

# **ST. MATTHEW CATHOLIC SCHOOL ATHLETIC HANDBOOK 2023-2024**

## **SCHOOL SPORTS PHILOSOPHY**

The middle school sports program is provided to help foster spiritual, moral, intellectual, social and physical development in our students by offering a competitive team sports environment. Our sports policy strives to balance the drive to win and succeed in athletic competition with the Christian principles that are the foundation of our educational program.

We encourage all students to consider participation in our athletic programs as opportunities arise throughout the year.

The SMCS Athletic program provides a variety of experiences that enhance the development of favorable habits and attitudes that will prepare students for adult life. The interscholastic athletic program shall be conducted in accordance with existing Archdiocesan Interscholastic Athletic League (AIAL) and SMCS policies, rules and regulations.

While SMCS takes great pride in winning, it does not condone “winning at any cost.” It discourages any and all pressures which might lead to neglecting good sportsmanship and good mental health. At all times, the athletic program must be conducted as an educational activity of learning.

The goal of the SMCS Athletic Program is to assist students in the development of Christian character through their participation in sports.

Parents and players are obligated to acknowledge the fact that “the St. Matthew Catholic School athletic programs are competitive.”

## **SPORTS PROGRAMS**

SMCS competes in the Archdiocesan Interscholastic Athletic League (AIAL). The guidelines established by the member schools govern competition in the league. The league offers competition in the following sports:

**Football, Baseball, Soccer, Track, Basketball, Softball, Golf, Volleyball, Cross Country, Tennis.**

Provided by St. Matthew Athletics not affiliated with the AIAL

## **Cheerleading, Dance**

Competition in boys and girls sports is divided into “A” and “B” teams in the following sports:

## **Volleyball, Track, Basketball, Cross Country**

The following sports only offer a single “A”.

## **Football, Baseball, Softball, Tennis, Soccer, Golf**

AIAL regulations stipulate that 8<sup>th</sup> grade students may only participate on “A” teams.

## **SPORTS POLICY**

The sports policy may be changed at the discretion of the school administration as needed and without notice. Please direct any inquiries to the School Administration. All students must meet all eligibility requirements to participate in any school team sport. Where both “A” and “B” teams are available, the school will field teams at both levels of competition. If there are not enough players to field a team at both “A” and “B” levels, only an “A” team will be established.

- 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are eligible to try out for all sports.
- Tryouts may be held for any sport when participation exceeds the available number of player's slots available for the sport. In the event a roster spot becomes available after the season has begun, and at the coach's, a student may be asked to join the team based on the tryout evaluation. The coach, athletic director and principal must approve final rosters for all sports before being sent to the AIAL office.
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are only eligible for participation on “A” teams. Available slots will be filled with any combination of other participants as necessary. ● A letter will be awarded to student athletes competing at the “A” team level in the AIAL competition provided they remain eligible for competition the entire season. After the initial letter an award pin will be awarded for additional sports.
- Students and parents are expected to exhibit Christian behavior and good sportsmanship at all school related functions and activities, whether on or off campus.
- The administration and game officials, at their discretion, have the authority to remove anyone displaying unsportsmanlike conduct at any school related activity, whether on or off campus.

## **ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT CONDUCT OF ATHLETES**

A firm and fair policy of enforcement is necessary to uphold the regulations and standards of the athletic department. The community, school administrators and the coaching staff feel strongly that high standards of conduct and citizenship are essential in maintaining a sound program of athletics. The welfare of the student is our major consideration and transcends any other consideration. All athletes shall abide by a code of ethics which will earn them the honor and respect that participation and competition in the interscholastic program affords. Any conduct that result in dishonor to the athlete, the team or the school will not be tolerated. Acts of unacceptable conduct such as, but not limited to theft, vandalism, disrespect, immorality or violations of law, tarnish the reputation of everyone associated with the athletic program and will not be tolerated. Participation on an athletic team involves discipline and willingness to make sacrifices. For this reason, those who wish to participate in interscholastic sports at SMCS must always act like ladies and gentlemen; be neat in appearance and polite in behavior.

All St. Matthew students will observe the respect and courtesies of Digital Citizenship and will follow the St. Matthew Catholic School Parent-Student Handbook with regard to the use of electronic equipment whether the practice/sporting event takes place on campus or off campus. Cardinal Rules apply where Cardinals work and play.

### **Use of Electronic Communication – taken from Archdiocese Policy 3307**

Whether occurring within or outside of school, when a student's use of electronic communication jeopardizes the safe environment of the school or is contrary to Gospel values, the student can be subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences, including expulsion.

This policy applies to communications or depictions through email, text messages, or web site postings, whether they occur through the school's equipment or connectivity resources or through private communication, which: (1) are of a sexual nature; (2) threaten, libel, slander, malign, disparage, harass or embarrass members of the school community; or (3) cause harm to the school community.

A school reserves the right to confiscate and/or examine any electronic device in the student's possession while on campus including, but not limited to, cellular telephones, watches, tablets, gaming devices, cameras, school-issued devices or other electronic communication equipment of any type.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION**

**Physical Examination:** A yearly physical examination is required. The physical exam form must be completed by the physician and submitted to the coach prior

to participation in any try-out or game competition. The examination will be valid for a period of one year from the date it was first obtained. The form will be kept on file in the Athletic Department Office.

**Medical Release Authorization:** Each athlete's parent shall complete an emergency Medical Release Authorization form, giving permission for treatment by a physician or hospital when the parent(s) are not available. The form will be kept with each coach so that they are available at each practice and contest.

**Parental Acknowledgement of Athletic Policies:** Upon entering middle school are at the time a student tries out for an athletic team, he/she will be presented with necessary forms and information for participating in athletics. Each parent or guardian and athlete shall read all of the enclosed material and certify that they understand the athletic eligibility, rules and policies of the school. This signed document will be filed in the Athletic Department.

**Scholastic Eligibility:** In order to participate on a SMCS athletic team, each athlete must have satisfied all the scholastic eligibility requirements prior to participation. Furthermore, any student who is in violation of the school's disciplinary policies is not eligible to participate in interscholastic sports at SMCS. Any student whose conduct or appearance is not in compliance with the school's policy may be declared ineligible by the Administration for an indefinite period.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

To be eligible for athletics, the middle school athlete must be in compliance with the SMCS policies concerning extracurricular eligibility and the rules and regulations of the Archdiocese Interscholastic Athletic League (AIAL). Individual sports may adopt rules and regulations, with administrative approval, regarding expectations and requirements for students participating in that particular sport. These policies, once signed by the parent and student, become an extension of the student/parent handbook.

- Must be enrolled in St. Matthew Catholic School
- Must have a 70 or better cumulative average of all subjects and are not failing more than one subject at progress report grading periods
- Must maintain 75 or better cumulative average of all subjects and no grade lower than a 70 in any subject at report card grading periods
- Students trying out for a fall sport must be a student in good standing at the time of the team tryouts.
- All applicable athletic fees must be paid in full prior to the first game/competition of the season
- Athletes must be marked present in school the entire day in order to be eligible to participate in games/competition or practice later that same afternoon or evening\*\*

- Any student missing more than 2hrs. (120 minutes) of the school day is marked absent for that day.
- If a student misses classes on a Friday, they will be eligible to participate in Saturday or Sunday events as deemed appropriate by the sport's coach.

\*\*The only exceptions are school sponsored or approved activities. Parents need to keep this in mind when scheduling appointments.

## INELIGIBILITY

If a student becomes ineligible, due to grades, he/she may not participate in practice or games until the deficiency is removed at the next progress report or report card grading period whichever comes first. A student may not try out for a sport if they do not meet the academic requirements for eligibility as outlined in the Eligibility section above. If a student is unable to try out, they will be ineligible for the full season even if they rectify the grade deficiency. If a student becomes ineligible for other reasons such as misconduct, the coach and/or administration will make a determination of the consequences up to and including permanent removal from the team.

**A student athlete who serves an In-School Suspension will receive a one game suspension to be served on the first game after the ISS is issued to the student.**

## TEAM SELECTION PROCESS

The purpose of tryouts is to fairly evaluate all student athletes on their talent, sportsmanship and knowledge of the game. All in attendance will be fairly evaluated by using a rating system that will rank each athlete in several categories that pertain to each sport tryout. The date and number of days the tryout will be conducted will be determined by the published AIAL calendar, Athletic Director and School Principal.

***Categories will be determined by each coach and approved by the Athletic Director for that sport.***

Athletes trying out for each sport must attend all posted tryout dates. Failure to attend all tryout dates will disqualify you from making the final roster for that sport.

In the event a student is ill and not able to attend school or has to leave school because of an illness, the athletic department will allow the student to try out as long as they are able to attend 2 of the 3 posted try out dates. Failing to attend 2 of the 3 try out dates will disqualify them from the try out. This applies to illnesses that fall under the current school policy that requires them to be kept home due to health department guidelines. Each situation will be reviewed and handled on an

individual basis by the Athletic Director, School Nurse and Principal.

There are no guarantees that a student, trying out for a team, will make the squad, regardless of grade level or prior participation on a school team. In the event a student fails to demonstrate the efforts and attitude expected of a player or should the coach believe the student could not safely participate in the sport, then the student may not be placed on the team. The coach, athletic director and principal must approve final rosters for all sports before being sent to the AIAL office.

Each player will be given a number prior to tryout. **A tryout worksheet will be kept to document scores and notes during the evaluations.** This will help coaches to identify and select players in accordance with their abilities. The worksheet is solely a tool to assist the coaching staff with making final team selections. Team selection results are considered personal in nature and will only be disclosed to St. Matthew School coaching staff and administration.

## **ST. MATTHEW CATHOLIC SCHOOL ATHLETIC HANDBOOK**

Sport	Grades Allowed to Try-Out	Number of Teams
Football - 11 man / 6 man	6th - 7th - 8th	A Team
Volleyball	6th - 7th - 8th	A & B Team
Soccer	6th - 7th - 8th	A Team
Cross Country	6th - 7th - 8th	A & B Team
Basketball - Boys	6th - 7th - 8th	A & B Team
Basketball - Girls	6th - 7th - 8th	A & B Team
Tennis	6th - 7th - 8th	A Team
Golf	6th - 7th - 8th	A Team
Baseball	6th - 7th - 8th	A Team
Softball	6th - 7th - 8th	A Team
Track & Field	6th - 7th - 8th	A & B Team
Cheerleading	6th - 7th - 8th	A Team

All participating in the tryout have an equal chance to make the team. Available slots will be filled with any combination of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

**AIAL regulations stipulate that 8<sup>th</sup> grade students may only participate on “A” teams. Clarification: A 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> grade athlete can be selected over an 8<sup>th</sup> grade athlete for a roster spot.**

## **TEAM COMMITMENT**

All absences will be either excused or unexcused.

**Excused absences:** Illness, death in the family or a family emergency. If a student gets ill during the school day and goes home, their absence will be excused. If a student feels ill and stays in school, they should go to practice. If their illness gets worse, then the coach can excuse them to go home.

**Unexcused absences:** When a student/athlete gets an unexcused absence from practice, they will become ineligible for one game. In addition, players will be required to attend the competition, dressed and must sit on the team bench as teammates normally do. When a student gets a second unexcused absence from practice, parents will be notified by phone, that one more unexcused absence from practice will result in that student's removal from the program. As a result, the player will again be required to miss one game with the same conditions as stated above. When a student gets an unexcused absence from a contest (misses a game), they will be immediately removed from the program and parents will be notified by phone.

**Tardiness** will also be either excused or unexcused. The coach will have the authority to decide whether a tardy is excused or not.” As a reinforcement measure, please make time to discuss these guidelines with your daughter or son. Players are expected to be on time to classes, practices, and meetings. Tardiness will not be tolerated. Corrective action will be taken by the coach. An ensuing tardy will result in the same consequence as an unexcused missed practice.

**Quitting a Sport** - The Athletic Department feels that a student has made a commitment to the school, team and coach. His or her quitting has disrupted team unity and deprived another student of participating. Any student, who remains on a team, and after minor disciplinary action, continues to demonstrate poor team morale can be dismissed by the coach with the approval of the Director of Athletics and be subject to the same suspension. The Athletic Department feels strongly that a student makes a serious commitment to a team before trying out for a sport. When an athlete quits the team to which he / she has been selected, he/she forfeits trying out or participating in another sport until the completion of the previous sport.

**Disciplinary Procedures** - Disciplinary infractions of school rules while in attendance at, or while being transferred to or from, an athletic event come

under the jurisdiction of the regular school disciplinary procedures. The head coach must inform the Principal and the Director of Athletics of such infractions. The head coach may add to the punishment from the school but cannot bypass ordinary procedures.

Since discipline is a vital ingredient to a team's success, athletes can be disciplined for the following infractions:

- Unexcused absence from practice or game
- Failure to attend team meetings
- Being tardy to a practice
- Lack of sportsmanship
- Failure to contribute your best effort
- Disciplinary reasons for missing practice are not excused
- Breaking training rules.

Sanctioned disciplinary procedures include:

- Suspension or expulsion from the team (only instituted with permission from the Head Coach of the sport and Director of Athletics).
- Benching (sitting out of practice or game as designated by coach).
- Extra physical activity (i.e. push-ups).

**NOTE:** A SMCS athlete who leaves the bench area to join in an altercation during a contest will be suspended from the team and subject to dismissal from the Athletic Program and the school, if after an investigation it is found that the student participated in such.

Another setback can occur with untimely injuries to players. Some of these injuries occur because of non-school team sports participation during the season. (Club, tournaments, etc) **While players are encouraged to participate in club sports, parents and players must understand that school athletics will take precedence over club athletics.** Similarly, if there is a conflict with another school sport, it is recommended that the parents and player decide which school sport is a priority.

It is the parents' sole responsibility to pick up their children after team practices are finished for the day. If a practice concludes at 5:00 pm their child will be dropped off at the school's After School Care Program after 5:15 pm. Parents will need to pay the costs of this care program. Most of the St. Matthew School coaches are volunteers or are not paid enough to wait and sit with your children for you. Parents are asked to be considerate and arrive on time in order to pick up their children after practices. This way coaches who conduct practices that finish after 6:00 pm will not have to sit with children until parents arrive. Please know that most of our coaches have other jobs and many need to go to work after their practices conclude.

# PERFORMANCE AND PLAYING TIME

The St. Matthew Catholic School Athletic Program is a competitive program. The coaches of each sport have full discretion when determining playing time and control of continued membership on a particular team. Discussion with the coach or Athletic Director regarding concerns of playing time should follow protocol on page 87 (Sports Policy).

SMCS Athletic Program is to assist students in the development of Christian character through their participation in sports. The student-athlete shall learn:

- To work with others. In a democratic society a person must develop self-discipline, Respect for authority, and the spirit of hard work and sacrifice. The team and its objectives must be placed higher than personal desires.
- To be successful. Our society is very competitive. We do not always win, but we succeed when we continually strive to do so. You can learn to accept defeat only by striving to win with earnest dedication.
- To develop sportsmanship. To accept any defeat like a true sportsman, knowing we have done our best, we must learn to treat others as we would have others treat us. We need to develop desirable social traits, including emotional control, honesty, cooperation and dependability.
- To improve. Continual improvement is an essential component of good citizenship. As an athlete, you must establish a goal and you must constantly try to achieve that goal. Try to improve in the skills and knowledge required and those personal traits that enhance the success of a team.
- To enjoy athletics. It is necessary for athletes to enjoy participation, to acknowledge all of the personal rewards to be derived from athletics, and to give sufficiently of themselves in order to persevere and improve the program.
- To develop desirable personal health habits. To be an active, contributing citizen, it is important to obtain a high degree of physical fitness through exercise and good health habits, and to develop the desire to maintain this level of physical fitness after formal competition has been completed.

**Athletic events and practices are not the time or place to express concerns or conduct discussions of a personal nature with coaches or school personnel and such will not be tolerated.** Concerns should be brought to the attention of the athletic director within 24 hours and a response will be received within a week's time.

## SPORTS TEAMS

### FOOTBALL

- The Football program is open to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- St. Matthew will field only one Football team
- Must have a current physical on file with the Athletic Department
- In the past there has not been a tryout for the team unless the number of participants exceeds a manageable number. At that time the Team Selection Process will be followed to determine a final roster. Number of participants will be determined by the Head Coach and Athletic Director.
- Must read and sign the St. Matthew Athletic Contract after being selected to the team
- All sports fee's must be paid prior to the start of any game competition

### VOLLEYBALL

- The Volleyball program is open to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students
- St. Matthew will field two teams ( "A" & "B" teams) see Sports Policy section for team structure
- Must have a current physical on file with the Athletic Department
- Team rosters and the number of roster spots will be determined by the Head Coach and Athletic Director at the conclusion of tryouts.
- Tryouts will follow the Team Selection Process which will determine team final rosters
- All Volleyball tryouts and practices are closed to only athletes, coaches and school administrators.
- Must read and sign the St. Matthew Athletic Contract after being selected to the team
- All sports fee's must be paid prior to the start of any game competition

### SOCCER

- The Soccer program is open to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students
- St. Matthew will field one "A" team see Sports Policy section for team structure
- Must have a current Physical on file with the Athletic Department
- Team rosters and the number of roster spots will be determined by the Head Coach and Athletic Director at the conclusion of tryouts.
- Tryouts will follow the Team Selection Process which will determine team

final rosters

- Must read and sign the St. Matthew Athletic Contract after being selected to the team
- All sports fee's must be paid prior to the start of any game competition

## CROSS COUNTRY

- The Cross Country program is open to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students
- St. Matthew will field an "A" & "B" team see Sports Policy section for team structure
- Must have a current Physical on file with the Athletic Department
- Everyone is encouraged to participate (Athletic Director will evaluate participation numbers each season)
- Team rosters and the number of roster spots will be determined by the Head Coach and Athletic Director if a tryout is warranted
- Must read and sign the St. Matthew Athletic Contract after being selected to the team
- All sports fee's must be paid prior to the start of any game competition

## BASKETBALL

- The Basketball program is open to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students
- St. Matthew will field four teams ( "A" & "B" boys team) & ("A" & "B" girls team) see Sports Policy section for team structure
- Must have a current physical on file with the Athletic Department
- Team rosters and the number of roster spots will be determined by the Head Coach and Athletic Director at the conclusion of tryouts.
- Tryouts will follow the Team Selection Process which will determine team final rosters
- All Basketball tryouts and practices are closed to only athletes, coaches and school administrators.
- Must read and sign the St. Matthew Athletic Contract after being selected to the team
- All sports fee's must be paid prior to the start of any game competition

## BASEBALL

- The Baseball program is open to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students
- St. Matthew will field one "A" team see Sports Policy section for team

#### *structure*

- Must have a current Physical on file with the Athletic Department
- Team rosters and the number of roster spots will be determined by the Head Coach and Athletic Director at the conclusion of tryouts.
- Tryouts will follow the Team Selection Process which will determine team final rosters
- Must read and sign the St. Matthew Athletic Contract after being selected to the team
- All sports fee's must be paid prior to the start of any game competition

## **SOFTBALL**

- The Softball program is open to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students
- St. Matthew will field one "A" team see Sports Policy section for team structure
- Must have a current Physical on file with the Athletic Department
- Team rosters and the number of roster spots will be determined by the Head Coach and Athletic Director at the conclusion of tryouts.
- Tryouts will follow the Team Selection Process which will determine team final rosters
- Must read and sign the St. Matthew Athletic Contract after being selected to the team
- All sports fee's must be paid prior to the start of any game competition

## **TRACK**

- The Track program is open to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students
- St. Matthew will field four teams ( "A" & "B" boys team) & ("A" & "B" girls team) see Sports Policy section for team structure
- Must have a current Physical on file with the Athletic Department
- Everyone is encouraged to participate (Athletic Director will evaluate participation numbers each season)
- Team rosters and the number of roster spots will be determined by the Head Coach and Athletic Director at the conclusion of tryouts.
- Must read and sign the St. Matthew Athletic Contract after being selected to the team
- All sports fee's must be paid prior to the start of any game competition

## **TENNIS**

- The Tennis program is open to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students
- St. Matthew will field one tennis team.
- Must have a current Physical on file with the Athletic Department

- Everyone is encouraged to participate (Athletic Director will evaluate participation numbers each season)
- Tryouts will follow the Team Selection Process which will determine team final rosters
- Team rosters and the number of roster spots will be determined by the Head Coach and Athletic Director at the conclusion of tryouts.
- Must read and sign the St. Matthew Athletic Contract after being selected to the team
- All sports fee's must be paid prior to the start of any game competition

## GOLF

- The Golf program is open to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students
- St. Matthew will field one golf team
- At this time St. Matthew is unable to provide an environment of instruction and practice. Individuals who wish to compete may do so utilizing their own practice time and coaching
- St. Matthew will enter any individual in the AIAL District golf tournament as long as the athlete is able to demonstrate they can play on their own and have a full understanding of the rules of golf.
- St. Matthew Athletic Director will evaluate the individuals to assure their acceptance into the tournament.

## CHEERLEADERS

### St. Matthew Catholic School

#### 2023-2024 Cheer/Mascot Contract/Handbook

The St. Matthew Cheerleading Program is under the supervision of the Principal, Athletic Director, Cheerleading Advisor/Sponsor, and Cheerleading Coach. The squad's responsibilities will include practices, pep rallies, athletic games (both home and away for some sports), competitions, and group events.

Our goal for SMC Cheer is to develop strong, kind, responsible and confident individuals. High standards and expectations will be set to help teach accountability, mutual support, respect, and commitment.

### Purpose

The purpose of the cheer team is to support curricular and extracurricular activities of St. Matthew Catholic School. Cheerleaders and mascots should promote good sportsmanship, good citizenship, and school spirit. Cheerleaders are first and foremost **representatives** of the school. It is an honor to become an SMC Cheerleader/Mascot.

Cheerleaders, including mascots should exemplify both individual and group behavior suitable to their position and in accordance with the rules as stated in the St. Matthew Catholic School Student Handbook. Members have a responsibility to play a leadership role in school activities, and because of these expectations, members are expected to maintain a higher standard of academic achievement and behavior both on and off campus.

## **Membership**

Membership is open to any incoming enrolled 6th, 7th, or 8th grade student who is eligible and meets the requirements for St. Matthew Athletic Contract. In addition to cheerleading, students may **only** participate in the following school sports/activities; cross-country, basketball, track, tennis, golf, and softball/baseball.

**Cheerleaders cannot participate in both school Cheer and school Volleyball due to conflicting practice/game schedules.**

Captains- these positions will be determined by Sponsor and coach. Only returning members going into 8th grade may hold this leadership position, or any returners if no 8th grade members on the team. In any given year, the coaches, sponsor and staff reserve the right to not elect captains for the team.

\*Prospective Captains may be placed on a probation period.

\*Captains will be responsible for leading the team and will set a good example for team members.

\* If standards are not met, the sponsor and coach may revoke the captain position.

## **Members must-**

- Adhere to all rules stated in the St. Matthew Catholic Student Handbook/Cheer Handbook

\*Respect the right of others

\*Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated.

\*Disrespect in any way may lead to consequences.

*Responsibilities officially begin on the day results are announced and remain in effect until the final event of the following school year.*

## **Financial Responsibility**

Parents/guardians are financially responsible for purchasing all uniforms and accessories.

Parents/guardians are required to make prompt payment. A delay in payment may cause members to sit out, miss cheer camp, probation or removal from the team.

A monthly fee of \$80/cheer (\$40/mascot) will be collected through FACTS during months of April, May and June, then restart Aug-Feb.

If a member decides to withdraw from the cheer team, they are responsible for the month Sponsor is notified. Sponsor will contact the business office to stop payment starting the following month. If we are not notified, payment will continue to be drafted.

Please let Sponsor know if you have any questions or if you prefer to speak in person.

## Seasons

The cheer year begins the day of selection and runs throughout the summer and school year until the end of winter sports.

There may be additional opportunities for practice and performance in the spring.

For reference:

- Spring/Summer: First day of practice until end of Cheer Camp or coaches schedule
- Fall-Football/Volleyball: Week prior to school until early November
- Winter-Soccer/ Basketball

## Academic Requirements

Members of the SMC Cheer team will be held to the standards of all student-athletes.

**It is the priority of the SMC Cheer Program and St. Matthew Catholic School administration to put school studies before extracurricular activities.**

Cheerleaders will be held subject to the same grade-check calendar used for Fall and Winter programs. This calendar is developed by the Athletic Director. At the time of grade checks, members of the team must meet or exceed standard.

*Receiving discipline notice due to grades or behavior may result in additional disciplinary actions, per circumstances.*

## Eligibility

To be eligible for athletics, the middle school athlete must be in compliance with the SMCS policies concerning extracurricular eligibility and the rules and regulations of the Archdiocese Interscholastic Athletic League (AIAL). Individual sports may adopt rules and regulations, with administrative approval, regarding expectations and requirements for students participating in that particular sport. These policies, once signed by the parent and student, become an extension of the student/parent handbook.

- Must have a 70 or better cumulative average of all subjects and are not failing more than one subject at progress report grading period  
Must maintain 75 or better cumulative average of all subjects and no
- grade lower than a 70 in any subject at report card grading periods

Athletes must be marked present in school the entire day in order to be eligible to participate in games/competition or practice later that same afternoon or evening\*\*

\*\*The only exceptions are school sponsored or approved activities. Parents need to keep this in mind when scheduling appointments.

Those who have not met eligibility, and do not raise their academic status by the end of the grading period, may be removed from the team and may become ineligible to tryout the following year.

## **Social Media**

Social Media is everywhere and allows communication to flow within seconds. Any member who chooses to maintain a profile on social media apps or websites must use it responsibly and with discretion.

Student-athletes that are posting offensive, inappropriate, or derogatory statements or pictures will be held responsible for their actions and may be subject to immediate removal from the team. Social media postings of any sort will not be allowed during games, competitions, practices, etc. Any postings during this time will have consequences.

Members must understand that he/she is not only representing herself/himself, but is a direct representation of the SMC Cheer Team, St. Matthew School/Community and his/her own family at all times.

Members should not be posting, saying or mouthing out anything on social media that they do not want their coaches, parents, or St. Matthew Administration seeing or reading.

**The way participants conduct themselves, in and out of uniform, directly reflects our entire team.**

## **Attendance Regulations**

Attendance is crucial to team success and members are expected to be at every practice and game on time. One person being absent affects the entire team. It is important not to inconvenience the practice time of the entire team by being late or absent.

Missed Practices will result in a loss of cheer time and a consequence. It will be the responsibility of the athlete to communicate with the coach or sponsor for reasons they will not attend practice/game/events.

Team members are expected to attend ALL events as scheduled. Advance notice and appropriate reason(s) are expected for all missed events. Absences occurring leading up to or directly in advance of a performance (halftime performance, pep rally, parade, etc.) may impact one's ability to participate.

Unexcused absences, excessive tardiness, and failure to communicate scheduling issues promptly with the coach/Sponsor is unacceptable, and may result in consequences during the season. Members of the cheer team should expect 2-5 (practices, games, etc.) per week. The schedule will be set in advance and the coach will do her best to stay to that, however it is always subject to change.

**Missing a scheduled St. Matthew practice, game, or other activity because of participation in an All Star team. School duties must come first. Dismissal from the team may occur if the coach feels necessary.**

\*Personal illness, or school related activities **will be excused.**

\*Family vacations, parties, celebrations, **will be unexcused.**

If unable to attend a required practice or function (excused or unexcused), an email, personal message on BAND, text or call from a parent must be submitted to the cheerleading coach/sponsor.

Members who are absent from practice on the week of a performance, their performance ability will be determined by the coaches.

Members who are absent from school on the day of an event, will not be allowed to perform.

If for some reason practice is canceled, we will notify the parents and athletes as soon as we know about the change. It is important to check your Band App frequently.

Gym is closed during practice times. If you are needing to speak with the coach, please message her on the BAND app. If you are needing to speak to your child, message Coach on BAND or message Sponsor via text, email or call. We will relay messages as quickly as possible.

**Injured team members are still expected to attend practice and events and should be under the care of a doctor. A note may be asked for at any time.**

Team members who miss a practice for any reason will be responsible to obtain the material covered on their own time.

Team members are expected to stay for the entirety of a scheduled event and should not expect to leave without Coach/ Sponsor authorization .

Members must understand that all practices, performances, and other events take precedence over all other activities outside of SMC Cheer.

## **Spring Practices**

Spring Practices begin on April 3, every Monday and Wednesday from 3:30-5:45/school gym (April-May). Monthly calendars with practices/games/events will be posted/provided.

Fall Practices will begin the week before the start of school. Practice days will increase to 3 days a week, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Practices are not an option- ALL practices are mandatory.

Members are required to wear appropriate assigned practice wear.

No jewelry can be worn during any practices, games or performances. Members must not get any new piercings until **after** the completion of the season. Members must remove all jewelry, including new piercings for practices, games, and scheduled events.

Members shall NOT be talking or disruptive while the coach, sponsor, choreographers, or captains are speaking or teaching.

## Games

The SMC Cheer team will cheer at ALL home and away **football** games, and will alternate/share HOME halftime performances with SMC Dance team/Spirit Squad. We also cheer at HOME volleyball, basketball, and soccer games. Cheer will also attend AWAY games during playoffs and championship games only.

All scheduled games are mandatory. Cheerleaders will be expected to show up to games on time. Each team member is required to bring ALL PIECES of the uniform to all games and performances. Any team member without a required piece of their uniform may not be able to perform at that game or performance. Members must be in full dress prior to the start of an event.

Jewelry is a prohibited accessory.

The following are non-negotiables when it comes to expectations during all performances, including gameday sideline:

- No talking or playing around among members
- No talking to people in the crowd
- Members must pay attention to the game
- Stand in the correct formation and stance
- Cheer/spirit, jumping, kicks, and tumbling must be exhibited the entire time as directed.
- \* Eating or chewing gum

**Cell phones** will not be allowed at any cheer event, including practice, games and cheer camp! Phones distract team members and practice time is limited. Phones must always be in your bag/backpack during any cheer event. If there is a water break you will not be able to look at your phone. Coaches/Sponsor will collect phones during camp. They can and will be collected at games, fundraisers and events if seen as a distraction. Parents will always be able to reach team members through coach/sponsor.

## Competition

All competitions that the team is attending are MANDATORY. During competitions, cheerleaders are to stay with their team and coaches at all times. If a parent or guardian is in need of their child for any reason, they must text the coach or sponsor.

The cheer team will compete in The Cheer For Christ Competition hosted by the Archdiocese.

## Uniforms/Practice Wear

Administration, Sponsor and Coach will approve all uniforms. This includes camp wear, practice and formal uniforms. In addition, all other accessory items like bows, shoes, pom-poms, warm-up wear, or sweatshirts, etc.

\*Hair will be worn in unison, decided by the coach.

\* Inspection of uniforms, make-up, hair, and shoes will be held before any performance.

Any loss or damage of the uniform will be the responsibility of the cheer/mascot team member to replace and pay for as soon as possible.

It is the responsibility of each member to take proper care of his/her uniform.

## Tumbling

It is not mandatory, however **highly recommended** that each squad member take a tumbling class at a local gym. (Alamo Gymnastics, Cheer-riffic Techniques, San Antonio Spirit, etc.)

## Fundraisers

All Members and parents will take part in fundraising events.

\*SMC Cheer Clinic

\*Homecoming Program Ad Sales

Each member is expected, unless noted otherwise, to attend and participate in select community service events. Members may gain service hours in participating in certain events- ex., Any Baby Can, Autism Walk, Wreaths Across America, Elf Louise, Blanket donation for Hospice patients

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Team will also represent St. Matthew Catholic School at different school events throughout the school year, ex. Christmas Tree Lighting, Fall Festival.

Monies raised will benefit the cheer program, and may be used for the following;  
camp deposit, competition fees, Christmas gifts, 8th grade gifts, End of year party.

**\*\*\* We plan to host 2 fundraisers to help with cost but we cannot guarantee that fundraising alone will cover all costs.**

## General Expectations

The cheer year is long, and can be stressful, tiring and hard. By remembering the following tips, team members will be in a good position to succeed:

- Everyone must have self-motivation and self-discipline throughout the entire year.
- Work as a team not individuals: when something goes right, it is done together.

When something goes wrong, it was done together

- Mistakes happen. Playing the blame game will not help anybody.
- Never stop practicing. If a team member is not currently in the stunt being practiced, they should be spotting, stretching, or perfecting other elements as directed by the coaching staff.
- Work hard. Each member has earned their place on the team because they met certain ability requirements. When asked to practice an element, practice and perform to the best of your ability.

## **Coach/Cheer program**

The coach will act in good judgment and make decisions for the good of the team as a whole. It is not possible to please all team members all the time and have 100% agreement by everyone.

It is understood that the coaching staff has the authority to override any decision made within the team as needed in order to maintain the team's best interest, not an individual's best interest.

The coach will have the final say in all matters.

Members or parents, who have questions or concerns are encouraged to discuss the matter directly with the coach. The coaching staff will work with the Sponsor on any issues/concerns. The coach reserves the right to augment these guidelines as deemed necessary and all rules are subject to change.

**The SMCS Student/Parent Handbook applies to all athletes and their behavior during practice and competition since these are school-related activities. The consequences for any violation of the SMCS Student/Parent Handbook are listed in that document; Cheerleaders will receive the same consequences for misconduct as an athlete.**

Some elements of the St. Matthew School Athletic Manual have been adopted from other educational institution athletic programs.