



**2025-26 Upper School Handbook
For Parents and Students**



500 Saratoga Avenue | San Jose, CA 95129 | 408.345.9200

www.harker.org

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OUR GOALS

Our goals are to:

- have fun and a positive experience.
- develop school pride, unity and character and to teach life lessons such as commitment, teamwork, respect, integrity, loyalty and responsibility.
- provide an experience where success is measured not by winning or losing, but by effort, and by working hard to become the best athlete possible.
- win every game and accept losses with humility and responsibility.

COMMITMENT

- Students are encouraged to try out for any team. Coaches determine what level (JV or varsity) is best for the athlete.
- After the tryout period any student deciding to stay with the team must complete the season. If a student quits without meeting with the coach and athletic director, that student may face a penalty affecting the next season's sport. We plan a four-year scope and sequence similar to any academic subject. If students enjoy their experience we strongly encourage a four-year commitment in order to gain the most benefit.
- Be aware of season start dates and final end dates which include all playoff games. Athletes must commit to their sports until their team is eliminated from playoff contention.

ATHLETIC CENTER

The athletic center is off limits during school hours except for:

- dropping off athletic bags/equipment before 8 a.m.
 - early athletic dismissal
 - changing clothes for P.E. or pre-scheduled workouts
 - a pre-established appointment with an athletic staff member.
- Appropriate, mature behavior is expected at all times in the locker rooms.

PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS

- Attend every practice: homework or outside activities are not an excuse to skip practice.
- Work hard, commit and do your best. Try to get better each day.
- When in disagreement with a drill, continue on and discuss your concern at an appropriate time.
- Listen to words spoken by a coach, not the volume.

CONFLICTS AND SCHEDULING

- Practices and/or competitions do occur during vacation periods, including summer, so please plan accordingly. Students must personally and directly communicate, in advance, any conflicts with their coach.
- Some notes about potential conflicts:
 - Medical appointments and outside activities should not conflict with your sport and every effort should be made to reschedule.
 - College visits should be scheduled around your sport as much as possible.
 - We do conduct a modified practice schedule during finals week which requires attendance for winter sports. Practices before SAT/ACT dates are mandatory. AP exams must be rescheduled if it conflicts with a game.
- Time management is vital. A missed practice should be an extremely rare occurrence. Sixty percent of the student body participates in at least one sport, and they all make it through. However, if one's academic load is becoming too stressful, please talk to the coach to see if there is some flexibility with schedules. Time management is a necessary and achievable skill. That said, Harker school policy states that you must attend a majority of the school day to participate in any co-curricular activity.

There is an overlap between fall/winter and winter/spring seasons. Athletes must complete their earlier season before joining the upcoming season. Simply communicate this conflict with the coaches so they know when to expect you.

PLAYING THE GAMES

- We participate in the following leagues and organizations:
 - California Interscholastic Federation (CIF), our state governing body, www.cifstate.org
 - Central Coast Section (CCS), which includes more than 100 schools from King City to San Francisco, and is one of 13 sections in the state. www.cifccs.org
 - West Bay Athletic League (WBAL) – most sports, www.wbalsports.org
 - Santa Clara Valley Athletic League (SCVAL) - (water polo, boys volleyball), www.scval.com
 - Peninsula Athletic League (PAL)- Baseball, <https://www.smcoe.org/about/peninsula-athletic-league/>
- Dismissal times for competitions are posted and sent to teachers the week prior to a game. Students must communicate with teachers regarding upcoming missed class time.
- Transportation to/from games will be communicated the week prior as either a round trip, drop only, or as families “on their own,” depending on circumstances.
- After away games, coaches will release students to parents only, except with previous email communication that includes all parties allowing such transportation.
- Students may not drive other students to any athletic competition or practice.
- With prior approval from the athletic director, a student-athlete may drive themselves to a competition if they live close to the opposing site. General boundaries for self-driving are south of Atherton or Fremont and north of Morgan Hill.

SPORTSMANSHIP AND CONDUCT

- Following the CIF Code of Conduct regarding sportsmanship, students must demonstrate
 - Trustworthiness
 - Respect
 - Responsibility
 - Fairness
 - Caring
 - Citizenship

PHYSICALS AND HEALTH INSURANCE

- All students who participate in interscholastic sports must have a current physical on file and other mandatory paperwork. Physicals are valid for one year from the date of exam. All required paperwork is to be submitted online through the Student Medical Record (Magnus).
- All students who participate in interscholastic sports must have health insurance.

PARENTS' ROLE

- Go to your child's games and be a positive spectator. Cheer for Harker. Resist responding to unsportsmanlike behavior of other fans. Harker will not tolerate any parental interaction or comments to game officials or coaches during games.
- Playing time is only discussed between player and coach and not with parents.
- Check with coaches on how you may assist.
- Please be prompt at pick-up times.
- Let the coaches coach, officials officiate, and players play.
- Parents are not permitted to attend practices.

COMMUNICATION

- Please call anytime you have a question or feel that what you are hearing or seeing is inconsistent with our stated goals.
- When problems arise, please follow this plan:
 1. The student talks to the coach;
 2. If concerns are not resolved then the parent talks to the coach;
 3. If concerns are not resolved then the parent talks to the athletic director. More often than not, concerns are resolved at the student to coach level.
- Please do not fear "retribution" for bringing up a concern. If there is an issue, direct communication is always best.
- 24-hour rule: Do not question a coach right after a game, to prevent emotional reactions.
- Refer to the athletics website for up-to-date information including team schedules. You may also subscribe to your child's schedule to receive change notifications.

www.harker.org/upper-school/programs-extracurriculars/athletics

Harker News Online Sports: <https://news.harker.org/tag/athletics/>

CONTACT INFORMATION

Upper School Athletic Director

Dan Molin

408.345.9627

dan.molin@harker.org

Assistant Athletic Director

Alfredo Alves

408.345.9656

alfredo.alves@harker.org

Head Athletic Trainer

Wes Howard

408.345.9245

wes.howard@harker.org

Strength & Conditioning Coordinator

Marlen Castaneda

408.345.9614

marlen.castaneda@harker.org



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