

HANDBOOK FOR ATHLETICS
ST. GREGORY CATHOLIC SCHOOL



April 2022

Dear St. Gregory Catholic School Community,

St. Gregory School's Athletic Program is designed to provide leadership and governance while adhering to School and Diocesan rules and policies. A well-balanced school athletic program is built on a strong foundation. The St. Gregory Athletic Program will promote and foster good sportsmanship, team play, competitive spirit and school loyalty, all within a Christian environment.

This Handbook for Athletics is intended to guide the Athletic Board and those who participate in interscholastic athletic programs. This Handbook tries to address several issues and concerns raised over the last several years.

Participation in sports at any level requires adherence to regulations and guidelines. It is expected that the policies, procedures and regulations in this Handbook will be followed. They are not optional. The practices included in this Handbook may not contradict Pittsburgh Diocesan policies.

The directives given here are offered to promote an active integration of Gospel values into the entire athletic program. These guidelines will strengthen the St. Gregory School Athletic Association.

Sincerely,

Erin M. Rice
Principal

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THE MISSION & PHILOSOPHY OF FAITH-BASED INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PROGRAMMING

CREATING A WELL-BALANCED SCHOOL ATHLETIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

The educational impact of participating in a sports program is highly significant. Participation in athletic programming can produce the following outcomes:

- improve and educate for life-long health
- increase self-confidence and self-esteem
- promote higher academic performance
- nurture the development of an inner sense of fair play and good sportsmanship

A well-balanced school athletic education program is built on a strong foundation. This foundation includes: Interscholastic Athletic Programs that promote and develop good sportsmanship, team play, competitive spirit, and school loyalty.

Unlike intramural programs, interscholastic athletics are more structured opportunities for the student athlete. At St. Gregory School, the main focus of interscholastic sports is on good sportsmanship through competitive activities where skill development, teamwork, team achievement and personal growth are emphasized. Intramural and interscholastic sports programs complement and enhance the school's physical education program.

OUTCOME GOALS OF INTERSCHOLASTIC PROGRAMS

Interscholastic athletics is an integral component to St. Gregory School's goal of educating the whole child, and the outcomes from such participation are far reaching. The desired results of interscholastic athletic participation include the following:

- to instill in the student athlete a sense of responsibility by demanding consistently high standards of behavior and making the student athlete aware and respectful of the needs of others
- to enhance the commitment level in the student athlete by directing him/ her to an acceptance of the goals of the team and an appreciation of the needs of his/her teammates, coaches, opponents, and officials
- to nurture unselfishness in the student athlete by requiring that his/her actions on and off the playing field be consistent with the goals of the team as a whole and not be directed towards individual honors
- to generate in the student athlete a willingness to sacrifice his/her time and energy towards the fulfillment of shared goals
- to further senses of personal discipline on the part of the student athlete by demanding abstention from activities that limit his/her athletic, academic, and personal potential

Saint Gregory School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national or ethnic origin in its admission or hiring policies, educational programs, loan or scholarship programs, athletics or any other school-administered program.

Every parent/guardian, student-athlete, and coach will be given a copy of the handbook. They all must sign a form stating that they have read the rules and agree to be governed by them. Periodic review/revision of the handbook and its guidelines and expectations is imperative.

ST. GREGORY SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The Saint Gregory Athletic program provides a safe sports environment that serves as an extension of the school's academic and religious programming. All participants will learn the fundamentals of each sport and be given the opportunity to cultivate strong, healthy and disciplined minds and bodies. Participants will also develop a sense of good sportsmanship, fair play, and team spirit, as well as facilitate and enhance the moral and ethical development of all those involved.

Saint Gregory Catholic School is concerned with the development of the WHOLE person – the religious, moral, social and academic dimensions, as well as physical development. We believe that participation in athletics is an important component to a well-rounded educational experience. Through participation in the Saint Gregory athletic program, students will develop ethical and moral standards, life-long skills, and positive values. These values include leadership, healthy living habits, self-discipline, integrity, teamwork, respect for rules and regulations and the ability to participate with dignity and grace.

GOALS OF THE ATHLETIC PROGRAM

St. Gregory Athletic Association Goals:

- developing sportsmanship
- giving students the experience of being part of a team
- fostering school spirit
- promoting the development of strong, healthy and disciplined bodies and minds
- helping students maintain good health through physical fitness
- providing an enjoyable recreational activity that can be sustained into adulthood
- encouraging values of self-discipline, self-confidence, fair play, and cooperation
- teaching the proper attitude toward winning, losing and competing with dignity
- further enhancing Catholic values and teachings

ESTABLISHING A CODE OF ETHICS

For information regarding THE CODE of ETHICS please refer to the Diocesan Handbook.

AWARDS / TROPHIES

Awards, trophies, and letters of recognition are frequently given to student athletes for program participation. Special trophies for "Most Valuable Player," "Most Improved Player," "Leadership" or other individual awards are highly discouraged. Ultimately, handing out individual awards or recognizing individual accomplishments is inconsistent with the "team first" concept that coaches demand from their players.

RECRUITMENT OF STUDENTATHLETES

Under no circumstances can schools recruit student athletes to their schools and/or athletic programs with the promise of tuition, special considerations, or any other incentives.

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION POLICY

No alcohol of any kind may be distributed or consumed at school and/or parish-sponsored sporting events or athletic banquets where children are present, whether on or off campus. This policy is nonnegotiable.

**SAFE ENVIRONMENT COMPLIANCE PROCEDURES —
SCHOOL EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS – refer to the
Pittsburgh Diocesan Handbook.**

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVELY ADMINISTERING INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PROGRAMMING

Since school-sponsored athletic programs are an extension of the school and its curriculum, these programs are subject to the authority of the pastor by virtue of his office and the principal.

The principal is the primary authority over the athletic program in the school. The assigned athletic director, and/or an athletic committee may be delegated the responsibility to supervise the athletic program (see Appendix IV).

The Athletic Board

1. The governing authority for athletic programs at St. Gregory will be known as the St. Gregory Athletic Board. The purpose of the Board is to provide leadership and governance for effectively conducting the athletic program at St. Gregory's, within the School and Diocesan rules and policies.
2. The composition of the Board shall be as follows:
 - a. The parish Pastor is a standing member of the Board, with final authority over all matters of the Board and St. Gregory School.
 - b. The school Principal will have full oversight authority over the Board and its decisions, and is a standing member of the Board.
 - c. The Athletic Director (AD), appointed by the Principal and Pastor to a 2-year term.
 - d. AB-Treasurer, appointed by the Principal and Pastor to a 2-year term alternating years with the AD.
 - e. AB-Secretary, appointed by the Principal and Pastor to a 1-year term.
 - f. Sport Directors, per sport, each shall be appointed to 1-year terms by the Principal and AD. Current recognized sports include:
 - i. Cross-Country (XC)
 - ii. Basketball (BB)
 - iii. Cheerleading (CH)
 - iv. Volleyball (VB)
3. Appointments will be made near the end of the school year, and effective for June 1st.
 - a. Removal of any person from a Board position will be at the discretion of the Principal or Pastor, with credible basis and cause.
4. If any Board member is unable to maintain his/her position during their term, notice from that person should be provided to the Principal prior to their resignation to ensure a smooth and orderly transition.

Duties of the Board Members

1. **Athletic Director (AD):** The AD shall have one vote at all meetings, to be cast only in the event of a tie in the voting. While the AD can be a head coach or assistant coach, the AD cannot have a second Board position. However, he/she may need to be the "acting" sport director on a temporary basis. The AD is responsible for:
 - i. Manages athletics through the Board, coaches, and assistant-coaches on a day-to-day basis.
 - ii. Presides as the Chair at all regular and special athletic meetings, sets the agenda (as coordinated with the Principal and Sports Directors), and provides the Secretary the necessary information for distribution.

- iii. Ensures the administrative needs of each sport are addressed and coordinated with their respective Sport-Director.
- iv. Serves as an ex-officio member of all athletic sub-committees.
- v. Coordinates communications with the Diocese, Parish, School, and other Schools' ADs.
- vi. Working with the Sport-Directors, will determine team compositions for the season – appropriate to roster-size and skill, and will be recommended to the Principal for final approval.
- vii. Coordinates training and access needs necessary for the Board, its coaches and assistant coaches.
- viii. In conjunction with the Principal and Board, reviews and approves all requests for game and practice schedules, tournament participation, league participation, and equipment needs.
- ix. Coordinating with the Sport-Director, has authority to CANCEL home practices, games, or meets, and will work with Sport-Director to get them rescheduled.
- x. Reviews options for 'new sports' for the school to consider.
- xi. Upholds the principles and purpose of the Association.

2. **AB Treasurer:** The treasurer is financially responsible for all athletic funds, and shall keep detailed accounts of all financial transactions. While the Treasurer reports to the AD, he/she has financial accountability directly to the Pastor. The Treasurer cannot have a second Board position, but can be a head-coach or assistant-coach. The Treasurer has one vote at all meetings, and is responsible for:

- i. Collecting athletic fees, admission fees, concession revenue, raffle gains, debts owed to the Association, and shall deposit all such collections in a recognized bank account under the St. Gregory Parish's jurisdiction.
- ii. Pay Board authorized bills and requests for reimbursements through signed check, when provided sufficient approval with documentation or receipts.
- iii. Payments should be made in a reasonable and timely manner.
- iv. Reporting the financial status of the Association at the Board meetings. All records shall be produced by the Treasurer and made available for review by any Board member, upon request.
- v. Will provide necessary documentation for all financial audits, as required by the Principal, Parish Office or Diocese.
- vi. The Treasurer shall assume the duties of the Chair at meetings, in the absence of both the AD and Principal.
- vii. Responsible for developing an annual budget plan, with Board and Pastor approval.
- viii. Upholds the principles and purpose of the Association.

3. **AB-Secretary:** The Secretary cannot be the AD or Treasurer, but can be a head coach, Assistant coach, or even could be a Sport Director if absolutely necessary. He/she has one vote at all meetings, and is responsible for:

- i. Takes minutes at Athletic meetings, which shall be accurate records of business transacted.
- ii. Provides notice of all meetings to the Board.
- iii. Acts as liaison between Athletics, and School and Parish Secretaries.
- iv. Distributes athletic rules, by-laws, minutes, schedules, and notifications, as directed from the AD or Principal.
- v. Keeps record of coaching documents, such as:

- i. Clearances
 - ii. Application
 - iii. Past evaluations
- vi. Keeps record of player participation requirements, such as:
 - i. Athletic fee(s)
 - ii. Valid physical
 - iii. Team rosters
 - iv. Uniforms
- vii. Working closely with the appropriate Sport Director, tracks the collection and distribution of player uniforms and equipment.
- viii. Upholds the principles and purpose of the Association.

4. Sport Director (generic): A sport Director cannot be the AD, Treasurer or Secretary, but can be a head-coach, assistant-coach, or potentially another sport director. She/he has one vote at all meetings (in season or not). Within their specific sport, they are responsible for:

- i. Acting as the central point of contact for their sport.
- ii. Cooperates with the Principal and AD's direction.
- iii. Coordinates all coaches (and their assistant-coaches) for all team levels (JJV, JV, VAR), for both Girls and Boys teams.
- iv. Brings equipment needs to the Board for consideration and approval.
- v. Coordinates the sport's schedule – games/meets and practices. This may include attending Section scheduling meetings, and reschedule updates.
- vi. Working with the A.D., will determine team compositions for the season – appropriate to roster-size and skill, and will be recommended to the Principal for final approval.
- vii. Coordinating with the A.D., has authority to CANCEL home practices, games, or meets, and will work with A.D. to get them rescheduled.
- viii. Coordinates required sport and building officials, for home games/meets.
- ix. Coordinates required training to conduct games/meets (XC timers, BB clock, VB linesman ...).
- x. Resolves and/or communicates safety concerns to the Board promptly.
- xi. At the end of the season, presents the Board with suggestions and recommendations for improvements of their sport season.
- xii. Approves tournament recommendations from their coaches.
- xiii. Arranges updates/additions to 'sport banners' for successful seasons.
- xiv. Upholds the principles and purpose of the Association.
- xv. To champion and promote their sport.

5. Cross-Country Director (XC-Dir): The XC-Dir shall oversee all matters specific to "cross-country" within the Association. This includes pre-season conditioning.

6. Basketball Director (BB-Dir): The BB-Dir shall oversee all matters specific to "basketball" within the Association. This includes the primary season, summer leagues, and the Progressive skills program.

7. Cheerleading Director (CH-Dir): The CH-Dir shall oversee all matters specific to "cheerleading" within the Association. This includes the "Pep Squad" program, and the "Fang" mascot.

8. Volleyball Director (VB-Dir): The VB-Dir shall oversee all matters specific to "volleyball" within the Association.

Duties of the Board

Establish a Catholic Grade school appropriate ***Philosophy to Athletics***, which is:

- a. To teach, develop, and exemplify Christian character
- b. To teach principles of good sportsmanship
- c. To provide athletic opportunities for students through Diocesan and community competition and intramural activities.
- d. To provide necessary personnel, equipment, and facilities to carry out the athletic program at St. Gregory School.
- e. To ensure that coaches are aware that although the winning of games is not the primary goal, St. Gregory strives to field competitive teams in all sports in which it competes.

Institute a set of ***Program Belief Statements***, which include:

- a. We believe that every student athlete must make academics their first priority.
- b. We believe that learning/practicing the fundamentals teaches discipline that is a key to future success in life.
- c. We believe that the concept of team must take precedence over personal position.
- d. We believe that winning is measured by more than the score of a game.
- e. We believe that competition reveals character and provides the opportunity to learn to win and loose with grace and sportsmanship.

Determine baseline standards for ***Good Sportsmanship*** AT ALL TIMES, involving (but not limited to):

- a. Prayer before each game.
- b. Supporting your teammates.
- c. No “put-downs”, taunting, or abusive language/behavior.
- d. No questioning the referee at any time.
- e. Maintaining composure at all times.
- f. Shaking of opposing players’ and coaches’ hands after the game.
- g. Disruptive or violent behavior will result in removal from the team.
- h. Suspension, removal from the team, and/or referral to the principal may be the result of the student’s inappropriate and/or disruptive behavior during practices/games.
- i. **CROWD CONTROL** – A Board member, in ranking order, has the right to eject any person from the premises who is exhibiting violent, disruptive, or inappropriate behavior.

Determine criteria for ***Player Eligibility***, which is:

- a. The school directs that students who participate in extra-curricular activities and/or sports must:
 - i. Maintain a record of academic proficiency.
 - ii. Attend school regularly.
 - iii. Return all school athletic equipment.
 - iv. Only students enrolled in St. Gregory School are eligible to participate in the St. Gregory Athletic Association Program, unless approved by the school administration.
 - v. All league rules pertaining to player eligibility (or other) must be followed.
- b. This is the responsibility of the Principal and Head Coach of each participating team.

- c. Players are subject to suspension by the Principal for reasons of inappropriate conduct, academics or other deficiencies. The coach must notify the Principal if there are issues.

Academic Eligibility: Teachers are required to enter weekly grades into the OptionC Grading Program. After the grades are processed, the Principal will print out the grades for students who have a D or E in any subject based on the St. Gregory School grading scale, and will determine if any player is ineligible. Coaches and Sport Directors will be notified of ineligible players. Ineligible student athletes and parents will be notified of their status. The period of ineligibility will begin immediately and last until the student begins to bring up his/her grade as verified by the Principal. Ensure any disciplinary action taken by the Principal is upheld. Participation on our sport teams is a privilege, and athletes have a responsibility to our school and their team to conduct themselves as Catholic students in all environments, on the court and in the school and classrooms.

Set up a means to **Address Concerns or Complaints** through a defined procedure, which is:

- a. Any parent or other persons' concerns/complaints regarding St. Gregory Athletic programs must be initially discussed with a team coach of the program involved. This initial discussion must not take place immediately before, during or after a sports event. It must be conducted at a scheduled meeting held in a mutually agreeable place and time.
- b. If the concern/complaint is not resolved at the initial meeting with the team coach and the person(s) bringing the matter to attention would like to discuss it further, the matter must be then brought to the attention of the Sport Director and Athletic Director for resolution. In addition to the person(s) raising concern, this meeting will include the coach, Athletic Director, Sport Director, and will be held at a mutually agreeable time and place.

Review, evaluate and select from submitted applications the **Coaches and Assistant-Coaches** for each season. Requirements and expectations for Catholic School coaches include:

- a. Begins each game with the Diocesan Prayer
- b. Has Act 34 and Act 151 clearances
- c. Has attended Protecting God's Children
- d. Has a signed Code of Pastoral Conduct
- e. Has attended the "Play Like a Champion" in-service
- f. Accepts his or her ministerial role as a Christian role model on and off the field of play.
- g. Understands the rules and instructs his/her players regarding same.
- h. Controls his/her emotions, is emotionally stable and responsible.
- i. Knows when and who to substitute.
- j. Speaks in a manner and tone appropriate for his or her position.
- k. Does not criticize or praise too much.
- l. Realizes players never purposely make mistakes and never ridicules.
- m. Concentrates on coaching and lets the officials call the game.
- n. Is fair and does not show favoritism.
- o. Sets realistic practice and game schedules.
- p. Never permits an ill or injured player to practice or play.
- q. Insists that a team practice with the same enthusiasm and skill as demonstrated during a scheduled game.
- r. Uses **ALL** players in practice and in games.
- s. Never deliberately humiliates an opponent by pushing up the score.

- t. Insists that players accept victory with modesty and defeat without alibi.
- u. Does not review a game immediately after the final whistle when emotions are high but saves detailed comments for the next practice.
- v. Realizes a team's reputation is built not only on its playing ability, but also on its sportsmanship, courtesy and manner.
- w. Be approved by the Pastor and Principal.
- x. Have the necessary knowledge of the sport in order to insure the students have a worthwhile experience.

Review and approve financial expenditures necessary to conduct the business of St. Gregory Athletics.

Provide oversight to *Cold Turkey Shootout Tournament* committee.

GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING A DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PROGRAM FACTORS FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

The number of practices and games, in addition to the time of the practices and games, are determined in consideration of the student athlete's age, physical development, and academic responsibilities.

The following are non-negotiable maximums for schools to use as they outline participation parameters for their athletic programs.

SPORTS GUIDELINES

Please follow Diocesan Guidelines in addition to:

All practices will end by 9:30pm on weeknights. The later practices slots will be used for upper grade level teams.

Tournament participation takes into consideration the distance traveled and whether or not tournaments are held within the regular season. Every effort should be made to keep the expectation of participation "family-friendly."

Participation:

It is expected that every student enrolled in the program who meets eligibility requirements be allowed to play a *reasonable amount* of time in every game. Pittsburgh Diocesan policies mirror St. Gregory School policy. Details for St. Gregory can be found on page 15.

As with any sport, safety should be of utmost concern for all participants. Most sports inherently carry some unavoidable risks. Proper information and knowledge can possibly reduce the severity and frequency of the injuries.

It is recommended that coaches become certified in first aid and CPR. All coaches should insure that proper safety measures are implemented at all times, to decrease the probability of injuries to the athletes.

Practices must be held in a location/area suitable to the sport with an appropriate surface (mats or grass) that's free of obstructions and excessive noise.

*Please refer to the **DIOCESAN CHEERLEADING DANCE RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR ALL CAMPS, COMPETITIONS, TOURNAMENTS, GAMES AND PEP RALLIES***

No practices or contests should be scheduled early on Sunday morning or during Mass times on Holy Days of Obligation, as families should be allowed the opportunity to attend Mass together.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL COACHES

COACHES: THE SELECTION PROCESS

The coach has the greatest responsibility as well as the greatest opportunity to guide and influence the student athlete. Coaches assume the role of teacher, mentor and minister to the athletes in their charge. A coach's attitude and spirituality are critical to modeling good Christian faith-based sportsmanship, both in word and deed. The careful selection of coaches is vital if the athletic program is to reflect the Mission and Philosophy of St. Gregory's interscholastic athletic program.

Criteria for the selection of coaches must include:

- The ability to model Catholic values
- The ability to articulate and model the school's Mission and Philosophy and goals of the program
- The ability to responsibly supervise and instruct the youth in his/her care
- An understanding of the basics of the sport to be coached
- The ability to develop the potential, confidence and skills of each athlete
- The ability to separate winning from the important goals and values of the program

After a careful screening and selection process, coaches are recommended by the Athletic Board and appointed by the pastor and/or the principal (see Appendix I). Head coaches select his/her assistant coach. Head coaches should be 21 years of age, and they all must submit all of the necessary documentation and training (**see Diocesan handbook**). Before coming into contact with any children, all volunteer coaches must sign the Annual Coach's Pledge and Review (see Appendix II). They also must follow the Diocesan requirements (see Appendix III).

COACHES CODE OF ETHICS

See Pittsburgh Diocesan Handbook. In addition, St. Gregory Athletic Association includes the following:

The Coaches Council of the National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) has established the following Code of Conduct to which coaches at all levels are to be held accountable:

- Have the knowledge and preparation to effectively lead your teams
- Be responsible to ensure that the health, well-being and development of your athletes take precedence over the win/loss record

- Accept that you serve as role models and there must be congruency between your actions and words
- Provide a physically and emotionally safe environment for practices and competition
- Exemplify honesty, integrity, fair play, and sportsmanship regardless of the impact that might have upon the outcome of the competition
- Maintain a professional demeanor in your relationship with athletes, officials, colleagues, administrators and the public and treat them with respect and dignity
- Be committed to the education of athletes and encourage academic achievement
- Follow current safe training and conditioning techniques
- Exhibit sound injury and risk management practices
- Demonstrate an understanding of growth and development stages of your athletes
- Place the athlete's needs and interests before your own
- Remember that competition should be a healthy and enjoyable experience for all

COACH'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Coaching is not just about winning games. In fact, winning is a very small component to the job. Successful coaches help athletes master new skills, enjoy competition with others, and help young athletes feel good about themselves. Successful coaches are not only well versed in the techniques and skills of their sport, they also understand how to effectively teach those skills through age appropriate exercises and drills. Most importantly however, successful coaches go far beyond teaching athletic techniques by teaching and modeling skills needed for successful living in our society.

Below is a list of major responsibilities and behaviors that all coaches **MUST** adhere to:

- Act in Accordance with Catholic Character
- Coaches are expected to model Christian sportsmanship knowing that the school is judged more by the coach's sportsmanship than by their record.
- The coach must instill and guide the team members with a sense of fair play and model winning and losing in a respectful, courteous and gracious Christian manner.
- Model Superior Sportsmanship, Humility, and Graciousness, both in victory and defeat
- Coaches should never instruct or encourage student athletes to violate either the spirit or the letter of the rules of the sport or of the league.
- It is **unacceptable** for coaches to "run up" the score on inferior opponents.
- Coaches are expected to substitute players when the opposing team is significantly behind.
- Coaches must show respect for game officials and opponents at all times; publicly shaking hands with the officials and the opposing coach before and after a game gives clear witness to this respect.
- All coaches must refrain from public protest that may lead to similar behavior from students, parents or other spectators.
- Properly Supervise Student-Athletes - In addition, coaches must be physically and mentally present when supervising athletes. Being preoccupied, completing unrelated tasks, using cell phones, texting, or engaging in conversation with others does not allow adequate supervision. Coaches must stay until every child is picked up by a parent/guardian.

The coach is responsible for student conduct and behavior during practices and games. Under no circumstances should coaches tolerate words that demean other players (name-calling, taunting, etc). Likewise, any action that is physically dangerous, for example deliberately trying to injure an opponent during a game, is absolutely prohibited. Coaches must strive to be fair and unbiased in

their relationships with student athletes and their parents. Coaches must also strive to faithfully and fairly adhere to the guidelines for “playing time” for each student athlete, giving **each** athlete an appropriate opportunity to participate. It is expected that coaches emphasize the development of self-confidence, self-discipline and sportsmanship, and that they make team participation a learning experience for all.

Possess Basic Knowledge in Skills, Tactics, and Strategies

It is to be expected that coaches are knowledgeable of the rules of the sport and techniques for teaching the fundamentals of the sport. They should use tactics and strategies that are appropriate for the age and skill levels of their athletes. Winning takes secondary importance to the athletic, social, and emotional development of all those involved. Coaches should teach the rules of the sport and develop each player’s skills within the framework of a team concept.

Possess Basic Knowledge in Training, Nutrition, and Injury Prevention

Proper physical conditioning of the student athletes must be emphasized. All practices should begin with dynamic stretching and warm-up exercises and end with cool down activities. Water must be made available to all participants, and coaches should allow athletes to take as many water breaks as needed. Coaches should never allow injured players to return to competition unless cleared by the coach, parent, referee, and Director (A.D., Principal, Pastor, or any Sport Director). All parties *must* be agreement.

Comply with Established Policies, Philosophies, and Procedures

Coaches should attend various information meetings to become familiar with these prior to assuming coaching responsibilities. In addition, all coaches are expected to publicly support St. Gregory School administration and Athletic Board.

Coaches must carry with them pertinent information on every athlete in their care in case of an emergency. The emergency card should list obvious problems such as asthma, heart problems and diabetes. The card should also specify allergies, including bee stings and foods, as well as list of emergency phone numbers for each athlete. A FIRST AID Kit should be at all games and practices. However, coaches should never administer medication. Coaches must document all injuries by filling out an accident report and/or other necessary paperwork with the school office.

Possess Basic Athletic Administration Skills

Coaches should keep a written documentation of accidents and injuries and notify the parents and the school administration when these occur. Coaches should keep objective and factual written documentation of problems concerning student athletes’ attitude and/or behavior.

These records are important when discipline matters might lead to the suspension and/or expulsion of a student from the program. It is important for coaches to communicate the schedule of practices and games to the Principal and parents (or any cancellations or alterations to the schedule) in a timely manner. **The Principal and Athletic Director will approve all practice and game schedules.** Coaches cannot assume that players will get an oral message home; communication, including emails, is highly encouraged.

Understand Appropriate Disciplinary Procedures

Coaches must discipline inappropriate student behavior or disrespect. However, coaches should never resort to physical or verbal abuse or profanity.

Coaches are prohibited from the following:

- To use inappropriate, abusive or vile language, or to engage student athletes in inappropriate conversations unrelated to the sport
- To berate and harass officials, opposing coaches, or personnel from other schools
- To undermine the authority of the School Administration, Athletic Director, and/or the Athletic Board
- To deny adequate playing time to students who are cooperative in effort and attendance
- To give preferential treatment to the most gifted athletes
- To submit rosters that are not signed by the pastor and/or principal (or athletic director)
- To play students who are not on their regular school roster or to roster students on two school teams in the same sport
- To forfeit games without following local procedures
- To join another league or an additional tournament, or practice outside of the school without the approval of the athletic board, athletic director or pastor and/or principal

PLAYING TIME

Playing time is a frequent source of misunderstanding and conflict among coaches, students and parents. St. Gregory School playing time policy mirrors the Diocesan policy.

IIV Basketball – Grades 3 & 4 - all players are expected to be awarded equal playing time. The focus at this level is on development, and every player at the 3rd and 4th Grade level must get an equal opportunity to play.

IV – Grades 5 & 6 –all players are expected to be awarded *near equal* playing time over the course of the season. The focus at this level is on development, and every player at the 5th and 6th Grade level must get a near equal opportunity to play.

Varsity – Grades 7 & 8 - playing time should be a reflection of ability, effort, attendance at practices, and commitment to the team. However, coaches at the 7th and 8th grade level should work to ensure that all players get *fair playing time* over the course of the season. Playing time for all is expected at the 7th and 8th Grade Level. For example, simply putting a player in the game for two minutes and calling that playing time is not acceptable. “Winning at all costs” or the exclusion of participation of eligible players is never tolerated. There will be consequences for coaches who repeatedly ignore this directive. Instances of non-compliance will be carefully documented with a written notice given to the offending coach. Missing practice without cause or excessive absences can result in reduced playing time. Playing time may also be reduced as a disciplinary action, most especially when a player loses self-control or engages in other conduct unbecoming a Christian student athlete. Generally, however, every eligible athlete plays (including tournaments).

DIVIDING TEAMS ACCORDING TO SKILL LEVEL

When schools have a large number of participating student-athletes in THE SAME PLAYING LEVEL, it may be necessary to create two teams for the sole purpose of ensuring a significant amount of playing time for all. If teams are formed by skill level, (an “A” team consisting of more game ready players and a “B” team consisting of players who need additional skill development) it is still

expected that students would see a fair amount of playing time on either of the teams for which they qualified. Lastly, these teams should never be referred to as “A” Teams and “B” Teams, but rather given some other identifiable name, such as a color, to differentiate the two.

Talented athletes should never be asked to play up with older players unless he/she is needed to play with the older team due to a lack of participating athletes at that level.

MONITORING COACHING PERFORMANCE

If a coach is unable to perform his/her duties according to the spirit and guidelines of St. Gregory School athletic program, the Athletic Board will determine the necessary steps for discharge. The specific procedures for disciplining and discharging a coach will be under the discretion of the Principal and Pastor.

Coaches who have been negligent or deficient in carrying out their responsibilities should not be retained. Ordinarily, coaches who have been removed from their position should not be involved in any other aspects of the athletic program.

RESPONSIBILITIES & EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES AND THEIR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Student athletes and their parents are responsible for:

- **Volunteering at games throughout the season. Failure to do so could negatively affect their child’s playing time.**
- Submitting all documentation within an established timeline
- Meeting basic academic requirements
- Turning in all necessary permission forms
- Signing an agreement of support of the guidelines and policies of the athletic program
- Undergoing a physical examination from a physician
- Paying all required fees

Below is a list of major responsibilities and behaviors that all student-athletes MUST adhere to.

- Return all uniforms and/or borrowed equipment by the specified dates for each sport.
- The athlete is responsible for the uniform issued. If it is lost, stolen or damaged, an appropriate assessment can be made to replace the uniform. At the end of the season, uniforms should be returned in clean, reusable condition in a bag with the athlete’s name.
- Maintain a solid academic and behavioral record in and out of season.
- Participating in an interscholastic athletic program is a privilege, not a right. Athletes must be held to personal, academic and behavior standards.

Students who choose to participate in the school’s athletic program are representing St. Gregory School and Parish at all times. They must act in a manner that reflects favorably upon the school and on themselves. This expectation is not limited to the sports arena, but should also be evident at school, in the community, and at other schools before, during, and after the games.

- Attend school the day of a game and/or practice.

- An athlete who was absent from school due to illness is not allowed to attend practice or play in a game on that given day. Absence from school on a Friday should not affect Saturday and Sunday participation if the athlete has recovered sufficiently to play.
- Attend and be on time for regularly scheduled practices.
- Athletes are expected to be present and on time for all practices and games. Not attending practices affects the entire team and detracts from the sense of teamwork that the coaches are striving to achieve.
- Athletes should arrive to practice and be picked up from practice a reasonable time before and after the practice time.
- Athletes should never be left unattended before or after practice without an adult or coach present.
- It is required that all athletes be walked in to the lobby and or practice location by an adult.
- It is required that all athletes be picked up in the lobby or practice location by an adult.
- Under no circumstances should a participating athlete be in the parking lot unattended.

Display Respect for Teammates, Opponents, Coaches, & Officials

Student-athletes must be respectful at all times towards their teammates, opponents, coaches, and officials. All student-athletes must also respect the spectators and fans. Athletes are expected to show good sportsmanship, play by the rules, and gracefully handle winning and losing. Losing self-control, using inappropriate gestures, verbalizing foul or abusive language, arguing a referee's call or a coach's decision, or displaying other signs of disrespect are reasons for disciplinary action.

Parental support is valued and encouraged. Parents/guardians and spectators must conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and act as positive role models for all participants.

It is important for parents/guardians to understand that participation in an interscholastic athletic program is a significant commitment. This commitment includes adhering to all St. Gregory School policies.

Act in Accordance with Catholic Values

Parents/guardians are expected to support and encourage their child's efforts. All comments from the stands should be supportive of the team's efforts. No negative comments and criticisms should ever be directed towards student-athletes. In addition, public criticisms directed towards the officials, coaches, the athletic director, and the school administration are absolutely unacceptable. In addition, it is expected that parents/guardians act as role models for their children by putting wins and losses in their proper perspective.

Let the Coaches Coach and the Referees Ref

Parents/guardians should make no attempt to instruct players or the team from the stands. In addition, questioning, criticizing, or berating the coach and/or the referees does not set a good example for the young athletes involved in the contest. It is up to the Athletic Director and/or the School Administration to help parents/guardians realize that they will be asked to leave a game if they are not able to maintain a standard of acceptable behavior.

Engage in Respectful Communication

Parents/guardians should communicate directly with the coach, athletic director, and/or the athletic board matters of concern following the policy procedures. They must do so at appropriate times, and not immediately before, during, or after a game. While it is a given that

parents/guardians act as advocates for their own child, it is important for parents/guardians to understand that coaches, athletic directors, and school administrators make decisions that benefit the group, not the individual. Sometimes decisions that benefit the group conflict with individual needs and desires, but such are the reality of being a member of a team. Under no circumstances should parents/guardians be verbally abusive towards coaches, athletic directors, and school administrators. Parents/guardians must be respectful with their tones of voice, as well as thoughtful with the words they choose to use. Additionally, volunteering in the concession/admissions areas is expected.

PROBATION SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION FROM THE ATHLETIC PROGRAM

Consequences of disrespectful behavior can include a reduction in playing time or even suspension or expulsion from the team. The school Principal will govern all such incidents.

St. Gregory's Coaches First Aid and Safety Guidelines and Procedures

St. Gregory School is dedicated to providing the safest environment for its student athletes and coaches. It is the coach's responsibility to make sure that each player is provided with a safe athletic environment and experience. The only way to do this is through proper knowledge and planning. By understanding and following the safety tips below coaches will be able to:

- Provide their athletes with a safe environment for practices and games.
- Provide first aid to their players for minor injuries.
- Protect themselves from any liability issues related to player injuries.
 1. All players must have a preseason physical examination. This will help determine if the athlete is in the proper physical health needed for cross country, basketball or cheerleading.
 2. All parents must sign an informed consent form. This states that the parents are giving their child permission to participate in a school sport and also be treated in case of an injury. This form helps protect the coach, player, and parents.
 3. Coaches should stress to the players and their parents the importance of proper nutrition. They should provide guidelines for a healthy eating plan as well as proper water consumption. Examples are attached.
 4. Coaches should properly condition their players to help prepare their bodies for their sport. This would include proper stretching, running, and other aerobic activities. Weight training can also be included for higher levels of competition.

5. Coaches should check the condition of the equipment, training aids, and course or court before practices and games begin. This should be done before any of the players step on the court or course. Any damages or safety issues to the equipment, court or course should be addressed immediately.
6. Coaches should always have their players match up against teammates that are similar in size and physical maturity. One of the most common ways for smaller players to get hurt is by being matched with teammates that are too big and strong for them.
7. Coaches should always be in a position to properly supervise their players during practices and games. Obviously, coaches should never leave their players unattended on the basketball court or on a running course.
8. Coaches should keep accurate record of all their practice plans and game schedules. They should document any injuries that may have occurred during those times. This will help protect them from any liability issues. A sample injury log is attached.
9. Coaches should provide their players with proper warm-up activities at the beginning of practices and games. These activities usually include running or jogging followed by stretching. This will help loosen the players' muscles and prepare their bodies for action.
10. Coaches should provide their players with the proper cool-down activities at the end of practices and games. These activities usually include a 5-10 minute jog or walk around the court. This will settle the players' heart rate and help prevent any stiff or sore muscles.
11. Coaches should provide their players with an adequate amount of water before, during and after practices and games. Proper hydration is an important key to keeping the players' muscles loose and allowing them to perform at their highest level. Coaches should include 1-2 water breaks in their practice plans.
12. Coaches should properly plan their practices to ensure that the players are participating in activities that are appropriate for their age and level of competition.
13. Coaches should constantly monitor and evaluate their players during practices and games. They should watch for physical signs that might indicate a player is injured.
14. Coaches should have the proper training and certifications in first aid and CPR. This will prepare them to deal with minor injuries and teach them the proper procedures for dealing with major injuries.
15. Coaches should make sure they have proper liability insurance to protect themselves in any player injury situations.
16. Specific Safety Procedures

Calling 911

When experiencing one of the following conditions, call 911 immediately:

- Anaphylaxis
- Bloody diarrhea with weakness
- Chest pain (see heart attack)
- Coma (unresponsive victim)
- Confusion
- Dizziness
- Drug overdose

Knowing and Performing CPR

There is no substitute for learning cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), but emergencies don't wait for training. These instructions are for **conventional adult CPR**. If you've never been trained in CPR and the victim collapsed in front of you, use hands-only CPR.

For kids, use the following guidelines:

- Infant CPR for kids under 1 year.
- Child CPR for kids 1-8 years old.

These are the steps to perform adult CPR:

Difficulty: Easy

Time Required: CPR should start as soon as possible

Here's How:

1. **Attempt to wake victim.** If the victim is not breathing (or is just gasping for breath), call 911 immediately and go to step 2. If someone else is there to help, one of you call 911 while the other moves on to step 2.
2. If the victim is breathing, see the Tips section at the bottom of this page for what to do.
3. **Begin chest compressions.** If the victim is not breathing, place the heel of your hand in the middle of his chest. Put your other hand on top of the first with your fingers interlaced. Compress the chest at least 2 inches (4-5 cm). Allow the chest to completely recoil before the next compression. Compress the chest at a rate of at least 100 pushes per minute. Perform 30 compressions at this rate (should take you about 18 seconds).
4. If you are not trained in CPR, continue to do chest compressions until help arrives or the victim wakes up.
5. It's normal to feel pops and snaps when you first begin chest compressions - DON'T STOP! You're not going to make the victim worse.
 - a. **Begin rescue breathing.** If you have been trained in CPR, after 30 compressions, open the victim's airway using the head-tilt, chin-lift method. Pinch the victim's nose and make a seal over the victim's mouth with yours. Use a CPR mask if available. Give the victim a breath big enough to make the chest rise. Let the chest fall, and then repeat the rescue breath once more. If the chest doesn't rise on the first breath, reposition the head and try again. Whether it works on the second try or not, go to step 4.

6. If you don't feel comfortable with this step, just continue to do chest compressions at a rate of at least 100/minute.
 - a. **Repeat chest compressions.** Do 30 more chest compressions just like you did the first time.
 - b. **Repeat rescue breaths.** Give 2 more breaths just like you did in step 3 (unless you're skipping the rescue breaths).
 - c. **Keep going.** Repeat steps 4 and 5 for about two minutes (about 5 cycles of 30 compressions and 2 rescue breaths).
7. If you have access to an automated external defibrillator (AED), continue to do CPR until you can attach it to the victim and turn it on. If you saw the victim collapse, put the AED on right away. If not, attach it after approximately one minute of CPR (chest compressions and rescue breaths).
8. After 2 minutes of chest compressions and rescue breaths, stop compressions and recheck victim for breathing. If the victim is still not breathing, continue CPR starting with chest compressions.
9. Repeat the process, checking for breathing every 2 minutes (5 cycles or so), until help arrives. If the victim wakes up, you can stop CPR.

Tips:

1. Chest compressions are extremely important. If you are not comfortable giving rescue breaths, still perform chest compressions! It's called Hands Only CPR.
2. Watch the Hands Only CPR Video.
3. If the victim is breathing, briskly rub your knuckles against the victim's sternum. If the victim does not wake, call 911.
4. If the victim wakes up, but is confused or not able to speak, call 911.
5. This is not a substitute for actual CPR training. Find a CPR class and get proper training.
6. Not every CPR class is the same. There are CPR classes for healthcare professionals as well as CPR classes for the layperson. Before you take a CPR class, make sure the class is right for you.
5. For more information on these steps go to the Emergency Cardiac Care (ECC) Guidelines from the American Heart Association.

Skull Fracture or Head Injuries

Head injuries typically come from blunt or penetrating trauma the head. The skull does not have to be fractured, but can be. If the skull is soft when touched, or missing, the victim has an open or depressed skull fracture. If skull fracture is suspected, call 911 immediately.

Other signs of a skull fracture include blood or clear fluid draining from the ears or nose, and bruising around both eyes or behind the ears.

Closed Head Injury

A closed head injury is an injury to the brain inside an intact skull. Injury to the brain causes swelling, which quickly increases the pressure within the skull (intracranial pressure). The increased pressure causes more damage to the brain, which causes more swelling, and so on. Common names for closed head injuries include:

- concussion
- subdural hematoma
- epidural hematoma
- intracerebral hemorrhage
- increased intracranial pressure

Some types of closed head injury stop the cycle automatically (concussion), while others will continue to get worse until the victim dies (epidural hematoma). The only way to tell the difference is through a CT scan, which looks at the brain and the skull using x-rays.

Signs and Symptoms of a Closed Head Injury

A victim struck with a blunt object should be watched for signs and symptoms of a closed head injury. If a victim of blunt head trauma has any of the following, call 911 immediately:

- loss of consciousness at the time of the injury (getting knocked out)
- short-term memory loss (victim keeps repeating questions)
- unable to wake the victim from sleeping
- confusion
- vomiting
- dizziness
- very high blood pressure
- very slow pulse

Head Injury First Aid

In all cases of injury to the head and neck, it's vital not to move the victim's neck. Support his or her head in the position you found it. Bones of the spine (vertebra) can be injured from movement of the head during trauma. Broken or displaced spinal bones can cut or put pressure on the nerves of the spinal cord, causing temporary or permanent paralysis and loss of feeling.

Vomiting can lead to problems with the victim's airway. If the victim begins vomiting and is unconscious, place the victim in the recovery position to let the emesis (vomit) drain from the victim's mouth.

It is a myth that closed head injury victims should be kept awake. If a victim of trauma to the head does not have any of the signs or symptoms of closed head injury or skull fracture, there is no reason to keep him or her awake. Once asleep, wake the victim about 30 minutes after falling asleep to make sure he or she can be aroused. If you are unable to wake a victim of blunt head trauma 30 minutes after falling asleep, call 911 immediately.

If a baby tooth gets knocked out, no harm done -- it was coming out eventually. Permanent (adult) teeth, on the other hand, are supposed to stick around for a while. If you or your child has a permanent tooth knocked out of its socket, here are the steps for saving it, courtesy of the American Dental Association.

Bloody Nose

Bloody noses (epistaxis) are uncomfortable and scary-looking, but usually not dangerous. Kids get nosebleeds more often than adults, typically either from irritating the nasal membrane (picking their noses) or from trauma (like a soccer ball in the face). When adults get nosebleeds, it could be an indicator of a more severe medical problem. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have gotten bloody noses, especially without physical trauma.

For a demonstration on managing bloody noses, watch *Stopping a Nosebleed*, a video from About.com First Aid.

Here's How:

1. **Stay Safe!** Follow universal precautions and wear personal protective equipment if you have it. The victim's bloody nose may be from trauma. Make sure you are not going to be hurt while helping the victim.
2. *Lean forward, not back.* Don't try to protect a favorite shirt by leaning back. The blood needs to go somewhere and will most likely go down the throat. If the victim leans back, blood could get in the windpipe causing a blocked airway or go into the stomach. Blood may irritate the stomach lining and cause the victim to vomit.
3. *Pinch the victim's nose just below the bony bridge.* Your fingers should be on the soft tissue as well as the bone. If there is still blood flowing, adjust your grip. There should not be visible bleeding while you are holding the nose. Blood vessels that supply the nasal membrane can be pinched against the bony bridge (the hard part) to slow blood flow and create a clot. Hold the nose for at least 5 minutes. *Do not let go to check bleeding until the 5 minutes is up.*
4. After 5 minutes, release the pressure to see if the bleeding has stopped. If not, repeat Step 3 for 10 minutes this time. Remember: don't let go to check bleeding until the 10 minutes is up. Repeat for another 10 minutes if necessary.
5. If a nosebleed doesn't stop after the second or third try, it's time to see a doctor. If at any time, the victim feels lightheaded, dizzy, or weak, call 911. If left uncontrolled, bloody noses can lead to shock.

Tips:

1. Placing ice or a chemical cold pack over the bridge of the nose can constrict the blood vessels and help stop bleeding. Use this in addition to pressure.
2. After the bleeding is controlled, do not let the victim blow his or her nose. Blowing the nose will release the clots and encourage bleeding to start again.
3. Most bloody noses are the result of dry nasal membranes or trauma. However, some nosebleeds occur spontaneously and may indicate more serious medical problems. Contact a physician if the victim is suffering from frequent or hard-to-control bloody noses.
4. Bloody noses after trauma to the head may indicate a brain injury - especially if the bleeding occurs without obvious facial injury. If a victim of significant trauma - such as a vehicle accident or fall - is bleeding from the nose, call 911 immediately.

Eye Injury

Black eyes are caused by bruising of the skin and fat around the eye bones (orbits). Most of the time, black eyes are minor injuries that, like any bruise, will fade with time and disappear. Black eyes can also be a sign of a more significant injury - especially if both eyes are black following an injury to the head.

Here's How:

1. Safety First! Make sure the environment is safe for both rescuer and victim before providing any first aid. Always practice universal precautions and use personal protective equipment whenever you may come in contact with blood or body fluids. The worst thing a rescuer can do is become another victim. Use common sense and stay away from potential hazards.
2. Call 911 immediately if the victim has any of the following:
 - bleeding from the eyeball (**DO NOT** apply pressure)
 - loss of consciousness
 - two black eyes (especially if the injury was to a part of the head other than the face)
 - confusion
 - loss of vision or blurred vision
 - vertigo (dizziness)
3. During the first 24-48 hours, place an icepack lightly on the black eye for about 20 minutes of each waking hour. Do not leave ice on the eye for more than 20 minutes at a time.
4. Watch the eye for swelling or infection. If the victim's vision is obstructed from swelling, or there is drainage or bleeding from the eye, call a doctor.

Tips:

1. Never put raw meat on a black eye. There is a first aid myth that putting steak on a black eye will help it heal faster. It will not. In fact, putting raw meat on a black eye is more likely to cause an infection (see E coli).
2. Never put pressure on the eyeball. Eyes are delicate and pressure can lead to serious permanent injury.
3. Ice works to decrease swelling, but there's not really anything that can be done for the discoloration. It will eventually fade.

Sprains or extremity injuries

The symptoms of a sprain are almost exactly the same as that of a broken bone. When in doubt, sprains should be treated the same as broken bones. The most common symptoms are:

- pain
- swelling
- bruising
- inability to move
- inability to bear weight on the joint

It is not necessary to have all of the symptoms of a sprain in order for the joint to be injured.

1. **Stay Safe.** If you are not the victim, practice universal precautions and wear personal protective equipment if available.

2. Do not call 911 for a sprain. NIAMS suggests visiting a doctor for a sprained joint if:
- it has severe pain
 - victim unable to put *any* weight on it
 - it looks different than uninjured joint (swelling doesn't count)
 - victim can't move it
 - victim can't walk more than four steps on it
 - there is numbness in any part of it
 - redness or red streaks spread out from the injury
 - it has been sprained several times before
 - there is pain, swelling, or redness over a bony part of your foot

2. Use the RICE method to treat the sprain.

Rest the sprained joint by not placing weight on it. Use a cane or crutch on the uninjured side to lean away from the injury.

Ice the sprain with an ice pack.

Regarding any type of injury – All parties: Student-athlete, Parent, Coach, Referee, and Director (A.D., Principal, Pastor, or any Sport Director) must agree that a child *can* return to the game after an injury. If even one of these people says “No”, the child doesn’t return. This is undisputable!

Please follow Pittsburgh Diocesan Guidelines in addition to this Handbook.

REFERENCES

The purpose of this manual is to identify and highlight best practices for athletic administration and youth league coaching. The intent was not to create something new and unique, but rather to compile information from various credible sources into one document that can be readily accessed by school administrators, athletic directors, coaches, student athletes, and parents.

Archdiocese Chicago Elementary School. *Handbook for Athletics*. Archdiocese Chicago Elementary School. *Handbook*. Archdiocese of Chicago. Web. Mar.-Apr. 2012.
<http://ocs.archchicago.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=2kpg8nS5UY8%3D&tabid=10696>