

2018-2019 Athletic Handbook



St. John Lutheran School

MISSION STATEMENT

United in faith, we serve the Kingdom of God by building lives that are rooted in the Word, centered on Christ, and motivated by Grace; to reflect Christ's love and share His Gospel with all.

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“Laying Foundations for the Future”

"Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God..."
Ephesians 6:10-11a

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St. John Lutheran School Board may make changes to the Athletic Handbook at any time.

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FOREWORD

The Apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 9:24, "Do you know that in sports all compete, but only one gets the prize? Play in such a way to get that prize." Naturally, we want the desire to win to be found in all that participate in athletics at St. John, but this sense of winning is indeed different for Christians. St. Paul continues in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

Students are winners when they strive to be the best they can be by doing the best they can to the glory of God. It is our desire for all athletes to see sports as a means to glorify God with their bodies. It is also a time for students to grow as a member of the body of Christ encouraging everyone on the team to strive for excellence in practice and in competition. Coaches will emphasize that true success on the court is experienced when the team is united in their purpose to give God glory.

PHILOSOPHY

The athletic program exists to support the mission and core values of St. John Lutheran School by providing positive athletic experiences for students in fifth to eighth grade in an environment where each child has the ability to grow and develop their skills. The athletic program of St. John Lutheran School serves as an extracurricular arm of the school. Its purposes and goals are consistent with the philosophy, purposes, and objectives of the school as listed on pages 2-3 of the Parent-Student Handbook.

We believe that participation in athletics can be a positive component in the growth and development of any child's physical, mental, and spiritual health. Our purpose and aim are:

1. Athletes and Coaches develop a closer relationship with their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ through Bible Study and prayer.
2. Athletes and Coaches see sports as an opportunity to witness their faith in Christ through words and deeds.
3. Athletics provides an opportunity for athletes and coaches to learn how to win and lose gracefully remembering that success is determined by athletes giving their all for the glory of God.
4. Athletics helps athletes and coaches develop a positive attitude and team/school spirit among the participants.
5. Athletics provide an opportunity for students to exercise and develop physically. Athletes will learn the benefits of leading happy and healthy lives.
6. Our athletic program will give athletes an opportunity to compete against local schools where they can utilize the skills acquired during practices.
7. Athletics help athletes develop emotionally learning more about their strengths and weaknesses. Our goal is that every player develops a sense of who they are as a child of God and foster the individual's self-confidence.

These purposes are valued more than the accomplishment of an "impressive" won-loss record. Athletic success is determined when a team lays it all on the line by giving their all for the glory of God.

OBJECTIVES

1. That each participant understands that the prize of eternal life, secured by Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, is the major goal in life. (This includes athletics.)
2. That each participant honors God and accords Him praise for the blessings of physical health and the ability to participate.
3. That each participant grows in Christian fellowship, teamwork, and sportsmanship in a setting that includes athletic training and competition.
4. That each participant experiences an increase in self-confidence.
5. That each participant develops a greater capacity for physical fitness.
6. That each participant advances or improves in his or her individual skill level, principally in the sports offered at St. John.

SPORTS OFFERED

The athletic program was created to encourage Christian fair play, sportsmanship, physical fitness, and self confidence. Sports for boys and girls in grades 5-8 are offered throughout the year and include:

- Cross Country
- Volleyball
- Basketball
- Track and Field

Generally there are two levels of participation:

- Junior Varsity is ideally comprised of students in fifth and sixth grade. However, fourth grade students may be asked to play to complete the roster. Seventh grade students, lacking experience, may be permitted to play on the JV squad with the consent of the coaches.
- Varsity is ideally comprised of upper middle school students from seventh and eighth grades. Varsity may include fifth and sixth grade students depending on roster size.

The sports listed above will be offered at St. John provided that we have willing volunteer coaches and enough interest and participation from students to support a team. Grade level may be amended to include fourth grade in order to ensure adequate rosters. Administration makes the final decision on grade level participation and notifies parents if the fourth grade students are invited to participate.

SPORTS PHYSICAL

Students desiring to participate in the athletic program are required to have an annual health exam or physical. One physical per year qualifies the student for entry into all sports. **A physical form must be on file in the school office prior to participating in practice or competitions.** For extenuating circumstances, please see the school office.

CONCUSSION FORM

St. John Lutheran School is in compliance with Illinois State Public Act 099-0245 cited as “Youth Sports Concussion Act”. We understand the significance of an athlete experiencing a concussion during an activity. **Each student-athlete is required to have a signed Concussion Information Form on file in the school office before they may participate in practices, games, or meets.** A new concussion form must be signed each year. One form allows participation in all sports.

FEES

The athletic department operates as a non-profit organization and a non-budget function of St. John Lutheran Church and School. Income to meet expenses is accrued from the concession stand and the gate admissions at home sporting events, tournament sponsorships, and individual participation fees.

Students are required to pay a fee for each sport in which they participate. The participation fee is used to pay entries to tournaments, home officials, facility rentals, purchase awards, equipment, uniforms, etc. The fee for each sport is listed on the “Athletic Intent Form” which is filled out for each 5th-8th grade student for enrollment/re-enrollment. Fee amounts are also available by request at the school office.

Parents are required to complete the proper agreement forms and satisfy the participation fees before the student can participate in regularly scheduled practices and games.

UNIFORMS

All uniforms and warm ups, with the exception of girls spandex shorts used for volleyball and performance shirts worn under jerseys, are the property of St. John. Uniforms must be returned to the school within one week of the final game. Uniforms may only be worn for games or meets. Uniforms may not be worn to school (i.e. on Spirit Days).

Parents are responsible for purchasing undershirts for their boys and girls to wear underneath the sports jerseys. Undershirts must be plain white (no images).

Parents are also responsible for purchasing optional black or navy blue compression shorts/pants to wear underneath uniform bottoms. Appropriate footwear (athletic shoes) must be worn by all athletes.

Girls' volleyball shorts will be purchased through the office each season. If your daughter has a pair of volleyball shorts from previous years that she wishes to wear in games, please schedule a "shorts check" with the school office so that we can ensure that the length/fit is still within our uniform modesty requirements.

The uniform user is responsible for replacement costs if the uniform is damaged, lost, or not returned.

PLAYING TIME

To participate in a game or practice, students must be present at school for a full day of instruction on game or practice days, unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as a doctor's appointment. It is expected that a participant notify the coach if he or she is unable to attend a practice or game. Direct communication with the coach is very important.

No player can accumulate playing time in a game without attending practice.

The junior varsity teams will concentrate mainly on fundamentals, participation, and learning the rules and concepts of the game. All players at the junior varsity level are assured floor time in each junior varsity game. This holds true under the condition that the player has been regular in attending practice sessions and games in the season

The varsity teams will maintain this emphasis on fundamental skills and game concepts, but will also increase the focus on being competitive and strategic in game situations. Play time at the varsity level may be based on skill, effort, attitude, and practice attendance. Coaches are asked to give at least minor playing time to every athlete on the varsity team. However, it is possible that not all players on a varsity team will have playing time in each game. Due to varying ages/grades on our teams, safety is a factor that must be considered at the varsity level. Coaches will use discretion to determine if the varsity team player's age and ability level is appropriate for the team being played.

For Track & Field and Cross Country, meet participation will be based on skill, effort, attitude, and practice attendance. Meet participation will also depend on the level of the meet and each meet's entry restrictions. Several of our Track & Field and Cross Country meets only have 7th and 8th grade divisions, and it may not be appropriate for a 5th or 6th grader to compete at that level.

Some Track & Field or Cross Country meets do not allow younger athletes to participate at all. Additionally, coaches are limited on the number of entries (participants) for events at each meet throughout the season, which means that not all team members may be able to participate in the same number of events. Coaches will make every effort to communicate entries with parents before the meets so that they know if their child is able to participate and which event(s) they are entered to compete.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Awards

Awards are categorized into three areas. Each of these awards will be presented at the end of the year Athletic Banquet held in May.

1. **Participation Certificate**-Students must maintain eligibility through grades, regular attendance and appropriate behavior.
2. **St. John Varsity Sports Letter (medallion)** -A sports letter (medallion) may be earned by (seventh or) eighth grade varsity participants in cross country, volleyball, basketball, and track and field. Requirements include regular attendance at games and practices, good conduct, and regular game or race participation.

3. **Christian Athlete Award**- This award represents the highest individual athletic award offered at St. John. All eighth graders will automatically be nominated for this award if they meet the academic and two sport minimum requirements. If no athlete(s) meet the qualifications for this award, then there will not be a winner. The recipient is selected by the athletic director, principal, junior high teaching staff, and pastor. The winning recipient must qualify by being:

- A student in the 8th grade (one boy and one girl).
- A student who modeled Christian qualities academically, socially, and athletically.
- A student who participated in a minimum of two sports.
- A student who practiced good sportsmanship both at practices and at games.
- A student who achieved the requirements for a letter in a minimum of one sport.
- A student who maintained grades of “C” average or higher throughout the year.

Eighth Grade Honors

The Athletic Department will honor all eighth grade athletes at the Athletic Banquet held in May. At the last varsity home game of the season for gym sports (basketball and volleyball), the eighth grade athletes will be called on to the court and an announcement will be made acknowledging their final St. John game.

Coaches or parents desiring to recognize eighth grade athletes during their specific season with flowers, candy, desserts, etc. may do so on their own at a practice or at an end of the season team party. We ask that this not be done at a game.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ATHLETE

Participation in athletics at St. John Lutheran School is a “privilege” each student enjoys, rather than a “right”. Being part of a team is a commitment to your school, coaches, and teammates. Taking on the role of a student athlete carries with it responsibilities. Attendance at all meetings, practices, and games must be a priority for all athletes. In addition student athletes must maintain academic and behavioral standards to prevent negatively impacting participation.

In order for students to realize their full potential, they must commit to a lifestyle that promotes a Christian attitude toward others, along with physical and mental fitness. Therefore the following eligibility policy has been established to guide students who represent St. John in athletics.

Academics and Grades

Students are required to maintain average grades (C or higher) in every class while participating on a team. A student’s eligibility to participate will be reviewed every Friday. A student with problems meeting the minimum grade requirement is given a total of three weeks during the sport season to raise his/her grades with increasing consequences to his/her participation in the sport. The first week a student does not meet the grade eligibility requirement, he/she will be placed on probation for the following week (Monday-Sunday). A note will be sent home to the parents identifying areas needing improvement. The student will be able to participate in practice and games during probation. If the student fails to meet grade eligibility requirements for a second week during the season, then he/she will be placed on Academic Ineligibility for the following week (Monday-Sunday). Students on Academic Ineligibility will not be permitted to participate in practices or games so that he/she can devote the required attention to their academic courses in order to raise their grades. If the student fails to meet grade eligibility requirements for a third week during the season, he/she is subject to removal from the roster for the remainder of the season. The three weeks of lower than "C" average grades do not need to be consecutive; it applies to any three weeks of the season in which a student receives lower than "C" grades.

At times a student may face challenges in the classroom which are simply beyond his/her control. The faculty and staff understand these individual situations. At St. John every effort is made to assist all students to experience success in the classroom. Recommendations may be made by the faculty to the school administrator for special consideration of an athlete’s ability to participate in sports.

- **PROBATION:** Student may fully participate in extracurricular activities. Probation is meant to be a warning that the student is struggling academically and requires additional assistance.
- **ACADEMIC INELIGIBILITY:** Student is given the opportunity to focus on academics. When a student is academically ineligible, the student may not participate in practices or games.

Summary of Grade Ineligibility Consequences:

Week 1 of Lower than "C" Grade(s) – Results in Athletic Probation (warning)

Week 2 of Lower than "C" Grade(s) – Results in Academic Ineligibility (no practice or game participation)

Week 3 of Lower than "C" Grade(s) – Results in removal from team roster for remainder of season

*The three weeks of grade ineligibility do not need to be consecutive for these consequences to occur. It applies to any three weeks in the sport season. This rule applies per sport (i.e. three weeks of grade ineligibility with the above mentioned consequences per sport season).

Parents are strongly encouraged to monitor student academic progress through the use of PraxiSchool. They are encouraged to contact the student’s teacher(s) to identify areas where improvement can be made. Parents play a critical role in student success and are encouraged to be active participants in the eligibility process.

No refund of sports fees will be given for students on Athletic Probation, students who are Academically Ineligible, and/or for students removed from the team roster due to ineligibility.

Attendance

The attendance policy for each team is developed by the athletic director and coach. The coach will outline the attendance policy at the pre-season meetings. The coach will also have the attendance policy in the pre-season syllabus provided to each family participating.

If a student athlete will be absent from a scheduled team activity (e.g. meeting, practice, or game), the parent/guardian must provide the coach with a written explanation prior to the absence, as to why the absence will occur (a phone call or text message could be used in case of short notice, but a written note must be submitted at the earliest opportunity.) The Head Coach and the Athletic Director will review all absences to determine if they will be classified as excused or unexcused.

1. Failure to notify the Coach of an absence will result in absence automatically being classified as unexcused
2. Absences due to conflicting school sponsored activities will automatically be classified as excused and written documentation is not required from the athlete’s parent/guardian. Please be sure that the coach is aware of schedule conflicts between school events so they can plan accordingly.
3. A parent/guardian may appeal the classification of an absence to the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director will notify the Principal of the appeal and schedule a meeting with the parent/guardian, Coach, Athletic Director, and Principal.

Student athletes receiving two unexcused absences as they pertain to participation on a particular team will be placed on “Participation Probation”. The Athletic Director will notify the athlete and their parent/guardian in writing regarding the status.

Student athletes receiving three unexcused absences will be subject to removal from the team. The Coach, Athletic Director, and Principal will review the situation and make a determination regarding the removal of the athlete from participation for the remainder of the current season. The Athletic Director will notify the athlete and their parent/guardian in writing regarding the decision.

No refund of sports fees will be given for students removed from team due to excessive unexcused absence.

Conduct Eligibility

Each student has the responsibility of being a leader in the school. If the conduct of any student is unacceptable according to the behavior guidelines stated in the handbook, or such that it impairs the efficient working of the school, then ineligibility may follow as a consequence. Conduct should reflect Christ in all that is said and done.

Consideration for conduct ineligibility may be brought to the Principal by any member of the staff (teachers, coaches, janitors, secretaries, or pastor.) The Principal will consult with staff members to determine if probation is the right course of action and set the duration of the suspension. Parent/Guardian of the student athlete may appeal the decision through the Principal.

No refund of sports fees will be given for students who become ineligible due to inappropriate conduct.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Pre-Season Meetings

Prior to the start of each athletic season, a meeting will be held by the Athletic Director. The meeting consists of the administration outlining procedures and rules of the athletic department. The meeting will be concluded with team meetings. This will provide an opportunity for the coaches to outline their philosophies and expectations for the coming season.

Attendance is **mandatory**. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must contact the athletic director prior to the Pre-Season Meeting to be excused. An alternate time may be set for the parent/guardian to meet with the Athletic Director and Coach. This meeting must occur prior to the student beginning practice or participating in the sport.

Permission Slip and Athlete Code of Conduct

The parent and the athlete must read and sign the Athlete Code of Conduct and Parent Expectation Sheet in order for the athlete to participate in the athletic program.

Volunteering

St. John Athletics is a community effort, and we need each family to be involved in order for our sports program to exist. The work of parent volunteers is highly appreciated. Ways in which parents may be asked to help are: admissions desk, scorekeeper, gym cleanup, uniform collection and distribution, providing team snacks, recording split times, and photographer.

Each family with a student participating in a gym sport will be **required** to help in the concessions stand for a certain number of games per sport. Please be prompt in signing up for concessions stand slots when you receive notification that sign ups have begun. Families that do not sign up for concession slots will be assigned dates/times. If a parent is unable to serve at the appointed time, it is their responsibility to switch with another family and notify the school office of the change.

Traveling to Away Games

Parents are responsible for the transportation of their child(ren) to all games. It is important not to expect or assume that your child(ren) would ride with another parent without any prior communication. Coaches might require that a team travel together and arrive at a game location at the same time. All drivers carrying passengers in addition to their own children must have a valid driver's license and up-to-date automobile insurance coverage on file in the school office.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COACHES

Coaches for St. John Lutheran School serve as athletic trainers and spiritual leaders for their team and participants. The coaches play an integral part of the development of a participant athletically through training and practice but also the spiritual growth of all participants as they lead athletes in regular devotions and exemplify Christ-like qualities in all they say and do.

Coaches serve as volunteers. Coaches are selected by the athletic director based on the following:

- Staff persons are permitted first preference in the assignment of coaches.
- Non-staff coaches are selected by the athletic director (in conjunction with the principal and school board) on an annual basis.

Those wishing to be a coach, to serve as an assistant, or to help in another way are to seek out the athletic director and fill out a coaching application.

The responsibilities of a coach include the following items:

1. Participate in a “Love and Logic” coaching workshop that will teach the principles we use as a school to handle any behavioral issues that may arise (all coaches and assistant coaches).
2. Complete concussion training every two years.
3. Sign the “Coach’s Promise.”
4. Set the practice schedule in consultation with the athletic director.
5. Communicate with the athletic director information involving equipment needs, traveling details, upcoming games, and disciplinary concerns.
6. Review rules and regulations for the conferences (i.e., IESA and LSA) pertaining to their specific sport.
7. Register athletes for athletic games, tournaments, or meets as needed.
8. Find a scorekeeper for your sport, supervise the scorebook, and complete a report form at the end of the season.
9. Supervise all practice sessions and remain at the practice site until all participants have been picked up.
10. Communicate to parents and players a list of expectations and current information as the need arises.
11. Complete the “Athletic Injury Report” form when an injury occurs and submit it to the athletic director within twenty-four hours.
12. Attend worship service at all LSA events in which St. John participates.
13. Attend the Athletic Banquet, share highlights of the season, and say something encouraging about each member of your team.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR SPECTATORS

- Appreciate participants for their commitment
- Applaud players for their efforts
- Accept the decisions of officials
- Support school personnel in conducting an orderly and spirited contest
- Maintain composure when breaks seem to go against your team
- Respect the rights of other spectators
- Reward sportsmanlike behavior through cheering
- Focus attention on positive aspects of competition
- Encourage players by showing enthusiasm and positive recognition
- Demonstrate concern for the safety and welfare of all athletes

Remember: These young men and ladies are students and not professional athletes. They will make errors in the course of competition, as will game officials and coaches. However, all participants are trying their best. Negative criticism and booing will not help them to improve and are unacceptable forms of expression at this event. You can assist in their development as athletes by focusing attention on the positive aspects of their performance. Your cooperation is important and appreciated.

ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

To be completed by the athlete.

I hereby pledge to honor and support St. John Lutheran School by adhering to the Athlete Code of Conduct as stated below.

- I will represent St. John Lutheran School and let the light of God's love shine through me.
- I will strive to honor God with my words, actions, and play.
- I will be a God-glorifying student in the classroom by daily preparation for class and maintain my grades in all academic courses.
- I will use appropriate language in appropriate tones when interacting with other athletes, coaches, officials, parents, and spectators.
- I will not taunt my opponent or be arrogant or boastful in my celebrations.
- I will arrive on time for all practices, meetings, and games.
- I will communicate with my coaches regarding issues of injury, illness, or expected absence prior to practice either in person or by email.
- I will communicate to my parents any necessary team information.
- I realize that glorifying God with my play requires me to care for my body with proper practice, nutrition, and rest.
- I will play by the rules of the sport, demonstrating and encouraging good sportsmanship, both in victory and in defeat.
- I will strive to win games without boasting, and lose games without excuse.
- I will not leave the game site without seeking to shake the hand of my opponent and thanking the officials
- I will be a good steward, being respectful of property and facilities of our school and any other school I visit. I will be diligent in picking up after myself.
- I will be responsible for any uniform or equipment checked out to me and will return it, washed and in the same condition I received it, in a timely manner at the conclusion of the season. I understand that I am responsible for the replacement cost of the uniform or equipment if the item is damaged or lost.
- I will be honest. I will not lie, steal, or cheat.
- When I have a conflict with a teammate or my coach, I will follow the principles outlined in Matthew 18.
- I will humble myself for the good of the team. I will pursue understanding my role on the team, do it with excellence, and always strive to do more.
- I will seek to encourage and assist my teammates in becoming better athletes and human beings.
- I will glorify God with the talents he has gifted me with.
- I will treat, with Biblical respect, my coaches, teammates, opponents, officials, parents, and spectators.
- I will celebrate the opportunity and privilege to participate as a St. John athlete.

PARENT EXPECTATIONS

To be completed by the athlete's parent/guardian.

Parent Commitment: As a parent or guardian of a student athlete, I am making an investment in my child and in the total athletic program.

I commit myself to the following:

- I will read, adhere to, and promote the Athletic Mission and Vision Statement of St. John Lutheran School.
- I will cheer in a positive manner exhibiting Christ-like behavior.
- I will demonstrate that good sportsmanship is as important as victory by approving and applauding good team play, individual skill, and outstanding examples of good sportsmanship and fair play exhibited by any team or athlete.
- I will take special care to welcome visiting teams and officials, extending every courtesy.
- I will attend mandatory athletic meetings for each sport prior to the start of each season.
- I will supervise my other children at all times at home and away games.
- I will fulfill my obligations, as a parent or guardian of an athlete, to assist with fundraising activities such as the concession booth.
- I will pick up students on time after all practices and games
- I will be a role model by positively supporting teams and by not shouting instructions or criticism to the players, coaches, or officials.
- I will respect the judgment and integrity of referees, judges, and other officials, realizing that their decisions are based upon game conditions as they observe them.
- I will let the coaches coach and resist the temptation to coach before, during, or after the contest.
- I will never approach a coach, athlete, referee, or school official regarding a ruling on the field of play or during the competition.
- I will discuss concerns with the coach, and never address the coach during or immediately after a practice or contest. I will make an appointment and meet with the coach and my child.
- I will maintain the Matthew 18 principle of going directly to the source of my concerns, if there are issues. I will be mindful to always bring my concerns before the Lord in prayer.
- If my student athlete takes issue with a coaching decision, I will advise them to talk with their coach and share their feelings.
- I will maintain perspective and be in control of my emotions.
- I will avoid making derogatory remarks while in a public place and support the program in the presence of my athlete and other fans.
- I will focus on performance and effort of the student athlete, not on outcome. Winning or losing does not define success.
- I will pray with my student athlete to encourage them to glorify their Lord and Savior on and off the playing field.

PLEASE RETURN THIS SIGNED FORM TO THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

Athletic Participant Expectations and Permission Slip Form

I request that my child, _____, Grade _____, Birth date _____, be allowed to participate in Cross Country Volleyball Basketball Track and Field at St. John Lutheran School. The above mentioned student has my permission to attend all practices, home and away.

This agreement absolves St. John Lutheran School (including faculty, volunteers, and hired service personnel) and any and all members of its governing boards and the congregation of any responsibility for the safety, welfare, health, and wellbeing of the child named above, beyond such matters as may be called reasonable care for children in the custody of a staff member and subject to the staff members clear instructions. I assume personally and exclusively all responsibility for accident, injury, etc., which may occur to above named child during school sponsored athletics.

I have read (know) the regulations stated here and in the athletic handbook, and I will support them.

Parent or Guardian: _____ Date: _____

I have filed a current physical examination in the school office. yes no

I have filed a completed copy of the Concussion Form in the school office. yes no

I will pay the applicable athletic fee(s). yes no

I have read and agree with the Athletic Code of Conduct. I will exhibit the will to win and play with everything I have in order to honor God with every fiber of my being. I understand that it is a privilege to play, and I am thankful for the opportunity.

Athlete's Signature: _____ Date: _____

By submitting this form, I acknowledge that I have read and agree to the Parent Expectations. I will support the coaches and the athletic program at St. John in word and deed. I understand that in everything we do our goal is to give God the glory.

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____