

Athletics Policies and Procedures



St. John Lutheran School

6630 Southeastern Ave.

Indianapolis, IN 46203

317.352.9196

St. John Lutheran School Objective

The objective of St. John Lutheran School is to assist parents by providing a Christian education that guides children to know Jesus as their Savior, through God's Word, and to strive for academic excellence in a life of service to Him.

St. John Lutheran School Athletic Program Mission Statement

The athletic program at St. John Lutheran School is one of the means by which we attempt to accomplish our school's goals. Through athletics, we strive to help our young people accomplish the following specific goals:

- To give witness to the glory of God in all that they do.
- To strive for excellence in the development of the talents which God has given.
- To prepare for a life of Christian service through the unique lessons learned in athletics.
- To develop an exposure to, and enjoyment in, physical activity that will lead to a lifetime involvement and maintenance of the physical temple God has given.

Participation on a team of St. John Lutheran School is a privilege. Along with this privilege come certain responsibilities in the area of preparation, attitude, sportsmanship, and academics. It is the firm opinion of this school that these responsibilities exist both in and out of school, both in athletic and non-athletic settings. We recognize the need for God's strength and guidance in meeting these responsibilities.

Introduction

Participation in athletic events is a part of the program offered at St. John Lutheran for its students. Our intention is to allow the student participants to grow in skills and in dealing with the many lessons that increasing competition can teach. Winning, losing, teamwork, sacrifice, perseverance, fairness and competitiveness are among these lessons.

The staff works very hard to provide as much opportunity as possible for students to participate. This can increase the opportunity to participate, but also increases the need for coaches, uniforms, equipment, etc. We often have volunteer coaches who donate their valuable time to work with the students. The Athletic Director has to recruit and supervise these coaches as well as schedule the extra practices and games. In addition, the other schools must approve or allow St. John to enter more than the customary one team per level of each sport.

This booklet was prepared so that student participants and parents would better understand the procedures and policies of the athletic program and how to effectively communicate with the coaches and others involved. We desire that the programs are a positive experience for everyone. We also solicit your input to make the programs better each year.

Finally, we ask you show your appreciation to the coaches, staff and volunteers that work diligently to make these programs a success. Without this sometimes massive effort, our ability to present an athletic program with the high level of participation and success that we have grown accustomed to might not be possible. Please give a hand when you are able and be supportive of coaches and staff. An encouraging word from a mom or dad goes a long way to help a good volunteer feel it is worth his or her time and effort to work with a team. Please also keep our students, volunteers, and staff in your continued prayers.

Overview of St. John Athletics

St. John offers a variety of extra-curricular sports activities in grades 5-8. We participate in the Central Indiana Lutheran Schools Athletic Association, consisting of St. John, Calvary, Our Shepherd, Holy Cross, and Trinity of Indianapolis, and Zion New Palestine.

The athletic program is divided into Varsity (also called "A") and Reserve (also called "B" or "JV") levels.

The Reserve level is generally for grades 5 and 6, as long as numbers allow us to field one full team. This level is designated to introduce the student-athlete to the game. Playing time will be as close to equal over the course of the season as possible, but not necessarily per game. Equal playing time will not be enforced during tournament play.

The Varsity level is generally for grades 7 and 8. While acknowledging that "winning isn't everything," coaches are committed to providing our varsity teams with the best opportunity to win within the rules, and represent the school in a manner which inspires and exemplifies pride. Therefore, playing time is not guaranteed. Playing time will be determined by ability, attitude, practice behavior, and game situations. The goal of our Varsity teams every year will be to qualify for the Lutheran State Tournament.

St. John requires a physical examination before any student participates in a sport. The physical is valid for a period of one school year.

St. John also requires a signed form stating that parents and athletes have read, and agree to abide by, St. John policies and procedures.

Concussions are serious situations. St. John provides concussion awareness forms to be read signed by both parents and student athletes, and returned to the school to be on file.

Parents are also asked to volunteer at Athletic events; i.e.: admissions, concessions, and/or scorer's table. Please get involved with the St. John Booster Program.

Cuts

It is our desire that we not need to cut individuals from squads. Instead, every effort will be made to provide more and more opportunities for all who are interested to participate on a team. This could even result in fielding a team per grade (ex. 5th & 6th or 7th & 8th).

In the event that we are not always be able to enter two teams into competition, it may become necessary to institute some policy for cutting squads back to a manageable size. In the event two teams are not allowed or that cuts are necessary, it will be the Athletic Director's decision as to how this is done. The choices are usually by grade or by ability. However, the policy that works well one year may not work the next. Therefore, the Athletic Director is given considerable discretion to consider the welfare of the student athletes and the opportunities that are available each year in implementing these decisions.

Importance of Practice

PARENTS will keep in mind that much of the benefit derived from being in a team sport involves the practice setting where skills are taught and strategies learned. While playing time may not exactly measure up to one's expectations, you are encouraged to remember the entire team experience, not only game situations.

Practices are important in several respects:

- 1) They offer opportunities to learn and develop new skills.
- 2) The practice time allows coaches to teach specific skills and strategies to the team.
- 3) The practice setting offers time to cultivate a team spirit and display a positive attitude toward the sport, your coach and your teammates.

COACHES must remember that practice sessions are for all players on the team. All are deserving of the coach's time and attention, and it is the coach's responsibility to challenge players and attempt to bring out and develop the very best in their athletic abilities.

PRACTICES ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE TEAM EXPERIENCE. FURTHERMORE, IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR ALL PLAYERS TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN OFFICIAL PRACTICES. WHILE EXCUSED ABSENCES ARE EXPECTED ON OCCASION, PLAYERS FAILING TO MAKE PRACTICES WITHOUT A LEGITIMATE EXCUSE AND PLAYERS WHO DO NOT FOLLOW THE COACH'S LEADERSHIP DURING PRACTICE OBVIOUSLY JEOPARDIZE THE AMOUNT OF PLAYING TIME THEY MIGHT EXPECT.

Daily Attendance

As mentioned above, attendance at practice is an integral part of the athletic experience. While we all understand that there are certain family needs that come up from time to time, it should be understood that players will notify coaches about absences in advance whenever possible. Parents and players also understand that a student must be in school at least half of a school day to practice or participate in a game on that day, unless special circumstances are cleared in advance.

Priority of School Sports

St. John encourages athletes to explore all of the opportunities available to them. We would also encourage and expect that St. John athletic teams be given preference in terms of practices and games whenever possible. While there are certain activities that St. John does not offer that are certainly understandable conflicts (dance, hockey, wrestling, and others), parents and players are kindly asked to communicate with the Athletic Director, coaches, and to understand the policies above.

Eligibility

A student athlete with a single grade of a D+ or lower in a core subject will not practice or play with their team until the grade has been improved to a C- or higher. The student will be informed verbally, and the eligibility suspension will begin that day. Grade checks will be at mid-quarter and end of quarters.

At times a given student athlete may face challenges in the classroom which are simply beyond his or her academic ability. St. John will make every effort to assist all students who are in this situation. Student athletes who find themselves in this position will be considered for exemption from the stated policy on an individual basis. The line of appeal begins with the Athletic Director.

St. John Lutheran Code of Athletics

As a player, coach, cheerleader, fan, or official, I will...

Consider all opponents as friends and guests, and treat them with due courtesy;

Accept all decisions of the officials;

Never hiss or boo a player or official;

Never utter abusive or irritating remarks from the sidelines;

Applaud teammates and opponents who make good plays or who reflect good sportsmanship;

Never attempt to abusively rattle an opposing player;

Seek to play fairly according to the rules;

Respect the game for its own sake, and not for what it can do for me;

Do unto others as I would have them do unto me;

Win without boasting, and lose without excuse or complaint, celebrating the opportunity to participate and be active;

Recognize that the primary purpose of my participation is that God be glorified through the gifts, talents, and abilities He has graciously given me; and

Praise God for giving me the ability to contribute to that cause.

Some things for parents to remember

*The biggest way you can get involved and show support for your student athlete, as well as the overall program, is to attend events. Sportsmanlike excitement by a large crowd adds a special dimension that we want your child to be able to experience.

*Remember that the games are for student-athletes, not adults.

*Make an effort to learn the rules of the game and our league.

*Demand that your child treats other players, coaches, officials and fans with respect.

*Never question, discuss, or confront coaches' decisions at the game.

*Never question or discuss playing time with the coach.

*Refrain from coaching during games or practices – save for coaches.

* Make sure your children know that win or lose, scared or heroic, starter or substitute; you love them, appreciate their efforts, and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without a fear of failure. Be a person in their life they can look to for positive reinforcement.

Some things for student-athletes to remember

*Athletics provide people with an opportunity to witness for Christ.

*Make an effort to be a fan – support St. John teams that you do not play for.

*Get better every day – as a Christian, a person, and a player.

*Student comes before athlete.

*A student athlete MUST be willing to do three things to be a part of a team:

1. Practice self-sacrifice – support teammates from the sidelines
2. Practice self-promotion – be willing to be challenged
3. Be a part of something special

*Never question officials.

*By being an athlete, you are representing your school and your community. You assume a leadership role when you are on a team. The student body and supporters of St. John know you, and you are in the spotlight. Because of this leadership role, you can contribute to school spirit and community image by your performance and high ideals. The younger students are watching you. Model what a Christian is so they may grow from your actions.

For Parents of Student Athletes

- Make sure your children know that win or lose, scared or heroic, starter or substitute, you love them, appreciate their efforts, and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without a fear of failure. Be a person in their life they can look to for positive reinforcement.
- We try to maximize playing time for our kids during the regular season, and this same type of playing time does not always equate in a tournament situation.
- Players and coaches are working together to do the best job they can – both the players physically on the court and the coaches making decisions on the sidelines. Parents should leave coaching and coaching decisions to the coaches.
- Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic capability, their competitive attitude, sportsmanship and actual skill level.
- Don't compare the skill, courage, or attitudes of your child with other members of the team, at least within their hearing.
- When you attend games, arrive with the attitude that you are there to support the entire team, not just your child.
- Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying," to be working to improve their skills and attitudes. Help them to develop the feel for working hard, competing, and for having fun.
- Get to know the coach so that you can be assured that the philosophy, attitudes, ethics, and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your child under this leadership.
- Always remember that children can exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reactions, and investigate before overreacting.

PLAYING TIME

Playing time is, without a doubt, the most debated and, at times, most painful aspect of an athletic program. Therefore, it seems appropriate to provide here some candid counsel and to articulate the policy of St. John Lutheran School.

To begin with, there is a distinction between the playing times provided between our levels of competition. Students involved in Reserve sports (generally 5-6th grades) are guaranteed an amount of playing time, aside from tournaments. This amount will vary from year to year depending on the size of the squad. This amount will be reviewed on a yearly basis. Students involved at Varsity Level sports (usually 7-8th graders) generally play according to their level of ability and as game situations dictate.

At all levels, it is our sincere desire to provide as much playing time to each individual as possible. Since the 5/6 level is at more of a developmental stage, it is deemed appropriate to guarantee a certain minimum amount of time. While we may aspire to similar type goals for the amount of playing time at the 7/8 level, it will not carry the same guarantees and quite likely will not be spread out evenly during each game. For example, a student who is not a "starter" or whose skills rank them behind most of their teammates, may in some contests play more than the average amount of time while in other contests they may play less, considerably less or possibly not at all.

It can be difficult at times to see a player not getting as much playing time as others, or as much time as they or their parent's desire. The flip side of this concern, however, is the player who excels but is not allowed to demonstrate or apply those skills because of limiting their amount of playing time in an effort to be equal to all members of the team. On the subject of playing time, please note that it is our position that equal is not always fair and being fair to everyone does not necessarily mean providing equal playing time in contests.

The issue of playing time further differs significantly from sport to sport. It is much easier to provide more playing time for everyone in a sport like soccer where squads are large than in a sport like basketball where only 5 players at a time participate. Track also provides unique circumstances. For example, in track, teams are very limited to the number of participant slots available at a given meet.

It shall never be our practice to run up a score. Therefore, it is evident that in contests in which scores are rather lopsided (in either direction), there should be more time available for the less skilled to play. Close contests obviously will present the greatest difficulty in playing all members of a varsity team.

Student attitude can at times have a bearing on playing time. Students who fail to give coaches the courtesy of letting them know they will be missing a practice or who, without valid excuses, absent themselves from practice jeopardize their share of playing time. Further, a student's unwillingness to cooperate, to follow direction, to hustle, etc., also might jeopardize their share of playing time.

Students are also reminded that their participation in athletics is a team experience. As such, even when a student is not actually participating in a contest, their attention and support from the bench or sidelines is still expected and considered an important part of the team effort. Students should, even though they may not be involved in the contest, participate in team huddles during time outs and stay close to the bench area while the contest is in progress. Being near the coach, whether on the sidelines or the bench, provides the athlete and coach opportunity to interact; it provides opportunity to provide the student with instruction and preparation in anticipation for their entering the game.

Students should not leave the bench or sideline area during the contest. When this occurs, the student often forfeits an opportunity to play as the coach may be unable to find the student when the chance for a substitution arises.

Finally, students may not always be chosen by the coach to play at a position which they desire. A student who is sent in by the coach to play guard when they would rather be playing center should nonetheless enter the contest, do their best, and follow the coaches' instruction in an effort to be of the most assistance to the entire team. Students who refuse to play at a designated position cannot expect to play in other positions. The team will have one coach (or at times a shared responsibility by more than one coach) and that leadership must be respected and followed.

Expectations for Coaches

Coaches have an important role in teaching, promoting, and modeling Christian sportsmanship for the athletic program at St. John Lutheran School. The following items should always be kept in mind:

- Coaches' lives should be a model of Christian behavior to show all the joy of God's grace and the importance of being a follower of Jesus Christ.
- Coaches have a unique calling and opportunity to influence student athletes.
- Good sportsmanship should be encouraged at all games and practices.
- You are working with children: therefore, patience is key. The main objective is learning, teaching, and enjoying sport.
- Accept and support the decisions of the officials.
- Treat opposing coaches, participants and fans with respect.
- Do not discuss the final results with an official after the completion of the game.
- Coaches should discipline players not demonstrating Christian behavior by removing them from competition.
- Coaches should instruct players about the proper respect of property when visiting other schools.
- As a coach, you are responsible and are to be in charge of your team at all times at practices and games. You are the adult, and you should be in control of yourself and the team.
- Please refrain from purchasing end-of-the-year awards for the teams or individuals.
- Any changes or additions to the schedule will be made by the Athletic Director.
- Coaches should be on time for all games and practices. Students are not to be left unattended.
- As a Coach, you are also responsible for building security. As you leave the building after practices and games, please check:
 - a. That all lights are turned off.
 - b. That all interior and exterior doors are locked.
 - c. That all equipment is stored and locked in the proper place.
 - d. That all students have been picked up. **YOU MUST BE THE LAST TO LEAVE!**

Sports are an integral part of the education provided by St. John Lutheran School. It is critical that all involved understand that the value of athletic competition can be an important part of Christian growth if all are dedicated to the program being God pleasing in every way.

VERY IMPORTANT

Please remember that your child can NOT participate in athletic events at St. John (practices or games) until these items are submitted to the AD:

1. The IHSAA physical form signed by you, your child, and your doctor;
[the following forms are available from the AD]
2. The St. John Athletics Agreement signed by (both) parents and your child;
3. The signed St. John Lutheran School Parent Contract;
4. The signed St. John Lutheran School Athlete contract
5. The signed CONCUSSION and SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

St. John Athletics Agreement Form

Participant: _____ Grade Level: _____

Parents/Guardians: _____

Phone: _____

In case of emergency contact: _____

We have been advised of the nature and extent of the activities that may take place and represent to you that the participant is physically and mentally able to participate in those activities.

We understand that the activity does present the risk of injury, or even death, to the participant and we have advised the participant of those possibilities. We represent to you that we and the participant assume the risk of any such injury or death, and hold you, your agents, employees, and representatives harmless from any liability for injury or death to the participant while engaged in this activity which is caused or contributed to by the conduct of the participant, and agree to indemnify and defend you against any claim or liability asserted against you for any such injury or death to the participant.

If we are not personally present at these activities in which the participant is to participate, so as to be consulted in the case of necessity, you are authorized on our behalf to arrange for such medical and hospital treatment as you may deem advisable for the health and well-being of the participant.

We also authorize transportation by St. John Lutheran School.

Parent/Guardian Signatures:

Participant's Signature:

DATE: _____

St. John Lutheran School Parent Contract

Realizing and being thankful of the privilege to represent St. John, we have read and understand the policies outlined in this document and agree to abide by them.

Student Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

St. John Lutheran School Athlete Contract

Realizing and being thankful of the privilege to represent St. John, I have read and understand the policies outlined in this document and agree to abide by them.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____