

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

****Pursuing Athletic Excellence while Developing and Revealing Character****

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to ensure cohesiveness and order in the athletic program of St. Mary's Catholic School. It is dedicated to the goal of providing an athletic program in which our athletes develop both physically and mentally/spiritually. It is our desire that the athletic program encourages student-athletes to become mature Christian men and women of good stature, character, and leadership.

Athletic Philosophy

The primary focus of SMCS athletes will be the development of each athlete both on and off the field. Emphasis will be placed on physical and mental growth at each level of the program. We will strive to do our best so that we may honor God, our school, parents, and community. We believe that doing our best must always be our goal.

Goal

The highest goal of SMCS's athletic program is to provide a quality athletic experience for each of our athletes. We will seek to do this by providing quality coaches, equipment, and the opportunity to participate against challenging competition.

Sportsmanship

Good Sportsmanship is top priority of the SMCS athletic program. Success will require a collective effort by everyone involved in the SMCS program. The following guidelines will be helpful in developing this type of program.

A. Athletes will:

Respect parents, coaches, teammates, opponents, and officials

Play with passion and positive attitude

Represent their school with pride and honor

B. Parents will:

Support the team and coaches in public and address concerns in private

Encourage 100% individual effort and 100% team loyalty

Provide positive reinforcement to SMCS athletes and opponents

Objectives

The objectives of the SMCS athletic program are:

- *To honor God, our school, parents, and community through our play and character
- *To learn to act and react positively in the arena of competition, emphasizing the team rather than the individual
- *To show respect for the rules of the game, the officials charged with enforcing them, and to our opponents
- *To draw attention to our program through its excellence so that we may reflect that attention to the community
- *To develop athletes who have the heart of a MUSTANG
- *To live our lives in accordance with the teachings of the Gospel and to be worthy representatives of St. Mary's Catholic Church and School in West, Texas.

Transportation

Persons providing transportation are required to be in compliance with EIM guidelines and rules. Coaches will communicate prior to competition whether or not transportation will be provided by the school. Otherwise, it will be the parents' responsibility to provide transportation to and from away games. All athletes will be required to leave an away athletic event with a coach or their own parent. A written note or email must be provided by a child's parent in order for an athlete to ride home with another parent that is not their own. A weekly newsletter will be emailed/posted to inform parents of upcoming events and transportation details for the different events.

Rules for All Teams

The following rules are to be followed by all SMCS teams. Coaches may supplement these rules to best serve their individual team(s). Any additional rules a coach wishes to implement must be approved by the AD. **A student has NO right to participate in athletics. It is a privilege that has been granted to you. Therefore, it is possible that the privilege can be taken away if athletes do not comply with the following:**

1. Players must maintain academic and behavioral eligibility as required by school. A 3-week athletic probation will be implemented for any unsatisfactory academic grades attained by an athlete. The 3-week probation period will take place beginning on the day that report cards are issued. While on athletic probation, a student may still practice with the team, but will be ineligible to participate in a game situation. If, at the end of the first 3-week probationary period, the student is attaining satisfactory grades in all classes, he/she will be eligible to participate in a game situation. However, if, at the end of the first 3-week probationary period, the student is not attaining satisfactory grades in all classes, he/she will continue to be on athletic probation for another 3 weeks. The student's grades will again be assessed at the end of the 6th week of the 9-week grading period. Upon that assessment, if the student is attaining satisfactory grades in all classes, he/she will be eligible to participate in a game situation. If, at the end of the 6th week, the student continues to attain unsatisfactory grades, the student will remain on athletic

probation for the remainder of the 9-week grading period. ***In reference to the 4th-6th Grade Private League Track Meet held in the spring, a student wanting to participate must be earning satisfactory grades in all classes 1 week prior to the track meet.

2. All players are required to attend all practices and games unless given prior permission to miss by their coach. In observance of Our Lord's Day, there will be no mandatory Sunday practices. If a coach wants to have an open gym on a Sunday, this will be optional to the athletes.

3. Players must be in school at least 4 hours of the day in order to participate in practice or games that day.

4. Student-athletes will not be allowed to play in or practice for an athletic event on a day in which they do not participate in PE/Athletics during that particular school day. This does not include doctor appointments (must have a doctor's note to be excused) or family emergencies.

5. Missing a practice or game without prior permission is unexcused and may result in removal from the team.

6. If an excused missed practice or game occurs, coaches can require players to make up for missed involvement as seen fit. This includes absence while serving assigned detentions or suspensions.

7. Players who receive Out of School Suspension (OSS) or In School Suspension (ISS) will not participate in at least one game that week. These athletes may attend the athletic event as a fan to support their teammates, but will not be allowed to sit with the team. A student will not be allowed to attend practice after school on the day that he/she serves OSS/ISS. Repeated incidents may result in removal from the team, and may not be eligible to participate in a SMCS sport the following season.

8. Players are to be on time for all team activities, and attend all team fundraisers, including end-of-the-year banquet unless family obligations prohibit this.

9. Players must follow team dress standards for practice, games, and while traveling as established by coach and school.

10. Players are responsible for the proper care and safe return of all uniforms and will be charged \$25 per item for damaged or lost items.

11. Players that quit after accepting a position on a team may not be eligible to participate in that particular sport the following year. This will be decided by the coach.

12. If a player is required to miss practice or games because of doctor's instruction, a note from the doctor will be required prior to player's return to activity. All parent notes will be accepted for 2 days, any days after will require a doctor's note.

13. If a player needs academic help after school, at a time during which team activity is scheduled, prior permission must be obtained from the coach. SMCS encourages students to take care of academic responsibilities and strive for academic excellence. Players are students first, then athletes. Student athletes must be passing all classes in order to leave school early for an athletic event.

Dual Participation

All athletes participating in SMCS Athletics make a commitment to the team, their teammates, and their school. Each program demands the dedication of time and energy of the athlete. Part of this commitment is to place the SMCS Athletic team above participation in any non-school sanctioned activity and attend all practices and games.

If an athlete chooses to miss or leave a SMCS athletic practice or event because of participation in an activity not associated with SMCS, the student athlete may not receive as much playing time as the athletes who choose to attend all practices and games. This will be decided by the coach.

Sixth graders have the unique opportunity to participate in both the private league and junior high level of play. In order for an athlete to “play up”, they will be required to participate/play with their own grade level as well.

The decision for any athlete to “play up” in any sport (FB, VB, BB, Track) will be at the discretion of the coaches. It is a privilege to “play up”, and not everyone will have that opportunity. Grade and skill levels will be taken into consideration when determining if an athlete will “play up”.

Parental Guidelines

SMCS values its parents and wishes to work hand-in-hand with them to provide an excellent athletic experience for our athletes. Parents are asked to abide by the following as related to SMCS Athletics:

1. Parents are required to attend pre-season team meetings and to take the opportunity to personally meet their sons' and daughters' coaches.
2. Parents are encouraged to provide vocal, enthusiastic, and positive support for our team at home and away.
3. Parents are required to sign up for a minimum of 2 games per sport that their son/daughter participates in to volunteer in certain areas such as concessions, working the gate, keeping scorebook, etc. Volunteering more than the minimum is greatly appreciated. EIM compliance is required for volunteers.
4. To provide their sons and daughters the opportunity to mature, parents should encourage them to go to their coaches to discuss issues or concerns they may have. Should the issue or concern persist after this meeting has occurred, parents should contact the coach and AD to arrange for a private meeting to discuss the situation. Parents should not attempt such interaction with a coach before or after a game or practice, as these can be an emotional time for both the coach and parents. Parents are to adhere to the 24-hour-policy. This policy entails that parents are not to discuss issues that have taken place at a game or practice. They are to wait 24 hours after the issue in question, and then schedule a parent conference with the coach and AD.
5. Athletes are to be dropped off at the gym/practice field ONLY when that child's coach is present. NEVER LEAVE YOUR CHILD UNATTENDED. Parents are welcome to wait until the appropriate coach arrives. Coaches of other teams/sports will not be expected to supervise

another team's athletes who are waiting for a different practice to begin when said coach is leading his/her own team's practice. Students should be picked up no later than 10 minutes after the conclusion of practice.

6. Parents will be responsible for the \$25 damaged or lost athletic item fee previously mentioned in the Player Section.

Weather Policies and Procedures

Each head coach for their respective sport is responsible for checking the temperature and/or heat index before starting a practice/scrimmage.

Hot Weather Policies and Procedures

When the Temperature-Heat-Index (THI) reaches 95° degrees, limit outdoor activity to 10-15 minutes with proper hydration of the children. (Recess, dismissal etc.) NO outdoor PE or sports/practice longer than 15 minutes is permitted. When the (THI) reaches 100° F degrees **(revised August 2024 to 102° F)**, no outside recess or PE or sports/practice for elementary/middle schools.

***Temperature is ≥100 and/or Heat Index is ≥104** (Considered extreme.)

*Closely monitor participants for signs of heat illness.

*Adjust outside activities in regard to level of intensity, time of exposure, and number of rest and rehydration breaks allowed.

FOOTBALL

1. Athletes will have water breaks every 15 minutes. Each break will be 5 minutes of total rest time with helmets off. Athletes will be allowed to bring cold towels for breaks.
2. Practice will not exceed 1.5 hours of total heat exposure.
3. Open water policy during the entire practice.
4. Athletes will be allowed to remove helmets while not in contact drills.
5. Delaying practices until there is a lower Heat Index may be necessary.
6. The above mentioned policies will be in effect for all outdoor practices. Game day policies will be decided prior to game time between the opposing coaches which may involve slight variations with athlete safety as the number one priority.

TRACK

1. Water breaks will occur every 30 minutes with a 5-minute total rest time.
2. Practice will not exceed 1.5 hours of total heat exposure.
3. Open water policy during the entire practice.

***Temperature is ≥105 and/or Heat Index is ≥110** (Considered very dangerous.)

Outside activities should be avoided if possible.

Cold Weather Policies and Procedures

Clothing is one of the most important parts of keeping the athlete's body warm. Athletes should dress in layers and try to stay dry. Heat loss from the head and neck can be as much as 50% of total heat loss; therefore the head and neck should be covered during cold conditions. Other extremities should be covered as well to protect from wind chill.

***Wind Chill Factor ≤ 45 degrees with rain**

*35 minutes of exposure/ 20 minutes inside (may return outside after 20 minutes)

*Dry Clothing (socks, gloves)

*Athletes must be in warm ups with extremities covered

***Wind Chill Factor ≤ 35 degrees without rain**

*45 minutes exposure time/ 15 minutes inside

*Athletes must be in warm ups with extremities covered

***Wind Chill Factor ≤ 38 degrees with rain**

*All practices will be inside

*No outside exposure

***Wind Chill Factor ≤ 30 degrees**

*No outside practices

Severe Weather Policies and Procedures

*Any time lightning is noticeably present in the area, all outdoor activities need to be brought to an immediate halt, with all team members moved to shelter. Activities may resume after 30 minutes with no lightning being observed.

*Athletic events and practices may be canceled or postponed ahead of time if the forecast calls for the likelihood of severe weather.

*Road trips may be canceled or postponed when the possibility exists for conditions such as flash flooding, icy roads, or other extreme weather conditions.

Right to Amend:

SMCS reserves the right to amend this Athletic Handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents via email address provided by parents.

Athlete Terms of Agreement

I agree to attend and be on time for all practices, games, and team activities. This includes award programs and team social/fundraising activities.

Before I participate in any tryouts or practices, I agree that I will provide to the school a signed statement from a physician stating that the physician has conducted a physical and finds that I am physically healthy and capable to participate in the teams in which I will participate.

I agree to personally gain permission from my coach if extenuating circumstances arise where I must miss or be late for a team function (academic help or family emergency).

I agree to attend practices and games when injured to support my team unless excused by my coach. I understand that if excused from practice or games by a physician, I must provide a physician-written release to resume participation.

I agree to maintain an attitude of encouragement toward my teammates at all times.

I agree to be diligent in my academic works so that I may be eligible for participation throughout the sport season.

I accept responsibility for the proper care and safe return of all team uniforms, and if lost or damaged, I agree to pay \$25 for the repair or replacement of each item of clothing.

I understand that I need to be in attendance in school for at least 4 hours and participate during PE/Athletics to be eligible to practice or play that day.

I, _____, have read and understand the guidelines set forth above and included in the SMCS Athletic Handbook found on the school website (www.stmaryswest.com). In signing this document, I agree to abide by them. Failure to do so is cause for SMCS to suspend or dismiss me from participating in the SMCS Athletic Program.

Signature _____ Date _____

Parents Terms of Agreement

I agree to refrain from any behavior toward other spectators, teams, coaches, administrators, or officials that SMCS considers to be contrary to good sportsmanship, respectful norms, the Gospel, or the objectives of the SMCS Athletic Program.

I agree to make an appointment to speak with a coach directly and AD in private should I have a concern related to my child's athletic activity. (Before or after a game or practice is not an appropriate time for conversation.)

I agree to support the athletic program by volunteering in certain areas such as concessions, working the gate, keeping scorebook, or running the scoreboard/clock at least 2 games per sport that my son/daughter participates in.

I accept the responsibility for the proper care and safe return of all team uniforms, and if lost or damaged, I agree to pay \$25 for the repair or replacement of each item of clothing.

I, _____, have read and understand the guidelines set forth above and included in the SMCS Athletic Handbook found on the school website (www.stmaryswest.com). In signing this document, I agree to abide by them. Failure to do so is cause for SMCS to suspend or dismiss me or my child from participating in the SMCS Athletic Program.

Signature _____ Date _____

Personal Code of Ethics

(Parents, Family Members, and their Guests)

The essential elements of sportsmanship are: respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The highest potential of an athletic program is achieved when all parties involved reflect these principles. Parents and other spectators should always provide positive support, for their child, all players, coaches, officials, school administrators, and the athletic program itself by demonstrating encouragement, good sportsmanship and support at every game, practice or other athletic activity/event. Parents shall treat all players, cheerleaders, coaches, fans, officials, and school administrators with respect, regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability. Furthermore, they must respect the officials, coaches, and school administrator's authority and directions during games and practices.

Parents and other spectators will refrain from the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products at all times during any athletic competition, home or away. Parents, family members, and their guests should not engage in any kind of negative conduct with officials, coaches, opposing players, or other parents such as booing, taunting, or using profane language and gestures. Parents must not discuss, question, or confront the coaches concerning actions or decisions made before, during, or after any game or practice. Parents who wish to speak with coaches must schedule a meeting with the appropriate party 24 hours after the event. The Athletic Department, School Administrators, and Coaches will always try to be receptive to parental input, questions, and concerns.

In an effort to be a positive example for young people, I,

_____, **parent of**

_____, **consent to abide by all rules and code of ethics stated herein. I will be responsible for myself, my family, and any guest who may accompany me. I will demonstrate exemplary Mustang character during any and all athletic events and practices.**

Parent Signature(s) _____ **Date** _____

Name of Participant: _____

Activity: SMCS Athletic Practices/Events/Competitions

Diocese: The Catholic Diocese of Austin, a Texas non-profit corporation, including its employees, contractors, clergy, agents, facilitators, and volunteers.

- F. To the extent permitted by law, Parents, for themselves and for Participant, release and agree to indemnify and hold harmless the School and the Diocese from all liability, claims, demands, and costs which may arise because of Participant's participation in the Activity, or which is related to such participation. This paragraph covers loss under any theory of loss (negligence or otherwise) including but not limited to personal injury or property damage. Parents and Participant assume all risk of injury or loss to themselves or their property.**

Phone:_____