



East Hill Christian School

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the East Hill Christian School Athletics Handbook, a guide for coaches, student-athletes, and parents outlining the policies governing interscholastic athletics at our school.

Coaches report to the Athletic Director and are responsible for ensuring team members comply with school policies. The Athletic Director administers rules related to team and coach interactions.

We prioritize sound reasoning, good judgment, and adherence to our core values when addressing situations beyond these rules.

Participation in interscholastic athletics is voluntary and not required for graduation. It's a privilege, contingent upon adhering to program standards. Failure to comply may result in revocation of this privilege.

All policies detailed in this handbook are official actions by the East Hill Christian Board of Directors and Administration, and will be strictly followed. If questions arise, the Parent-Student Handbook supersedes the Athletic Handbook in all matters related to policies, guidelines, and regulations concerning students and their participation in school activities.

Thank you for participating in our athletic program. May God bless your use of athletic talents to serve Him in this vital aspect of school life.

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT CORE VALUES

1. Christ
2. Integrity
3. Respect
4. Discipline
5. Teamwork
6. Sportsmanship
7. Excellence

OUR COACHES

Coaches serve as the primary influencers in a student athlete's journey, embodying the ethos of the athletic program. At East Hill Christian School, coaches act as both educators and active participants, modeling Christ-like behavior while possessing comprehensive knowledge of their sport. They excel in preparation, motivation, adaptability, and operate under the authority of the athletic director and school administration. Our coaches embrace their role in shaping young lives for Christ.

OUR PARENTS

Parents of student athletes play a crucial role in their child's development and the success of the team. Strong parental support is essential for students to reach their full potential and for our teams to thrive. It's vital that parents offer positive reinforcement, understand their role within the team dynamic, and consistently support and encourage coaches and teammates.

While parents may not be coaches, trusting the coaching staff is integral to learning valuable life lessons through athletics. Additionally, it's essential for parents to conduct themselves in a manner that honors the Lord during athletic events.

OUR ATHLETES

Athletes at East Hill Christian are expected to approach their sport with diligence, giving their best effort consistently. They should demonstrate personal discipline, respectfulness, and self-control in all circumstances. Humility is valued, and athletes are encouraged to pursue excellence vigorously, regardless of external factors such as the score, opponent, time, referee decisions, or situation. Ultimately, the student athlete bears the responsibility and is accountable to their parents, coach, and the Lord.

OUR TEAMS

Our teams are dedicated to three core principles:

1. Glorifying God
2. Playing hard
3. Having fun

OUR ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

Our department is committed to:

1. Discipleship of our coaches and student athletes.
2. Developing our athletes morally, intellectually and physically.
3. Showing discipline and respect to all.
4. Stewardship of our resources.
5. Pursuing excellence in all endeavors.

To ensure the success of EHC's athletic program, coaches, student athletes, and parents must all commit to glorifying God at all times.

PHILOSOPHY

At EHCS, athletics is integral to education, fostering character and values. Our program complements academics, service, and Christian values, promoting campus culture and community. We aim to instill Christ-like attitudes and lifestyle, emphasizing teamwork over self-glorification. While we compete to win, success is measured by the quality of our graduates and their life perspective, using sports for God's glory.

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT, EXPECTATIONS, PRACTICES & POLICIES

ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION

All student athletes at East Hill Christian School are expected to uphold exemplary standards of conduct and academic achievement to establish and maintain eligibility.

1. Academics– At East Hill Christian School, academic excellence is paramount, surpassing athletic participation. Our academic standards exceed those set by the FHSAA (Florida High School Athletic Association) and PCC (Panhandle Christian Conference). Here are our eligibility guidelines:
 - a. In order to be eligible to try out and participate in an EHCS sponsored athletic activity, a student's cumulative GPA must remain above a 2.0. At semester's end, if a student's cumulative GPA falls below a 2.0, the student will be suspended from team sports for the following semester.
 - b. Grade checks will occur midway through each quarter.. Students receiving a failing grade (59 or below) will be placed on academic probation immediately. They will not be reinstated to the team until their grades improve.
 - c. Students found to have violated the Academic Honesty Policy will be subject to academic probation and removal from the team.
 - d. Student athletes are expected to complete all homework and obtain missing assignments for any class period missed, especially when teams depart prior to 3:00 PM. Athletics are not an excuse for unfinished academic work.
 - e. Players should bring homework to away games if they are concerned they will not have enough time to complete it when they get home.
2. Attendance–
 - a. The student must be at school or involved in an approved school-day activity for the entire day (all scheduled classes) in order to participate in any extracurricular event occurring that day. A student who checks into school later than 8:35 am is recorded absent, not tardy, for the first period and is therefore ineligible to practice or participate in extracurricular activities on that day.
 - b. A student may be excused for mandatory court dates, first-time driver's tests, and doctor visits but is excused only for the time spent visiting the doctor's office, driver's license office, or court. Documentation is required. The administration reserves the right to grant exceptions to this policy.
 - c. Returning late from away games is not an excused absence from school the next day. Student athletes are expected to be in regular attendance the day after athletic competition. The Athletic Director will deal with all lack of compliance without exception.
3. Conduct–

Every student athlete is expected to align their conduct with the standards and principles outlined in God's Word, as well as adhere to all applicable EHCS standards of student behavior. Violations will impact participation in athletic activities.

- a. Poor behavior, poor sportsmanship, or acts that do not reflect Christian sportsmanship will not be tolerated and will be dealt with immediately. Student athletes who continue to display incompatibility with student athlete expectations will be removed from the team or program.

- b. In-school or out-of-school suspension. Students may not participate in practice or events from the beginning of the suspension until the student returns to their classes. This may include evening and weekend events.
- c. Any player who quits or is removed from an athletic team for any reason may not join another team.

*Academic or conduct suspensions or reinstatements will be enacted on non-game days. This ensures transparency in the process. The process is not in place to return athletes to playing sports, but to ensure athletes are capable of being successful in the classroom.

- 4. Age Eligibility–
 - a. Upon entering the 9th grade, students shall have four years to complete interscholastic eligibility.
 - b. Students can participate in interscholastic competition until reaching the age of 19 years, 9 months. Upon reaching this age, student athletes are no longer eligible for interscholastic competition.
- 5. Homeschool Students–

At East Hill Christian School, we believe in fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for all students, including homeschool students who wish to participate in our athletic program. To ensure consistency and alignment with our educational and moral values, the following policy will be implemented:

- a. Admissions Process: Homeschool students must meet the same eligibility requirements as full-time EHCS students. To include undergoing an admissions interview with the Administration.
- b. Adherence to School Rules: Homeschool students must abide by all EHCS rules, including the dress code and standards of behavior on and off the field.
- c. Our homeschooling numbers will be limited to:

Soccer	5 or fewer
Volleyball	3 or fewer
Basketball	3 or fewer
Baseball/ Softball	4 or fewer

PARTICIPATION FEES

Participation fees are vital for funding interscholastic athletics, covering expenses such as field rental, game officials, tournament fees, and equipment. Fees including Booster Club will be collected through FACTS family portal.

- 1. For participation, tuition and fees must not be 31 days past due.
- 2. All athletic fees are paid before the start of the first game.
 - a. Participation for grades K5-5.....\$100-150 per sport (Fees set by the CYSL)
 - b. Participation for grades 6-12.....\$100.00 per sport
 - c. Participation for Homeschool students.....\$250.00 per sport

3. All families must become members of the Booster Club, agreeing to volunteer for on and off-campus events throughout the year in addition to paying fees.
 - a. MS/HS Membership fees start at \$75 per year per family and include one all season pass for entry to EHCS home games for the school year.
 - i. Bronze Membership- \$125- two all season passes
 - ii. Silver- \$250- 4 all season passes
 - iii. Gold Membership- \$500- all season passes and a 3 x 4 spirit sign to be hung in the gym.
4. Any fees incurred by a student as a result of violations of rules set forth by the FHSAA (Florida High School Athletic Association) or PCC (Panhandle Christian Conference) will be the responsibility of the student or team involved in the violation.

*All athletic and Booster Club fees are non-refundable in the event that an athlete leaves or is dismissed from the team.

Physical Form & Parental Consent Forms

The EHCS Athletic department recognizes the need to ensure that best medical procedures are followed within our athletic department to ensure the health and safety of our student athletes. The following guidelines are designed for students and families to ensure they remain eligible for participation.

1. For a student to be allowed to try out or practice with a team, they must have completed their Athletic Clearance online through athleticclearance.com. To include:
 - a. Participation Physical (EL2)
 - b. Consent and Release (EL3)
 - c. Recruiting Policy Affidavit (GA4)
 - d. Students will also be required to complete the NFHS course work for Concussion in Sports, Concussion for Students, Heat Acclimation and Heat Illness Prevention, and Sudden Cardiac Arrest. The school will provide a time for viewing, but if you are unable to attend you must hand in your certificates of completion to the Athletic Director.
 - e. Athletic Handbook- Parent/Student Agreement
 - f. Uniform Contract
2. For a Homeschool student to be allowed to participate on any teams, they must complete the above process and the following additional forms:
 - a. Homeschool Application found on our website under athletic handbook and forms.
 - b. Home Education Students (EL7)
 - c. Home Education Student Academic Progress Report (EL9) required for second semester.

Elementary and Middle School Guidelines

Elementary and middle school athletics at EHCS prioritize player development, instilling an athletic mindset, and teaching the fundamentals while ensuring a fun and enjoyable experience for all participants. Inclusive participation is encouraged, with coaches focusing on teaching the skills relevant to each sport and emphasizing values of sportsmanship, respect, and teamwork. Parents are encouraged to support their children's participation, and are welcome to volunteer to help. Overall, EHCS aims to create a positive and enriching environment where students can learn, grow, and develop both athletically and academically.

Junior Varsity Guidelines

EHCS uses Junior Varsity athletics to develop the skills needed for Varsity competition. Eligible students in grades 9-11 may compete, with exceptions considered for middle school athletes on a case-by-case basis. Parents must approve high school-level participation. Athletes must demonstrate ability, teamwork, and positive Christian attitudes. Competition is rigorous, and playing time is earned through academic diligence, skill, and contribution to team success.

Varsity Guidelines

Varsity teams comprise skilled high school athletes, selected based on ability, commitment, and attitude. Middle school students may try out with approval from coaches, parents, and the Athletic Director. Varsity athletes are expected to embody campus values and commit to off-season training. Playing time is determined by skill, knowledge, and Christian values, with coaches making decisions in consultation with the Athletic Director to ensure EHCS competitiveness.

Transportation

The EHCS Athletic Department acknowledges the transportation challenges encountered by small private schools. The following policy and procedure delineates the management of transportation at EHCS:

1. EHCS parents are responsible for arranging transportation for their own students.
2. Students must submit a Permission to Ride Form to ride with anyone not listed in their enrollment packet.
3. Any adult or student willing to transport other students must complete a Volunteer Drivers Form and provide a copy of their driver's license and insurance card.
4. If EHCS offers transportation for the team, all EHCS rules apply. Male and female student athletes are required to sit with their respective teams and refrain from sitting with members of the opposite sex. Any violation will be addressed promptly.

5. Any EHCS-sponsored transportation is considered an extension of our facilities. Student athletes and coaches are expected to maintain cleanliness on the bus by removing all trash from under seats and aisles and disposing of it properly. Additionally, the bus should be swept, and windows should be closed upon return.

Travel

Players are required to use assigned vehicles or school transportation for games. Leaving the gym facility during away games is prohibited without coach approval and checkout. For alternative transportation arrangements, the proper forms must be on file with the school. During overnight travel, coaches will set room assignments and rules. Room checks will be performed and curfew enforced. Rooms must be left in the same condition as upon arrival. Athletes are expected to show respect towards all individuals and facilities they encounter. Traveling is a privilege and can be taken away.

Athletic Training

EHCS has partnered with the Andrews Institute to enhance athlete care. Services include injury prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and CPR/First Aid training. The scope covers check-ups, evaluations, and annual physical exams. Additionally, they collaborate with EHCS administration to develop emergency medical plans for athletic and on-campus events.

ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

Athletic Conduct and Discipline

Athletics are a privilege and EHCS sets high standards for student athletes' behavior and integrity, reflecting on themselves and the school community. While not meant to supersede other policies, it outlines consequences for poor choices. Student athletes must adhere to state and federal laws, EHCS rules, and athletic regulations; failure to do so may result in suspension or expulsion from EHCS. Coaches, in coordination with the Athletic Director, determine discipline for behavioral, academic, or social issues, considering the circumstances and past conduct.

Team Commitment Policy

1. All school-sponsored athletic activities adhere to rules outlined in the Parent-Student Handbook.
2. Student athletes must be punctual for all practices and games, with exceptions granted by the Coach or Athletic Director.
3. Athletes are accountable for all team obligations once they join a team.
4. Respect for officials is mandatory; any disrespect may result in game removal or future suspension.
5. Athletes and parents must familiarize themselves with handbook policies, sign contracts, and complete required paperwork before participation.

6. Attendance is mandatory for all athletic events, including practices and team-sponsored activities, with athletes expected to remain for the duration of scheduled events.

Uniform, Attire and Dress Code Policy

The EHCS Athletic department sets guidelines to ensure modest and neat attire for student athletes and coaches, recognizing the varied nature of sports.

1. Practice attire should not reveal cleavage, midriff, undergarments, or expose too much skin, with loose-fitting clothing and appropriate lengths. All dress code guidelines from the Parent-Student Handbook apply to athletics, except that athletic elastic waistbands are permissible. Non-compliance will be promptly addressed.
2. Uniforms are school property and should not be worn without authorization. Personal uniforms must still reflect EHCS standards.
3. The Athletic Director will issue uniforms and uniform contracts at the start of the season. School issued uniforms are mandatory for participation. Uniforms must be returned promptly after the season ends.
4. Lost or damaged uniforms must be replaced at full cost and will be charged to FACTS family portal.
5. Care labels must be followed, and tags should not be removed to ensure proper cleaning.
6. Dress code applies during travel and away games; failure to comply may result in loss of future participation privileges.
7. In any conflict, the Parent-Student Handbook takes precedence over the Athletic Department Handbook.

Anti-Hazing Policy

EHCS has a strict Anti-Hazing Policy. Hazing, including activities that degrade or risk harm, is prohibited. This includes physical abuse, humiliation, forced servitude, and more. Any behavior causing mental stress, embarrassment, or violating laws or school policies is considered hazing and will result in disciplinary action.

Anti-Bullying Policy

At East Hill Christian School, bullying in any form is inconsistent with our spiritual, educational and athletic goals. It will not be tolerated, and disciplinary actions will be taken against those who engage in such behavior.

No Quit Policy

If a student earns a spot on an EHCS athletic team, it's vital they commit fully. Quitting after selection is strongly discouraged. Any student athlete who quits a team is barred from trying out for another EHCS extracurricular team during the same season. Coaches will consider this

when evaluating future positions. Exceptions may be made if both coaches and parents agree it's best for the student.

Playing Time Policy

EHCS Athletic leadership understands the complexity of playing time. These guidelines clarify how it's earned:

1. Coach decisions determine team rosters after tryouts and will be reevaluated consistently.
2. Players showcase skills in tryouts, practices, and games and demonstrate commitment, discipline and growth to earn playing time.
3. Individuals are encouraged to practice their skills on their own time. Skill improvement may increase playing opportunities.
4. Coaches maintain open communication with players about their roles.

Sportsmanship Policy

Students and parents are encouraged to support our athletic teams as families. Sports events provide opportunities for family sharing and enjoyment as well as times to teach values and sportsmanship. As a Christian school, it is important that our fans demonstrate courtesy and respect for our rivals and referees. Under no circumstances are our fans to have any personal confrontations with officials regarding our sporting events. Please note that the FHSAA prohibits laser lights at any sporting event as well as artificial noisemakers at all basketball games. Additionally no cowbells, drums, air horns or other artificial noisemakers may be used in the gym. Students are reminded to stand and remove hats during any prayer or the playing/singing of our national anthem at all ball games. Any parent or student disrespecting East Hill Christian School, administration, staff, facility, or coach will be subject to dismissal.

Multiple-Sport Policy

EHCS Athletics encourages student athletes to participate in multiple sports, fostering Christian friendships, Christian character, and competitive experiences as well as reap the benefits of cross training. Coaches will provide an objective evaluation when approached about the benefits and drawbacks of being a multi-sport athlete, sharing information to help athletes make informed decisions.

Off-Season Practice Policies - Athletes prioritize participation for the sport that is in season. Coaches will work together to support student athletes in balancing off-season activities such as open gyms, conditioning, and skills practices. While participation in non-EHCS sports is permitted, we ask that you prioritize EHCS team schedules in case of conflicts.

SAFETY

Accidents & Injuries

Coaches, certified in CPR and first aid, promptly assess any injuries. A written report is submitted to the Athletic Department within 24 hours. In severe cases, emergency services

are contacted, and parents are informed. All injuries are handled with care, with parents consulted for decisions on treatment and rehabilitation. Medical conditions are treated confidentially, and athletes require a physician's clearance to return to practice after missing sessions due to injury.

Bad Weather

Lightning, severe storms, and extreme weather conditions such as hot or cold temperatures may cause last minute cancellations. Decisions regarding student athlete safety will be made by the Athletic Directors in consultation with the coach, administration, and officials. On game days, the host school will make decisions as close to noon as possible so that team departure and pick up are feasible. Cancellations will be communicated through the team Parent Square.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ATHLETIC OFFERINGS

Fall Offerings

Volleyball – Elementary, Middle School, JV & Varsity Girls; Grades 4-12

Cross Country – JV & Varsity Boys/Girls; Grades 6-12

Cheerleading – JV, Varsity & Competition; Grades 6-12

Soccer– Varsity: Grades 6-12

Tackle Football- Elementary, Middle School, Grades 5-8

Winter Offerings

Boys Basketball – Elementary, MS, JV & Varsity; Grades 2-12

Girls Basketball – Elementary, MS & Varsity; Grades 2-12

Cheerleading – Pep Squad, JV, Varsity & Competition; Grades 2-12

Spring Offerings

Baseball – Varsity Boys; Grades 6-12

Basketball– MS Girls & Boys; Grades 5-8

Soccer– Elementary, MS; Grades K5-8

Softball – Varsity Girls; Grades 6-12

Tennis – Boys/Girls; Grades 6-12

Track– Elementary, MS; Grades K5-8

Schedules

Schedules for athletic events and practices are coordinated by the Athletic Director in collaboration with coaches. Coaches will provide schedules to students and parents at the

earliest opportunity for each season. If practices are daily, a printed schedule may not be issued. Athletic contests are never scheduled for Wednesdays or Sundays. Occasionally, events may be scheduled during school vacations, with dates communicated well in advance, and attendance expected from all athletes.

School Facilities & Equipment

The EHCS Athletic department ensures the proper use of facilities and equipment to support successful teams and foster a positive culture. Guidelines include keeping facilities clean and safe, avoiding behavior that could cause injury or damage, treating equipment with care, obtaining equipment with permission, and restricting equipment to authorized use in practice and games. Unauthorized use or removal of equipment is prohibited.

Team Fundraising Projects

All team fundraising projects must be presented to and approved by the Athletic Director.

Volunteer Coaches

Volunteer Coach Policy: All volunteer coaches must complete a volunteer application and undergo an interview process conducted by the Athletic Director. Additionally, fingerprinting will be required as part of the application process.

Team Managers

Athletic Team Managers are integral to the team's success, as they adeptly handle logistical tasks and offer essential support. Managers are expected to uphold academic, conduct, and attendance standards identical to those of athletes. Their duties encompass operating the scoreboard, managing statistician books, tracking equipment, and providing water for their teams. Failure to fulfill these responsibilities may lead to removal from the team.

Varsity Letter Requirements

Eligibility Criteria:

1. **Athletic Performance:** The student-athlete must have actively participated in varsity-level competition as a member of a recognized sports team affiliated with East Hill Christian School. Managers, statisticians, injured players and senior athletes with long service to the team, may also be awarded a letter.
2. **Attendance and Participation:** The student-athlete must have participated for the entire duration of the athletic season including any post-season play. The athlete must also have attended 90% of all team practices and competed in 50% of all competitions as required by the coaching staff; demonstrating commitment and reliability.

3. **Sportsmanship and Conduct:** The student-athlete must have exhibited exemplary sportsmanship, respect for teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, and spectators, serving as a positive testimony for the East Hill Christian School community.
4. **Academic Standing:** The student-athlete must uphold a minimum GPA of 2.0 throughout the entirety of the season and must never be placed on academic probation during their participation in varsity athletics, adhering to the academic policies set forth by East Hill Christian Schools.

In addition to the general award requirements, individual sports may have extra standards as determined by the head coach and Athletic Director.

COMMUNICATION

The best resource for information is the team page of your Parent Square app. There you will be able to directly communicate with the coach and Athletic Director, access schedules, required forms and even photos.

Parent/ Coach Communication Guide

EHCS identifies both the coach and the parent as having difficult jobs when it comes to the welfare of the student athlete and everything that goes into being a team member and supporter of EHCS athletics. By establishing an understanding of these roles, each is better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to the student athlete. Evaluation of skills, determining athletic contribution to the team, and playing time are determined by the coach. With respect to the evaluation process, input from parents is neither solicited nor accepted; however, parents have a right to understand what expectations are placed on student involvement in athletic programming. Varsity athletes will be expected (all others will be encouraged) to attend at least one summer camp of the sport in which they plan to compete at the Varsity level.

Expected Communication from the Coach

1. General philosophy of the coach for the team at hand.
2. Expectations the coach has for the individual student athlete as well as all players on the team.
3. Location, times of all practices and contests.
4. Team requirements, such as but not limited to additional fees, special equipment, off-season expectations, etc.
5. Procedures the coach plans to follow should an injury occur during participation.
6. Disposition of lost/outstanding equipment at the end of the season.
7. Discipline infractions that could result in the suspension of a student athlete's participation.

Expected Communication from the Parents

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach, following the Matthew 18 principle.
2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.

3. Specific concerns in regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations.

A student athlete's involvement in athletic programming at EHCS can be one of the most rewarding experiences of their lives. Additionally, it is also important to understand there may be times when things do not go the way the parent or the student anticipated or wished. At these times, a discussion with the coach is always encouraged. However, in approaching a coach, EHCS Athletics recommend a 24 hour cooling off period before a conversation happens with a coach within our athletic program. We also encourage our coaches to seek a 24 hour cooling off period before having a conversation with a player or parent when applicable.

Acceptable Concerns for Parents to discuss about their own child with a Coach

1. The treatment of the student athlete; mentally, physically and spiritually.
2. Ways to help the student athlete improve
3. Concerns about the student athlete's behavior or wellbeing.

Issues Under Direct Authority of the Coach

1. Playing time for student athletes
2. Team strategy and philosophy
3. Play calling within games and practices
4. Other student athletes

Pre-Season Parent Meetings

Attendance at a pre-season meeting with the coaching staff and Athletic Director is mandatory for all parents of student athletes before the first contest. During these meetings, parents will receive information on the rules governing the sport, as well as the guidelines of East Hill Christian School and the conferences in which we participate.

Social Media

Please be advised that our athletic events will be photographed. Your child's photo may appear in our Socials sports coverage. If you prefer not to have your child photographed, please complete the photograph release form available in your Admissions paperwork. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Parent Responsibilities for Each Team

Parents play a crucial role in our athletic community. The Booster Club ensures all students enjoy exceptional athletic experiences with top-notch facilities and coaching. Parents are expected to contribute financially and volunteer, assisting with concessions, gate sales, transportation, clean-up, special events, and other needs. Coaches will provide sign-up lists at parent meetings. Your participation is vital to our teams' success, and we appreciate your commitment.

Parent & Student Agreement

I, _____[Parent/Guardian Name], and _____[Student Name], hereby acknowledge that we have received a copy of the Athletic Handbook of East Hill Christian School. We understand that it is our responsibility to read and fully comprehend the contents of this handbook.

By signing below, we agree to abide by all rules, policies, and guidelines outlined in the Athletic Handbook. We understand that failure to comply with these regulations may result in disciplinary action as outlined in the handbook.

Furthermore, we acknowledge that participation in athletic activities at East Hill Christian is a privilege, and we commit to upholding the values of sportsmanship, integrity, and respect both on and off the field.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____