

**St. Thomas Catholic School  
Athletic Handbook  
Catholic Diocese of Peoria  
2018-2019**

**Mission Statement:** The athletic program at St. Thomas Catholic School seeks to train each student athlete the skills needed to perform their respective sport or activity, teach concepts of fair sportsmanship, team work, and individual discipline, and develop character qualities within the realm of Catholic Christian traditions.

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## **Athletic Philosophy**

*We have offered sports to God as a human activity aimed at the full development of the human person...*

Pope John Paul II  
Jubilee for the World of Sport

Peoria Diocesan Catholic Schools are dedicated to the development and growth of the whole person.

Jesus' teachings remain at the heart of virtues that ultimately contribute to making the athletic program a Catholic Christian experience. The program exists to develop and enhance the relationship between faith development and daily living.

First and foremost, parents and legal guardians are the first teachers and models of faith development.

Myriad opportunities for spiritual, intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development exist within the religious and academic environment.

Athletics, as an extra-curricular school activity at the elementary level, is a privilege, one that is earned and fostered by a student's Christian character and academic efforts. Athletics will be recognized as a supportive component to the total educational process, offering balance rather than prominence within its educational scope and practices.

## **Objectives**

A balanced athletic program, a privilege in which elementary students may choose to participate, exemplifies and witnesses to the meaning of living in a Catholic Christian community by:

- Allowing participation of students regardless of their athletic abilities
- Developing character qualities within the realm of Catholic Christian traditions
- Providing opportunities for development of fundamental skills and self-confidence
- Developing habits of health, hygiene, and safety
- Providing opportunities for student athletes, parent(s)/guardians, coaches, moderators, and spectators to celebrate their school communities as *Christ present among us*

At the minimum, outcomes flowing from the Philosophy and Objectives will include:

- Character formation
- A healthy sense of competition
- Development of basic skills
- Team work
- Sportsmanship
- School pride
- Self-discipline
- Enjoyment

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## **I. Policies and Procedures**

### **Adult Supervision**

Adequate adult supervision must be provided to student athletes every time they arrive, practice, participate in any manner, and wait for their rides. It is expected that one of the supervisors will be the coach. However, it is recommended that parents, guardians, and other adults oversee the student athletes at all times when they are in the school, on the school premises, or at games/events away from the school.

By the same token, parents and guardians must show their respect by bringing their children to practices and events and picking them up at the recommended window of time designated by the school.

The only supervision the school provides after school is the Aftercare program from 2:45-5:45. If student athletes are not a part of the Aftercare program, they should leave the school grounds after dismissal and not return for practice or a game/event until the time requested by the coach. If student athletes are leaving for practice or a game/event from the Aftercare program, they must be signed out by either the coach or their parent or guardian. Student athletes **MAY NOT** sign themselves out of Aftercare. All regular Aftercare fees will apply to student-athletes.

### **Affiliations**

St. Thomas School is a member of the Illini Conference and abides by its regulations and by-laws. Schools within our Illini Conference include Thomasboro, St. Malachy, Ludlow, Judah Christian, Holy Cross, and University High. St. Thomas School is a member of the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA) and abides by its regulations. All individuals who desire to be on a team and fulfill the requirements may be on the team. Students who meet all requirements will not be cut from a team, except to comply with IESA tournament team limits (15) at the end of the season.

### **Athletic Offerings**

All St. Thomas School students in fifth through eighth grade are invited to participate in cross-country, basketball, volleyball, and track and field. Speech will be offered to all students at St. Thomas School in grades fifth through eighth. Cheerleading is open to fourth through eighth grade students if there is an interest. St. Thomas School will make every attempt to field seventh- and eighth-grade teams according to IESA and conference guidelines. All athletic offerings will depend on sufficient volunteerism in coaching and student participation.

## **Awards**

Awards, including trophies, are traditionally a part of the athletic program. Only athletic awards officially approved by the Athletic Committee and/or Administration may be presented to the students regardless of the funding source of the awards. They will be presented to student athletes at the annual sports banquet in the spring.

## **Eligibility**

Developing a sense of responsibility is an important part of the curriculum in the education of children. Responsible players are needed for a team to succeed. Students should be aware that failure to abide by the requirements of the program entails personal consequences that also have an effect on the team. With this goal in mind, the eligibility policy has been developed.

St. Thomas School is a member of the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA) and complies with its eligibility standards. To participate in IESA activities sponsored by St. Thomas School, the following is required:

- A Sports Physical Form is required each year for each athlete and must be on file before the first day of practice; the athlete may not participate until a current form is on file.
- A candidate for an athletic team must be covered by family insurance. Proof of insurance must be kept in the student's file in the school office.
- An athlete will not be allowed to attend practice or compete in an event if he/she was absent **half** of the school day (three (3) hours or more), due to **illness**.
- Eligibility requirements will begin for the athlete upon the start of the season, based on IESA regulations for the sport in which they are participating.
- An athlete must maintain a passing grade in every subject area. Grades shall be cumulative for the school's grading period. A student becomes ineligible when:
  - He/She has an "F" cumulative average in any subject;
  - He/She is late in completing extended-deadline work after an absence
- Eligibility checks are made every Thursday at the end of the school day by the athlete's teacher(s).
  - The homeroom teacher will notify the student athlete's parent(s) or guardian(s) by the close of the school day on Friday. The Principal will notify the Athletic Director no later than Friday evening. The Athletic Director will notify Coaches no later than Friday evening.
  - When a student is ineligible, he/she may not attend practice, dress in uniform, or participate in any game/event during the time of ineligibility. Ineligibility starts on the upcoming Monday and remains in effect through the following Saturday. A student will be dropped from the team if he/she becomes ineligible five (5) times during one (1) sport for the remainder of that season.

- In cases where a contest has been postponed or re-scheduled, the current week eligibility shall be used to determine a student's eligibility. For example, a contest is scheduled to be played on Tuesday and, because of poor weather, the contest is rescheduled for two weeks later. A student who was grade eligible for the originally scheduled game but is ineligible during the week of the rescheduled game is not eligible. Conversely, a student who was ineligible the week of the originally scheduled game and is grade eligible the week of the rescheduled contest is eligible to play.
- Behavior expectations that align to our school motto to *Live, Love, and Serve as Christ* also apply to extra-curricular activities including but not limited to practices, travel, and games/events. Unsatisfactory behavior as determined by Administration, Athletic Director, and Coaches may make a student ineligible.
- Detentions are to be served regardless of the sports schedule.
- Please refer to the IESA Handbook, Section 2.040 *Scholastic Standing* for further information.

### **Facilities**

All athletic home events will be held at either the John Schumacher Gym (St. Thomas School) or the Frank's Center Gym (Philo). The location of each athletic event will be noted on each sport's schedule and the St. Thomas School website calendar.

The admission price to regular season home games is:

- Adults (including high school students) \$3
- Senior citizens \$2
- K-8 students \$1
- Children under the age of five are not charged admission
- Bus driver of the opposing team, volunteer helpers, coaches, players, and St. Thomas School staff are not charged admission

### **Fees**

There will be an annual \$75.00 athletic fee assessed for all participating students. This fee will be paid at the beginning of the school year through parents' online FACTS accounts. This is not a fee *per sport*, but rather one total fee per student. For example, if a student is in both basketball and volleyball, the fee is \$75.00. This money helps offset the cost for expenses associated with the athletic program. Inability to pay the athletic fee does not prohibit a student from participating in athletics. Please see Administration or the Athletic Director if financial assistance is needed.

### **Finances**

Income to meet athletic department expenses is accrued from concessions and gate receipts at both home and tournament events, student athletic fees, Spirit Wear, Hot Dog Lunches, the annual Schumacher Shuffle, and generous donations.

All money that is earned or received for athletics is applied to the purchase of equipment and uniforms, officials, athletic banquet supplies, athletic awards, and any other athletic department needs.

### **Playing Up**

In the event that a grade level does not have sufficient members to form a team, the Athletic Director and Administration may allow student athletes to play up. Depending upon the number of available athletes in the particular sport, beginning with fifth grade, athletes may be asked to move up to play with higher grades. For example, fifth and sixth grade students could play on a seventh-grade team while sixth and seventh grade students could play on an eighth-grade team.

### **Transportation**

Transportation to away events is arranged by Coaches using either the St. Thomas School bus or parent carpooling. The decision to take the bus will be approved by Administration and the Athletic Director.

## **II. Expectations**

### **Athletic Director**

**The Athletic Director reports directly to the Principal and the Pastor of St. Thomas School.**

The responsibilities of the Athletic Director include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Complete Safe Environment Program training
- Schedule all athletic events for St. Thomas School
- Keep current the website calendar for all events and practices
- Recruit Coaches and submit selections to Administration for annual approval
- Maintain a permanent record of Coaches' certifications
- Maintain updated records of the athletes' required forms
- Provide Coaches with medical forms and parent contact information forms
- Review and administer finances in consultation with Administration
- Secure referees and officials for all home events
- Set-up before and clean-up after all home events; ensure public address system is turned off and building is secure after each home event
- Monitor the condition of athletic equipment and make purchases when necessary, upon approval of Administration
- Communicate with Administration and Coaches on matters involving player discipline and academics in a timely manner
- Communicate with Administration and the custodian(s) on matters involving scheduling and building use for events and practices

- Communicate with Coaches annually regarding expectations for the athletic program
- Communicate with opposing schools to confirm scheduled games and tournaments prior to the event
- Arrange with each team to have necessary first aid and appropriate safety items for each scheduled event
- Communicate with Administration regarding any coach who defies the policies and expectations of the athletic program and those of St. Thomas School
- Provide on-site supervision for all St. Thomas home events; if the Athletic Director is unable to attend a home event, the Athletic Director should coordinate with Administration and/or staff for such coverage
- Schedule St. Thomas School bus as needed for events
- Attend parent meetings before the first practice of each sport
- Supply an Athletic Report to Administration prior to each Education Commission meeting
- Meet monthly with Administration to report any updates or concerns
- Seek consent of Administration and the Catholic Diocese of Peoria for any overnight event or tournament; such consent may be granted on a very limited basis
- Order all awards for the annual athletic banquet
- Facilitate fundraisers for the athletic program (e.g. Schumacher Shuffle, Spirit Wear, and Hot Dog Lunches)
- Agree to the guidelines set forth in this document and sign below:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, as Athletic Director for St. Thomas School, agree to abide by the guidelines set forth in this Athletic Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Date

### **Coaches**

#### **Coaches report directly to the Athletic Director**

Those wishing to coach at St. Thomas School must submit their name to the Athletic Director. Final approval is the responsibility of Administration and the Athletic Director. Coaches are recruited on an annual basis.

Certain factors are taken into consideration when selecting Coaches. Those factors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- If the candidate is an active parishioner in good standing of St. Thomas Church or any affiliated parish
- If the candidate is a St. Thomas School staff member
- If the candidate is a St. Thomas School family member
- If the candidate has previous coaching experience

The responsibilities of Coaches include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Represent St. Thomas School in sportsmanship, behavior, Christian conduct, and appearance at all times
- Complete Safe Environment Program training
- Complete IESA/Human Kinetics Coaching Essentials Course found on the IESA website under Sportsmanship
- Complete Concussion Protocols through IESA; AD will provide course access
- Refrain from berating the efforts of student athletes
- Pray with the student athletes prior to the beginning and at the conclusion of events and games
- **At no time should a coach be with athletes without another adult present. This includes, but is not limited to: practices, events, locker rooms, and travel**
- Set the practice schedule in consultation with the Athletic Director
- Communicate with the Athletic Director any information involving equipment needs, traveling details, upcoming events, and disciplinary needs and concerns.
- Remain onsite after events and practices conclude until all participants have been secured
- Solicit and ensure a scorebook is kept at each home and away game
- Solicit and ensure a clock keeper is present for all home games.
- Determine award winners, supply that information to the Athletic Director after the season is complete, and present awards at the annual athletic banquet
- Conduct a parent meeting prior to the start of the season; at least one parent of the athlete must attend this meeting; this meeting date is to be communicated to the Athletic Director and Principal at least one week prior to the meeting taking place
- Communicate to parents and players a list of expectations, practice and game schedules, and additional information as needed
- Assign and distribute uniforms at the beginning of the season
- Collect and inventory uniforms at the end of the season; request that parents please clean uniforms before returning
- Assist with set-up and clean-up of all home events
- If a player is needed to play up for an event, the player's coach needs to be asked for permission by the requesting coach; the player's coach has the final say whether the player can play up.

- Inform seventh- and eighth-grade athletes and parents of the Coaches' interpretation of "equal" playing time. The school realizes that the seventh- and eighth grade teams are involved in a more competitive environment, especially in tournament play. An attempt to win **AND** play everyone equally may not be possible in certain circumstances. To play all players in each game is a goal of our athletic program. Underclassmen will be allowed to "play up" in tournament play. Observations and circumstances during practice sessions and games might cause a coach to deviate from this goal. For example, missing practices or displaying a negative attitude during practices or in games might cause the Coach to withhold playing time from an individual.
- If a meeting with the coach is requested by a parent regarding a complaint and the **24-Hour Rule** was met, a summary of the meeting must be supplied in writing by the coach to the Athletic Director and Administration within 48 hours after the meeting
- Agree to the guidelines set forth in this document and sign the Coach Agreement Statement (form is attached at the end of this document); this signed statement must be returned to the Athletic Director before participation will be allowed

## **Athletes**

Student athletes should:

- Be genuinely interested in learning the rules and skills required for the sport
- Be willing and able to devote the necessary time to each activity; attend practices and events regularly and punctually; notify the Coach ahead of time of any scheduling conflict
- Be respectful of all coaches, administrators, officials, fellow team members, and opposing team members at all events, games, practices, and school; abide by all team guidelines and expectations established by the Coach
- Respect all school property, both at St. Thomas School and hosting schools
- Represent St. Thomas School in sportsmanship, behavior, Christian conduct, and appearance at all times
- Work to meet eligibility requirements; make use of available resources for extra help as needed
- Agree to the guidelines set forth in this document; sign the Parent/Player Agreement Statement provided by the Coach or Athletic Director before the sport's season begins; this signed statement must be returned to the Athletic Director before participation will be allowed

**St. Thomas School offers an athletic program to its students as a privilege, not a right. This privilege may be revoked at any time.**

## **Parents**

**Parents or legal guardians are the first teachers of faith formation in their children's lives.**

Parents should:

- Abide by the **24-Hour Rule** – Approaching a coach with a complaint immediately before, during, or after a game or practice, whether privately or publicly, should be avoided. Coaches are asked to stay focused on the team/event. If after 24 hours the situation still needs addressed, please make an appointment with the coach(es). Such matters should NOT be addressed in a public forum.
- Remain in their seats if their athlete is injured during an event until the coach or event administrator asks the parent to come to the athlete
- Aid the athletic program by helping with such tasks as timekeeping, scorekeeping, concessions, admission gate, announcements, monitoring of all athletes, and any other such tasks; all athletes' parents are needed and expected to help in these ways
- Show respect toward all Coaches
- Understand coaching is the Coach's responsibility; therefore, parents should not interfere during practices and events
- Show respect toward all student athletes
- Make arrangements to pick up their athlete(s) promptly after practices and events; please be respectful of the Coaches' time and make him/her aware if a late pickup is unavoidable
- Exhibit good sportsmanship and Christian conduct at all athletic events
- Agree to the guidelines set forth in this document; sign the Parent/Player Agreement Statement provided by the Coach or Athletic Director before the sport's season begins; this signed statement must be returned to the Athletic Director before your child's participation will be allowed

## **Please Note**

Christian conduct is our goal at all times. Please remember that all involved—coaches, players, parents/fans, students—are representatives of St. Thomas School at all athletic events. As fans, we must show good sportsmanship at all times. The Pastor, Principal, Athletic Director, and game officials have the right and the responsibility to eject spectators whose behaviors are unacceptable.

## **Communication/Grievances and the 24-Hour Rule**

Keeping the lines of communication open between parents and coaches is vital to a successful athletic program. Please keep those lines open with your child's coach(es) throughout the season.

If a complaint arises, please respect the **24-Hour Rule**. Approaching a coach with a complaint immediately before, during, or after a game or practice, whether privately or publicly, should be avoided. Coaches are asked to stay focused on the team/event. If after 24 hours the situation still needs addressed, please make an appointment with the coach(es). Such matters should NOT be addressed in a public forum.

The proper chain of command for logging a complaint is (from bottom up):

Pastor  
↑  
Principal  
↑  
Athletic Director  
↑  
Coach  
↑  
Athlete/Family

In the event of a complaint for non-compliance to IESA rules, diocesan policies or local school policies and administrative regulations, a written form should be completed by the complainant and submitted to the Athletic Director and the Principal. Administration will make all final decisions regarding complaint resolutions.

*I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith.  
2 Timothy 4:7*

Revised/Updated July 2018

## Coach Agreement Statement

All Coaches must complete and return this Coach Agreement Statement prior to beginning their duties for the season. The signature of the coach indicates that he/she has read, understood, and agreed to abide by the stated policies. This document must be on file with the Athletic Director before the coach's season begins.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, as coach of

\_\_\_\_\_ at St. Thomas School have read and will support the policies of the St. Thomas School Athletic Handbook.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

(Coach)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Date)

**PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS FORM TO THE ST. THOMAS SCHOOL ATHLETIC DIRECTOR**