



# ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

*Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. -  
Colossians 3:17*

## **DRLS PHILOSOPHY OF ATHLETICS**

### **BACKGROUND**

At Divine Redeemer Lutheran School (DRLS), we endeavor to provide opportunities for children to participate in athletics in as many areas as our environment allows. The philosophy of the athletic program at DRLS is guided by the mission statement and philosophy for the Christian education of the school. Three ideas from those statements form the basis of our athletic philosophy.

1. DRLS is a ministry of Divine Redeemer Lutheran Church seeking to provide an environment in which children may develop their full potential as Christians in faith, knowledge, and behavior.
2. The school sees itself in partnership with Christian parents, cooperatively working to develop in children their full potential as Christians in faith, knowledge, behavior, and accomplishment.
3. Through instruction centered around God's Word, the students learn a proper relationship to God, His world, and their fellowman, and they are led to relate their faith to every aspect of life.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

As the skills of each sport are practiced and developed, it is important that children develop and approach athletics with a Christ-like heart and attitude. Divine Redeemer student-athletes will be led to understand a proper relationship between reaching their full potential as an individual athlete and fulfilling their role on the team, both with a foundation of knowledge and confidence in our Savior Jesus Christ, as we confess to be children of God.

Understanding this relationship helps students recognize their strengths and weaknesses, graciously accept and grow from failures, humbly and proudly grow from successes, cooperate and work with their coaches and teammates, and develop their full potential as Christian athletes in faith, knowledge, behavior, and accomplishment. This relationship recognizes the talents and abilities God has given each of us and ways in which God uses us to accomplish His plan of bringing Gospel message to all mankind.

## **GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION IN ATHLETICS**

DRLS offers sports programs to all students in Grades 5-8. We believe athletic participation aids in developing well-rounded individuals. We also believe for an athletic program to be successful in developing those well-rounded individuals, guidelines for participation need to be in place. The following are guidelines for athletic participation.

### **ACADEMIC GUIDELINES**

Students participating in athletics at DRLS must meet all three of the following conditions to participate in the athletic program. Participants must:

1. Maintain grades of "C-" or above in all subject areas on report cards.
2. Work at an academic level that is considered in keeping with the child's ability (according to his/her teachers) and show effort in class participation and assignments.
3. Conduct and behave in following Code of Conduct as outlined in the Student Handbook.

If a student fails to meet any of the above guidelines, they will be suspended from athletic participation for a week (starting Tuesday of that week and continuing to the following Monday). During the period of suspension, the student will not be able to practice but will use the extra time to improve the grade(s) and get any necessary help.

Grades will be updated and checked every Monday. If the student is still ineligible at that check, they will remain ineligible for another week. After numerous weeks of being ineligible, the student may be too far behind to continue with the team. This decision will be made by the coach and athletic director with agreement by the principal.

The spirit of these guidelines is to encourage the student athlete to be responsible, in their academics and behavior. Exceptions to these guidelines may be allowed due to extenuating circumstances (i.e. extended absence due to illness).

### **PRACTICE AND COMPETITION GUIDELINES**

Students must meet the following guidelines to be allowed to participate in competitions.

1. Students must attend a minimum of three practices before they are allowed to participate in a game. If a student is injured, then any practice at which they attend still counts as one of the three practices. If a student is suspended and attends a practice, this will not count towards the three-practice minimum.
2. Players may not participate in practices or games if they are not in attendance at school prior to 11:00 a.m. on the day of the practice or game, or leave prior to a given early release time. Medical appointments are exceptions to this policy.

Athletes are expected to be at all practices and games. When an athlete is unable to participate in an event, the coach should be made aware. Regular unexcused absences from practices and games may result in reduced playing time in games. Coaches are encouraged to apply the following policies regarding missed practices and games:

1. Players missing a practice or a game due to an unexcused absence will not be allowed to play in the first half of the next game.
2. Players can accumulate a maximum of a one-game suspension due to missed practices or games for an extended vacation. Another series of such absences would result in another missed game.

It is expected that parents, or the students, inform the coach if a student will miss a practice or game. If the absence is not communicated, it will be counted as unexcused. This includes if a student is sick. Some coaches are not on staff and will not know who attended school that day.

### **PLAYING TIME**

One of the main goals of the athletic program at DRLS is to provide opportunity and experience in athletics to all students. A concern that often arises within all levels of any athletic program is playing time for each child. At Divine Redeemer, if a child is considering joining one of our athletic teams, the child can know they will be on a team and will play.

The child also must realize when they join a team, commitments on the athlete's part must be made as well. Failing these commitments can result in a reduction of playing time. These commitments include the following:

1. Demonstrating a Christ-like attitude toward all coaches, officials, and players.
2. Attending practices and games.

3. Maintaining acceptable grades in all subject areas in school.
4. Demonstrating proper behavior on the court, off the court, and in the classroom.
5. Paying attention and striving to improve during all practices and games.

### **PLAYING TIME IN GRADES 5/6**

Our goal for Grade 5 and 6 athletic programs is to provide an opportunity for students to experience various sports, learn the rules of the games, and develop the skills necessary to compete in each sport. Coaches should provide all players on their team with equal playing time as much as possible. This does not necessarily mean equal minutes of playing time for every individual game. Playing time should be equal over the entirety of a season. Desire to participate, attitude of the players both during games and practices, specific circumstances of a given game, and missed practices and/or games are all factors that could contribute to unequal playing time.

### **PLAYING TIME IN GRADES 7/8**

Our goal for Grade 7 and 8 athletic programs is to focus on developing player skills through practices, competition, and involving all players in games. During these years, the competition level of the games becomes more advanced and the concept of winning, although not the central point of emphasis, becomes more evident in practices and games. Coaches at this level are encouraged to find meaningful opportunities to play every player and to make the most of those opportunities.

Not all players will receive an equal amount of playing time. It could also mean, in some competitions, a player does not see any playing. Actual playing time in Grades 7/8 is determined by the following factors: attendance at practices and games, attitude during practices and games, individual skills of each player, academic eligibility, and the circumstances of each game.

## **TEAM SELECTION**

It is the policy at DRLS not to cut any player wishing to participate in any sport. To accommodate the large number of children wishing to participate at some of our grade levels, more than one team may have to be formed at those levels. In other years, there may not be enough players at a given level to create a team. At that time, those players will be combined with another grade level to create either one large team or two smaller teams.

Teams in Grades 5 and 6 that have more than one team at a given grade level will be split by coaches and the athletic director. These teams will be split so talent levels are as even as possible. Requests to be on a specific team or placed with specific students will not be considered, except under unique circumstances and agreed upon by the coaches and athletic director.

### **TEAM SELECTION POLICY**

1. Tryout practices will be held where coaches will observe basic athletic ability as well as measurable fundamental skills.
2. Coaches will create multiple teams based on prior knowledge and performance at the tryout, and then present it to the athletic director.
3. The athletic director and coaches will finalize teams and communicate the team selections with parents.

Once the rosters for each team have been created and approved by the athletic director, only the athletic director has the authority to change those rosters.

Combined teams in Grades 7/8 can happen based on a variety of factors, including but not limited to the number of participants, number of coaches, and ability levels of participants.

## **COACH SELECTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Coaches will become familiar with the philosophy of athletics of DRLS and with its policies, guidelines, and coaching code of ethics for athletics; and will strive to coach according to them. Below are additional qualifications and responsibilities of DRLS coaches.

1. Only those approved by the athletic director and principal may serve as coaches, conduct practices, or coach a game.
2. Current members of the teaching staff will be given first consideration for coaching and to which team they would prefer to coach. Parents of Divine Redeemer students, spouses of the teaching staff, and other members of Divine Redeemer Lutheran Church and School will then be given consideration with first preference of a school parent who does not have a child on the team.
3. Coaches may serve as the coach of any one team for a maximum of two consecutive years. For example, they may coach the same team in Grades 5 and 6 but would not be able to coach that same team in Grade 7. The goal is to provide students with exposure to at least two coaching styles. This rule is the case only if other volunteers are willing to coach a team. If no one volunteers to coach that team or there is overwhelming support from parents, then the previous coach may continue beyond two years.
4. Teams are limited to three coaches per team with one of the coaches being designated by the athletic director as head coach. Assistant coaches must also be approved by the athletic director.
5. Coaches are required to attend a coaches' meeting prior to the sport season in which they will be coaching. The purpose of the meeting will be to finalize coaching assignments, review athletic philosophy, establish practice schedules, and discuss the upcoming season.
6. All coaches are required to complete a standard background check for volunteers.
7. The scheduling of all games and tournaments is done by or through the athletic director of the school. All scrimmages, games, or tournaments must be approved by the athletic director.

## **LIST OF ATHLETICS OFFERED**

Divine Redeemer athletic teams at the Grades 7/8 level participate in the Milwaukee Lutheran Elementary School Athletic Association (MLESSA). League games will be against other MLESAA teams.

### **Girls Volleyball**

Volleyball competes in the fall and involves games and tournaments from early September to mid-October with practices usually beginning in August.

### **Coed Cross Country**

Cross country competes in the fall. Practices begin in August and the season is capped off with the State Meet, held in October.

### **Girls/Boys Basketball**

Basketball competes in the late fall and winter. The season typically begins in November and finishes in February. Games and tournaments are held throughout the season. For those competing at the highest level, the State and National Tournaments take place in March.

### **Spirit Squad**

The Spirit Squad was formed as an alternative to a cheerleading program. Members of the Spirit Squad practice and train for three events. They perform at the season-opening pep assembly, the pep assembly prior to the beginning of the Divine Redeemer basketball tournament, and they may perform and cheer at the basketball tournament itself. The Spirit Squad director may also choose to involve the squad in other competitions at his/her discretion.

### **Pep Squad (Grades 3-5)**

Similar to Spirit Squad, pep squad is offered for younger students to experience what it is like to be on the Spirit Squad. Students practice before or after school to learn a dance and several cheers to perform at the basketball pep rally and the Divine Redeemer Basketball Tournament.

### **Coed Track and Field**

Track and Field takes place in the spring season. Students compete in meets and may qualify for the State Meet, which is held in May. Various running, throwing, and jumping events are offered and taught to the students.

### **Boys Volleyball (with enough interest)**

Boys volleyball competes when there is enough interest in Grades 5-8. This sport competes in the spring. Practices typically begin after Spring Break.

### **Coed Soccer (with enough interest)**

Soccer is offered based on interest and if there are enough teams in the MLESA. Soccer happens in the spring and practices typically begin after Spring Break.

## **ATHLETIC FEES**

To cover the cost of running the program of DRLS, a fee is assessed per sport on Preparation Day. The fee schedule is as follows:

Number of Sports	Fee
One	\$50
Two	\$90
Three	\$120
Four	\$140
Five	\$150

If families do not pay on Preparation Day, each sport is \$50. An exception to this rule is for transfer students, who would receive the tiered pricing option.

The fees are collected at Preparation Day prior to the start of the school year. Students may sign up for these athletic programs on Preparation Day, or through the sports survey that is sent out in the summer months.

This fee helps the Divine Redeemer Booster Club cover the costs of league fees, officials, purchase and replacement of uniforms, tournament fees, and equipment replacement and repair.

### **Missing Uniform Fees**

If a student does not return their uniform at the end of the season, parents will be responsible for compensating the school for the missing uniform. Fees are different based on each sport.

<b>Sport</b>	<b>Uniform Fee</b>
Volleyball	\$45
Basketball	\$90
Soccer	\$30
Track/Cross Country	\$30

## **CODE OF ETHICS FOR PARENTS**

- First, and above all else, I will demonstrate a Christ-like spirit in all my words and actions.
- I will become familiar with the rules of the sport(s) in which my child(ren) is/are participating.
- I will always support all the players on the team.
- I will recognize the authority of the coach or coaches to make all coaching decisions during the game and will, therefore, not verbally complain in the stands about coaching decisions.
- I will bring any concerns I have first to the coach, then to the athletic director, and finally to the administration. I will do this privately and not on the field or on the court immediately after a game or practice while players, parents, or other fans may still be present. I will wait 24 hours after a contest to present my concerns.
- I will not attempt to coach my child or any other child from the sidelines or stands during games. I will allow the coach to coach.
- I will be supportive of the officials, or I will say nothing at all.

## **CODE OF ETHICS FOR COACHES**

- I will treat each player, opposing coach, official, parent, and administrator with respect, Christian love, and dignity.
- I will become familiar with the philosophy of athletics at DRLS and with its policies and guidelines for athletics and will strive to coach according to them.
- I will do my best to learn the fundamental skills and strategies of the sport I am coaching.
- I will become familiar with the rules of the sport.
- I will learn the strengths and weaknesses of my players so that I might place them in situations where they have a maximum opportunity to achieve success.
- I will cooperate with the athletic director in the enforcement of policies and guidelines.
- I will protect the health and safety of my players by insisting that all of the activities under my control are conducted for their welfare.