

St. Paul's Lutheran School  
Athletic Handbook

Revised 2018



# Part One: Mission

## Philosophy

St. Paul's Lutheran School has adopted the mission slogan, "Honor the Game, Honor Christ!" Parents, coaches, school leaders, and players alike all have important roles in developing and maintaining a positive, nurturing, and fun environment.

## Environment

It is important to remember the idea that students at this level should still be considered part of the "Development Zone". (Thompson, Jim. *Developing Better Athletes, Better People*. 2013.) To quickly summarize, the Development Zone creates an environment different from the entertainment sports culture where the scoreboard, the quality of the officiating, and the "win at all costs" mentality tend to receive great emphasis and focus. In the Development Zone Environment, we adopt the mentality that we have to coach, compete, parent, and cheer in a manner that is different from high school, college, and professional levels.

The environment we wish to create is one that reflects our league theme. Here is what it means to "**Honor the Game, Honor Christ!**" at St. Paul's Lutheran School and how we want our environment to look and sound:

### **Environment for Coaches: Be a Double-Goal Coach!**

The primary goal is teaching life lessons through sports. The secondary goal is winning the game. Coaches will practice the "ROOTS" principle to accomplish these goals, and will work to instill these values in their student-athletes:

- **Rules:** Do not bend the rules to win, even if you can get away with it.
- **Opponents:** An understanding that opponents are a gift that push you to get better.
- **Officials:** Be thankful for officials! Without people willing to do this difficult job, there is no game. Show respect, even when they make a mistake. Mistakes are opportunities to learn to deal with adversity.
- **Teammates:** Never embarrass them on or off the court.
- **Self:** You "Honor the Game" by living up to the high standards set for you regardless of external pressures or other people's behavior.

## **Environment for Parents: Be a Primary-Goal Parent!**

Primary-Goal Parents can be described through the following statements:

- Primary-Goal Parents leave the scoreboard to the coaches and athletes while focusing relentlessly on the life lessons a student-athlete is learning through sports.
- Primary-Goal Parents don't react negatively when officials make bad calls against their team. A missed call is an opportunity to work on resilience, a trait we strive to pass along to our children. Rather, we should strive to show thankfulness for the service of officials, and express this through our kind words and actions.
- Primary-Goal Parents are their child's biggest fans no matter how they perform and whether they win or lose the game.

## **Primary-Goal Parents “Do” and “Do Not” Items**

### **Do...**

- **Practice “No-Directions” Cheering:** Yell cheers that start with a positive adjective, not a verb. (*Great job, Nice play, Great hustle, Good try, Outstanding effort...*)
- **Honor the Game:** Compliment good plays by the participants, including opponents and good calls by the officials. (*Nice play, Great shot, Good call Ref...*)
- **Fill your child's emotional tank with encouragement.** (*You can do it, Don't give up, Way to go, It'll be ok, Way to play hard, Your team played well today...*)

### **Do Not...**

- **Give directions while cheering.** (*Set it up, Dive for those, Come on, Pass it, Shoot it...*)
- **React negatively or sarcastically to calls made by the officials.** (*Come on Ref, No way, That was out, That's terrible, That's a horrible call, Are you kidding me? Are you blind?...*)
- **Put undue pressure on children who are still learning in the "Development Zone".** (*If you tried harder, What got into you today?*)

- **Blame the coaches, officials, or other players for the results on the scoreboard.** (*If he wouldn't have blown that call..., or If she would have passed better...*)

## **Environment for Players: Be a Triple-Impact Competitor**

Triple-Impact Competitors are committed to impacting their sport on three levels by improving oneself, one's teammates, and the game as a whole.

- Triple-Impact Competitors enjoy the challenge of competing and they can hardly wait to go to practice.
- Triple-Impact Competitors show respect to all coaches, teammates, opponents, and officials.
- Triple-Impact Competitors look forward to their own "Mallory Moment". (*At a college softball game on April 26, 2008 - Mallory Holtman helped to carry her opponent, Sara Tucholsky, around the bases because Sara had injured herself as she hit a 3-run homerun. Mallory's team lost the game 4-2.*)

## **Long-term Impact of this Philosophy**

We honor the game by working together as coaches, players, and parents to create and maintain a positive culture that develops better athletes and a better community.

These above-described philosophies are not only applied in our sports programs, but have been taught and practiced in our classrooms for years. We hope that by adopting such a clear vision for athletics, and by communicating and reinforcing these concepts to our coaches, parents, and players, that we will greatly improve what St. Paul's Athletics offers to our student-athletes. Scripture reminds us in 1 Corinthians 10:31, that in whatever we do, "*do it all for the glory of God.*" Let this be our guide as we compete. We honor Christ, our Savior, when we serve one another and build each other up. If we agree to work together and hold each other accountable, we will Honor the Game and, in doing so, Honor Christ.

Thank you for always being enthusiastic fans and players, and for joining your teachers, coaches, and other parents to help St. Paul's develop better athletes and a stronger community.

# **Part Two: Information**

## **Agreement**

This handbook outlines information that coaches, parents, and students of St. Paul's need to know when students-athletes are participating in athletic programs at our school. Coaches, parents and students are to completely read the information and rules found in this handbook and sign the "St. Paul's Athletic Agreement" indicating that they understand and agree to adhere to the guidelines of this handbook. Signed Athletic Agreements must be on file with athletic director before participation is permitted.

## **Athletic Opportunities**

Our school is a member of the La Crosse Area Lutheran School Athletic Conference (LALSAC). As of August, 2018, extracurricular activities at St. Paul's include: Flag Football (5-8 Boys), Volleyball (5-8 Girls), Cross Country (5-8 Boys & Girls), Basketball (5-8 Boys and Girls), Softball (7-8 Boys and Girls), and Track (5-8 Boys and Girls).

## **Concussion Awareness**

Wisconsin State Law mandates that, "At the beginning of a season of youth activity, the person operating the youth athletic activity shall distribute a concussion and head injury information sheet to each person who will be coaching that youth athletic activity and to each person who wishes to participate in that youth activity. No person may participate in a youth athletic activity unless the person returns the information sheet signed by the person and, if he or she is under the age of 19, by his or her parent or guardian."

To comply with this law, all athletes must review the Concussion Awareness Pamphlet and return the signed Concussion Agreement Form. This must be completed before the first day of practice for each season. The Concussion Awareness Form and Agreement Form are found on the St. Paul's Athletic Website. Printed copies are available by request. For multiple sport athletes, the completion of the Concussion Awareness Form is only needed once per school year.

## **Eligibility - Coach**

All coaches at St. Paul's, whether head or assistant coaches, are to be members in good standing of St. Paul's or another WELS/ELS church. The athletic director will work to secure coaches who are qualified for the position. The athletic director will gain approval for head coaches and assistant coaches from the St. Paul's Lutheran Board of Education.

All coaches will be subject to a background check.

## **Eligibility – Player Attendance**

If a student misses a day or part of a school day due to illness, he will not be allowed to participate in the practice or game scheduled for that day.

All practices require attendance, except for those practices that occur before the start of the school year and during school holidays. An unexcused absence is defined as an avoidable absence not approved by the coach or Athletic Director. The following action will be taken for unexcused absences:

- 1) First Offense: The child will receive a verbal warning from the coach and Athletic Director.
- 2) Second Offense: The child will not be able to participate in the next game or meet.
- 3) Following Offenses: Further discipline is determined by the coach and Athletic Director's discretion.

## **Eligibility – Player Conduct**

Students must be working in the classroom to his/her God-given ability, regardless of grade average. Athletes must also demonstrate the proper Christian attitude. This attitude must show itself not only in the classroom, but also in daily life, practices, and games. As a representative of our school, the child must realize this is very important. He is going to be competing with fellow Christians, and his attitude should demonstrate the main purpose of our school.

If the teacher feels the student is not working to his potential or is not demonstrating a proper Christian attitude, consideration will be given regarding the student's athletic eligibility. The parents will be notified and the matter will be discussed with them before any action takes place.

## **Eligibility – Player Grades**

To be eligible for extracurricular activities, St. Paul's students must maintain a "D-" or higher grade in all subjects. If a grade drops below the eligibility threshold of a "D-", the student will be ineligible from participation in extracurricular activities until the grade returns to a "D-", or higher. Ineligible students will not be permitted to participate in practices, games, performances, etc., but are strongly encouraged to support their team on the bench during games. Eligibility status is reviewed on a weekly basis, during the weekly Faculty Meeting, by the teacher, principal, and athletic director. During the first two weeks of a new quarter, students who were eligible at the end of previous quarter will be granted a grace period. During this grace period, a qualifying student will not be subject to ineligibility if a grade falls below the D- requirement. After the two-week grace period has ended, normal eligibility rules will apply. This two-week grace period will be applied at the beginning of a new school year to all students. Students who end a

quarter with ineligible status will be placed on probationary status for the beginning of a new quarter. Under probationary status, the two-week grace period will not apply and students will be immediately subject to eligibility requirements.

In addition to maintaining a “D-“ or higher grade in all subjects, students must ensure that homework responsibilities are being fulfilled in a timely fashion. Late or missing homework can also cause a student to receive an ineligible status. Please review the “Student Handbook” for more information regarding the late homework form and its impact on eligibility.

## **Expectations - Coach**

In addition to being a double-goal coach, all coached are expected to:

1. Focus on Christ. The coach will continually work to recognize and portray a Christian attitude in light of 1 Corinthians 10:31, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.”
2. Act with integrity in performing all duties owed to the athletes, the sport, other members of the coaching profession, and the public.
3. Be well prepared in order that all duties in the respective discipline are fulfilled in accordance with the mission of St. Paul’s.
4. Act in the best interest of the athlete’s development as a whole person.
5. Treat other parents, coaches, and officials in a manner that displays courtesy, good faith, and respect.
6. Work with the athletic director to actively communicate all information student-athletes and their families will need to promote success and timeliness to practices and games. This also includes any special requirements of the student-athletes, injuries, and any disciplinary matters that should arise.

## **Expectations - Parents**

In addition to being a primary-goal parent, all parents are expected to:

1. Strive to set an example of Christian behavior for their children.
2. Represent St. Paul’s in a positive light, both in their words and actions.
3. Have children at practices and games in a timely fashion.
4. Be responsible for their child’s behavior at games. All children are expected to be supervised by a parent at all times.
5. Positively support coaches, administration, and other student-athletes both at games and at home.
6. Schedule an appointment to discuss appropriate problems with the coach. Do not conduct these meetings in front of the children, as it is inappropriate and breaks down respect for the coach. Please remember to include the athletic director with pertinent information, as this will allow for better-informed decisions and actions to occur.
7. Look for areas where you can help enhance the sports program. Potential areas of need can include: helping with carpool, cleaning up after games, volunteering to coach, setting up before games, officiating, keeping scorebooks for games, monitoring hallways, assisting with concessions, etc.

8. Work with their children to maintain our uniforms.
9. Inform the coach and athletic director of all medical conditions that could impact the student-athlete's ability to perform in practices and/or games.

## **Expectations - Player**

In addition to being a triple-impact competitor, all student athletes are expected to:

1. Maintain their homework during the season.
2. Come to practice with a mentality to improve their individual and team skills.
3. Be at all scheduled practices and games unless due to illness or a planned absence that has been pre-approved by the athletic director and coach of the team.
4. Listen to their coach and do as he/she asks.
5. Be prompt for games to properly warm-up.
6. Sit in the bleachers and watch the other games as long as they are there. Cheer on your fellow Panthers!
7. Display proper sportsmanship at all times.
8. Have the proper equipment to participate in a sport.
9. Care for your uniform, as it is your responsibility.
10. Reflect a Christian attitude at all times.
11. Be a positive and supportive teammate. Leave constructive criticism for the coach.
12. If needed, do not be afraid to ask your coach to review proper techniques.
13. Work to promote team harmony. Arguing, yelling, or complaining are not allowed. These disrupt teamwork.
14. Adhere to the rules of the game and do their very best to uphold these rules.

## **Extracurricular Fee**

\$70 will be assessed at registration as an extracurricular fee. This fee helps to cover all the expenses associated with our extracurricular activities program. This fee, paid during school registration, only needs to be paid once per child, per year. The fee is a fixed amount and is not impacted by how many extracurricular programs in which the student is involved.

## **Medications**

Parents or guardians of a student are responsible for ensuring necessary medication is at all games and practices. It is strongly encouraged that a parent or guardian carry this medication with them during games and practices for quickest access in the event of an emergency.

Please inform your coach and athletic director of relevant conditions and medications.

## **Meetings – Parents and Coaches**

When a parent has a concern to discuss with the coach, they should set up a private time to meet and calmly discuss these concerns.

It is appropriate for parents to discuss items such as: Treatment of the student-athlete (both mentally and/or physically), opportunities for the student-athlete to improve their skills, concerns regarding behavior or grades, etc.

Please be sensitive when discussing the playing time of a student-athlete. Often, there is a logical reason for a coach's decision. (It is important to keep in mind that if we had a basketball team filled with thirteen players with Michael Jordan caliber skill, only five are allowed on the court at one time!)

It is inappropriate for parents to discuss with the coach or other parents items such as: Team strategy, play calling, other student-athletes in a negative manner, etc.

Remember, in all that we do both on and off the court, let us use our time, talents, and abilities to Honor Christ!

## **Multiple-Sport Athletes**

Many of our athletes are blessed with tremendous God-Given talents and will have the opportunity to participate in multiple St. Paul's extracurricular activities. It is also possible that a student-athlete will wish to simultaneously play for both a St. Paul's and non-St. Paul's team. We certainly do not wish to discourage student-athletes, and their families, from participating in St. Paul's Sports due to a scheduling conflict. Rather, if you feel that there could be a potential conflict with scheduling for your student-athlete, please speak with your coach or athletic director who will be happy to help explore possible solutions! Ideally, this should be done before the commitment stage of a season so more solutions can be available.

Other seasons and camp opportunities exist through Luther High School and the Luther Junior Knights programs. Please see their publications or websites for information. It is important to note that St. Paul's does not coordinate these programs, so all questions and payments should be directed to the appropriate program coordinator.

## **Off-Site Practices**

In many seasons, St. Paul's will try to utilize the facilities at Luther High School for practice purposes. Parents may choose to allow their child to walk/run to Luther High School or may make their own arrangements for transportation.

## **Playing Time**

Students, parents, and coaches representing St. Paul's must remember what it means to "**Honor the Game, Honor Christ!**" Games are played not only to have fun and to learn skills, but also to be successful and give glory to God. In our program, we strive for all of these goals, with our most important goal being to represent our school in a way that displays good Christian sportsmanship.

At the “B Team” level, typically comprised of fifth and sixth graders, coaches stress fundamental skills and learning the game. Here, less emphasis is placed on winning and more on learning the game and its skills, as well as the fundamental concepts of Christian teamwork. Although it is not possible to be exact, coaches will strive for equal playing time among players. Players and parents must also realize that other things such as attitude, cooperation in practice, practice attendance, and game attendance can also affect playing time.

At the “A Team” level, typically comprised of seventh and eighth graders, adjustments are made to our guidelines and coaching as the intensity of competition increases within our league. Throughout our league schools begin placing more emphasis on the sharpening of individual skills, helping athletes to think of team goals rather than individual goals, teaching more intense game situations, handling pressure, handling stiffer competition, and on striving to win. However, this does not mean that winning at all costs is our goal. It does mean that playing time at this level will no longer be equal or guaranteed. Although coaches will strive to get all players into games, this may not always happen. Playing time is determined by: grade level, practice attendance, skill of the player, player's attitude, player's effort in practice and games, skill level of opponent, number of athletes participating, or game situation.

## Uniforms

Students, and their family, are responsible for the care, safekeeping, and return of all uniforms and equipment assigned to him or her. The family will be responsible for the full replacement cost of uniforms that are not returned or returned damaged. All uniforms should be returned within two weeks from the conclusion of the season, unless otherwise indicated by the Athletic Director. Athletes will not be allowed to participate in their next season until all uniforms and equipment are returned or payment has been made.

Uniforms are not to be used as personal wearing apparel. With the consent of the head coach, uniform tops may be worn on certain game days.

# Part Three: Conclusion

## In Closing,,,

Participating in extracurricular activities at St. Paul's is a privilege through which we can use our time, talents, and abilities to bring glory to our Heavenly Father who provides all blessings to us. As we participate in athletics throughout the year, we pray that we will use all our abilities to **“Honor the Game, and Honor Christ!”**

Please direct all questions and concerns regarding this handbook or athletics to St. Paul's Athletic Director, Mr. Joe Fetcenko, and thank you for your support of the St. Paul's Athletic Program!