

Athletic Handbook

St. Emily Catholic School

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This handbook is intended to guide those who govern, manage, finance and participate in athletic, especially interscholastic, programs.

Participation in sports at any level requires adherence to regulations and guidelines. Local school policies, procedures and rules may not contradict Archdiocesan and/or Office of Catholic Schools policies, procedures and practices.

The directives given here are offered to promote an active integration of Gospel values into the entire athletic program. St. Emily School is dedicated to challenging and empowering students to achieve their best in whatever activity they participate.

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Statement of Non-discrimination

St. Emily 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.

Mission Statement

The St. Emily Athletic program provides a formative, competitive and instructional sports program as an extension of the St. Emily School academic program. All participants will learn the fundamentals of each sport and be given the opportunity to develop strong, healthy and disciplined minds and bodies. Participants will also develop a sense of good sportsmanship, fair play and team spirit.

Philosophy Statement

St. Emily Catholic School is concerned with the development of the whole person-the religious, moral, social, and academic dimensions, as well as physical development. St. Emily School believes that participation in athletics is an important part of student development. Through participation in the St. Emily athletic program, students may develop life-long skills and positive values. These values include leadership, healthful living habits, self-discipline, integrity, teamwork, respect for rules and regulations, and the ability to participate with dignity and grace.

Code of Ethics

St. Emily School is a Catholic Christian Community. We stand as an example to the world by our values. We are called, even in the arena of sports, to uphold these values. Student athletes, parents, spectators, and coaches are to maintain a Christian standard of conduct that adheres to the school's rules, to common decency, and respect for others.

Responsibility for the Athletic Program

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 (Archdiocesan Policy) and the principal (Archdiocesan policy) and any pertinent policies of the local school board.

The principal is the primary authority over the athletic program in the school. The president or assistant principal may be delegated the responsibility to supervise the athletic program.

Athletic Board: Constitution and By-Laws

The athletic board develops a Constitution/By-Laws that articulates its

- Organization and purpose
- Membership
- Selection
- Terms of office
- Accountability
- Responsibilities

The Constitution and By-Laws are approved by the president and principal and are submitted to the local school board.

Athletic Board: Guidelines and Procedures

The athletic board, with the approval of the principal, develops procedures that govern the scope and direction of the interscholastic athletic programs and student participation in such programs. The board works in cooperation with the principal, or designee, faculty and parents. The athletic board manages and maintains the school's interscholastic sports programs.

Programs

All programs operate solely through the fundraising activities of the Athletic Association and its members, and the participation fees charged to the team members. There are no funds contributed by the school or parish.

Teams compete in various Catholic leagues. At the current time, the program consists of the following:

- 3rd-8th grade boys and girls basketball
- 5th-8th grade boys and girls volleyball
- 5th-8th co-ed cross country
- 3rd-4th co-ed running club
- 5th-8th co-ed track & field
- 5th-8th girls softball
- 6th-8th girls cheerleading

Time Commitment/Restrictions

Generally 6 hours a week (Sunday-Saturday) will be devoted to a given sport. This time includes games, practices (generally 1.5 hours), travel time to and from away games, and tournaments.

Additional time may be added on weeks when tournaments are scheduled. The respective Athletic Director and the School Principal must approve exceptions to this. It is the responsibility of the coaches to adhere to this policy and anticipate time allocations based on the scheduling of tournaments or games.

Expectations of Coaches

The athletic director selects the head coach for each team. Coaches are chosen prior to the start of the season using the following criteria:

- Experience with the program and system
- Time availability and desire by the prospective coach to volunteer
- Ability to learn the game, and teach and work with the team
- Ability to represent St. Emily School and cooperate with the Athletic Association, School Administration, School Board, and Parish Staff

The School Principal (or designee) must approve the final selection of all coaches.

Head coaches recommend individuals to serve as assistant coaches after team selection is complete. The respective Athletic Director and the School Principal (or designee) must approve these persons. Selection of the assistant coach is based on the following:

- Desire to volunteer time
- Ability to learn and teach
- Ability to cooperate and work with the coaching staff, Athletic Director and School Administration

The respective Athletic Director evaluates all coaches yearly.

The role of the coach is as follows:

- Coaches are role models for student athletes and must conduct themselves as such.
- Coaches must be knowledgeable of the school's athletic program philosophy.
- Coaches must possess or be willing to learn a working knowledge of the sport.
- Coaches should develop the skills of the student athlete in the sport.
- Coaches will ensure that each eligible athlete plays accordingly to the philosophy of the athletic program. Specific guidelines for basketball are provided in a subsequent section of this handbook.
- Coaches must assure the health and safety of the athletes by providing adequate adult supervision at all times.
- In case of injury to an athlete, the coaches have the responsibility of immediate care, notification to parents, and a report given to the athletic director as soon as possible.
- Coaches must emphasize that respect for coaches, officials, opposing teams, and spectators must be maintained and that any deviation from this requirement will not be tolerated.

- Coaches will not be authorized by school to drive team members to or from the games or practices.
- Coaches must stay in compliance with all Archdiocese of Chicago VIRTUS training.
- Coaches must stay in compliance with all IESA concussion protocol training.

Coaches are not allowed:

- To use inappropriate, abusive, or vile language.
- To deny adequate playing time to students who are cooperative in effort and attendance.
- To place too much attention, or give preferential treatment to the most gifted athletes.
- To play students who are not on their regular school roster.
- To join their team in another league or an additional tournament without the approval of the athletic board, athletic director, principal, and/or president.

Basketball Playing Time Guidelines for Coaches

St. Emily School is dedicated to challenging and empowering students to achieve their best in all extracurricular activities. Participation in sports requires adherence to regulations and guidelines. Each player's amount of playing time will reflect his/her ability, effort, attendance at practices, and commitment to the team. Missing practice without cause, or excessive absences can result in reduced playing time and even exclusion from the team. Playing time may also be reduced for academic reasons (as determined by St. Emily School administration), or as a disciplinary action, e.g., when a player loses self-control or engages in conduct unbecoming of a Christian student athlete.

The following guidelines have been established to avoid misunderstanding and conflict.

- 4th/5th grade-The focus is on instruction, learning the game, skills development, and sportsmanship. The children are beginning to learn how to play the game. Playing time is as equal as possible as squads are substituted in/out regardless of score.
- 6th grade-League standings are kept so that informed decisions may be made regarding team placements in 7th grade(when applicable). Conference games are played with equitable playing time. In tournaments the goal is to try to make it to the championship game, but all players are expected to get into all games (tournament and other).
- 7th/8th grade-The Northwest Catholic Conference is a competitive league, and St. Emily School runs its program as a competitive program. Playing time is dictated by skill level and commitment to practices. All players are required to

get in every conference game. Based on the competitiveness of a specific game, playing times may be limited for the lesser skilled players, but playing time is given to all players in all conference games over the course of the season. The expectation is that each child gets into each game, however, the coaches will continue to try to position the team to be competitive, especially in tournament games.

Administration/Management/Metrics-The athletic director or basketball coordinator will review the playing time guidelines with each coach at the beginning of the season. The playing time guidelines will be reviewed to set expectations with the parents during the mandatory AD/coach/parents' meeting before the season starts.

The Basketball Coordinator or AD, as representative of the Athletic Board, will survey the parents at a designated point in the season to review how things are going, gauge overall satisfaction, and identify and address any issues or concerns to date.

Expectations of Student Athletes

Participation in athletics is a privilege and those students who represent St. Emily on a team are held to a high level of accountability both on and off the court or field.

Accountability is considered in a number of ways:

- Scholastic achievement,
- Observance of rules,
- Cooperation,
- Good sportsmanship,
- Respect for coaches, teammates, spectators/fans

All student athletes will abide by the extracurricular policy as outlined in the school handbook.

Participation in activities such as athletics is a privilege, not a right. The school reserves the right to remove a student from participation in extracurricular activities if a student's grades or attitude are not in keeping with school expectations. Each student will be considered on an individual basis.

If the student's academic work falls below an average of "C" in any subject area, the student will be placed on academic probation (suspension from extracurricular activities). The suspension is effective Monday through Sunday. The student's work will be reviewed on a weekly basis by the student's teacher, and on a midterm and full term basis by the athletic director. This includes two missing assignments from one or more subject areas in a given week. If the student's average is below a "C" grade, or conduct is below a "B" grade, coaches, teachers, or advisors will be notified, and the student will not participate in practices, games, or activities until the grade is raised. Students receiving detentions and/or suspensions in school will be suspended until conduct improves. Parents will be informed of the suspension from team or organization activity by the athletic director.

Students who observe school and association rules and guidelines, as well as cooperate with those in authority within those groups, are proper representatives of St. Emily School. In particular cases, non-compliance with school rules or inappropriate behavior of a student may make the student ineligible for participation in extracurricular activities.

When on the court or field, student athletes are expected to demonstrate Christian behavior and good sportsmanship.

Losing self-control, using inappropriate gestures or tone of voice or foul or abusive language, arguing a referee's call or a coach's decision, or other signs of disrespect are reasons for disciplinary action. Consequences of such behavior are reduced playing time, or even suspension or expulsion from the team.

An athlete who was absent from school due to illness will not be allowed to attend practice or play in a game on the given day. Absence from school on a Friday does not affect Saturday or Sunday playing time if the athlete has recovered sufficiently to participate.

Goals for the Student Athlete

- Apply Catholic principles to recreational activities
- Develop sportsmanship
- Experience being part of a team
- Develop school spirit and team spirit
- Develop strong, healthy, and disciplined bodies and minds
- Maintain good health through physical fitness
- Learn an enjoyable recreational activity that can be sustained into adulthood
- Develop values of self-discipline, self-confidence, fair play, and cooperation
- Develop the proper attitude toward winning, losing, and competing with dignity

Expectations of Parents

No program can succeed without the positive support of parents for the athletes, coaches, and activities. Parents have a primary responsibility to act as role models for their children, demonstrating Christian behavior and good sportsmanship. Parents are expected to comply with the state mandate that all student athletes receive a complete, yearly physical prior to participation in a sports program.

Parents understand that enrolling a child in a sports program is a commitment that the child plays according to all rules. Full participation in all aspects of the program, e.g., driving student athletes to “away games” or tournaments that are a good distance from the school, and tournament participation during the holidays is expected.

Parents are expected to attend a mandatory pre-season parent session, and any other requested parent sessions. Parents are also expected to contribute time and service in support of the team and the interscholastic athletic program. A volunteer program is dependent upon everyone’s help and support to maintain a high level of quality and success. Parents will be asked to assist as scorekeepers, timekeepers, admissions takers, refreshment sellers, monitors of crowd control, or to serve as base coaches (softball), assistant coaches, or to help with set-up or clean-up. One or two parents may be asked to serve as team liaisons and assist with phone calls or provide a schedule to see that all tasks are filled and rotated in an equitable manner. Parents provide transportation for their children to and from games and practices. Parents may not allow younger siblings to attend practices with the student athlete as there is insufficient supervision at practices to do this.

Parents are expected to support and encourage their child’s efforts. Attending games and cheering for the team is a show of support. Parents are reminded to always act in a responsible manner and show good Christian sportsmanship. Parents who are not coaching must make no attempt to instruct or direct the play of an athlete or of the team. Parents should be role models for putting losses in perspective and moving on. Questioning, criticizing, or berating the coach, referee, or any other official is inappropriate behavior before, during, or after the contest.

Conflict Resolution Procedure

In resolving a conflict, the parents should ask his/her child about the situation. If the child is comfortable, the parent should encourage the child to talk directly to the coach. Any parent, guardian, or student having a concern about the administration of a team should speak to the coach directly. Think about what is hoped to be gained by confronting the issue. Coaches and parents need to be open to constructive criticism and/or suggestions for improvement without becoming angry or offensive. It is recommended that parents wait a day before contacting a coach about a grievance. Contact may be done via email or in person. Sample language, e.g., "My understanding of the conflict is...Do you agree?" The coach needs to respond within one week.

After discussing the issue with the person involved, the parent or guardian who is presenting the issue has the option to document the conversation in an email to the athletic director or respective sport coordinator.

After one week, if no response is received or the conflict is not resolved, the parent should draft a second email to the coach and AD/coordinator to request feedback regarding the situation. If the communication is ignored for more than three days or if the conflict is not resolved, the parents should talk to the athletic director. If there is still no resolution, the parent should go to the Athletic Board:

- The parent may contact the president or vice-president who would bring the concern to the Board, on behalf of the parent, for discussion and resolution.
- If needed, the parent will be invited by the president to speak at the next meeting.
- If no resolution can be reached, the principal will work with the parent and Board.
- If time is a concern, a special Board meeting could be called to resolve the issue as soon as possible.