



St. Joseph Catholic School

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

2025-2026

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Dear Parents, Students, and Coaches,

"[I] consider sports as an instrument of education when it fosters high human and spiritual ideals; when it forms youth in an integral way in values such as loyalty, perseverance, friendship, solidarity and peace.

Surmounting differences of cultures and ideologies, sports offers an ideal occasion for dialogue and understanding among peoples, for building the desired civilization of love. To put into practice these values, based on the dignity of the human person, in face of possible interests that might darken the nobility of sports itself."

- Pope John Paul II (Sept. 16, 2002)

Welcome to St. Joseph Catholic School! In choosing to attend St. Joseph School you have elected a Christ-centered Catholic education and academic excellence. Many wonderful opportunities await you!

This handbook outlines the philosophy and reflects the policies of the St. Joseph School Athletic Program. Please read this document carefully, sign the attached agreement, and return it to school before attending the first practice date. The agreement states that you intend to abide by the policies of the St. Joseph School Athletic Program for the current school year.

St. Joseph Athletics extends the work of St. Joseph School by offering another environment in which high human and spiritual ideals can be fostered to help children grow towards a deeper understanding of themselves and their roles in God's great world. Thank you for doing your part to help positively affect and develop the lives of all children by building a peaceful environment within our school, our parish, and in our larger community.



Fran Thompson
Principal

St. Joseph Catholic School Athletics

Philosophy of St. Joseph Catholic School:

As a Catholic school, St. Joseph upholds Christian values and principles. Though our athletic teams strive to win in the sense of having the best score, we recognize the real value of Catholic school athletics is realized only if it fosters the development of the human person—both in spirit and in body—by cultivating Christian character, strengthening personal integrity and responsibility, and promoting the pursuit of excellence in all endeavors.

Mission of St. Joseph School Athletics:

The St. Joseph School Athletic Program dedicates itself to the pursuit of excellence in athletics within the framework of a Catholic community and in accordance with its primary role as an educator and spiritual guide. The athletics program is committed to providing opportunities for each individual student-athlete to reach his/her highest potential while developing the qualities and spirit of a Catholic Christian.

Athletic Director:

St. Joseph has an athletic director on staff that is administratively responsible for all of the teams, coaches and players. This individual represents St. Joseph Catholic School to the Dallas Parochial League and to the Athletic Director of the Dallas Parochial League. The athletic director is the school's representative for all matters that concern athletics and all questions and concerns of coaches and parents need to be addressed to this individual. In the case of a conflict, the principal and athletic director will cooperate to settle a dispute.

Conference Affiliation:

St. Joseph School participates in the Dallas Parochial League, a league comprised of diocesan Catholic schools. St. Joseph athletes play students from diverse backgrounds and skill levels. Parents who wish to know more about the DPL may go to the website at:
www.dallasparochialleague.com.

After School Custody Policy:

The majority of our games and practices are held after school hours. Below is the SJCS policy pertaining to the "Chain of Custody" for our athletes designed to ensure the safety of our students.

The "chain of custody" policy remains in effect for all after school programs and DPL events. Once a child is dropped off at the school in the morning the school is responsible for the well-being of the student. At dismissal the school is responsible to dismiss all students to either their designated pick up person, to an after-school program, or to our ELP. Each of these is represented by either the parent or a SAFE Environment approved individual, which in our

case is usually the coach. If the after-school program starts later in the afternoon and not immediately after school the student must follow the above “chain of command” procedure and should have NO gaps in that sequence. This is also the case for all DPL events.

Here are a couple of examples:

- 1) Practice is at 3:30 – immediately after school, athletes are escorted to the gym area where they meet the “designated” person at the entrance to the gym. Once the “designated” person accounts for all on the team the athlete would leave their books in the gym and be dismissed to the locker room to change.
- 2) Practice is at 5:00 or later – athletes have three options:
 - a. Are picked up from the approved area by their parent or designated person (adult)
 - b. Be admitted to EDP immediately after last bell and remains until practice starts.
 - c. Report to a teacher for after school reasons and remains with that teacher up until the time of practice. If that time with the teacher ends prior to practice that student is either signed into EDP or handed over to the designated person. No students, at any time, are permitted to be on their own, either within the “secured” areas of the school or any location on church property, including the forum.
- 3) When practice is over, the athlete is to wait in the gym until their ride home arrives at the gym or the coach escorts them out to their car. Pick up is on the Jupiter side of the building. It is not acceptable for the athlete to leave the secured area of the school and wait outside for their transportation home without a coach. If the pickup after practice is more than 12 minutes late and prior arrangements have not been made with the coach the athlete will be signed into our EDP program.

During practice times the only people allowed in the gym are the athletes, their parents, the coaches and the coach’s children. Siblings of the athletes that do not have a parent present are not permitted in the gym. Our EDP program is available for them.

- 4) Any student dropped off for a DPL game must remain in the events location, such as the gym, after the game is over until their designated ride picks them up. They are not permitted to “wait” outside without adult supervision being present with them.

This process is designed to protect the welfare of our students. Please keep in mind that our coaches do a fabulous job but they are also volunteers that are responsible for our athletes!!

Registration Information

Nondiscriminatory Policy

St. Joseph School Athletics admits any students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its participatory policies, admissions policies, or athletic programs.

Procedure for Registration

A student can become a full, participating member of a St. Joseph athletic team once the following requirements are met:

1. Student and parent/guardian have completed and returned St. Joseph Athletic Permission Form (see Appendix A)
2. 5th Grade Student Athletes and New Student Athletes who start playing sports at St. Joseph after 5th grade will be required to attend with their parent/guardian the school's DPL Informational Preseason Orientation Meeting.
3. Student and parent/guardian have read the St. Joseph Athletic Handbook and signed the Athletic Contract (see Appendix B)
4. A current physical report is on file at the school. This must be updated yearly.
5. Fees: All sports offered at St. Joseph School have different costs required for operation. Fees will be disclosed prior to the start of the season and paid to the school through the Athletic Director. Fees cover the cost to enter teams in the league and for supplies and uniforms. Fees are not to be paid to coaches.

Athletic Permission Form

St. Joseph students wishing to participate in a sport must fill out a St. Joseph School Athletic Permission Form. Permission forms must be completed and returned on or before the deadline set before the first practice date.

DPL Informational Preseason Orientation Meeting

Prior to beginning each season, the Athletic Director will hold an *Informational* meeting for all potential student-athletes and their parents. During this meeting the Athletic Handbook will be distributed and reviewed. The coaches will also facilitate a sport-specific discussion group during this meeting to introduce themselves and share their expectations specific to their sport. *Parents should contact the Athletic Director prior to the meeting should they not be able to attend.*

Fees

All sports offered at St. Joseph Catholic School have different costs required for operation. Fees are used to pay to the DPL for each team registered as well as uniform, equipment and maintenance costs.

The Athletic Department offsets some of the operating costs by generating revenue from concession sales (Jag Shack). Having the Jag Shack open is also a DPL requirement. The goal is to staff the Jag Shack with the parents. The expectation is one shift per season. If you choose not to sign up for a one-hour shift during the season there will be an additional \$20 charge assessed.

Financial constraints should not inhibit any student from participating in Athletics. For financial assistance for Athletics, please contact the Athletic Director or Principal.

COVID and OTHER HEALTH GUIDELINES

Bishop Burns has asked us to provide updated protocol guidance in order to ensure that all of our schools are taking a uniform approach to safety. While these protocols will be in place until further notice, it is our intention to return control to the local sites as soon as it is safe to do so. This will largely be determined by the same factors that we used to make that decision last year: local case counts, vaccination rates, hospital capacity, and our own internal data regarding school cases. In short, masks will be required for all people inside school buildings regardless of vaccination status. Local guidance will still apply for sports, outdoor activities and volunteer activities.

All players are required to follow the established protocol. For DPL games, this will be determined by DPL. The protocol for practices will be determined by the Athletic Director. Failure to follow protocol will result in athlete being ineligible to play or practice. These guidelines will be fluid in nature with updates and modifications as determined to be necessary.

General Information

Levels of Competition

Development of the skills fundamental to each sport receives primary emphasis on each athletic team offered at St. Joseph. Each team experience, however, may be slightly different depending on the level at which the team is competing.

LEVEL	Varsity 7 th & 8 th Grade Teams at this level strive to prepare students for high school athletics	Junior Varsity 5 th & 6 th Grade and V3 Teams at this level serve as transitions from the developmental level to varsity level teams.
COMMITMENT REQUIRED	<i>High</i> Students and families must commit to 3-5 events a week—practice, games, scrimmages, etc. *attendance at Saturday practices and practices during holiday breaks may be requested.	<i>Moderate</i> Students and families must commit to 3-5 events a week—practice, games, scrimmages, etc. *attendance at Saturday practices and practices during holiday breaks may be requested.
TRYOUTS	<i>Varies</i>	<i>None</i>
COMPETITION	Officiated games against other DPL schools as well as occasional non-conference games. Season ends with a conference playoffs.	Officiated games against other DPL schools as well as occasional non-conference games.
PLAYING TIME	At discretion of teams' coach(es) with an emphasis on developing each athlete.	All athletes participate with an emphasis on developing each athlete.
SKILLS EMPHASIZED	-Advancing game strategies -Leadership skills on and off the field/court -Individual fundamentals reinforced and extended	-Importance of team cohesion -Individual fundamentals introduced and reinforced -Formal game strategies introduced

Athletic Teams at St. Joseph

St. Joseph School offers the following sports as recognized by the Dallas Parochial League [DPL] to students in grades 5 - 8 (unless otherwise noted):

SEASON	GRADES	GIRLS	BOYS
Fall	5,6,7,8 5,6,7,8 5,6,7,8	Volleyball Flag Football Cross-Country Swimming Tennis Cheer	Tackle Football Flag Football Volleyball Cross-Country Swimming Tennis Cheer
Winter	5,6,7,8 5,6,7,8	Basketball	Basketball
Spring	5,6,7,8 5,6 7,8 5,6,7,8 5,6,7,8	Softball Futsal Soccer Track & Field Golf	Baseball Futsal Soccer Track & Field Golf

Tryouts

On the occasion that tryouts are necessary announcements of tryout dates will occur over the loud speaker and prior to tryout dates. Tryout flyers will be posted in school on the athletic bulletin board, sent home in Friday Folders, and appear in the St. Joseph Catholic School News: E-mail. Students in grades 7 & 8 may be required to try out for any St. Joseph sports team if the Athletic Director feels there is a need. There is an expectation that all students will be able to be members of a team, but when cuts are necessary, students will be treated fairly and with compassion. Coaches will provide individualized feedback to players rather than simply posting a list of team members.

In some instances, there may be more players than one team can effectively operate resulting in the need to have two teams. The following are the guidelines in completing this:

- 1) If both teams are to play in the same division then the players are divided up creating 2 equally balanced teams.
- 2) If one team is playing in a high division than the other there would be tryouts to ensure proper placement of the players.

The final determination will be the responsibility of the Athletic Director.

Transfer Students/Injured Students

Transfer students or students injured at the beginning of a season will be put on a team if:

1. There is one more than half of the games left in that sport's season.
2. There were not players who tried out for that team and were cut.

Coaching Expectations and Requirements

Coaches are first and foremost educators, and must work in coordination with the parents who are the primary educators of children. At all times, coaches must be examples of Christ the Teacher who serve as role models for student-athletes to emulate. They must be messengers of the school mission and ensure that athletic programs embody the Catholic characteristics prevalent at St. Joseph School.

Coaches also have two certification courses that they need to complete. Each year a coach must complete the requirements and maintain an active Safe Environment status. Each coach must also complete the "Play Like a Champion" course. This is a one-time course that remains valid for any sport a coach chooses to participate in.

The Play Like A Champion Today™ Sports as Ministry (PLC) initiative supports Catholic leagues and dioceses in promoting: athletics as ministry to youth and families, building teams as Christian communities, character development, spiritual growth, intrinsic motivation and responsible decision-making

Attendance at a PLC workshop is required just once during your time as a volunteer coach in the DPL. However, any coach who is suspended for unsportsmanlike behavior will be required to attend another PLC workshop as soon as possible after the suspension, before you would be eligible to coach another sport. (Coaches required to attend a second workshop will be assessed a \$15 fee, to be paid by the coach, not the school.)

Goal Setting

When working with St. Joseph student-athletes, a successful coach will work towards goals in the following three dimensions: team, personal, and school.

St. Joseph coaches build a **team** by:

- Creating a positive and memorable experience that will be cherished by the student-athlete.
- Teaching the specific and unique skills of this sport to the very best of his/her abilities.

- Teaching the skills of healthy competition that will prepare athletes and the team to succeed while appreciating the times of winning and losing.

St. Joseph coaches grow as **individuals** by:

- Modeling character, sportsmanship, self-discipline, and a lived faith.
- Maintaining perspective in and throughout all athletic endeavors, realizing teachable moments exist in all experiences.
- Fostering positive relationships with the school community.

St. Joseph coaches contribute to the **school community** by:

- Infusing the school mission in all athletic activities.
- Promoting academic excellence as an essential component in the development of student-athletes as leaders and role models.
- Committing to effective communication with administrators, parents, and athletes.
- Creating a culture of school unity and spirit as exemplified through sportsmanship, positive fan participation, and respect for all.

Language

Language should be appropriate and constructive at all times. Coaches are expected to not only monitor their own language, but they should also set and enforce standards of appropriate language for their athletes.

Treatment of Opponents

Although opponents are not a part of our school community, they are members of the larger body of Christ and should be treated as such. Coaches should model such respect for their athletes and should instruct players on how to welcome their opponents and all visitors in a way that conveys a sense of hospitality and community.

Coaching Duties

In addition to serving as witnesses and models of faith, St. Joseph coaches are expected to fulfill the following duties:

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| ➤ Plan out practices and games | ➤ Account for equipment |
| ➤ Supervise athletes at all times until they are picked up from practices/games | ➤ Communicate practice and game schedule to athletes and parents in a timely manner. |
| ➤ Condition athletes properly | ➤ Supervise assistant coaches |
| ➤ Assess athletes' readiness for practice & competition | ➤ Secure parent volunteers to work the Jag Shack as necessary for each sport. |
| ➤ Maintain safe playing conditions | |

Please Note: Coaches are not *responsible* for collecting fees.

Communication with Athletes and Parents

St. Joseph coaches should establish clear procedures and guidelines for communication with athletes and parents that align with the philosophy and mission of St. Joseph School. E-mail should be used only to communicate basic information, such as time and location of games and practices. Discussions of concerns should always be done in person. If a face-to-face meeting is not possible, a phone call is acceptable.

Awards and Recognition

The St. Joseph Athletics Program hosts an annual Sports Banquet during the Spring Season. Coaches are expected to attend the evening to celebrate, publicly introduce their players and summarize their season.

Student Expectations and Requirements

Students and parents should recognize that participation in the athletic program is not a right of all students, but rather a privilege to those selected individuals who possess the ability, attitude, disposition, cooperative spirit, and desire to represent the St. Joseph community in a favorable way. By joining the school's athletic program, a student becomes a representative of his/her team and of St. Joseph School.

Academic Eligibility

St. Joseph Catholic School is first and foremost an educational institution founded to provide excellence in academic and spiritual development for its students. Educational excellence requires a resolve by all members of the school community—students, parents and teachers—that students must complete their primary task of education at an acceptable level before diverting time and energy to other activities. All members of the school community are expected to support the school's eligibility rules for the benefit of all students.

Fifth through eighth grade students that participate in extracurricular activities are subject to the eligibility rules set forth below:

- Students must maintain a 76% or "C" average in all Core subject areas with no more than 1 "D" and no "F's"
- Students must maintain an "C" or higher in conduct in all subjects with no "D's" and/or "F's"

- Eligibility is based upon Progress Reports and Report Cards

Students not meeting eligibility criteria at progress report or report card time will become ineligible to participate in practice and games for a two week period. The student's grades will be reassessed at the end of the two week period and if grades meet the above criteria the student will be released to participate. If grades do not meet the criteria at the two week grade check the student will remain ineligible to participate until the next reporting period (progress report or report card).

Parents will receive notification with dates of ineligibility from the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director will notify individual coaches.

Any student who violates the condition of eligibility faces disciplinary action.

Any coach who knowingly allows a student to violate conditions of eligibility may be asked to resign from his/her position.

Student-Athlete Expectations

A student-athlete's behavior is governed by the same rules, regulations, and procedures that apply to all students as set forth in the St. Joseph Family Handbook. Each student-athlete is expected to demonstrate and encourage in others behaviors that reflect good sportsmanship. If behavior infractions occur, student-athletes may face both a school and an athletic consequence.

Attendance

All student-athletes must be marked as present in school on the day of practice or a game in order to participate. Please see the *Family Handbook* for what constitutes an absence.

All student-athletes must recognize the time commitment made to a team. One is expected to attend all practices and games. If one cannot attend a practice or game, please make sure the coach and/or athletic director has been notified *in advance*. Consequences for a missed practice or game will be informed by the team rules as outlined by the coach/team at the beginning of the season in addition to the natural consequences that result from missing practice instruction or game experience.

Dress Code/Uniforms

Student-Athletes are highly visible representatives of the school and, as such, are responsible for using good judgment in their overall appearance. All teams, regardless of level, have a responsibility to ensure that their game attire speaks volumes of their class and excellence. All game shirts will be tucked in. No player should make modifications to his or her uniform. Athletes are to wear a school issued uniform and treat their uniform with respect.

Uniforms must be returned to the athletic director within seven (7) days of the last game. If a uniform is not returned, parents are responsible for the cost of replacing the uniform.

Sportsmanship

All student-athletes are expected to represent St. Joseph in an exemplary manner. This behavior is expected both on and off the court or field. Student-athletes are expected to display the best of Christian courtesy and manners to all officials, coaches, opposing coaches, players, and spectators. If there is an issue the athletic director and principal will make the final decision following a meeting with the athlete, coach, and parent.

Transportation

Transportation to/from practices and games is the sole responsibility of the parents. Please ensure that your student-athlete is picked up promptly at the end of each practice/game.

Removal from Team – Parent Decision

The principal, athletic director and coaches will respect and support the decision of a parent to remove his or her child from a team for any reason. However, once the child is removed, he or she may not return to that team for the remainder of the sport season.

Revisions/Modifications to Policy

The Principal may make changes to any policies outlined in this handbook as needed, and has the final decision with regards to any policy. Changes will be made public in the weekly newsletter and sent out to all athletes and their family.

The Principal has the authority to remove a student or cancel a season if student-athletes or parents are not adhering to St. Joseph School standards.

St. Joseph Catholic School Athletics

Parent/Student Athlete Contract

Welcome to St. Joseph Catholic School Athletics! We are looking forward to an enjoyable season that will be a positive experience for student athletes, parents, coaches, their families and guests. Together, as partners, we can provide a faith based, fun, safe and positive athletic experience for all participants in our program. Our student athletes and parents will be held to a high standard of behavior in all athletic events. Please take time to read this contract, sign and return it along with other registration paperwork.

St. Joseph Student Athlete Commitments:

1. I will strive to give my best to the team in every practice and in every game.
2. I will be on time to practices and games. I will not miss a practice or a game unless my coach or athletic director approves that absence.
3. I will cooperate with my coach and my teammates. This cooperation will make me a better athlete and my team more successful.
4. I will play hard while exhibiting exemplary sportsmanship and my behavior will be a positive reflection upon my family, team, St. Joseph Catholic School and myself.
5. I will accept winning with class and losing with dignity.
6. I will be an example of Christ in all my actions on and off the field/court.
7. I will remain academically eligible and meet standards established by the principal for participation in extra-curricular activities.

St. Joseph Parent-Guardian Commitments:

1. I will reinforce my student athlete's commitments (above) to this program.
2. I will show positive support for all coaches and officials working with my child. I will treat all players, officials and fans with respect regardless of race, gender, creed or ability in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all. I will be an example of Christ in all of my actions at St. Joseph sporting events.
3. I will remember that we are all part of the Catholic community and that the game is for youth and not for adults.
4. I will be respectful in my communication with coaches, fans and players.
5. I will observe a "cooling off" period of no less than 24 hours should I have an issue to discuss with my child's coach. Emotions are often high after a contest and conversations are more productive if both are able to take time to reflect on the game. One exception: If the coach's behavior puts your child's safety at risk speak to him/her as soon as you can safely do so.
6. St. Joseph demands a sports environment that is free of drugs, alcohol and tobacco and I will refrain from their use at all sporting events.
7. I will do my best to make the St. Joseph sports experience fun for my child.
8. I will turn in registration paperwork and pay registration fees by the advertised due date.
9. I will volunteer my time as needed to help sell concessions during games.
10. In the event all sports equipment/uniforms are not returned after the season in a timely manner, I will reimburse St. Joseph the cost associated in replacing the non-returned equipment/uniforms.

St. Joseph Catholic School Athletics
Parent/Student Athlete Acknowledgement
Received Page

I have read and agree to comply with the Parent/Student Athlete Handbook:

Parent/Guardian Name

Parent/Guardian Name

Student Athlete Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Student Athlete Signature

Date

Date

Date