

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 offer 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 Catholic School you have elected a Christ-centered Catholic education and academic excellence. Many wonderful opportunities await you!

As a school community, we all must consider the appropriate role of athletics here at St. Joseph. A core characteristic of Catholic Christianity and Catholic schools is the concept of relationship and community and the conviction that human kind is “made for each other” (*Education for Life*, Thomas Groome, p. 60). Our prayer is stronger in community. Academic achievement is greater in a community with a similar mission and similar goals. Our athletic program adds another dimension to our school community. Pope John Paul II says that as manifestations of the communal body of Christ, athletics serve to unify all individuals, including coaches, student-athletes, and families in a spirit of peace.

St. Joseph athletics extends the work of St. Joseph Catholic 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.

Just as those who create a document such as this are a work in progress, so is this Athletic Handbook.

Sincerely,
Diane Wolfe
Head of School

Table of Contents:

- (1) Mission Statement of St. Joseph School Athletics
- (2) League Affiliation
- (3) Student Athlete Expectations, Attendance and Procedures
- (4) Athletic Disciplinary Guidelines
- (5) Academic Requirements
- (6) Parent and Coach Communication Guidelines
- (7) Parent/Fan Support at Games
- (8) Transportation Permission slip
- (9) Sports Contract

Mission of St. Joseph School Athletics

The St. Joseph Catholic 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.

League Affiliation

St. Joseph School participates in the Arkansas Activities Association, a league comprised of both public and private schools. St. Joseph School plays under the bylaws of the AAA. Thus, St. Joseph athletes play students from diverse backgrounds and skill levels.

Student Athlete Expectations, Attendance and Procedures

Your membership on a St. Joseph School athletics team is considered a privilege, not a right. You are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship, honesty and integrity while abiding by the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct at all times.

As a St. Joseph School student-athlete, you are among the most visible students on campus as well as in the community. This platform brings with it a whole set of privileges and responsibilities. Every student-athlete is expected to abide by the school's rules and regulations and the policies of the Arkansas Activities Association (AAA).

You have a responsibility as an enrolled student-athlete to adhere to team rules as provided by the head coach and the Athletic Department. These rules are important because they have the potential to affect your status as a student-athlete. Remember that by signing the handbook acknowledgement, you are bound by all rules and regulations set forth in this handbook.

Student-Athletes are expected to follow ALL rules as outlined in the SJS Student Handbook. In particular in regards to attendance please note the following:

📌 You **must** be in school that day to participate in any athletic activities (practice or games) exception: school allowed absences; field trips, retreats, school responsibilities, documented medical action, funerals, etc...

📌 You **must** be in school by 9:00 am, again with the same exceptions as above (any medical action must have a note from the medical office)

📌 You may **not** leave school before the school day has ended, again with the same exceptions as above

📌 Students with excessive tardies (excused or unexcused) may be forced to sit out from athletics at the Athletic Director's discretion in order to receive tutoring or make up work for school.

Understand that your participation in athletics comes before social activities. This means that your participation in athletics will oftentimes mean sacrificing some sort of social engagement. **A firm and lasting commitment to attend all practices and games for the entire season (including games played on weekends and over school vacations such as Thanksgiving, Christmas and Spring Break) is expected from all athletes that choose to participate. However, every effort will be made NOT to schedule tournaments during these holidays.** Failure to remain committed may result in dismissal from the team.

Bulldog student-athletes are expected to have exemplary performance and behavior in the classrooms. Again, your participation in athletics is a privilege, not a right. It is a privilege given to those students who can handle the academic responsibilities that come before being an athlete. It is also given to those students that can conduct themselves like mature, responsible students in the classroom. Failure to meet academic requirements will result in dismissal from the team. Misconduct in the classrooms, depending on the severity of the misconduct, will have a number of different consequences ranging from sitting out for a portion of a game to being dismissed from the team. A good athlete will become a good student. A person that is lazy or foolish in the classroom will have a hard time finding long-term success in athletics. As an athlete, you must plan your schedule so that you give sufficient time and energy to your studies and achieve acceptable grades.

It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to make arrangements for any coursework or exams that may be due on a day that teams have early dismissals from class. Student-athletes should be making these arrangements with teachers **in advance** of the early dismissal day. Early dismissals for athletic events are not an excuse to miss exams or turn in coursework late, unless prior arrangements have been made.

Bulldog student-athletes are expected to display sportsmanship at all times on and off the playing fields. Acting in an unsportsmanlike manner at any time before, during or after a game/practice under any circumstance will have a consequence ranging from missing a portion of a game to being dismissed from the team.

Bulldog student-athletes are representatives/ambassadors of St. Joseph School. SJS athletes participating in summer sport activities sponsored by St. Joseph School will abide by the hair and facial hair dress policy.

Bulldog student-athletes will refrain from the use of alcohol, tobacco, performance enhancing drugs, and any and all other drugs. Not only does your use of these substances hurt your body and its proper development, but it also affects your team because it keeps you from performing to the best of your abilities. Disciplinary action from the athletic director and/or Principal will be taken for these infractions in addition to possible removal from the team.

Bulldog student-athletes will demonstrate a commitment to excellence. A Bulldog athlete will pursue perfection in everything that he/she does even though perfection is not possible. Bulldogs believe that pursuing perfection as if it were possible will result in excellence.

Bulldog student-athletes will not swear or make inappropriate gestures. Everything you do and say makes a statement about who you are as a person. It also makes a statement about St. Joseph School and its Athletic Department (since you are a member of both the school and the athletic program you represent both entities). Make sure that you're making the right statements with your words and actions.

Bulldog student-athletes will uphold the highest security when it comes to social media, refraining from posting anything that can make their teammates, coaches, or school look bad to the larger world community. Cyberbullying, heckling, or inciting a war of words with another school or someone at SJS is absolutely not tolerated. Using social media in this fashion can lead to discipline from the school and/or suspension or removal from the team as warranted.

Athletic Disciplinary Guidelines

Coaches may have more specific or varied guidelines as far as discipline is concerned. As always, student-athletes and parents should communicate to the head coach when circumstances arise that may affect being at practices or games. If a coach is unaware, it is hard for them to be flexible.

The following is a **general guideline** to which all coaches may adhere, although each coach can set their own policies:

MISSING PRACTICE

- Missing a practice for an unexcused reason (1st time) can result in sitting out for part or all of an athletic competition.

- Missing a second practice for an unexcused reason can result in sitting out for part or all of up to two athletic competitions.

- Missing a third practice for an unexcused reason will result in sitting out for all of up to three athletic competitions.

- Missing a fourth practice for an unexcused reason will result in up to a six-game suspension and possible dismissal from the team.

(Excused reasons include, but are not limited to, academic tutoring, family emergencies, spiritual obligations and illness. Unexcused reasons, include but are not limited to, serving a detention, having a lot of homework, social engagements.)

MISSING A GAME

- Missing a game for an unexcused reason (1st time) can result in a suspension from games OR removal from the team.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

- Inappropriate classroom behavior will not be tolerated.

- Reports by any teachers of inappropriate behavior will be handled by administration FIRST, and then will be forwarded to the coach, and the athletic director.

- Consequences for inappropriate classroom behavior include, but are not limited to, sitting out for a part of or an entire athletic competition, suspension from the team (no practices or competitions), or dismissal from the team. This is in addition to any administrative consequences.

- Serious disciplinary infractions, such as getting suspended or being ejected from an athletic competition, will result in sitting out of at least the next game/competition and possibly result in dismissal from the team. Any punishment handed down by the AAA for unsportsmanlike conduct will most likely be coupled with disciplinary action taken by the school as well. Any fines assessed to the school because of the behavior of a student-athlete will be the responsibility of the student-athlete and his/her family.

- Receiving more than one suspension in an athletic season or more than one ejection as a student-athlete may result in penalties up to permanent dismissal from sports.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- Cases of unsportsmanlike conduct will be handled on a case by case basis.

- Consequences will be decided by the Athletic Director and the coach of the athlete and will be in addition to any consequence mandated by the AAA.

- Consequences can include but are not limited to sitting out for a portion of a game, suspension from the team (no practices or competitions), or dismissal from the team.

- In the event that an offense of unsportsmanlike conduct occurs, the player/coach will be subject to paying any and all fines given by the AAA.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Student-Athletes must meet the academic requirements set forth by the St. Joseph School Handbook

☞ A student must have a cumulative 2.0 grade point average on a 4.0 unweighted scale, or its equivalent, at the conclusion of each semester to be academically eligible during the next semester.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Use of any drugs will result in immediate dismissal from the team and disciplinary action taken by the school administration. This includes the **off-campus** actions of students or student-athletes.

PARENT AND COACH COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

The Parent-Coach Relationship

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By listening to each other, we are better able to be aware and accept the actions of those around us and provide greater benefit to our young adults. As parents whose children are involved in our athletic program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's team.

Parents should keep in mind that coaches are hired as Professionals. As Professionals, they make decisions based on such factors as AAA compliance, determination of what is best for the team as a whole, etc. Our athletic department's philosophy is that at the high school level, sports are a competitive endeavor, and that coaches are expected to give their team the best possible chance to win every game. Playing time comes from being the team's best chance to win a game. Players can earn playing time through winning a position in practices.

Coaches should keep in mind that parents are the primary educators of their children and work with parents to help the child mature and grow.

Communication you should expect from your child's coach:

1. Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all the players on the team.
2. Locations and times of practices and competitions.
3. Team requirements- fees, special equipment, etc.
4. Procedures we follow should your child be injured during participation.
5. Disciplinary action that results in the denial of your child's participation.

Communication a coach expects from you:

1. Student-Athletes in High School are responsible **first** for speaking to the coach.
2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance of the practice or event.
3. Specific concerns that have to do with the safety or academic success of an athlete
4. Communication about any colleges or Universities that have interest in an athlete.
5. Offer to help with team events and fundraising.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:

1. Questions about what an athlete should be doing away from practices and games in order to improve.

2. Concerns about your athlete's behavior or health.
3. Concerns about scheduling or transportation.
4. Questions about your child's college search.

The SJS Athletic Department understands that it is sometimes very difficult to accept your child's not playing as much as you or your child may hope. Coaches make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be the best for all students involved and the program as a whole.

These judgements and decisions *must always* be left to the discretion of the coach.

Issues that should not be brought up with coaches:

1. Complaints about playing time.
2. Position choices for players.
3. Team strategy.
4. Play calling.
5. Other student-athletes.

The only appropriate way to have a discussion about playing time is to have your son or daughter (the student-athlete) approach the coach and find out what needs to be done in order to warrant more playing time.

If you do have a concern to discuss with a coach:

(Please *do not* confront a coach before or after a practice or a game. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach (and the athlete). Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution but only further conflict. Email or call the coach to address concerns so as to create a healthy environment in which to discuss the situation.) **The appropriate steps are:**

1. Your child should first visit with the coach.
2. Contact your child's coach directly to set up a meeting time or contact Coach Bruich, the Athletic Director, to schedule a meeting for you and the coach. Your child should be in attendance.
3. **Observe the "24 Hour Cushion"** – As do all good educators, St. Joseph School coaches will naturally and deliberately reflect on game situations and decisions. Please allow coaches the time they need to process their decisions before approaching them with any questions. Coaches need not discuss playing time, coaching strategies and specific plays, or information pertaining to other athletes.

ALL ATHLETIC CONCERNS MUST BE DIRECTED THROUGH THE APPROPRIATE PERSON(S) AND IN THE PROPER ORDER.

1. Have the student talk to the coach
2. Parent and student talk to the coach
3. Parent/student/Coach meet with Athletic Director
4. Parent/Student/Coach/Athletic Director meet with Principal

PARENT/FAN SUPPORT AT GAMES

(This applies to both home and away contests. Regardless of where games are being played, our fans, student-athletes and coaches are representatives of St. Joseph School.)

Bulldog Fans: As is the case with being a member of a Bulldog sports team, cheering on our Bulldogs in the stands **MUST BE** appropriate and display ethical behavior. Our student-athletes and coaches strive to behave in sportsmanlike and Christian ways on and off the playing field. Support from the stands must model and mirror this commitment to upholding the integrity of the game and St. Joseph School.

Reasoning: Sports are, in a sense, a performing art. Therefore, while they don't require an audience, having spectators watch our teams and student-athletes compete is a natural occurrence. Furthermore, having support at games and competitions is a way to help student-athletes perform better. Having fan support at Bulldog Athletic games is not only allowed, it is encouraged!

🌐 Cheer for our team. Encouragement and praise is the key - **keep it positive.**

🌐 **Do not** cheer against the other team or harass the referees. This is heckling/hazing and it has no place in Bulldog Athletics.

As guests at an opposing school, you are subject to not only **SJS** rules, but also the rules of the opposing school.

🌐 As a fan at an AAA sanctioned contest, you are subject to the rules and regulations of the AAA (**including having to pay for any fines that may be incurred because of your behavior**).

🌐 Respect and appreciate the efforts of all involved in the game. **Congratulate outstanding performances regardless of who performs them** – whether a Bulldog or an opponent.

🌐 **Have fun.** Keep in mind that in the end, it is just a game.

🌐 Promote a spirit of rivalry - **But think intense, not hostile.** The best rivalries are fueled by an intense respect for an opponent.

🌐 **Understand that this is a school function, regardless of the time or place. You are subject to the SJS Code of Conduct and consequences.**

Failure to abide by any of the above guidelines may result in any of the following: dismissal from the game/event, disciplinary action such as an administrative detention and/or suspension (for students), or prohibition of attending any future games/events.

General Parent Reminders

*Parents may take athletes from an away event provided the head coach has been notified ahead of time and that the parent/guardian or parent designee of that student-athlete is present. A permission slip template is included in this handbook and must be presented to the coach before the event. Coaches have no legal authority to allow or arrange transportation that has not been authorized by the parent. **DO NOT ASK.** Parent designees must be at least 21 years of age. Parents will also sign out the student-athlete at the conclusion of the event therefore relinquishing SJS from any responsibility or liability.*

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 communications sent home to the students involved in sports.

TRANSPORTATION PERMISSION
ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL

My child _____, has my permission to

leave this athletic event _____,

I (or a parent designee) also agree to sign out my student athlete at the conclusion of the athletic event. A sign out sheet will be provided by the coach or the coach's designee.

_____ I, the parent, will be transporting my child from the athletic event, therefore releasing St. Joseph School from any responsibility or liability.

_____ I, the parent, grant permission to _____
(parent designee) to transport my student athlete after the athletic event, therefore releasing St. Joseph School from any responsibility or liability.

(Parent)

(Date)

**ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL
Sports Contract
2019-2020**

**Please initial each statement below to acknowledge your agreement to this contract. Then sign the form at the bottom as an acknowledgement that the handbook has been read. Return to the Athletic Director to be eligible for participation.
As a St. Joseph School Student-Athlete...**

____ I will strive to give my best to the team in every practice and every game.

____ I will be on time for all practices and games.

____ I will not miss a practice or game because of another outside sport or extra-curricular activity unless approved by the coach or coordinator of sports.

____ This experience is an opportunity to learn not only this sport but also teamwork with all its inherent responsibilities. There will be times when I will follow someone's lead and there will be times when I must assume that lead – I always have a contribution to make to my team.

____ I will take my coaches' directions and comments as constructive suggestions, which make me a better athlete and my team a successful unit.

____ Practice is where I learn the concepts of the game. How I apply those concepts in mind and body in practice will carry over into the game situation.

____ I will always play hard, but always will be a fair sport whether we are winning or losing the games realizing that everyone on my team and my opponent's team is playing for fun and the competitive experience.

____ I will carry these principles to my schoolwork and my family life with the realization that these are of greatest importance and take precedence to any sport.

____ I will be an example of Christ in all my actions on and off the field/court of competition.

Player(s) Signature

Date

I have read the expectations and handbook for my child to participate in the sports program at St. Joseph School.

Parent Signature

Date