

# St. Peter's Athletics Policies and Code of Conduct

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## **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE ATHLETICS PROGRAM AT ST. PETER'S AND OF THIS POLICY?**

St. Peter's School provides an athletics program for student-athletes in grades four through eight. As stated in the Athletic Committee charter approved by the School Board, the athletics program encourages the development of fundamental skills of each participant while emphasizing sportsmanship and Christian values. A well-run sports program recognizes the intrinsic value of each student and will have a positive influence on student-athletes' physical, social and psychological well being.

*The athletics program is an integral part of the education mission of the school.* While teaching athletic fundamentals is one program objective, that is not the only aim. Our athletics program stresses the importance of physical fitness, teamwork and leadership skills, the value of hard work in accomplishing individual and team goals, and, of course, the lessons of both winning and losing that can come only from competition.

It is sometimes said in sports that winning is the only thing, and we agree. *Our athletics program, however, takes a broad view of what it means to win.* When our student-athletes know what it feels like to have success and to overcome challenges, when they learn to work with others of differing strengths and contributions, when they grow in self-confidence through learning new skills, when they learn to appreciate the contributions of the adults in their lives and treat them with respect, and when they conduct themselves as Christian role models not only in athletic competition but in the classroom and the community, that is what we mean by winning.

Just as for all other St. Peter's programs, *the athletics program is a community effort.* Our program is a collaborative work involving the Athletic Committee, coaches, parents, and student-athletes. This policy manual describes the roles and responsibilities for each. In preparing this policy manual, the Athletic Committee was guided by the following principles:

- The children always come first;
- All involved in our athletic programs will be role models for each other and within the larger community; and
- The values of our faith are to be demonstrated in all that we do.

## **WHAT ARE THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ATHLETIC COMMITTEE?**

The Athletic Committee consists of thirteen members, including a faculty representative. Governance for the committee is described in by-laws approved by the School Board. Following is a description of the primary roles and responsibilities for the Athletic Committee and how these are accomplished.

### SPONSORING OF TEAMS

The Athletic Committee attempts to field at least one team per grade for any sport sponsored by the Kansas City Parochial League for the Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph (“the Parochial League”) in grades four through eight. Sponsoring a team requires sufficient student interest and available funds. At present, we support teams for girls’ volleyball, boys’ football (through a program with the CYO of Kansas City, Kansas per agreement with the Kansas City Parochial League), boys’ and girls’ basketball, track and field, boys’ volleyball, and girls’ softball. The Athletic Committee has no responsibility for athletics in earlier grades, or for programs not sponsored by the Parochial League, including, for example, YMCA basketball, the Brookside soccer league, 3&2 baseball, or CYO sports for high schoolers.

The Athletic Committee also sponsors our teams in tournaments hosted by Parochial League member schools, including the Lillis basketball tournament. We equally distribute opportunities for all of our teams to play in such tournaments, and we pay entry fees and assist in scheduling.

In sponsoring sports programs, the Athletic Committee provides equal emphasis and support to both boys’ and girls’ programs and “A” and “B” programs. The Committee strives to give the same level of commitment to all teams regardless of gender and skill level in regard to coaching, uniforms and equipment, gym time, or financial support.

### SELECTION OF COACHES

Prior to the start of each season, the Athletic Committee will request applications for head coaching positions. The Athletic Committee selects and approves all head coaches. When more applications are submitted than required, the Athletic Committee will select the highest qualified coaches based on the following criteria: background in coaching, background in the relevant sport, quality of past performance against the standards described in the “roles and responsibilities of coaches” contained in this policy manual, level of interest and ability to meet time commitments. Each selected head coach must meet a minimum level of qualification against these same criteria as determined by the Athletic Committee and also must not be disqualified from coaching in the Parochial League. Selections of coaches will be made without bias regarding personal relationship with any Athletic Committee member or financial contribution to the school or the athletics program. The Athletic Committee will recruit additional head coaches if an insufficient number of qualified applicants is available.

Many head coaches are parents. They are absolutely critical to the program. Nevertheless, consistent with our commitment to provide balanced and effective coaches to all teams, the Athletic Committee maintains a preference for qualified and committed non-parent coaches. Adults willing to devote their time to our children not only bring tremendous skill and diversity to the program but also are in a position to coach without the difficulty of having one’s own child on a team.

The Athletic Committee makes a particular effort to recruit non-parent coaches for all “A” teams, which further ensures fair team selection.

Assistant coaches ordinarily are selected by head coaches but are subject to Athletic Committee approval. Upon request from a head coach, the Athletic Committee will assist in recruiting an assistant coach. Parent assistant coaches may not be preselected prior to team selection.

At the conclusion of each season, the Athletic Committee will survey the parents on the quality of the coaching received by their children. The survey responses are for use in future coaching selections.

#### TEAM SELECTION

When sufficient interest exists among the student-athletes for more than one team, the Athletic Committee is responsible for ensuring that teams are selected in compliance with Parochial League rules. The Parochial League has two standards of team selection that may be followed at the option of the schools, which also determines the level of competition that the teams will face in league play.

The two standards are “equal skills and ability” -- where the level of skill for each team in the same grade and school is required to be as equal as practicable -- and “A/B team selection” – where the student-athletes on the A team are to have an advanced level of skill, as compared to the B teams. The league offers the second standard only for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls’ volleyball and girls’ and boys’ basketball teams, with 7<sup>th</sup> grade A and B teams being piloted for two years beginning in 2003-04.

The Athletic Committee recognizes that skill level is very important in making team selections, but it is not the only factor. Other factors that will be considered include student-athlete behaviors, potential conflicts with outside activities including another sport, and ability at particular positions in the sport in question.

The Athletic Committee complies with Parochial League standards in team selection by conducting one or more tryouts where the children are presented an opportunity to display their skills in a fair environment. At each tryout, the student-athletes will be evaluated by head coaches, an Athletic Committee representative, and other non-parent observers selected by the Athletic Committee. Tryouts are closed to parents. Head coaches make team selections per the Parochial League standards, in consultation with the other observers, and subject to the approval of the Athletic Committee. Once team selections are announced to student-athletes, team selections are considered final unless all impacted head coaches and the Athletic Committee agree that a change is necessary prior to the deadline for submitting rosters to the Parochial League.

### **FUNDRAISING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, FEES**

A key part of the Athletic Committee's responsibilities are raising funds for the athletics program and spending those funds wisely. The Athletic Committee currently sponsors several fundraising activities, including setting and collecting fees for participation in athletics, managing gate and concessions at McKay Center Parochial League functions, selling season passes to those functions, sponsoring the Lillis Basketball tournament along with Visitation and St. Elizabeth's athletic committees, and hosting the Moms and Pops basketball tournament each year.

The Athletic Committee will use funds to provide sports teams sufficient supplies and uniforms, and to maintain the McKay Center for practices and competitions. All supplies provided to coaches teams and players are the property of the Athletic Committee and must be returned at season's end. Basketball and football uniforms are also returned at season's end.

In recognition of our role in the parish at large, we also from time to time may make donations to the parish and/or the school depending on the success of the year's fundraising activities, but only after determining that the financial needs of the athletics program will not be neglected.

The Athletic Committee will set a reasonable fee at the outset of every athletic season to help defray expenses. Parents must pay the fee at the time their child signs up for a sport. Fees, however, will be waived on a parent's request due to financial hardship. A uniform deposit also is required for basketball and football and will be refunded at the close of the season and return of the uniform.

### **OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Other responsibilities of the Athletic Committee include:

- Coordinating gym practice schedules and other facilities. Coaches must coordinate practice times with the designated Athletic Committee member. The Athletic Committee coordinates gym availability with the school and secures other facility space for excess basketball needs as well as for outdoor sports.
- Supervision of the McKay Center during Parochial League events. The Athletic Committee provides a gym captain who is in charge of the facility during all league events. Contact the Athletic Committee to find out who is the gym captain for a particular event.
- Enforcement of Parochial League policies. The Athletic Committee is responsible for compliance with all Parochial League rules. Coaches share some of these responsibilities as explained elsewhere in this policy. The Athletic Committee will provide a copy of the league rules on request.
- Liaison with the school and Parochial League. The Athletic Committee communicates with the school and the Parochial League on all athletic

program matters. Issues with either body related to athletics should be brought to the Athletic Committee for resolution.

- Establish policy for the athletics program. The Athletic Committee will revise these policies from time to time, and we welcome comments.

## **WHAT ARE THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COACHES?**

Just as the faculty is critical to the success of the school, our coaches play perhaps the most important role in the success of our athletic program. Following is a list of roles and responsibilities for the coaches. While the head coach is primarily responsible for these obligations, the same standards apply to assistant coaches as appropriate.

### **LEARN AND TEACH THE GAME**

As a volunteer group, not all coaches are experts in the sport in which they are participating. Coaches have a responsibility to learn enough about the game, including the rules, game and practice approaches, so that the student-athletes will have a productive and meaningful experience throughout the season. The Athletic Committee and the Parochial League occasionally provide clinics for coaches. The Committee will pay applicable registration fees for those clinics, and it encourages coaches to attend. Other ways to learn include attending games and practices of others, and talking with other coaches in the St. Peter's program. It is expected that the coach's knowledge of the game will be transferred to the student-athletes in an appropriate way considering grade and skill level.

### **ATTEND PRACTICES, GAMES AND REQUIRED MEETINGS**

Head coaches are required to attend all practices and games, or to provide an adult substitute if attendance is not possible. While occasional absences are unavoidable due to illness, other family obligations or business needs, the Athletic Committee expects that absences will be rare. Cancellation of either games or practices due to a coaching absence should be avoided at all times: the student-athletes deserve regular practices and an equivalent number of practices as their classmates on other teams. When a substitute is needed for a rare absence, head coaches should arrange a substitute with a parent associated with the team or may contact the relevant Athletic Committee sports coordinator for assistance. The Athletic Committee encourages supervision by at least two adults at all practices and games.

Head coaches also must attend mandatory meetings called by the Athletic Committee or the Parochial League. These ordinarily occur at the beginning of the season.

All coaches must attend the diocesan program "Protecting God's Children" to be qualified to coach. Attendance in any one year qualifies the coach for future years.

#### **KNOW AND ABIDE BY PAROCHIAL LEAGUE RULES**

The Parochial League publishes rules and regulations and distributes these to coaches at the start of each season at a mandatory meeting. Coaches must know and abide by these rules. Similarly, football coaches must abide by the rules of the Kansas City, Kansas CYO. The Athletic Committee will enforce these rules separately and independently from the Parochial League, and will assist the Parochial League in compliance with any of its enforcement decisions.

#### **COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS**

The Athletic Committee expects coaches to communicate regularly with parents both as a group, and, when appropriate, individually. Coaches are responsible for making parents aware of practice and game schedules and any scheduling changes. Coaches also must share with parents the expectations for the team and individual student-athletes, and the progress of each.

Over the course of the season, coaches spend a significant amount of time with student-athletes in the absence of their parents. Coaches should share with parents any troubling behavior that is observed regardless of whether the behavior impacts the team. To the extent the behavior impacts the team, coaches and parents are encouraged to work together to solve the problem. Coaches must notify parents of any significant discipline provided to their child, including the rationale for the discipline.

#### **TREAT STUDENT-ATHLETES WITH RESPECT**

Coaches are role models and teachers and must treat student-athletes with respect at all times. This means specifically the following:

- Avoid abusive, threatening, or other inappropriate behavior directed toward the student
- Avoid inappropriate personal behavior in the presence of the student-athletes
- Avoid foul language
- Avoid favoritism toward some of the student-athletes based on personal relationship or biases
- Do not embarrass student-athletes in front of their teammates or at games
- Provide a fair allocation of playing time, consistent with individual and team commitment, behavior and skills.

Playing time contributes significantly to a student-athlete's development and self-esteem. While the Athletic Committee does not require equal playing time, maximizing each child's participation beyond Parochial League minimums while maintaining general team excellence is a coaching skill that is highly valued coaching skill by the Committee and is strongly encouraged of all coaches.

#### **ENFORCE STUDENT-ATHLETE STANDARDS AND PROVIDE DISCIPLINE**

Coaches are responsible for enforcing the roles and responsibilities for student-athletes described elsewhere in this policy manual. Discipline is both a right and

responsibility of the coaches. Discipline should be reasonable and tailored to the behavioral issue. Physical discipline, such as striking, or grabbing in a threatening way, is prohibited. Acceptable forms of discipline include extra drills applied without endangering health, and withholding game time (even to the extent of holding a student-athlete out of an entire game). The Athletic Committee recommends withholding of game time in the event of unexcused absences, with the same amount of time withheld for any team member regardless of skill level. Dismissal from the team may be appropriate in rare circumstances but requires the consent of the Athletic Committee and prior notice to the parents.

#### **USE APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR AT GAMES**

Student-athletes learn from the behavior of their coaches. Moreover, coaches represent St. Peter's Parish while at games. Accordingly, the Athletic Committee expects coaches to conduct themselves in a manner that teaches student-athletes appropriate behavior and that reflects well on the parish. In particular, coaches must:

- Treat opponents, their players, coaches and fans with respect at all times
- Avoid tirades, loud, obnoxious or obscene behavior
- Treat officials with respect by abiding their rulings and avoiding loud and threatening arguments.

Questioning the calls of an official is sometimes unavoidable in an athletic competition. Coaches must approach officials appropriately, for example, quietly during a time out, at half time or after a game. The Parochial League has the right to eject coaches from the game and to suspend them from further competition. In the event of suspension, restatement must be approved both by the Parochial League and, in a separate and independent determination, by the Athletic Committee. While the Parochial League rules on suspension do not apply to ejections from preseason tournaments, the Athletic Committee will consider suspending any coach who has been ejected from a preseason tournament.

#### **WHAT ARE THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS?**

Parents play an active and necessary role in making our athletic programs a success. By participating in the programs, we as parents not only provide needed help to the coaches and the Athletic Committee, we also demonstrate to our children that we consider their athletic participation to be important and we are willing to devote our own time to the effort just as we expect them to commit theirs. Following are expectations for the parents.

#### **MEET TIME SCHEDULES FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS AND PAYMENT OF FEES**

It is important for parents to timely complete and submit their children's applications to play on sponsored sports teams. The Athletic Committee needs to be confident in the level of participation so that it will be able to determine the number of teams and coaches needed. Likewise, payment of fees and uniform deposits are required when due (including any late fees if established by the

Committee) if a financial hardship waiver is not requested by the parents. These funds are needed up front for our programs, and failure to make timely payment creates additional work for coaches and the Athletic Committee.

#### ASSIST IN MCKAY CENTER ACTIVITIES

Parents are required to provide support in the McKay Center for concession and gate duties as assigned by the Athletic Committee volunteer coordinator. This is a condition to your child's participation in the particular sports program. Parents are required to provide their own substitutes when unable to participate as assigned. Significant disruption to the McKay Center occurs when parents choose not to show up for assignments or arrange for a substitute.

#### ASSIST CHILDREN IN MEETING THEIR ATHLETIC OBLIGATIONS

Parents must assist children in showing up for practices and games regularly and on time. Notify coaches when a player will be absent or late. In particular, notify coaches of significant conflicts that may regularly affect practice or game attendance during the season **prior to team selections**. Moreover, parents must pick up their children on time after practices or arrange for their ride home. Coaches should not be expected to contribute even more of their time to supervise children after practices until a ride arrives. Parents must ensure that their children attend games with their uniforms cleaned and otherwise dressed appropriately in regard to supporting attire (no earrings, matching t-shirts and socks, etc.).

#### SUPPORT COACHES IN THEIR DUTIES

Be mindful and appreciative of coaches and the time they spend with your children in a voluntary activity. Following are many ways parents are encouraged to assist the coaches:

- Attend meetings called by the coaches
- Advise of schedule conflicts or difficulties ahead of time
- Help in car pools, phone call trees, arranging social events, or other activities that make the coaches job easier
- Help monitor behavior of student-athletes at events before or after games, and even at practices if the coach is short-handed
- Make coaches aware of any difficulties your child may be having that may impact the child's or the team's performance, such as problems at school, conflict among teammates, or, if you are comfortable doing so, any family difficulties
- Encourage coaches by providing positive feedback and letting them know how much you appreciate their efforts.

The Athletic Committee strongly discourages parents from criticizing coaching skills or second-guessing coaching approaches during the season. The Athletic Committee will survey parents at the end of the season, and this is the proper forum for providing feedback on coaching skills.

Parents should bring to the attention of the Athletic Committee for resolution any coaching misconduct issues based on standards identified in this Policy Manual.

### **PROVIDE POSITIVE ENCOURAGEMENT TO YOUR CHILDREN AND THEIR TEAMMATES**

Parents should be a positive motivating factor for the student-athletes. Regular attendance at games is strongly encouraged. Emphasize the positive to your child; compliment them on their effort, and their improvement. You are not the coach, and critiquing your child's play should be left to the coaches.

Parents who are not coaches have no role whatsoever in critiquing the performance of someone else's child. Communications with your child's teammates should be limited to encouraging and appreciative statements.

### **USE APPROPRIATE CONDUCT AT GAMES**

Parents should reflect well on St. Peter's Parish and be positive role models for student-athletes when attending sporting events. In particular, parents must:

- Treat opponents, their players, coaches and fans with respect
- Avoid tirades, loud, obnoxious or obscene behavior
- Treat officials with respect
- Be appreciative guests at other facilities and schools

The Athletic Committee encourages parents to enjoy the game and cheer for our teams appropriately.

Questioning the calls of an official is not the role of a parent who is not a coach and is prohibited by the Athletic Committee.

Both the Parochial League and the Athletic Committee have the right to eject parents from a game and to suspend them from further attendance for inappropriate behavior. In the event of suspension by the Parochial League, reinstatement must be approved both by the League and, in a separate and independent determination, by the Athletic Committee. While the Parochial League rules on suspension do not apply to ejections from preseason tournaments, the Athletic Committee will consider suspending any parent from further competition who has been ejected during a preseason tournament.

### **WHAT ARE THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT-ATHLETES?**

While the athletics program is for the benefit of the student-athletes, student-athletes have their own responsibilities to make the athletic program work. These responsibilities are owed to the Athletic Committee, coaches, parents and teammates.

### **MAINTAIN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

Parochial League rules call for student-athletes to maintain at least a C- average in all courses, with eligibility determined each week. Student-athletes are expected to maintain this performance for their own benefit as well as the benefit of their team. Beyond maintaining eligibility, however, studies come first. We expect all of our student-athletes to try their best to excel in the classroom.

Student-athletes should talk to their coaches when the sports schedule creates difficulties in achieving academic excellence.

#### **MAINTAIN REGULAR ATTENDANCE AT PRACTICES AND GAMES**

Student-athletes are responsible for knowing their practice and game schedules and making sure they show up for each on time. While parents will assist in attendance, coaches will hold the student-athletes responsible for tardiness or absences. Advise coaches of absences or planned tardiness ahead of time. Tardiness and absences that are not excused because of illness, important family matters, or other school activities are expected to be rare.

Participation on any St. Peter's team is expected to be a student-athletes' primary athletic and extra-curricular commitment. Frequent absences due to other activities may impact team selection (particularly A/B team selection), playing time at games, and discharge from the team in extreme instances. Parochial League rules prohibit student-athletes from participating on any other team of the same sport at any time during the regular and post season of their Parochial League team.

#### **TREAT COACHES WITH RESPECT**

Student-athletes must treat coaches with respect at all times. Follow all coaching instructions at practices and games. Challenging coaching decisions, arguing with coaches, and other forms of disrespectful behavior are forbidden. Student-athletes are to raise concerns about team issues in appropriate ways, by asking questions politely and at appropriate times, and involving the rest of the team.

#### **BE A TEAM PLAYER**

No individual member of the team is more important than the team as a whole. All responsibilities mentioned in this policy are owed to the team, and when a student-athlete violates the policy he or she is letting the team down.

Student-athletes are to support each other to help each individual player be successful. Provide positive encouragement to teammates by complimenting them for effort and a job well done. Leave player criticism to the coaches. Taunting, teasing or bullying of teammates or fighting between teammates is forbidden.

#### **TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR OWN PERFORMANCE**

All players cannot be stars, but all players are expected to try their best, work hard to improve, and do what they can within the rules to help their team be successful.

#### **TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR SCHOOL**

When a student-athlete puts on a St. Peter's uniform, she or he becomes a representative of the school. Act accordingly, to show those who see you what makes St. Peter's special. The Athletic Committee strongly encourages all student-athletes to be a supporter of other teams within their own grade and for all other grades by occasionally attending games and rooting for their school.

#### **DEMONSTRATE SPORTSMANSHIP AT GAMES**

As a representative of St. Peter's school, student-athletes are expected to be role models of sportsmanship at all games. This includes the following:

- Avoid arguing with officials. If a call needs to be challenged, leave this to the coaches.
- Do not taunt or tease the opposing team, including coaches and fans. Grandstanding or showboating is not allowed. After games, win or lose, compliment your opponent for a good game.
- Do not fight with opponents. If an opponent tries to start something, walk away and advise your coach or an official.

#### **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IN THE EVENT YOU HAVE A CONCERN WITH COMPLIANCE TO THIS POLICY?**

The Athletic Committee needs the help and support of everyone to ensure compliance with this policy. Parents are requested to bring team-related issues first to the head coach, and then to an Athletic Committee representative if the issue has not been resolved. All other concerns may be brought to the attention of an Athletic Committee member.