

Dear Parents, Students, and Coaches,

*“I consider sports as an instrument of education when it fosters high human and spiritual ideals; when it forms youth in an integral way in values such as loyalty, perseverance, friendship, solidarity and peace. Surmounting differences of cultures and ideologies, sports offers an ideal occasion for dialogue and understanding among peoples, for building the desired civilization of love. To put into practice these values, based on the dignity of the human person, in face of possible interests that might darken the nobility of sports itself.”*

-Pope John Paul (Sept. 16, 2002)

Welcome to St. Joseph Catholic School! In choosing to attend St. Joseph School you have elected a Christ-centered Catholic education and academic excellence. Many wonderful opportunities await you!

As a school community at St. Joseph, we all must consider the appropriate role of athletics. A core characteristic of Catholic Christianity and Catholic schools is the concept of relationship and community and the conviction that human kind is “made for each other” (Educating for Life, Thomas Groome, pg. 60). Our prayer is stronger in community. Academic achievement is greater in a community with a similar mission and goals. Our athletic program adds another dimension to our school community. Pope John Paul II says that as manifestations of the communal body of Christ, athletics serve to unify all individuals, including coaches, students-athletes, and families in a spirit of peace.

This handbook outlines the philosophy and reflects the policies of the St. Joseph School Athletic Program for the 2024-2025 school year. Please read this document carefully, sign the Code of conduct agreement form and return it to school before attending the first practice date. The agreement states that you intend to abide by the policies of the St. Joseph Athletic Program during the 2024-2025 school year.

St. Joseph Athletics extends the work of St. Joseph School by offering another environment in which high human and spiritual ideals can be fostered to help children grow towards a deeper understanding of themselves and their roles in God’s great world. Thank you for doing your part to help positively affects and develop the lives of all children by building a peaceful environment within our school, our parish, and in our larger community.

Just as those who create a document such as this are a work in progress, so is this Athletic Handbook.

In peace,

Mrs. Danette Ragusa  
Principal

# **St. Joseph School Athletics**

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## **Mission of St. Joseph School Athletics**

The St. Joseph School Athletic Program dedicates itself to the pursuit of excellence in athletics within the framework of a Catholic community and in accordance with its primary role as an educator and spiritual guide. The athletics program is committed to providing opportunities for each individual student-athlete to reach his/her highest potential while developing the qualities and spirit of a Catholic Christian.

## **Philosophy:**

*“Do you not know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? Run so as to win. Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one.”*

*Corinthians 9:24-25*

We recognize that the imperishable crown offered by Jesus Christ far exceeds any of the perishable crowns or trophies offered by this world. As a Catholic school, St. Joseph upholds Christian values and principles. Though our athletic teams strive to win in the sense of having the best score, we recognize the real value of Catholic school athletics is realized only if it fosters the development of the human person – both in spirit and in body – by cultivating Christian character, strengthening personal integrity and responsibility, and promoting the pursuit of excellence in all endeavors.

Participation on a team is a privilege. With this privilege come responsibilities in the areas of preparation, attitude, sportsmanship, and academics. These responsibilities exist both in and out of school, both in athletic and non-athletic settings. We recognize the need for God’s support and guidance in meeting these responsibilities.

## **Conference Affiliation:**

St. Joseph School participates in the Northshore Independent Athletic League (NIAL), a conference comprised of area Catholic and private schools. St. Joseph plays under the LHSAA, Louisiana High School Athletic Association rules as amended by the bylaws of the NIAL. In addition to playing conference games, St. Joseph teams sometimes play other public schools in the area. Thus, St. Joseph athletes play students from diverse backgrounds and skill levels.

# **Registration Information**

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## **Nondiscriminatory Policy**

St. Joseph Athletics admits any students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its participatory policies, admissions policies, or athletic programs.

## **Procedure for Registration**

A student can become a full, participating member of a St. Joseph athletic team once the following requirements are met:

1. Student and parent/guardian have completed and returned St. Joseph Athletic “Catholic Mutual Cares” insurance packet
2. Paid the fee amount regarding sport team (see Fee section)
3. Student and parent/guardian have read the St. Joseph Athletic Handbook and signed the “Code of Conduct Agreement Form.”
4. Student has an updated physical form (for 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade athletes)

## **Fees**

All sports offered at St. Joseph School have different costs required for operation. Student athletes and their families are required to pay a sport’s fee per athlete per sport to cover parts of the operating costs, utilities, equipment costs, league fees, concessions and referee fees. Students and their families may be asked to provide their own personal equipment for certain sports.

Participation fees must be paid in full prior to the first game of each sport. Fees are non-refundable.

Volleyball - \$35.00	Flag Football - \$35.00
Cross Country - \$25.00	Soccer - \$35.00
Basketball - \$35.00	Baseball - \$35.00
Softball - \$35.00	Track & Field - \$25.00

*Financial constraints should not inhibit any student from participating in student athletics. For financial assistance for St. Joseph athletics, please contact the principal.*

## General Information

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### Levels of Competition

Development of the skills fundamental to each sport receives primary emphasis on each athletic team offered at St. Joseph. Each team experience, however, may be slightly different depending on the level at which the team is competing.

LEVEL	VARSITY - Teams at this level strive to prepare students for high school.	JUNIOR VARSITY – Teams at this level emphasize on the development of skills.
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### Athletic Teams at St. Joseph

St. Joseph School offers the following sports as recognized by the Northshore Independent Athletic League to students in grades 5<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> (unless otherwise noted):

SEASON	GIRLS	BOYS
FALL	Volleyball Varsity – 7 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Junior Varsity – 5 <sup>th</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> Cross Country – PreK – 8 <sup>th</sup>	Flag Football Varsity – 7 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Junior Varsity – 5 <sup>th</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> Cross Country – PreK – 8 <sup>th</sup>
WINTER	Basketball Varsity – 7 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Junior Varsity – 5 <sup>th</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup>  Soccer Varsity – 7 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Junior Varsity – 5 <sup>th</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup>	Basketball Varsity – 7 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Junior Varsity – 5 <sup>th</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup>  Soccer Varsity – 7 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Junior Varsity – 5 <sup>th</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup>
Spring	Softball Varsity – 5 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>  Track & Field – 5 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>	Baseball Varsity – 7 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Junior Varsity – 5 <sup>th</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> Track & Field – 5 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>

Dependent on certain circumstances, the Athletic Committee and administration may discern the adjustments to the rosters when necessary.

### Transportation Policy

In accordance with the policies of Diocese of Baton Rouge, St. Joseph does not provide any transportation to or from athletic events. All transportation is privately arranged by parents/guardians. St. Joseph and the Diocese of Baton Rouge assume no liability for accidents that may occur in the transportation of students to or from any sporting practice or event.

## **Tryouts**

Announcements of tryout dates will occur over assembly and during P.E. classes prior to tryout dates. Students in grades 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> may try out for any St. Joseph sports team. Students and parents should be reminded that not all who try out will be chosen for a particular sport.

## **Coaching Expectations and Requirements**

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Coaches are first and foremost educators of sports. At all times, coaches must be examples of Christ the Teacher who serve as role models for student-athletes to emulate. They must be messengers of the school mission and ensure that athletic programs embody the Catholic characteristics prevalent at St. Joseph School.

### **Goal Setting**

When working with St. Joseph student-athletes, a successful coach will work towards goals in the following three dimensions: team, personal and school.

### **Team Goals**

St. Joseph coaches build a team by:

1. Advancing the athletes' understanding of their role as members of the communal body of Christ.
2. Creating a positive and memorable experience that will be cherished by the student-athlete for the rest of his/her life.
3. Teaching the specific and unique skills of this sport to the very best of his/her abilities by using all means, methods, and resources available.
4. Teaching the skills of healthy competition that will prepare athletes and the team to succeed.

### **Personal Goals**

St. Joseph coaches grow as individuals by:

1. Modeling character, sportsmanship, self-discipline, and lived faith.
2. Appreciating the moments of grace throughout a season, at times of winning and losing.
3. Becoming a lifelong learner of their sport.
4. Maintaining perspective in and throughout all athletic endeavors, realizing teachable moments exist in all experiences.
5. Fostering positive relationships with all school community stakeholders.

## **School Goals**

St. Joseph coaches contribute to the school community by:

1. Infusing the school mission in all athletic activities.
2. Promoting academic excellence as an essential component in the development of student-athletes.
3. Committing to effective communication with administrators, teachers, parents, and athletes.
4. Supporting the development of student-athletes as leaders and role models in greater school community.
5. Creating a culture of school unity and spirit as exemplified through sportsmanship, positive fan participation, and respect for all.

## **Conduct of Coaches**

Coaches are called to be models and witnesses to their faith each day and as such, coaches are expected to uphold high standards of conduct in and out of season.

## **Language**

Verbal and nonverbal language should be appropriate and constructive. Coaches are expected to not only monitor their own language, but they should also set an enforced standards of appropriate language for their athletes. This includes, but is not limited to swearing, harassment, exclusionary language, sexual innuendo, personal attacks, and unsportsmanlike gestures.

## **Treatment of Opponents**

Although opponents are not a part of our school community, they are members of the larger body of Christ and should be treated as such. Coaches should model such respect for their athletes and should instruct players on how to welcome their opponents and all visitors in a way that conveys a sense of hospitality and community.

## **Prayer**

Athletic experiences play in important role in the spiritual formation of students at St. Joseph School. Genuine and lasting spiritual development is only possible through careful and conscientious preparation by those in leadership positions. Coaches, as team leaders, or chosen not just to be mentors and role models for student-athletes, but also to be witnesses. Prayers should become an intentional component to a team's culture, not just a rushed event before or after a game or practice. Rather than emphasizing winning, prayer should focus on embodying the spirit of Christianity. Coaches are encouraged to build and create a spiritual traditions into their approach to coaching at St. Joseph School.

## **Holding Tryouts**

In a Catholic school, it is essential to demonstrate respect for all members of the school community. There is not an expectation that all students will be able to be members of a team, but when cuts are necessary students should be treated fairly and with compassion.

## **Coaching Duties**

In addition to serving as witnesses and models of faith, St. Joseph coaches are expected to fulfill the following duties:

- Plan out practices and games with Athletic Director
- Supervise athletes at all times until they are picked up from practices/games
- Condition athletes properly
- Assess athletes' readiness for practicing competition
- Instruct properly on what to do and what not to do
- Maintain safe plane conditions
- Ensure cleanliness of facilities
- Provide proper equipment
- Communicate practice and game schedules to athletes and parents
- Select train and supervise assistant coaches

## **Communication with Athletes and Parents**

St. Joseph coaches should establish clear procedures and guidelines for communicating with athletes and parents that align with the philosophy and mission of St. Joseph School. Emails, group me's, and team chats should be used only to communicate basic information, such as time and location of games and practices and must include the AD. Discussions of concerns should always be done in person. If a face-to-face meeting is not possible a phone call is acceptable. Before meetings, establish clear agendas approved by the A.D., and communicate that certain topics will not be discussed. Coaches do not have to discuss playing time, coaching strategies and specific plays, or information pertaining to other athletes.

## **Recognition**

Recognition of athletes should be utilized throughout the season as a means of personal athlete formation and teambuilding. Any recognition of athletes should embody the goals and the philosophies of the athletic department and the program, not only physical talent. Some areas of recognition may include one's academics, sportsmanship, and Catholic nature/spirituality.

The banners in our school gym contains the year each sport won the NIAL championship. This is for Varsity teams only. In the future, years will be added each time a varsity sport wins the NIAL championship game.

## **Student Expectations and Requirements**

Students and parents should recognize that participation in the athletic program is not a right of all students, but rather a privilege to those selected individuals who possess the ability, attitude, disposition, cooperative spirit, and desire to represent the St. Joseph community in a favorable way. By joining the school's athletic program, a student becomes a representative of his/her team and of St. Joseph School.

## **Eligibility and Probation**

We expect student-athletes to maintain academic and behavioral standards in keeping with the St. Joseph School Parent-Student handbook and the teachings of the Catholic Church. These regulations and procedures apply while on school premises, during practices and competition. A student will be considered ELIGIBLE to participate in interscholastic athletics at St. Joseph School if their most recent academic and conduct report reflects a passing or satisfactory grade in all subjects including conduct.

A student – athlete will be considered on PROBATION should his/her most recent academic and behavior reports reflect any one or a combination of the following:

### **1. One failing grade in any subject**

- **At mid-quarter the AD will check grades. Any student-athlete with an F will have one week to increase the grade at least to a D. After one week goes by, if the grade remains an F, that is the date the probation starts. The AD will continue to check the students grade and probationary status every Wednesday.**
- **The AD will also check when report cards go home. If a student receives an F in any subjects, the day report cards go home is the day the two-week probation starts.**

### **2. Early morning detention (due to accumulating 8 recess detentions)**

- **The two-week probation for early morning detentions will start the day administration schedules the detention. St. Joseph only holds these detentions twice a month.**

### **3. Major referral**

- **The two-week probation for a major referral will start the day administration sends home paperwork.**

**-Administration will have all final decisions.**

**-Student-athletes, parents and coaches will be notified by the AD or appropriate staff regarding all probation dates and any additional information.**

- If the probation is due to a major referral or early morning detention, the student-athlete may still be present at games/practices during that two-week probation, they must not touch a ball or play during this time. They may only go to observe.
- If the probation is due to failing a class, he/she must not attend any activities during the two-week probation meaning they do not go at all during probation.

Probation is a two-week period during which a student-athlete works to improve his/her grades and/or conduct. During this two-week period, a student is still considered a full member of the athletic team, but time should be spent wisely in improving one's grades and conduct. St. Joseph School faculty and staff are always willing to assist students in their academic studies and personal growth as young adults.



## **Evaluating Probationary Improvement**

A student-athlete remains a full member of a team if his/her grades at the end of the probationary two-week period reflect a passing average or better in every class, and the student-athlete maintained conduct in keeping with the St. Joseph Student – Parent Handbook and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

## **Student-Athlete Expectations**

A student-athlete's behavior is governed by the same rules, regulations, and procedures that apply to all students as set forth in the St. Joseph Parent – Student Handbook. Each student-athlete is expected to demonstrate and encourage behaviors in others that reflect good sportsmanship. If behavior infractions occur, student-athletes may face both a school and an athletic consequence.

## **Attendance**

All student-athletes must be marked as present in school on the day of practice or a game in order to participate. Please see the Parent – Student Handbook for what constitutes an absence.

All student-athletes must recognize the time commitment made to a team. One is expected to attend all practices and games. If one cannot attend a practice or game, please make sure the coach and/or Athletic Director has been notified in advance. Consequences for a missed practice or game will be informed by the team rules as outlined by the coach/team at the beginning of the season in addition to the natural consequences that result from missing practice instruction or game experience.

## **Dress Code/Uniforms**

Student-athletes are highly visible representatives of the school and, as such, responsible for using good judgment in their overall appearance. All teams, regardless of level, have a responsibility to ensure that their game attire speaks volumes of their class and excellence. No player should make modifications to his or her uniform. Athletes are to treat the uniform with respect.

Uniforms are to be bought personally by the student-athlete's parent/guardian. The Athletic Director and coaches will inform student-athletes of the type of uniform and its cost.