

## PHILOSOPHY

As a Lutheran elementary school, St. Mark strives to apply and teach Christian attitudes in all school activities, including sporting events. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:31, **“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”** Co-curricular sports give student athletes the opportunity to use their God-given physical ability to reflect the love of their Savior. Through athletics we strive to increase a student’s self esteem, work ethic, competitive drive, leadership behaviors, and understanding of teamwork. In addition, we strive to provide an enjoyable, vigorous, and safe experience in a Christian environment. We believe athletics is part of the total education process at St. Mark School.

## OBJECTIVES

The following are the objectives for all of St. Mark’s athletic teams:

1. Give students an opportunity to develop their God-given skill in a particular sport.
2. Teach students the importance of Christian sportsmanship as they compete in various contests.
3. Teach students the various strategies related to the particular sport they are participating in.
4. Offer opportunities for the students to give glory to God on and off the court by their Christian conduct.

## EXPECTATIONS FOR:

### Coaches

Coaches and assistant coaches are expected to maintain a high level of Christian behavior, sportsmanship, professionalism, and integrity both on and off the playing field. Coaching duties include keeping the “fun” in sports, developing God-given athletic abilities, teaching specific skills, and instilling in the players an appreciation for the game. In detail, coaches are expected to...

- Uphold proper Christian conduct in the light of 1 Corinthians 10:31 “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.”
- Treat every player, opposing coach, official, parent, and administrator with respect and dignity.
- Learn the fundamental skills, rules, teaching and evaluation techniques, and strategies of his/her sport.
- Communicate to his/her players and their parents the rights and responsibilities of individuals on the team.

## Players

Children play sports to have fun, develop God-given abilities, and learn sport-specific skills. Players have a responsibility to their team, coach, and school. In detail, players are expected to ...

- Learn and be willing to cooperate with coaches and fellow teammates.
- Display Christian conduct. In the event an individual fails to demonstrate Christian behavior as determined by the coach, he/she will receive a warning and the parents will be contacted. After the second occurrence, the parents will be contacted and the player will be suspended from the next game. On the third infraction, the child will no longer be part of the team.
- Attend all practices and games unless excused by a **parent prior** to the event, either verbally or by note. Players missing a practice prior to a game will not be allowed in the starting line-up.
- Be reliable. Players must be present at practices and games 75% of the time to receive recognition as being part of the team. If a player quits, no matter when that takes place, he/she forfeits all recognition of being on the team.
- Put academics before sports. Children who faithfully work to their potential in their schoolwork and who regularly demonstrate proper conduct will be encouraged and welcome to participate in extra-curricular activities. Students not meeting academic requirements set by parents and teacher will be ineligible to participate in interscholastic sports until requirements are met.
- Bring proper uniform. If a player forgets his/her uniform, he/she may not be able to play.
- Wear appropriate athletic clothing to practices, and you are encouraged to follow the St. Mark dress code to all games when you are not in uniform.
- **Any player choosing to play on another team outside of St. Mark at the same time as playing on a team at St. Mark must choose their St. Mark team's activities over the other team.**

## Parents

Just as coaches and players strive to reflect the love of our Savior in their words and actions, parents are encouraged to do the same. Parents participate in games by watching, cheering, and supporting the efforts of all participants of the game. The following guidelines are expected to be followed by all St. Mark parents. Parents are expected to ...

- Gain an understanding and appreciation for the rules of the contest.
- Reflect the love of their Savior at all times, remembering that their words and actions may influence the behavior of the children and other spectators.

- Recognize and appreciate skilled performance regardless of affiliation.
- Acknowledge officials as authoritative figures understanding that mistakes will be made.
- Never criticize the coach in front of other parents or players or “coach from the sideline.” Here are guidelines of how problems should be communicated between coaches and parents:

In Matthew 18:15, Jesus says, **“If a brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you.”** In order to do things in a God-pleasing way, the following guidelines are to be followed:

1. Any concerns by a parent or parents regarding coaching philosophy and expectations need to be expressed to the coach during a scheduled appointment and in private.
2. Appropriate concerns and topics for discussion would be the treatment of your child mentally and physically, ways for your child to improve his/her skills, or concerns about your child’s behavior.
3. Inappropriate topics or issues not up for discussion are playing time, team strategy, play calling, and other student-athletes.

## **PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES**

Participation is generally allowed for students in grades five through eight. On occasion fourth graders are used. In all our sports, the goal is to help the students use their God given abilities to learn the game and play the best they can. We always hope to make them better each season and prepare them for the next level.

C team: We consider this level to be developmental. Although we play to win, the main goal is to make everyone a better player. For that reason, every player will play about the same amount of time in each game. This will ensure that every player will get the chance to be prepared for the next level.

B team: We consider this level also to be developmental. Again, the goal is to make everyone a better player. Each player will play a good amount of time in each game. At this level, some players might get a little more playing time in tournaments. Again, we want the players to be prepared for the next level.

A team: We consider this to be our competitive level. The goal is to make each player and the team better during the season. Therefore we will try to get every student playing time in each game. The playing time won’t be equal, because we will be more aggressive to win the games. In tournaments, at this level, playing time is not guaranteed. Players wishing to

compete at the A team level are encouraged to develop their skills more fully through summer camps and other opportunities.

We believe practice is vital to our program. Playing time for a student at any level will be affected if he/she consistently misses practice.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation to and from practices, games, and tournaments is the responsibility of the parents.

We encourage parents to be at all the games in which their child is participating to support their child and the rest of the team.

## **UNIFORMS**

All uniforms will be handed out and collected by the athletic director or coach. **When washing uniforms, please do not use detergent with a bleach additive.**

## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

So that all things can be done decently and in order, and to do our best to see to it that our students represent our school and their Savior in a way that would glorify Him, the following guidelines have been established for our athletic programs:

1. A player needs to be at all practices and games unless excused by a parent **prior** to the event, either verbally or by a note. If a child is absent from school due to illness, the child will not participate in practices or games that day. **If a child is ill when the day begins, but arrives at school before noon, he/she is allowed to participate in games or practices. If a child goes home sick during the day and does not finish the day at school, he/she is not allowed to “come back” for games or practices.**
2. If a player misses a practice, unexcused, he/she will be unable to play in the next game.
3. The student must show the desire to learn the skills of that particular sport. He/She must also be willing to cooperate with the coach(es). Any unwillingness to cooperate may result in removal from the team.
4. Any disrespect shown to coaches, officials, fans, or other players will result in a minimum suspension of one game. Continued behavior detrimental to the team will result in removal from the team.
5. Other behavior which may cause removal from the team would include fighting, stealing, vandalism, and use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco.

## **ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES**

Students who wish to represent our school in athletics must exhibit adequate classroom progress and proper school behaviors. They must maintain a C-grade average (1.665).

If a child fails to exhibit acceptable progress in school, the child will be ineligible to participate in any athletic activity for a period of fourteen days. After fourteen days, the student's progress will be reviewed. If the student has demonstrated satisfactory improvement, the student will once again be eligible for athletic activities. The school recognizes that students are individuals, each one possessing different gifts and abilities. Because of this, there may be times when these eligibility guidelines may be tailored to the needs and abilities of the individual.

*If a student receives a detention, he/she will be ineligible until the detention has been served.*

## **PARENT/STUDENT CONSENT FORM**

You will be receiving with this handbook a consent form that needs to be signed and returned before your child can participate in the first game. This form indicates that both parent(s) and child have read this handbook and are willing to follow the guidelines that have been established.