



# **PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

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## **Section I**

### **General Information**

**Forward:** This Handbook is designed to familiarize you with the Lincoln Eagles Basketball Program, and provide you with information about policies and requirements for all participants (players, parents, coaches, etc.). Both players and parents should read this handbook, have a thorough understanding of what is expected, and be prepared to comply with its provisions.

No handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question, but the intention of this handbook is to provide a framework of expectations for a program that is striving for excellence in all we do (Col 3:23). It may be necessary from time to time for those charged with leadership of the program (Athletic Director, Board Members, and Coaches) to make tough decisions in enforcing or interpreting what follows. Please understand that this is done with the intention of “Making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” (Eph. 4:3).

The Lincoln Eagles Board reserves the right to revise or rescind any policy or portion of the handbook as it deems appropriate. Players and parents will be notified of any impactful in-season changes to the handbook as soon as possible. Updated copies of the handbook will be provided at the beginning of each season with descriptions of any significant changes.

#### **Vision, Mission, & Values Statements**

Clearly identifying and defining your purpose (Vision), how you will accomplish that purpose (Mission), and the values that guide that pursuit are essential to actually accomplishing what you set out to do. The Lincoln Eagles Basketball Program defines each of these as follows:

Vision: Developing Godly Character through the Pursuit of Excellence in Basketball. (Col. 3:23)

Mission: We will use the adversity that comes when we play the game and give our best as a tool for building a character foundational to a life that honors God. (Rom. 5:3-5)

Values:

- 1) We value EXCELLENCE. Giving our very best no matter the circumstances, no matter our feelings, no matter what anyone else says, and no matter if anyone else is watching, is what God expects of us all. (Col. 3:23)
- 2) We value IMPROVEMENT. The simple goal to “Get Better” every day as players and as people is something that anyone can achieve. (Proverbs 4:18)
- 3) We value CHARACTER. On and off the court, our character is a reflection of what God has done in our hearts, how we observe His commands, and ultimately how we represent Him to a lost and dying world. (Romans 5:3-5)
- 4) We value RELATIONSHIP. God designed us for relationship because we are truly better together. Our awareness of this shows in how we treat others (Teammates, Coaches, Officials, Other Teams) and humble ourselves. (Proverbs 27:17)
- 5) We value FAMILY. God has ordained the nuclear family and His family the Church as the primary way to meet our needs as people. As a Program, we will respect this, while also striving to create our own “family” environment/experience for all participants. (Ephesians 3:14-21)

**Eligibility:** We welcome players from Lincoln and the surrounding areas who are homeschooled for at least 51% of their classes over the course of the school year. Please contact the Athletic Director if you have any specific questions about your child's eligibility.

**Coaching Philosophy:** The desire of the Lincoln Eagles Basketball Program is to develop young men and women of character through athletics. Coaching technique will vary from coach to coach, as well as with different ages and team levels. Our desire is for our players to develop their character and improve their skills. The best way for us to quantitatively measure our success is by tracking wins and losses. Thus, the Lincoln Eagles Basketball program will always try to win, while at the same time making sure we do that with our character and Christian witness intact and untarnished.

Junior High teams will see coaches rotate players in and out of the game more frequently in order to develop players as they mature, and their skill develops. Our goal here is not equal playing time, but appropriate playing time, which takes into account a player's readiness to perform, comfort level, and game situation. At the High School/Varsity level the coaches will play the best players, as determined by the coaches with the goal to win the game. These decisions are the responsibility of each team's coaches and are based on various factors, including player attendance at practices/games, attitude/effort at practices/games, skill and athleticism, cohesiveness with other players, etc. If players have questions about playing time, the player should ask their coach directly first. If questions remain, parents may reach out to the coach. As a last resort, you can reach out to the Athletic Director or a member of the Board. Our coaches are held to a high standard by the Lincoln Eagles Board and are provided "Coaching Guidelines" which are the program's expectations for them. These are available for your review upon request.

**Team Assignment:** Players are assigned to teams first based on age, then by ability, and finally coach, player, and parent preference. The assignment continues at the coach's discretion throughout the season. Junior High and younger players will remain with their teams through 8th grade, however, older junior high players may be asked to play JV games as necessary for development. Coaches may request a player to move to a different/higher team or play for more than one team only after discussion with the player's parents and the coaches for all teams involved. Varsity starters may not start on JV teams but may play as player numbers require. Our program is willing to consider placement of players on teams to make family life and schedules easier. However, it has to make sense and not be disruptive to effective practices, and thus it must be approved by the team head coach.

**Age/Date Cutoff for Junior High and High School Competition:** There is a cutoff age and date for participation in Junior High versus High School competition. The cutoff age and date is 15, on or after September 1<sup>st</sup>. So if a student-athlete turns 15 on August 31<sup>st</sup> or before, the player must play at the high school level. There is one exception to this, the Lincoln Eagles Junior High Teams participate in the Catholic League in Lincoln, and their cutoff is January 1<sup>st</sup>. So If you turn 15 before January 1, you will not be able to participate in the approximately 8 Catholic League games we play each season. September 1st is also the cutoff date for high school eligibility, except that the age is 19 instead of 15.

**Team Travel:** Due to the nature of homeschool sports, travel for single games and tournaments is normal. In general, it is the Program's position that anytime we travel more than 90 minutes away we attempt to get multiple games for each team participating. All travel expenses for games and tournaments are the responsibility of the player and their family. Travel at the high school level is

essential and will occur regularly. If this presents a problem for your family, please communicate with your coach. Travel is always at the discretion of the family, however, it should be noted that the inability to travel will very likely impact your student athlete's playing time. While traveling, the player is to be under the direct authority of their parent, or another adult assigned responsibility by the parent if they are not traveling with their player. Families have the option of not housing with the team during overnight travel if it is in their best interest and they have made proper arrangements with coaches. However, the player should do all they can to be present for team functions (meals, meetings, film sessions, etc.).

**Parental Involvement:** A huge part of our success as an Eagles Basketball Program is the willingness of our families and players to help with the various duties that are essential to our administrative and on-court success. Thank you in advance for making this a priority! There are numerous responsibilities that we must have volunteers for. Parents will have an opportunity to sign-up for responsibilities that include:

- Team Parent/Game Day Coordinators (clock, book, video)
- Fundraising/sponsorship (player sponsorships and program sponsorships)
- Travel Coordinator

In addition, every family will be asked to help with responsibilities related to hosting home games and tournaments (concessions, admission/gate, set-up/clean-up, etc.) and other responsibilities throughout the year. As members of the Lincoln Eagles Basketball Program, we all have the responsibility to "see a need, fill a need," which means to be on the lookout for what you can do to help, even if you're not specifically assigned that responsibility.

**Uniforms:** In order to compete in games for the Lincoln Eagles each student-athlete will need to purchase a current Lincoln Eagles uniform. The Lincoln Eagles want to make sure that our student-athletes look their best and feel proud to represent our program. In order to accomplish this, we work with a local supplier to secure great-looking, high-quality, and cost-effective uniforms. The cost of new uniforms will be billed via the player's fee invoice. Uniforms details (size and number) will be collected during the registration process. Several opportunities will be provided to players to be sized prior to the close of registration and the ordering of new uniforms for the year. Returning players will be given priority when it comes to selecting a number in the following order 1) Varsity, 2) JV, 3) Middle School/Junior High, followed by new players in the same order. If multiple players with the same priority level want the same number, it will be determined by who registered first. Transition to new uniforms will take place approximately every 3 years depending on overall wear and tear on uniforms. With that in mind, please do your very best to take excellent care of your uniforms, including making sure they are washed on a delicate washer cycle and are hung up to dry. If your uniform is damaged or stained in some way that makes it unpresentable, you will be required to order and pay for a new uniform.

**Practices:** Basketball is a team sport, and thus it is imperative for players to be at every practice and game possible. When you make a commitment to play for a team, you make a commitment to your teammates and coaches. When you are late or miss a practice, it has a negative impact on the effectiveness of your team. If you can't be at a practice for some reason, please let your head coach know as far in advance as possible. If issues arise with attendance at practices, disciplinary action will be taken (See Player Discipline in Section II). Practice location and time are expected to have some variation

because of limits on available facilities in and around the Lincoln area. Communication via email, text, or the website calendar (<https://lincolneagles.com>) will be the best way to keep track of the practice schedule.

**Communication:** In general, you should expect communication via e-mail from the program email account, [Lincoln.EaglesBasketball@gmail.com](mailto:Lincoln.EaglesBasketball@gmail.com). In addition, the Lincoln Eagles website (<https://lincolneagles.com>) will contain useful information. Games will be livestreamed via the Lincoln Eagles Facebook Page. When items are particularly time-sensitive, communication through text message or phone call should be expected. Schedule changes are inevitable, especially in homeschool athletics. Please be flexible and check the website and your e-mail regularly. Decisions to cancel practice, games, or other events are based on weather forecasts, or school and business closings at the time of the scheduled event. An e-mail, Facebook, and text notification of cancellation will be sent as soon as possible. It is extremely helpful for you to “like” and follow the Lincoln Eagles Facebook page, as well as like and share our posts.

**Financial Accountability:** We desire to keep all financial business of the Lincoln Eagles Basketball Program at the highest level of Christian character and respect. An Income and Expense Report is available upon request after the end of each season on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Transparency with the finances of the program is our goal, and thus general information is available to families involved in the program upon request. However, please understand that the Athletic Director, Board Members, and Coaches are all volunteers and thus financial information is not always maintained in an immediately presentable manner. The Athletic Director, President, Treasurer, and/or Board Members should be able to speak to the finances of the program at any point and give assurances to participating families if questions related to finances arise. Participating families are expected to fulfill their financial responsibilities according to the same high standards.

**Fundraising:** The Lincoln Eagles Basketball Program offers several options to players to participate in fundraising opportunities. *Fundraising efforts should be completed by October 10th.* Fundraising is not obligatory, and each player can participate and offset some or all of their player fees, uniform fees, and travel costs by any combination of the options below. If you are able to raise money above and beyond the cost of your player's fees and uniform, we ask you to consider making a donation to the program.

**Sponsorships:** 100% of the sponsorship amounts listed below can be applied to the costs associated with being a part of our program (Player's Fees, Uniforms, Travel Expenses, etc.).

The following are tiers of sponsorship and benefits we offer to businesses:

1	2	3	Player Sponsor					Program Sponsors		
			Patron	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Platinum	Silver	Gold	Platinum
			\$299 or less	\$300	\$400	\$500	\$1,000	\$500	\$1,000	\$2,000
4	Player Prepared Special Thank You at Home Game	x	x	x	x	x				
5	Company Listed In Home Game Program	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
6	Company Listed On Website		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
7	Ad In Home Game Program			Small	Small	Large	Large	1/2 Page Add	Full Page	
8	Ad on Website				x	x	x	x	x	
11	Company Mentioned During Live Broadcasts					x		x	x	
12	Golden Ticket - Free Admission for 2 people all home games					x				
13	Company Name Listed on Player Shooting Shirts						x (Small)	x	x	
14	Lincoln Eagles Corporate Sponsor T-Shirt (2)							x	x	
15	Home Game Promotional Events - Halftime of Varsity Boys/Girls Games								x	
16	Name/Logo In MAHHC Promotions (Eagles Home Tournament)							x	x	
17	Logo on MAHHC Tournament T-Shirts							Small	Large	
18	Logo on MAHHC Tournament Programs							Small	Large	
19	Logo On Championship Banners For Winners							x	x	
20	Banners/Signage Displayed at MAHHC Tournament							x	x	

\*\*Additional opportunities will be made public as they become available.

To help with fundraising efforts, a letter for you to present to potential sponsors is available on the Eagles Website, as well as a receipt if this is requested. It is highly recommended that you send a formal thank you with a copy of our program, a screenshot of our website, or other evidence that the business has received the represented promotion.

Additional Fundraising: At least annually, additional program or team fundraising may be necessary. We ask that you actively participate in these endeavors as they help provide for the program and keep our players fees low.

## **Section II** **Policies & Procedures**

**Health and Liability Insurance:** All players are expected to carry personal insurance providing coverage should injury occur during practices or games. Parents, guardians, and players agree that the Lincoln Eagles Basketball Program, as well as the facilities used for practices and games, will not be held responsible for any injuries. In the event your child is injured while playing/practicing or while traveling

to/from one of our events, the Lincoln Eagles Basketball Program does carry “Accident Medical & Dental Expenses” and “Accidental Death & Dismemberment”. This is a supplemental policy which means you must file with your own health insurance policy first. If there are remaining expenses that your own will not cover, you can file a claim under the Lincoln Eagles Policy. Claims must be submitted within 30 days of first treatment. Those covered are players, coaches, managers, and volunteers of the team. In the event you would need to file a claim, you need to fill out the claim form.

**Player Fees:** Player fees will be set prior to each season based on the budget of the team in consideration of the operating expense of the program. All player fees may be paid directly or through fundraising opportunities (See Below) offered by the Lincoln Eagles Basketball Program. Fees cover gym practice space rentals, referees, tournament fees, travel expenses, stipends for coach's travel, equipment, banquet, and other various operating costs. Player fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

Player fees or other required documentation can be mailed to:

Lincoln Eagles Basketball  
% Jeff Long  
356 East 11th Street  
Wahoo, NE 68066

Financial Hardship Assistance: We do not want player fees to be the reason to not participate. Limited financial hardship assistance is available and is considered on a case-by-case basis, as funds are available. Please send an email to [Lincoln.EaglesBasketball@gmail.com](mailto:Lincoln.EaglesBasketball@gmail.com) with the subject line “Financial Hardship Assistance”, and provide the following information, 1) Explain your situation and why you need assistance, 2) How would you be willing to provide extra volunteer help to the program this year.

- A \$100 non-refundable player commitments deposit is due by the registration deadline (September 10, 2024) and will be applied to individual player fees.
- All player fees, less player commitment deposits and specific fundraising applied, are due by October 10, 2024. If player fees have not been paid by October 10<sup>th</sup>, a \$50 late fee will be added to the player fee balance.

**Other Possible Expenses to Players:** In general additional expenses beyond player fees may include: personal gym equipment, apparel, shoes, lodging, gas, and food for out-of-town games/tournaments are the responsibility of the player and/or family.

#### Nationals:

Annually the Lincoln Eagles High School varsity teams travel to Homeschool Nationals in March (Dates vary but typically in the middle of March). While we acknowledge that going to Nationals is not mandatory, it is an expectation that all high school players will attend. There is an additional cost for this trip as it involves a full week of travel (Sunday to Saturday), with lodging, gas, meals, and other incidental expenses. The cost of this trip is approximately \$400/Student-Athlete. As noted above fundraising and sponsorships in excess of players fees and uniform fees can be applied to Nationals costs.

**Guidance on Apparel, Hygiene, & Representing our program:** One of the key components to the Lincoln Eagles program Vision statement is “pursuing excellence.” This applies not only to our play on the court but in how we present ourselves on and off the court (behavior, speech, dress/adornment, etc.).



Everyone has different standards, and even the “same” standard can be applied very differently. It is impossible for our program to anticipate and address that herein. However, we want our program to have an attitude consistent with Romans 14:13-23. Verse 13 captures our thinking on this very well:

“Therefore, let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block in the way of your brother or sister.” Romans 14:13 NIV

Part of our commitment to “pursuing excellence” as a program is to provide for high-quality and great looking uniforms which are refreshed/updated every 3 years. These should be kept in good repair, regularly washed, and kept stain free. Undershirts may be worn but should be either black or white. Socks must always be worn. Consistent with standard basketball protocol, during competition, jerseys must be tucked into shorts, and all jewelry must be removed. In the case of a recent ear piercing, please protect/cover appropriately. Headbands are acceptable but can’t be “tie on” and should not be wider than 2 inches due to regulations. No “street shoes” are allowed on the court for practice or games. For practices, we recommend clean, neatly fitting, and comfortable shorts and shirts. Practice Jerseys are provided to all players, please bring these to every practice and make sure they are washed regularly. In keeping with good sportsmanship and respect for teammates, coaches, and opponents we ask that student-athletes practice good personal hygiene, including making sure body and clothes are clean and deodorant is applied.

As a program, the Lincoln Eagles want to exemplify our Vision, Mission, and Values. While our presentation or physical appearance is an important part of that, nothing speaks to this more clearly than our overall attitude. As a program, we ask you to pay proper attention to both.

**Player Conduct and Involvement:** Teaching commitment and responsibility is part of the intentional character building process we engage in being a part of this athletic program. Practices and games are not optional. Involvement on teams outside of the Lincoln Eagles Basketball Program during season play is not allowed unless approved by the Board of Directors.

Players are expected to:

1. Be on time for practices and games.
2. Contact their coach when they are unable to be at a practice or game.
3. Understand that excused absences are at the discretion of the coach.
4. Listen to instructions and follow the team rules as set out by this handbook and coaches.
5. Show respect and loyalty to the coaches, players, parents, and leadership of the Program.
6. Be coachable – willing to take direction, instruction, and discipline.
7. Demonstrate an enthusiasm for practice and playing the game.
8. Strive for excellence as a player and student and to show leadership.
9. Maintain the equipment issued to each player.
10. Not use any abusive, foul, degrading, disruptive, or complaining language. Remain encouraging.
11. Report all injuries to the coaching staff ASAP.
12. Refrain from misconduct that has a potential negative impact on the Program's reputation or image.
13. Do your best to participate in team events and service projects.
14. Volunteer for activities such as set up/tear down, trash, helping in admissions/concessions, etc....

These expectations/rules must be maintained while the players are under the authority of the coaches and chaperones at any Program event.

**Parent Conduct:**

Parents/Guardians are expected to:

1. To encourage and support the authority of the coaching staff, Board, Athletic Director, and the Program in general.
2. To make every reasonable effort to have the player at all scheduled practices and games and fulfill their commitment to the team.
3. To treat coaches, fellow parents, game officials, players, and spectators with respect at all times, and to make sure all family members do the same.
4. To contact the Athletic Director, any Board member, or coach with any problems, concerns, or comments regarding the Lincoln Eagles Basketball Program, and not spread it around. (Matt 18:15).
5. To make the coaches, Athletic Director, or Board Member aware of any physical, mental, or emotional problems that their player may experience.
6. To abide by the guidelines set up for out-of-town travel, including but not limited to, ensuring proper clothing and appropriate off-court conduct. Players will not be allowed to drive to out-of-town games.
7. To support the Lincoln Eagles Basketball Program by volunteering to help with the many functions surrounding the program.
8. To make sure all spectators who are invited to any Lincoln Eagles Basketball Program function understand the expectations as they are written here and agree to abide by them.
9. To pay fees and other potential program fees by assigned due dates.
10. To acknowledge that their student has met the eligibility requirements noted herein.
11. To provide correct contact and personal information to prevent miscommunications.
12. To encourage their player(s) to adhere to "Player Conduct & Involvement" noted above.

**Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco/Vaping:** The Lincoln Eagles Basketball Program will maintain without exception an environment free of drug, alcohol, tobacco, vaping, or other substance abuse for all players while participating in practices and games, including travel time to and from away games. While participating, legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted, but parents must make coaches and chaperones aware of the medicine(s) being taken.

**Rules & Discipline:** Rules govern almost every aspect of human life and conduct. Whatever the situation, rules are necessary to assure fairness and harmony. Rules guide our conduct, express mutual expectations, and help guarantee freedom from the arbitrary and irresponsible acts of others. Rules are expressed in both positive and negative terms; that is, in terms of what you can do, as well as what you cannot do. We realize that responsible people will have reasonable disagreements from time to time over what is consistent with the expectations of the Lincoln Eagles Basketball Program and this Handbook. When that occurs the Board of Directors will serve as the final arbitrator/interpreter of how the following applies to the situation at hand.

The Disciplinary Action Schedule below summarizes the rules/expectations of the Lincoln Eagles Basketball Program and sets out anticipated actions of the program in response to behavior inconsistent with our Vision, Mission, and Values. It is difficult to address every possible event or scenario, but the following represents the spirit with which the Lincoln Eagles Program will administer discipline with progressive escalation. The schedule that follows helps assure uniform communication and uniform administration throughout the program's operations, even though individual cases may require individual consideration by coaches, the Athletic Director, or the Board.

Any warnings, suspensions, or dismissals given to a player will be immediately explained to the parents as well. See Disciplinary Action Schedule Below:

**Disciplinary Action Schedule:**

VW = Verbal warning, number of verbal warnings based on severity of infraction, at coaches discretion

WW = Written warning, may vary, depending upon the severity of the offense

S = Suspension, may vary, depending upon the severity of the offense and other facts in the case

D = Dismissal from the program

**ATTENDANCE:**

Unexcused absence	VW WW S D
Chronic absence	VW WW S D
Unexcused/excessive tardiness	VW WW S D
Leaving without permission	VW WW S D

**PRACTICE/GAME BEHAVIOR:**

Consistent failure to obey the coach's instructions:	VW WW S D
Improper use, possession, or selling of drugs/alcohol/tobacco during team activities:	S D
Fighting:	VW WW S D
Violation of dress/uniform code, or modestly standard:	VW WW S D
Intimidating, threatening, or interfering with a coach or other players:	WW S D
Use of abusive/foul/degrading language:	VW WW S D
Technical Foul (Player will be pulled from the game & re-enter at coach discretion):	VW
Intentional Foul (Player will be pulled from the game & re-enter at coach discretion):	VW

**OTHER ACTS:**

Theft from the Lincoln Eagles Basketball Program or other players:	D
Misconduct negatively impacting the Lincoln Eagles Basketball Program's reputation or image:	VW S D