

St. Gerard School Athletics Policy Handbook

July, 2016

St. Gerard Athletics Philosophy Statement

St. Gerard Parish Athletics seeks to complement the home, church and school in the development of the “whole child”. Activities of the programs are for the benefit of the children, suited to their age and stage of development. The goals of the St. Gerard Athletics program are:

1. To encourage maximum participation of students in all sports sponsored by St. Gerard.
2. To provide enjoyable athletic activities which develop Christian attitudes of sportsmanship and fair play that can be sustained into adulthood.
3. To instill the habits of healthful living through physical fitness.
4. To encourage participants to learn the values of responsibility, dedication, loyalty, teamwork, desire, humility, confidence and other desirable traits of good character.

As valuable as extra-curricular and co-curricular activities are to students, academic instruction and faith formation are even more important and must be the top priorities.

Athletic leaders, directors, coaches, adult advisors, and interested parents must see themselves as being engaged in a ministry to children and youth. They are engaged in an educational effort that can contribute to strong character formation.

Athletics and athletic competition can contribute to the development of the total child by being the proving grounds for the formal teaching, which takes place in the church, classroom and home.

Administration

The pastor of St. Gerard Parish has final authority over all athletic programs operated under parish auspices. The principal of St. Gerard School is designated as the primary authority over athletic programs operated under parish auspices. The principal delegates responsibility for coordinating sports programs and supervising coaches to the athletic director. The athletic director is responsible for monitoring teaching techniques, relationships between coaches and teams, safety precautions, and overall conduct. The athletic director is directly responsible to the principal of the school and ultimately responsible to the pastor of the parish. The athletic director has a written job description, which is on file in the school office.

Advisory Bodies

The athletic committee is the subcommittee of the education commission and is charged with the operation of the athletic programs. It is the responsibility of the athletic committee to report to the education commission. The parish education commission has the responsibility to review all athletic policies being proposed by the athletic committee and to make appropriate recommendations to the principal and to the pastor of the parish.

All athletic policies must have written approval of the pastor before implementation and then should be reported to the education commission, athletic committee and the administrators of the program.

Affiliation

St. Gerard is a member of the Catholic Youth Activities Conference (CYAC) and abides by the rules and regulations of the Conference as amended from time to time and as augmented by the policies contained in this handbook. Discrepancies between the Conference rules and this handbook, shall be resolved by the principal and athletic director in a timely manner. Any discrepancies between the conference rules and this handbook shall be published and disclosed to the Athletic Committee and the Education Commission of St. Gerard Parish. The CYAC events are open events that could be photographed by the conference and posted on the website. No names would be included.

Coaches

Coaches are appointed by the athletic director. A team should have a head coach and an assistant coach to insure that two adults age 18 or older are present with the students at all times. Coaches have to be 18 and one of the two must be 21 or older. The coach bears the greatest burden of responsibility for sportsmanship. His/her influence upon the attitudes and behavior of the players and spectators is critical. In order for good sportsmanship to become a reality, it is essential that the coach subscribe to the values of good sportsmanship and teach those values in word and deed. Behavior that violates the spirit and intent of the Diocesan Guidelines, Conference rules or this handbook may subject a coach to dismissal or other disciplinary action. In addition to the specific duties assigned by the athletic director, the coach:

1. Must set a good example for others to follow, exhibiting a Christian manner in speech and action and upholding the morals of the Catholic Church.
2. Must teach the value of an honest effort in conforming to the spirit as well as the letter of the rules.
3. Must instruct the players in their responsibilities for displaying good sportsmanship.
4. Must discipline those students who display unsportsmanlike behavior, including forfeiture of the privilege of representing the school and parish.
5. Must respect the official's judgment and interpretation of the rules and must refrain from public protests which may lead to similar behavior from players and spectators.
6. Must publicly shake hands with the officials and the opposing coach before and after the contest.

Additionally, the parish expects a coach to:

1. Contribute to the educational and physical development of each member of the team.
2. Work toward a better understanding of the principles of instructing youth and work to improve his/her teaching as well as coaching skills.
3. Be loyal to superiors in making athletics fit into parish life.
4. Insist upon a high level of scholarship and enforcement of all eligibility rules.

5. Notify school athletic director immediately in the event of an unexcused absence. The will notify parents of consequences.

Attendance policy

Participation in St. Gerard Athletics is a privilege. Students are expected to attend, be on time and stay the entire time for all practices and games during the program season, unless, he/she is excused by the coach or athletic director. **These rules apply to all St. Gerard School sponsored sports in grades 5-8.**

Excused absences include illness, family emergencies, and other St. Gerard school sponsored activities such as band, choir, drama, or special school programs. 24 hour advanced notice of school activities to coach is required.

If a player is absent from school and therefore too ill to attend practice the parent must call the coach before practice.

If a player leaves school early due to illness, he/she will not be eligible to practice or play that day after school.

If a player is suspended from school, he/she may not practice or play in a game until he/she returns to school. This absence is considered unexcused and the player will automatically be suspended from the next game no matter what day of the week their suspension is on.

If a student is not well enough to participate in physical education class, they will not be allowed to participate in any St. Gerard or Junior Cougar affiliated sporting events that day.

The First **Unexcused absence** will result in the following consequences:

- For Basketball: 1 Unexcused = Suspension for 1st Quarter of next game. 1st Quarter player is ruled ineligible. Eligibility rules apply after the 1st Quarter.
- For Volleyball: 1 Unexcused = Suspension for the 1st Game of a Tri-Meet - 1st Game player is ruled ineligible. Eligibility rules apply after the 1st Game.

The Second **Unexcused absence** result in the player missing:

- For Basketball = Suspension for the 1st half of the next game. 1st half player is ruled ineligible. Eligibility rules apply after the 1st half.
- For Volleyball= Suspension for the next 2 games of a Tri-Meet. Player is ineligible for the first two games. Eligibility rules apply after the 2 games.

Three **Unexcused absences** result in:

- A meeting with the Athletic Director, St. Gerard Administrator, the coach and parents of the player which may result in the player asked to resign from the team.

Scheduled /Optional Practices

Teams are allowed 3 practices a week prior to the start of the games. Once the games start only 2 practices plus games are allowed per week.

On special occasions a coach may determine the need for additional practices outside of the normal scheduled practice time. While every effort should be made to attend these practices as part of a commitment to a team, it is understood that other family commitments may prevent a student from attending. Although they are not mandatory, the parent must call the coach to excuse the student from the optional practice.

Practices held over school vacation periods or holidays shall be considered optional and students will not be penalized for missing these practices.

Due to the sacredness of Sunday mornings and to allow our families ample opportunity to attend Mass together, games and practices will not be scheduled during any regular Mass times, or Holy Day evenings.

If school is cancelled for any reason; all school activities for that day and night will also be cancelled. See CYAC Handbook.

Teams are not allowed to practice at any other facilities except for another Catholic School. Due to liability, our programs are only covered for facilities within the Diocese.

Physical Examinations

All student athletes must have on file with the administration and/or athletic director, a current certificate of physical examination after April 15 of each year, written permission of parents or legal guardian to participate, and proof of medical insurance coverage in order to participate in a St. Gerard sport.

Eligibility to Participate

Eligibility to participate in the sports program at St. Gerard Parish is as follows:

St. Gerard School students are eligible to participate provided they meet the academic requirements contained herein.

Children of parishioners who are not St. Gerard School students are eligible to play provided they are enrolled in and regularly attend Religious Education classes prior to and during the St. Gerard Sport season. Regular attendance at religious education classes will be defined as missing no more than 2 classes in the semester leading into the sports season. The principal of the school has the authority to excuse an absence based on extenuating circumstances. Students in religious education at St. Gerard must try out for their school team first before being allowed to participate in sports at St. Gerard, if these sports are played at the same time.

Academic Eligibility

Students must meet the following academic eligibility requirements:

Grades and the resulting eligibility will be reported to the coaching staff midway through each academic quarter. If a student is failing any major subject (religion, science, math, social studies, English, literature, spelling) and that failure is accompanied by an unsatisfactory grade in effort or conduct, the student will be declared ineligible. Once a student is declared ineligible that student's grades will be rechecked after two weeks. If the student remains ineligible, the student will be ineligible until the next normal reporting time, which would be either midterm or the end of the academic quarter.

Coaches may not play an individual whose eligibility is in question unless that coach receives notice of eligibility from the athletic director or school administrator.

Students who are declared ineligible may practice with the team at the discretion of their parents and coach. Students may not dress for any game per conference rules until declared eligible.

The above requirements pertain to fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. However, parents of all student athletes, regardless of grade may remove a child from athletic participation for academic reasons.

Extenuating circumstances will be dealt with on an individual basis, by the school administrator.

Technical Foul Rule

If a player gets called for a technical foul because of behavior during a game, that player will be suspended for the following game. The player must be present on the bench during that game but may not dress. There is no appeal.

If a coach gets called for a personal/technical foul for behavior during a game, they will be suspended from coaching the next game. The coach may attend the game as a spectator only. The coach cannot be present on the bench, in the locker room or any other coaching capacity. There is no appeal.

Student Participation

St. Gerard encourages maximum participation of students in the athletic programs. In keeping with this philosophy, the following guidelines have been established. We will be following CYAC rules.

Basketball

Fifth and Sixth Grade

If participation reaches 18 students, teams may be split into two teams. If participation reaches 27 students, teams may be split into 3 teams.

Playing Time

Playing Time is determined by the Catholic Youth League Rules:
<http://www.lansingcyac.org/>.

Seventh and Eighth Grade

If participation reaches a 16 student team, that team may be split into two teams. If participation reaches a 24 student team, that team may be split into 3 teams.

Playing Time

Playing Time is determined by the Catholic Youth League Rules:
<http://www.lansingcyac.org/>.

Every player dressed for the game must play a minimum of four minutes in every game.

Volleyball

There shall be a maximum of 15 players on a team. If participation reaches 16 players the team will be split into two. There will be two combinations of girls, 5th/6th graders on a team and 7th/8th graders on a team. Each player on the team must play at least one of the first two sets in the match unless there are circumstances that do not allow a player to play. There is no minimum playing time in volleyball.

Cheerleading

Cheerleading is offered for seventh and eighth grade. There shall be a minimum of 4 students to make a squad.

****A no-cut policy, other than for disciplinary reasons, shall be the norm observed in all athletic programs.**