

Athletic Handbook

St. Paul's Lutheran School
West Allis, Wisconsin
Revised 2023



St. Paul's Lutheran School Athletic Handbook

PHILOSOPHY

In order to provide students with a complete, well-rounded program, St. Paul's Lutheran School believes that athletics are an important tool in teaching the children to make use of their God-given talents and skills. Considering time, facilities, and coaches, we strive to provide the opportunity for as many students as possible, within our guidelines, to pursue athletic activities. Full utilization and development of God-given talents and a positive Christian attitude remain the motivation for our athletic program.

The athletic program builds on the base of the physical education curriculum of the school. It supplements the PE curriculum by providing additional, competitive, physical activities for students in grades five through eight who choose to, and are eligible to participate. The fifth and sixth grade teams are meant to provide experience for the students in preparation for varsity competition. The seventh and eighth grade (varsity) teams are meant to provide opportunities for the students to develop their abilities in a much more competitive setting, and to prepare them for high school competition.

The athletic program at St. Paul's is designed to encourage our children to compete with others in a Christian manner. We feel that competitive athletics also develops sport-specific skills, exercises and strengthens bodies, promotes sportsmanship, provides avenues for success, while learning important life-skills like teamwork, dedication, and commitment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PROGRAM

Our goals are:

1. To develop and maintain the highest level of Christian sportsmanship.
2. To develop proper attitudes toward winning and losing, success and failure.
3. To encourage and develop respect for fellow athletes whether they are teammates, members of other St. Paul's teams, or members of opposing teams.
4. To assure that the amount of time required for athletic participation does not interfere with academic success.
5. To develop proper attitudes toward individual health habits, appearance on and off the field, and citizenship in and out of school.
6. To encourage competition not only for the tangible rewards but also for the development of positive attitudes that makes athletic competition valuable and worthwhile.
7. To orient all participants and fans to abide by the rules, regulations, and officials' decisions that govern each sport.
8. To maintain the highest standard of ethics, recognize each participant as an individual who will conduct him/herself in a manner befitting his/her responsibilities, and develop the kind of rapport with the broader school community that will improve the total educational program.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

Participation in a sport can benefit a student in other areas by helping the student learn to organize time to maintain all areas of responsibility. Since academic progress must take precedence over sports, participation in a sport should never be used as an excuse for a drop in academic performance. The following guidelines will be used to determine academic eligibility for sports participation.

- Any student will be suspended from the team for having two D's or an F in any core subject at each midterm/quarter. The length of the suspension will be a minimum of one week or until the average is brought up. The suspension will begin the Sunday after midterm/quarter and run through the following Saturday.
- Because we expect our students to do their best in all areas, parents will be notified if the student is having difficulties, such as:
 - a. chronic lateness of work
 - b. a steady or sudden drop in grades
 - c. discipline problems of any kind which could lead to disciplinary action taken by the coach
- Exceptions to this policy may be made for students with diagnosed learning disabilities.
- If a student has been removed from one team because of grades and a new season begins in the same marking period, the student may not participate, unless they have shown marked improvement. In this case Principal, Athletic Director, and Teacher must grant permission.

Student Behavior

- Severe or continuing discipline problems may result in a student being removed from a team. The Principal, Athletic Director, and Coach make this decision.

Illegal Activity

- If any student that engages in any illegal activity (in or out of school) necessitating disciplinary or legal action, the school will determine the appropriate sanction including the possibility of suspension or dismissal from all athletic activities in addition to any other sanctions deemed necessary by the school.
- This expectation as to conduct, and its corresponding penalty, is in addition to the prohibitions and penalties relating to alcohol, tobacco, and drug use and possession set forth in the **Substance Abuse Policy** (*Athletic Forms Booklet*).

Physical Examination

- Prior to the first participation in interscholastic athletics, all 7-8 grade students shall undergo a medical examination and be approved for interscholastic athletic competition by a medical authority licensed to perform a physical exam. This examination is valid for two years.
- Prepared forms are available in the *Athletic Forms Handbook* or from the school office and must be filled out by the physician. Forms will become part of the student's permanent record.

Age

- We belong to the Milwaukee Lutheran Elementary School Athletic Association (**M.L.E.S.A.A.**), we must then abide by league rules regarding age, which state participating players must not have reached their fifteenth birthday by September 1st of the school year in which they desire to participate.

Practice Attendance

- Attend all scheduled practices, without excuse, unless directly dismissed by the coach. Two **unexcused** absences will be cause for dismissal from the team.
- If a student is in school that day they will be expected at practice unless they communicate directly with their coach to inform him/her of their absence.
- Athletes must attend a full day of school in order to participate in practice sessions or games that day.
- Personal absences (doctor’s appointment, funeral, etc.) will not affect participation in practices or games that day.
- **Missed practices may result in reduction of playing time.**

Insurance

- St. Paul’s does not carry any medical expenses insurance for the benefit of any student who may be injured at school or while participating in a school sponsored event or activity, including athletic events, and that St. Paul’s nor its coaches assumes any responsibility for such expense. Parents/guardians must carry insurance that covers any accidental injuries.
- All injuries received during practice/competition must be brought to the coach’s attention the day the injury occurs.

Permission Forms

- Students who try out for an athletic team must have all **Athletic Forms** filled out and signed by a parent or guardian prior to trying out. These forms will be made available each year at Open House, and are also available from the Athletic Director or the Office.
- **Concussion Forms**-State law requires parents/guardians and students sign concussion information forms. These can be found in the **Athletic Forms** packet.

Participation Fees

- All students participating in volleyball, basketball, soccer, and cross country must pay a \$30.00 participation fee for each sport.
- Payment should be given to the Office. Payments may be made by check to St. Paul’s Lutheran School. Athletes who do not meet the payment deadline will not be allowed to participate on any level (including practice) until payment is received.
- Athletes will be required to pay the fee before the first practice of the season.
- Refunds will not be given for any student who quits or is dismissed from a team.
- Athletes who join a sport in mid-season for any reason must pay the full fee.
- Refunds for athletes who suffer a season-ending injury or illness will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

OPPORTUNITIES

Our school is a member of **M.L.E.S.A.A.** (Milwaukee Lutheran Elementary School Athletic Association) and participates in the sports sanctioned by this body. We pay in excess of \$2000 to belong to this association. Fees for this come from tournament profits and sports fees. Some sports may not be fielded due to lack of participation or coaches.

FALL

Girls Volleyball
4-8

WINTER

Boys Basketball
4-8
Girls Basketball
4-8
Cheerleading/Dance
5-8

SPRING

Boys Volleyball
6-8
Co-Ed Track and Field
5-8

1. Philosophy

It is our desire to see as many students as possible participate in the athletic program. Obviously, time, space, facilities, equipment, coach availability, athletic ability and other factors will place limitations on the most effective squad size for any particular sport, and the number of teams offered.

2. Team Composition

- Squad size at the varsity level is limited. Too many players reduces the number of repetitions each athlete gets, impedes learning and skill development, and reduces the amount of playing time each athlete would receive. The number of participants on any given team is a function of the number needed to conduct an effective and meaningful practice and to play the contest. The number of roster positions is relative to factors mentioned above.
- Due to student participation, ineligibility, behavior and/or attitude problems it may be necessary at times to make adjustments in the grade level of players on a particular team. In some situations, we may need to bring players up from the grade below or move players down from the grade above.
- Parents are to be notified of any possible changes.
- The student may only be a member of one team during a season at the 7th/8th grade level for league games. (League Rules)
- In cases where tryouts are deemed necessary, the coach will consult with the Athletic Director and Principal in setting up and running tryouts. Tryouts will only occur in the 7-8 grades.

3. Team Selection Procedure

- Prior to trying out, the coach shall provide the following information to all candidates for the team:
 - a. Extent of the tryout period.
 - b. Criteria used to select the team.
 - c. Number of students to be selected.
 - d. Practice commitment for those who make the team.
 - e. Game and tournament commitments.
- Each candidate shall have a minimum of two practice sessions. Illness and injury to a student athlete during a tryout period must not be held against the student athlete, but the coach must make a fair judgment about time restrictions for tryouts.
- Athletes will be evaluated by a minimum of three coaches.

JOINING AND QUITTING TEAMS

- Students may not join a team once practices have begun. Exceptions can be made in the case of illness or injury, or a new student transferring into our school system.
- Ideally, a student choosing to discontinue participation in a sport is doing so after all other avenues have been explored. The student, after making a final decision in consultation with their parents, should directly inform the coach of their decision.

PRACTICES

Practices are a key element for developing teamwork and individual skills. Since gym time is limited, we must use what time we do have to its fullest potential.

Attendance: Coaches spend a lot of time planning and preparing for practices. When a player is missing, it can affect the entire practice. Attendance at practices is mandatory. If a student is going to miss a practice, **the coach should be notified in writing at least one day before** the practice. We strive to teach our students to be dedicated to their team and to honor their commitment to be part of a team. Students who are genuinely interested in a particular sport and who are dedicated will not miss practice unexcused. We advise all athletes to attempt to schedule dental, doctor and other appointments and activities around athletic practices and games. **Missed practices may result in reduction of playing time.** Parents and students also need to be reminded that no jewelry is allowed at games and thus will not be allowed at practice. Students are advised against getting ears pierced before or during a sports season. For safety reasons, students wearing earrings (even those covered by athletic tape) will not be allowed to participate until the jewelry is removed (*WIAA Rules*).

During school vacations such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, a student will not be penalized for missing a practice.

Detention: If a student misses a practice or a game due to a detention/suspension, this will count as an *unexcused* absence.

Unexcused Absences: An unexcused absence may be given for the following reasons: missing practice without proper notification, inappropriate clothing, and detention.

The coach will use the following criteria to enforce attendance at practice/games.

- 1st Unexcused Absence- One game suspension
- 2nd *Unexcused Absence - Dismissal from team*

Clothing: Practice clothing should be clean, in good repair, and reflect Christian modesty. Shoes should have non-marking soles, be of good quality, be laced, and be appropriate to the sport. Proper footwear greatly lessens the chance for ankle injury. (Slip-ons are not acceptable)

Siblings: Siblings of players that must stay after school and wait until practice ends for a ride home, should wait at After School Care.

Pick-up Time: Players are expected to be at practice, and picked up from practice on time. All children need to be picked up **no later than 10 minutes after practice ends.** We understand emergencies and delays can arise. For legal reasons coaches have been instructed not to leave the students in the building unsupervised. Please consider the time of our teachers and volunteer coaches in this matter.

If student transportation or supervision before or after an event is a problem, our school does offer After School Care for a minimal fee. More information on this may be obtained from the school office.

WEATHER EMERGENCIES

If games or practices are cancelled during the school day because of inclement weather the students on the teams will be given permission to use the school phones to notify their parents. We will make every effort to let all involved know by 1:30 of that day. When there is a weather emergency that necessitates canceling school, there will be no games or practices that evening.

PLAYING TIME

The students and parents who become involved in the athletic program of St. Paul's will need to develop a correct understanding of a Christian approach to competition and winning, and put this understanding into action. Games are played not only to have fun and to learn skills, but also to win and be successful. In our program, we strive for all of these goals, with our most important goal being to represent our school in a way that displays good Christian sportsmanship.

- At the lower levels, the coaches should stress the fundamental skills and learning the game. Here, less emphasis is placed on winning and more on learning the game and its skills, as well as fundamental concepts of Christian teamwork. Although it is not possible to be exact, coaches will strive for equal playing time among players. **This may not apply to tournament situations.**
- Players and parents must also realize that other things such as attitude, cooperation in practice, **practice attendance, and game attendance** can also affect playing time.
- At the seventh and eighth grade levels we need to adjust our guidelines and coaching as the intensity of competition increases within our league. Throughout our league schools begin placing more emphasis on the sharpening of individual skills, helping athletes to think of team goals rather than individual goals, teaching more intense game situations, handling pressure, handling stiffer competition, and on striving to win. However, this does not mean that winning at all costs is our goal. **It does mean that playing time at this level will no longer be equal or even guaranteed,** and although coaches will strive to get all players into games, this may not always happen. This, too, is part of the learning and character building process. **We expect that all players and parents be publicly supportive of our coaches' decisions,**
- Playing time is determined by:
 1. Grade level (4-6 level versus 7-8 level)
 2. **Skill** of the player
 3. Player's **attitude** toward coach and team
 4. Player's **effort**
 5. Skill level of **opponent**
 6. **Game situation**
 7. **Missed practices may result in reduction of playing time.**

TRANSPORTATION

- Our **Athletic Transportation Policy** (*Athletic Forms Booklet*) states that transportation is normally provided by parents.
- Drivers need to make sure they have a valid driver's license, up-to-date insurance, and a current AVDIRF form on file in the school office. Each passenger must wear their own seat belt.

UNIFORMS

For most sports we provide students with a uniform. In some sports, students are asked to purchase their uniform top at a minimal cost (i.e. dance). In 7-8 basketball, students are asked to purchase a warm up shirt.

Care: Take caution and extreme care when washing uniforms. Read instructions carefully! The uniform will never be worn for anything other than games.

Return: The uniform will be returned in the same condition it was given out. If it is not, you will be billed the replacement cost of the entire uniform. Students who have not returned their uniform will be billed for the replacement cost of that uniform.

Equipment: Parents and players will be notified in advance of any additional equipment deemed as necessary by coaches, and approved by the Athletic Director and Principal. This might include mouth guards, kneepads, eyeglass straps, and shoes.

SCHEDULING OF PRACTICES AND GAMES

All game schedules come from our league and are made available as soon as we receive them. Gym time is very limited; coupling that with coach's availability makes scheduling practices and games a complicated matter. At times, conflicts with other after school activities are unavoidable. If this presents an ongoing conflict, parents and students will need to choose which activity the child will remain involved in. We strive to have a schedule that affords an opportunity to as many students as possible.

No games or practices will be conducted during worship services. We must also keep in mind Advent and Lent mid-week services.

Coaches will make every effort to keep parents, players, and school personnel aware of schedules and scheduling changes in a timely fashion.

COACHES' ROLE

Coaching kids is a very difficult, time-consuming, and yet rewarding activity. We are thankful for the many people who over the years have so selflessly given of their times and talents to make our athletic program what it is today. Coaches, like kids, come in many different ways, and all have their own way of doing things. History shows us that Drill Sergeants were very effective teachers and motivators. History also shows us that it is possible to walk softly, and get the same results. Please try to be, accepting of individual differences in coaching style. Coaches are human. They make mistakes, but all of our coaches want what is best for your child.

Each St. Paul's coach will strive to lead the children to use their God-given athletic talents to the best of their ability. He/she will teach basic skills, team skills, teamwork, and Christian sportsmanship.

Each coach will be accountable to the athletic director and the principal and will be required to follow league rules.

EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

1. Be positive with your son/daughter. Let them know that they are accomplishing something by being part of the team.
2. As a fan, you are entitled to cheer as loud as you wish in a positive and supportive fashion, but please, don't become belligerent.

3. Insist that the athletes respect and follow team rules, school rules, **game officials**, and sportsmanship. Self-respect begins with self-control.
4. **Respect** the officials. Under no circumstances should a fan ever approach a game official to discuss or offer their opinions.
5. Encourage your athlete to play for the love of the game.
6. Remember that the coach is involved as a coach because he/she is sincerely fond of children and is a fan of the game. Coaches have different ways of dealing with people and situations. Athlete's lives are enriched by interaction with different types of leaders. **Support the coach(es) in the presence of other parents and fans, and especially your children.**
7. At a competition you, the parent, represent your school, your son/daughter, and your Lord. Please be a positive role model.
8. Parents need to be supportive of their children's efforts. Being at games, picking up children on time, being a supportive spectator, discouraging unsportsmanlike conduct, and the like are ways Christian parents teach their children. Parents should teach their children to be humble winners and gracious losers.
9. **The coaches are the coaches.** Resist coaching from the stands. Undermining a coach's authority is harmful to the team and to your child.
10. Respect the officials.

PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION

As your son/daughter becomes involved in the sports program at St. Paul's, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. Our coaches all try their best and want what is best for each child and the team. It is important to understand that there may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. This is the opportunity for your child to talk with their respective coach and discuss the situation. When your child handles the problem, it becomes part of the learning and maturation process.

There may also be situations that require a conversation between the coach and the parent. These are encouraged as well. It's important that both parties have a clear understanding of the other's position. Please follow the following procedures to help promote a resolution.

1. Parent/guardian speak directly and privately to the coach to discuss the concern.
2. **Conflicts are not solved in the bleachers or the hallways. Please do not criticize and run down our coaches in the presence of other parents, children, or fans.**
3. If the concern is not resolved, call the Athletic Director to arrange a conference. A meeting will be arranged with the coach, parent and Athletic Director. At this meeting, the appropriate next step can be determined.
4. If the above attempts have not resulted in a satisfactory resolution, the Principal will be consulted. His/Her ruling is final.
5. Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolutions, and lead to tarnished images of our school, the coach, and yourself. A parent who attempts to talk to a coach in a manner that is considered to be aggressive may be told that proper procedure would be to set up an appointment with the coach the following day. The purpose would be to give both parties a chance to calm down and think about the situation completely. This would hopefully prevent problems for the parent, athlete, and coach.
6. Please let scripture be your guide (**Matt. 7:1-5 and Matt.18:15-17**).

For years St. Paul's and its fans have had the respect and admiration of other schools as well as league officials. This is due in part to the positive and supportive behavior of our coaches, players, and fans. In the era of taunting and disrespectful behavior that kids see and emulate, we need more than ever to display God-pleasing attitude and behaviors for our children and fellow adults as well.

St. Paul's Athletic Code of Conduct

Preamble:

Interscholastic and youth sports programs play an important role in promoting the physical, social and emotional development of children. It is therefore essential for parents, coaches and officials to encourage youth athletes to embrace the values of good sportsmanship. Moreover, adults involved in youth sports events should be models of good sportsmanship and should lead by example by demonstrating fairness, respect and self-control.

I therefore pledge to be responsible for my words and actions while attending, coaching, officiating or participating in a youth sports event and shall conform my behavior to the following code of conduct:

1. I will not engage in unsportsmanlike conduct with any coach, parent, player, participant, official or any other attendee.
2. I will not encourage my child, or any other person, to engage in unsportsmanlike conduct with any coach, parent, player, participant, official or any other attendee.
3. I will not engage in any behavior which would endanger the health, safety or well-being of any coach, parent, player, participant, official or any other attendee.
4. I will not encourage my child, or any other person, to engage in any behavior which would endanger the health, safety or well-being of any coach, parent, player, participant, official or any other attendee.
5. I will not use drugs or alcohol while at a youth sports event and will not attend, coach, officiate or participate in a youth sports event while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
6. I will not permit my child, or encourage any other person, to use drugs or alcohol at a youth sports event and will not permit my child, or encourage any other person, to attend, coach, officiate or participate in a youth sports event while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
7. I will not engage in the use of profanity.
8. I will not encourage my child, or any other person, to engage in the use of profanity.
9. I will treat any coach, parent, player, participant, official or any other attendee with respect regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation or ability.
10. I will encourage my child to treat any coach, parent, player, participant, official or any other attendee with respect regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation or ability.
11. I will not engage in verbal or physical threats or abuse aimed at any coach, parent, player, participant, official or any other attendee.
12. I will not encourage my child, or any other person, to engage in verbal or physical threats or abuse aimed at any coach, parent, player, participant, official or any other attendee.
13. I will not initiate a fight or scuffle with any coach, parent, player, participant, official or any other attendee.
14. I will not encourage my child, or any other person, to initiate a fight or scuffle with any coach, parent, player, participant, official or any other attendee.
15. **I WILL** do my best to be a positive example of Christian Sportsmanship to others.

I acknowledge, understand, and agree that failure to conform my conduct to the foregoing while attending, coaching, officiating or participating in a youth sports event I may be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to the following in any order or combination:

1. Verbal warning issued by a league, organization or school official.
2. Written warning issued by a league, organization or school official.
3. Suspension or immediate ejection from a youth sports event.
4. Suspension from multiple youth sports events.
5. Season suspension.