is removed from the school

Should you ever become aware of or concerned about issues of poor sportsmanship on the part of our students, student-athletes, coaches, or parents contact the supervisory personnel on duty at the game or the Athletic Director.

Participation

Participation Fee: The athletic fee is \$300.00 per sport. The participation fee is due at the beginning of the season and is paid through the online registration system. The fee helps to cover the following athletic costs:

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| Head Coaches | Uniforms | Officials |
| Equipment | Facilities | Awards |
| Transportation | Equipment Repair | Tournament Fees |
| League Fees | | |

Participation in multiple sports: The AYA Athletic Department seeks to promote the concept of well-rounded and multi-sport student-athletes. We work cooperatively with student-athletes to allow them to pursue interests in as many areas as possible during their time at AYA. All student-athletes who compete for the AYA team are allowed to try out for a team in the next season of sport upon the conclusion of the previous season. Coaches and teachers will try to work cooperatively with families to allow participation in multiple activities when possible. However, coaches can set the minimum requirements for team membership.

Practice Sessions: Practice sessions are closed to parents/guardians and spectators. Often the presence of parents puts pressure on student-athletes and serves as a distraction to the team members. When arranged in advance, college coaches are permitted to watch practices for recruitment purposes; this must be arranged by the head coach and communicated with the Athletic Director. There are no Sunday practice sessions.

Quitting: A high level of commitment is expected from our student-athletes. Student-athletes who quit a team after first cuts are posted OR prior to the conclusion of the season OR who are removed from a team by the Athletic Department are ineligible for any other team at AYA until the original team's season has been completed. At the discretion of the Athletic Director and Administration, the student-athlete may also be required to sit out 30 days before participation in their next sport/activity.

Social Media Policy: Student-athletes are always representatives of American Youth Academy and AYA Athletics and their online behavior must positively represent themselves, their team, the athletic program, and the school. Student-athletes must refrain from using social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat, etc.) to harass, threaten, annoy, intimidate, or make fun of others in any way. Student-athletes must refrain from using social media to speak negatively about AYA Athletics, AYA coaches, teammates, opponents, officials, and spectators. Negative posts on Social Media sites will not be tolerated and are a reason for the student-athlete to be removed from the team.

Sportsmanship: Beyond the guidelines and regulations that AYA is obligated to follow, it is the hope that everyone associated with our athletic program recognizes the purpose of our sportsmanship policies. Anyone associated with an athletic contest has a responsibility to uphold the highest standards of sportsmanship before, during, and after a contest. Sportsmanship includes, but is not limited, to the following:

- Show respect for teammates, coaches, opponents, officials, and fans.
- Treat opponents as guests while they are on campus.
- Accept both victory and defeat with grace and dignity.
- Refrain from heckling, jeering, or using profane language.
- Be positive in words and actions.

Parents are the primary role models for their children. It is critical that parents set the best example of sportsmanship, particularly when they are spectators at an athletic contest.

Transportation Information (bus/vans/private vehicle)

To travel with a team, student-athletes must be eligible to compete in the contest to which the team is traveling. With rare exceptions (weekend contests), transportation to and from athletic contests is arranged by the AYA Athletic Department.

Transportation by any other means is permissible only with the consent of the Athletic Director and coach and permission of the student-athlete parent/guardian. Any parent wishing to assist in driving student-athletes other than their own son or daughter must be cleared through the school (fingerprinting, mandated reporter, etc.) and complete the Volunteer Driver packet (available in Athletic Office).

For off-campus practices, transportation is provided to practice; however, it is the responsibility of the student-athlete and his/her parent/guardian to arrange for transportation home from AYA. In the case that transportation to practice is not provided by American Youth Academy, the student-athlete and his/her parent/guardian must arrange to get to practice.

Transportation by Bus

- Faculty and/or adult supervision will be provided for activities when school buses are used.
- Coaches and bus supervisors shall always assume major responsibility for the proper and safe conduct of student-athletes.
- Unauthorized passengers may not ride a bus with American Youth Academy student-athletes.

Transportation by Auto (private vehicle)

- Students are allowed to drive themselves to athletic contests under special circumstances and only if approved by the coach, Athletic Director, and parent/guardian. The Athletic Director must receive the completed Travel Permission form at least 48 hours before the student-athlete wishes to drive to the contest.
- Student-athletes are NEVER allowed to drive other student-athletes to and from athletic contests or practices.
- Under no circumstances are those who are driving to have more than 7 students plus the driver in any vehicle. If there are more than 7 students plus the driver, a bus driver's license is required by law. Also, NO RECREATIONAL VEHICLES, MOTOR HOMES, or OPEN VEHICLES are to be used regardless of the number of passengers.

The only time student-athletes may arrive at an athletic contest without traveling in transportation provided by the school is:

- On a Saturday or non-regular school day if school is not in session when it is the parent's responsibility to provide transportation to the site of the contest.
- When the contest is in the evening and the coach determines that it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide transportation to the contest.

Try-Out Information: Any student-athlete who intends to try out for a team must attend the meeting held by the coach. The coach will communicate the physical abilities and general skill level required to make a team in their program. The coaching staff will evaluate and determine the level at which each student-athlete will be placed. This includes any student-athlete who might begin tryouts late due to an overlapping commitment to another AYA team. Only in rare situations would a student be allowed to make up a missed try-out date.

In many cases, making a team at AYA is highly competitive. Student-athletes trying out for a team must realize that they may not make the team. After the tryout period, the coach has the exclusive right to determine if the student-athlete demonstrated the talent, ability, and attitude to successfully compete in the program.

Uniforms/Equipment: Uniforms and AYA-owned equipment issued to the players must be returned in good condition* at the time the coach arranges. Student-athletes who do not turn in equipment/uniforms will not be allowed to participate in the next sport until the uniform/equipment is received or the AYA Athletic Department has been reimbursed for the cost of replacement.

Medical Clearance – Pre-Participation Physical Exam

Student-athletes wishing to participate in a sport must show evidence of having a physical examination by a licensed Florida Physician that covers their entire sports season.

Injury Management

Student-athletes must report all injuries to their coach and the athletic trainer. The athletic trainer will evaluate each injury and determine the best course of action (rest, MD/DO referral, etc.) for the health and well-being of the student-athlete. The athletic trainer will determine when the injured student-athlete may return to athletic activity.

Student-athletes who seek the care of a physician, either by referral of the athletic trainer or at a parent's preference, MUST provide written documentation from the physician stating their injury or illness status.

This documentation should state the nature of the injury, recommendations for return to play, and a return to participation date. Student-athletes who do not submit documentation, after receiving care by a physician, will not be allowed to participate in any capacity until such a note is received by the athletic trainer.

- Injured student-athletes are still part of the team and are expected to attend practices and competitions as “observers” until they are medically able and cleared to resume athletic activity. The exception to this rule applies to student-athletes who have suffered a concussion—see below for Concussion Policies
- If a medical professional removes a student-athlete from an activity, then the student-athlete must have a signed note from a medical professional to return to the sport. If a student-athlete is withheld or limited from athletic participation because of an injury or illness, then the athletic training staff holds ultimate authority on return-to-play decisions. In the circumstance where a student-athlete seeks medical attention outside of the AYA athletic training staff and is withheld or limited from athletic participation because of an injury or illness, then the following **MUST** occur:
 1. The student-athlete must present a signed physician release form (“physician’s note”) to the AYA athletic trainer (NOT the coaching staff) stating they can return to athletic participation. Any student-athlete who does not present a physician release to the athletic trainer will not be allowed to resume practice or participate in games.
 2. The athletic trainer will then make the decision to return the student-athlete to athletic participation.
 3. The coaching staff will be notified that the student-athlete can return to athletic participation.
 4. All student-athletes must undergo concussion testing to participate, as scheduled by the athletic trainer.

Concussion Management Policy

A concussion, no matter what degree, is a serious injury. The athletic trainer will work closely with the parents and student-athlete to determine the best course of action. If it is determined that a student-athlete requires a modified school schedule/workload as a part of the recovery process, that student-athlete will not be permitted to attend practices or games until the student-athlete provides notification from a physician that they can return to their prior academic workload. However, he/she is not yet cleared to participate in his/her sport; he/she may attend practices and games, but he/she is not eligible for early dismissal on game days.

Return to play is determined on a case-by-case basis. The student-athlete must be completely symptom-free and cleared by his/her attending physician (MD/DO) with written documentation. A student-athlete may not return to full participation or competition sooner than seven days after being diagnosed with a concussion by a physician. Once cleared, he/she will go through a gradual stepwise progression of physical exertion, sport-specific activities, and exposure to contact. The student-athlete must check in with the athletic trainer daily prior to progressing to the next step. If symptoms return during progression, the student-athlete must cease activity and report his/her symptoms to the athletic trainer. Once symptom-free for at least 24 hours, he/she may resume the process at the previous step. American Youth Academy policy states that every student-athlete is required to meet the following criteria to be allowed to return to play after a concussion

1. The student-athlete is asymptomatic at rest and with exertion.
2. The post-concussion Impact data is within the normal range of baseline data
3. The student-athlete must have a normal neurological and physical exam and be cleared for full activity by his/her primary care medical physician.

WEIGHT ROOM RULES

The Weight Room is available to AYA student-athletes, AYA students, AYA Faculty & Staff, and AYA coaches.

1. You may only work out in the Weight Room if you are properly equipped; running shoes are required. Vans, bare feet, and slippers are not permitted. School uniforms are not proper workout attire.
2. If you are in the Weight Room, then you need to be working out (The Weight Room is not a place to socialize or to study).
3. No bags are allowed in the Weight Room. Backpacks and other bags need to be placed in a locker or outside the Weight Room.
4. Music is prohibited.
5. RE-RACK YOUR WEIGHTS!!! If you use something, put it back in the proper place. Spotters must be used for all heavy lifting.
6. No food or drinks are allowed in the Weight Room. Water is allowed.
7. Wipe down the equipment after you use it with the sanitizing wipes that are provided.
8. If a piece of equipment is broken, notify the director or any coaching staff immediately.
9. Make sure you are safe and that you leave the Weight Room better than you found it.
10. Athletic Trainer must be always with you when using the Weight Room.



I agree to accept the participation standards and policies listed above and knowingly accept that violations of these standards may result in a variety of sanctions by the athletics department including, but not limited to restriction, suspension from, or termination of participation in the athletics program.

Student-Athlete Signature:

_____ Date: _____

Parent's Signature:

_____ Date: _____