

SMOKY VALLEY HOME EDUCATORS

Sports Governance Policy

Authority structure and governance framework for the SVHE Eagles Sports Program

Amended by Athletic Board + Advisory Council ratification • Basketball • Volleyball • Cross Country •
Baseball • Football

“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” — Luke 2:52

Mission

SVHE Eagles pursue excellence — in character, in competition, and in every sport, every season. We expect every coach and athlete to bring their very best. Anything less falls short of what God calls us to — not because winning demands it, but because He does.

We hold that building character and competing to win are not in tension — done right, one produces the other. Character is not what we fall back on when we lose. It is what God calls us to regardless of the scoreboard — and those watching will remember how we competed long after the score is forgotten. That is the standard we are chasing.

The foundation for this is Luke 2:52, where Jesus himself modeled growth in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and man — four dimensions of whole-person excellence that SVHE takes seriously across every sport. The full treatment of this passage is in the Master Athlete and Family Handbook.

How This Document Fits

The SVHE Eagles Sports Program is governed by a suite of coordinated documents, each with a distinct purpose and a different threshold for amendment. The three governance-level documents form the foundation; two additional operational forms complete the suite:

Document	Covers	Amended By	Signed By
Sports Governance Policy (this document)	Mission, structure, Sport AD roles, board, treasurer, family relationship policy	Athletic Board + Advisory Council ratification	Athletic Board + Advisory Council
Sports Operations Manual	Eligibility, attendance, playing time, conflict resolution, safety, finances, coach selection and eligibility	Athletic Board majority vote	Athletic Board
Master Athlete and Family Handbook	Mission, conduct expectations, consequences, CPP reminder, commitment agreement — same for every sport	Athletic Board majority vote	Every athlete, parent, and coach each season
Sport Supplements (one per sport)	Gear, schedule, coaches, sport-specific logistics	Individual Sport AD	Every athlete and parent in that sport each season
Coach Application Form	Coaching candidate background, qualifications, character screening, eligibility disclosures	Athletic Board majority vote	All coaching candidates before first practice

Section 1 — Biblical Foundation

In Exodus 18, Jethro observed Moses handling every dispute among the Israelites alone — from morning until evening. His counsel was not a criticism of Moses’ heart, but a structural correction:

“You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone.” — Exodus 18:18

Jethro’s solution was a tiered structure: capable, God-fearing leaders placed at every level, each empowered to handle what belongs to them, and trained to know when to escalate. This Governance Policy applies that same principle to the SVHE Eagles Sports Program.

Section 2 — Governance Structure

The SVHE Eagles Sports Program operates under a five-tier authority structure. Each tier is accountable to the tier above it. Decisions are made at the lowest tier with appropriate authority. No tier may act outside its defined scope without authorization from the tier above.

Tier	Role	Responsible For	Accountable To
5	Advisory Council	SVHE mission, Statement of Faith, organizational bylaws, Sport AD appointments	SVHE membership
4	Athletic Board	Program governance, cross-sport policy, coach appointments, budget approval	Advisory Council
3	Sport AD	Day-to-day operations, team management, coach oversight, financial oversight within sport	Athletic Board
2	Head Coach	Team conduct, game decisions, assistant coaching, player development	Sport AD
1	Assistant Coach / Captain	Practice-level conduct, first-response player concerns	Head Coach

The tiered structure protects volunteers at every level. When each tier handles what belongs to it, no single person carries an unsustainable load — and the program can grow without burning out the people who serve it.

Note on program size: SVHE sports vary significantly in size, and the structure above is designed to scale accordingly. In smaller sports, the Sport AD and head coach are often the same person — the head coach tier simply collapses into the Sport AD role, and the structure remains intact with one person carrying both responsibilities. As a sport grows, separating the roles becomes appropriate. Sports with two or more teams or forty or more rostered players are encouraged to separate the Sport AD and head coach roles, allowing the Sport AD to focus on program oversight while head coaches focus on their individual teams. This is a guideline rather

than a hard rule — the Athletic Board may keep the roles combined when circumstances warrant, and may recommend separating them earlier when needed.

Section 3 — Leader Qualifications

Consistent with Exodus 18:21, every leader at every tier of SVHE sports — from team captain to Athletic Board member — is held to the same four-part standard. These are character qualities, not credentials:

Quality	From Exodus 18:21	What It Means in Practice
Able	Capable men	Competent in the sport and in communication; able to handle conflict, make decisions, and follow through
Fears God	Who fear God	Living in alignment with SVHE’s Statement of Faith; the mission matters more than winning
Trustworthy	Trustworthy men	Reliable in character; does what they say; consistent conduct on and off the field
Free from Self-Interest	Who hate dishonest gain	Not using their position for personal or family advantage; the program’s interests come first

All leaders are also subject to SVHE’s Child Protection Policy (available at svhe.com). Compliance with the Child Protection Policy is a condition of service at every level of the sports program, without exception.

Section 4 — Athletic Board

4.1 Purpose and Structure

The Athletic Board is the collective governance body of the SVHE Eagles Sports Program. It is composed of the Sport Athletic Directors — the people who actually run the sports — acting together on program-wide decisions. This is a working board: members govern collectively and operate individually within their own sport.

When Sport ADs act individually within their sport, they are operating. When they convene as the Athletic Board, they are governing. Meeting minutes clearly distinguish between the two functions.

4.2 Composition

Sport	AD Status	Notes
Basketball	Active — voting	Largest program; approx. 80 players across multiple teams
Volleyball	Active — voting	

Sport	AD Status	Notes
Cross Country	Active — voting	
Baseball	Active — voting	
Football	Launch phase — Secretary	Serves as board Secretary during launch period; receives full voting seat after inaugural season

- The Athletic Board elects from among its full voting members a Chairperson who coordinates cross-sport matters and serves as the program’s primary contact with the Advisory Council
- The Athletic Board elects a Secretary who maintains meeting minutes and board records
- The Chairperson is elected annually at the first board meeting of the program year
- The Chairperson retains their role as Sport AD for their own sport
- A quorum for any board decision is a majority of seated, active voting members

4.3 Football AD — Launch Period and Secretary Role

The Football program is in its launch phase. The Football Athletic Director seat on the Athletic Board is held in reserve until the Football program completes its first full competitive season, including at least one scheduled game against an outside opponent.

During the launch period, the Football AD serves as board Secretary. This role provides the Football AD with full access to board meetings, discussions, and records while they build the program. The Secretary role is advisory and non-voting. The Football AD transitions to a full voting seat at the first board meeting following the completion of Football’s inaugural season.

Section 5 — Sport Athletic Directors

5.1 Role and Responsibilities

Each Sport AD is responsible for the full operation of their sport within the boundaries established by this Governance Policy and the Sports Operations Manual. Acting individually, a Sport AD:

- Recruits, recommends, and oversees coaches for their sport
- Oversees the Sport Treasurer and ensures financial records are accurate and current
- Manages the season calendar, facilities, scheduling, and registration for their sport
- Serves as the primary point of escalation above the head coach within their sport
- Ensures all players, parents, and coaches complete required documents before the first practice
- Ensures all coaches maintain current background checks
- Represents their sport’s interests and needs at Athletic Board meetings

5.2 Appointment and Term

- Sport ADs are appointed by the Advisory Council, typically based on recommendations from the Athletic Board
- Terms are two (2) years, staggered across sports to ensure continuity
- A Sport AD may serve consecutive terms with Advisory Council reappointment
- Vacancies may be filled by Advisory Council appointment for the remainder of the unexpired term, again typically based on recommendations from the Athletic Board
- A Sport AD who also serves as head coach of the same sport holds both roles simultaneously; the Athletic Board approves the appointment in both capacities

5.3 Performance Review

The Athletic Board conducts an annual review of each Sport AD's performance as part of the May/June planning meeting. The Athletic Board may recommend removal of a Sport AD to the Advisory Council if warranted. The Advisory Council retains sole authority to remove a Sport AD.

Section 6 — Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches

- In sports where the Sport AD is a separate person, head coaches are recommended by the Sport AD and approved by the full Athletic Board
- In sports where the Sport AD and head coach are the same person, the Advisory Council appointment covers both roles simultaneously
- Assistant coaches are recommended by the head coach and approved by the Sport AD
- All coaches must agree to the SVHE Statement of Faith, complete the Coach Application Form, and sign the Master Athlete and Family Handbook before their first practice
- All coaches must complete a background check per SVHE's Child Protection Policy before their first practice; background checks renewed at least every two years
- All coaches must be current or former SVHE members, or have an approved SVHE sponsor
- Coaches serve one-season renewable terms; reappointment follows the same approval process
- Removal of a head coach requires full Athletic Board approval; the Sport AD may remove an assistant coach without full board approval
- Coaching eligibility criteria, including the Established Adult Coach definition and opposite-sex coaching requirements, are detailed in the Sports Operations Manual, Sections 8.4–8.6

Section 7 — Sport Treasurer

7.1 Role

Each sport has a Sport Treasurer responsible for day-to-day financial operations: collecting fees, paying invoices, tracking expenses, and maintaining records within the SVHE-approved web-based accounting system.

7.2 Dual Reporting Line

	Operational Reporting	Financial Reporting
Sport Treasurer reports to:	Sport AD (day-to-day operations, invoices, purchases)	SVHE Treasurer on Advisory Council (financial records, season-end reports)
Why:	Sport AD knows the operational context and approves spending within their sport	SVHE Treasurer provides financial accountability independent of operational pressure

Operational decisions go through the Sport AD. Financial reporting and accountability go directly to the SVHE Treasurer on the Advisory Council. This separation ensures financial integrity independent of operational pressures.

7.3 Reporting Schedule

- Season-opening report: submitted to Sport AD within thirty (30) days of the first practice
- Season-closing report: submitted to Sport AD within thirty (30) days of the last game
- Annual summary: submitted to SVHE Treasurer by June 30 each year
- Basketball mid-season check-in: submitted to Sport AD at the midpoint of the season given the program’s size
- The SVHE Treasurer may request additional reporting at any time

7.4 Spending Authority

The unbudgeted spending authority tiers are detailed in the Sports Operations Manual, Policy 7.2. Approved budget spending does not require additional approval beyond the budget vote.

Section 8 — Family Relationship Policy

8.1 Policy

Family relationships between people in leadership positions within the sports program are permitted in most circumstances. They are not permitted where one family member is in a direct line of authority over another. This policy protects the integrity of the program, protects the family from being placed in an impossible position, and preserves the trust of the families the program serves.

In some cases — such as a parent serving as Sport AD while their child coaches in the same sport — the automatic recusal rule (Section 8.3) provides the appropriate protection. See Section 8.2 for a full breakdown of permitted and restricted combinations.

8.2 Permitted and Restricted Combinations

Relationship	Permitted	Conditions / Notes
Parent coaching their own child's team	Yes	Permitted and common; playing time decisions subject to Policy 8 transparency requirement
Spouses in separate sports	Yes	No restrictions; different sports means no direct authority overlap
Spouses in the same sport, neither supervises the other	Yes	Disclose to Athletic Board; not in direct reporting line to each other
Spouses where one supervises the other	No	Head coach and spouse may not both serve within same sport where one supervises the other
Family member as Sport Treasurer in same sport as coach	No	Financial and coaching authority must be separated between family members in same sport
Sport AD and coaching candidate are family members	With recusal	Selection decision transfers to other Sport ADs; affected Sport AD recuses entirely

8.3 Recusal Rule

Any leader who has a spouse, anyone to whom they are engaged or in a committed romantic relationship with, or anyone they are pursuing a romantic relationship with, in a direct or adjacent relationship within the sports program shall automatically recuse from all decisions, votes, and discussions directly concerning that family member's role, team, or sport. Recusal is automatic, not requested, and is documented in meeting minutes.

8.4 Coach Selection with a Family Conflict

When a family relationship exists between a Sport AD and a coaching candidate within their sport, the selection decision transfers to the other Sport ADs on the Athletic Board. The affected Sport AD recuses entirely from the selection process for that position.

8.5 Transparency

When a family relationship exists between two roles in the program, it is disclosed at the start of the season to the Athletic Board and acknowledged in relevant parent communications. This is not an apology — it is a demonstration that the program has considered the relationship and has a plan.

Section 9 — Child Protection Policy Alignment

SVHE’s Child Protection Policy (available at svhe.com) governs all SVHE activities, including the sports program. This Governance Policy does not replace or modify the Child Protection Policy — it operates alongside it.

The following Child Protection Policy requirements apply specifically to the sports program:

- All Sport ADs, coaches, and Sport Treasurers complete a written application and background check before beginning service; background checks renewed at least every two years
- SVHE strives to have two adult workers present at all activities involving minors. If only one adult is available, all activity must be held in a fully open and observable setting with no private or enclosed spaces
- No one-on-one interactions between an adult and a minor in a private or unobservable setting
- Coaches should avoid private digital communications with players and use group chats or communication channels approved by the program
- Any suspected abuse or misconduct reported immediately to the SVHE Advisory Council or Board Chairperson, and to the Kansas Protection Report Center (1-800-922-5330 or dcf.ks.gov)
- SVHE cooperates fully with law enforcement in any investigation

Additional sport-specific protections — including the Established Adult Coach definition, recent graduate coaching guidelines, opposite-sex coaching requirements, and age gap standards — are detailed in the Sports Operations Manual, Sections 8.4–8.6, and supplement, rather than replace, the Child Protection Policy.

Section 10 — Authority at a Glance

Decision	Sport AD	Athletic Board	Advisory Council	Notes
Appoint / remove head coach	Recommend	Approve		Board vote required for head coaches
Appoint / remove assistant coach	Approve			Sport AD acts alone
Approve season budget	Submit	Approve		Approved budget exempt from approval tiers
Unbudgeted spend \$501–\$750		Chairperson		Board Chairperson only
Unbudgeted spend over \$750		Approve		Full board vote
Amend Operations Manual		Majority vote		Board majority; no Advisory Council vote

Decision	Sport AD	Athletic Board	Advisory Council	Notes
Amend Governance Policy		Propose	Ratify	Advisory Council ratification required
Seat / remove a Sport AD			Appoint	Advisory Council appoints Sport ADs
Appeals of board decisions		Final	Statement of Faith matters only	Board decisions final except SOF matters

Section 11 — Relationship to SVHE Organizational Bylaws

This Governance Policy operates beneath SVHE’s organizational bylaws and does not modify them in any way. The Advisory Council retains full authority over SVHE’s mission, Statement of Faith, membership structure, and all organizational governance matters.

The intent of this structure is that the Advisory Council should rarely need to involve itself in sports program operations. The Athletic Board exists so the Advisory Council can trust the sports program is governed well without requiring their direct attention.

Should any provision of this Governance Policy conflict with SVHE’s organizational bylaws, the organizational bylaws take precedence.

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