

Mission Statement and Program Philosophy

The goal of the St. Mary Athletic Association is to provide our student athletes with a program that encompasses our Catholic faith and pride in our parish community. These two cornerstones are encouraged through teaching our student athletes about strong leadership, sportsmanship and teamwork skills. Also allowing for our student athletes to grow in their athletic abilities and to have fun while with their peers.

Program Philosophy

We believe that participation in athletics allows our student athletes to become more well-rounded individuals. The St. Mary Athletic Association is concerned with the development of the whole person: religious, moral, social, academic and physical components. We believe that teaching these skills will lead to our students leading positive and faith filled everyday lives. We foster in our student athletes; self-discipline, respect for peers and coaches, leadership and the ability to participate with dignity and grace.

Program Overview

Our extracurricular athletic program is available to students in 5, 6, 7 and 8th grades and will follow a “no – cut” policy. Student athletes will learn the fundamentals of each sport and will be provided an opportunity to develop strong, healthy, disciplined minds and bodies. Every student, coach and parent will be treated fairly at all times and will uphold respect and model behavior.

5th & 6th grade is a program that is designed to introduce technical and tactical instruction for first time participants and will also focus on teamwork and discipline. Student Athletes who have experience in said sport are encouraged to lead by example and encourage their peers. At these levels, we will follow an equal playing time policy for all student athletes.

7th & 8th grade is a program that is designed for competitive play. We want to provide an environment for all players that is conducive to the student athletes physical, mental and athletic abilities, where all of our students can develop their skills, hone in on leadership and teamwork skills and have fun.

* For more in-depth information on how playing time is structured, please see large heading “Coaching and Team Structure” and sub-section “Playing Time”

Athletic Board Structure

The St. Mary Athletic Association is led by an Athletic Board with a minimum of eight members that reports directly to the school principal and ultimately to the parish Pastor. All policies and guidelines created by the Athletic Board must be in accordance with school, parish and diocesan policies or guidelines.

Responsibilities of Athletic Board

- Review and implement guidelines, rules and procedures for the entire athletic program
- Engage in decision – making regarding all issues related to the athletic program.
- Hold regular open meetings, at least monthly

Note: When a decision(s) must be made the board members will work to the best of their ability to come to an agreement on said issue(s). Some type of compromise will be made and will be fair for everyone. In the event of a vote that is needed, A quorum is needed for an issue/vote to be carried over/agreed upon. If there is a tie, the issue will go to the Athletic Directors for the tie breaking vote.

Coaching Guidelines

Be present at games and other athletic sponsored events. Must regularly report to the Sports Coordinator regarding athletic activities. Must be in good standing/representation of Saint Mary School and Athletic community at all events.

Factors to be considered when selecting new coaches:

- Parent of a player on the team selected over a non-parent
- Previous coaching experience in the sport being considered for
- Other relevant coaching experiences as reflected on the coaching application.
 - Playing experience
 - Level of coaching
 - Years of coaching

If more than one person volunteers to coach a particular team;

- A parent will be chosen over a non-parent.
- If both are parents, above “factors” will be taken into consideration
- If both are non-parents, above “factors” will be taken into consideration
- If both candidates are “equal” in coaching credentials and experience Coordinators and Co AD’s will make final decision.

- Coaches are guaranteed to coach their child's team, not necessarily an A or B team.

If more than one person volunteers for a manager position:

- Athletic Directors and sub-committee (associated board members) will interview all manager volunteers.
- This committee will then make recommendations to the Athletic Board regarding the manager, coaches and assistant coach selections.
- Board members actively seeking a manager position in such cases will be excused from the selection process.

Guidelines for Assigning Returning Coaches

- Coaches have shown or taken advantage of learning more about the sport they are coaching and should provide a list of such "professional learning activities."
 - Going to coaching clinics
 - Going to or enrolling in coaching classes
 - Seminars or other learning opportunities
 - Potential "extra" but not required:
 - CPR certified
 - First Aid certified
- Coaches are required to apply for coaching positions on a yearly basis
- A parent of a player on a team will have precedence over a non-parent volunteer.
- If both volunteers are "equal" (non-parent or parent) then coach with "coaching tenure" at St. Mary School/Athletic Program will take precedence in coaching position.
- IF both candidates are "equal" in coaching credentials and experience coordinator and Co AD's make final decision.

Coach Qualifications

- All coaches are required to attend the Protecting God's Children Workshop, prior to assuming their coaching responsibilities
- All head coaches and assistant coaches are required to complete the "Concussion Management Policy" through the Illinois Elementary Sports Association (IESA).
 - Please contact Athletic Board for information

Coaches' Responsibilities

- Read and sign the Coaches Agreement and Code of Conduct Pledge.
- Must conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times.

- Appropriate language/mannerism used in front of; parents, players and referees
 - **Profanity will not be tolerated from parents, players and coaches from any team.**
- If unsportsmanlike conduct is showcased between parents and players, coach(s) must address immediately.
 - If conduct ensues further, if Athletic Director or Board Member is present at game, then these individuals can help/work with situation.
- Intoxicating beverages and illegal substances are forbidden at all times on parish property.
- Arriving at all practices 15 minutes before practices are supposed to start.
 - Waiting for activities that are in gym (non-athletic) to end.
 - Student Athletes are not in gym if Head Coach, Assistant Coach or Team Manager is not present.
- Arriving at all games 30 minutes before games are supposed to start.
- Attend at least one coaching clinic per year to help develop/hone coaching skills.
- Teach proper rules for the sport and model following rules.
- Staying after practice to ensure that all players have been picked up by adult.
- Will not exceed maximum games allowed by grade, which is set forth by the Diocese of Joliet, through the scheduling guidelines.
- Complete Protecting God's Children Workshop
- Mission Statement and Program Philosophy is used when coordinating with players.
- Abide by guidelines for use of the gym.
 - Sitting on the edge of the stage is not permitted
 - No Ball playing in the hallway
 - Doors are locked/not opening doors that are not for athletic use.
 - Keys are to be used by Coaches/Board Members only
 - Supervision of equipment by coaches when players are handling equipment.
 - If you break equipment or see equipment broken, must communicate with Athletic Directors and Principal immediately.
 - If any property is damaged that team will be held responsible for payment or replacement of equipment.
- Student medical permission slips are with coach at all team gatherings.
- Cannot assign assistant coaches to a team without approval of the Sports Coordinator.
- Failure to meet any of these standards/Responsibilities will require actions in this order:
 - (1st Infraction) Meeting with one or both Athletic Directors
 - (2nd Infraction) Meeting with Both Athletic Directors & Principal
 - Followed by a 1 game suspension
 - (3rd Infraction) Time loss of coaching that will be at the discretion of the Athletic Directors, Principal (and if need be Parish Priest)

NOTE: Will also depend on the severity of the infraction and will be taken into consideration with Athletic Board and School committees.

Coaching and Team Structure

Coaches – Single Team

There will be one manager per grade, per sport and at least one assistant coach.

Coaches – Split Teams

If it is necessary to divide the group into two teams, there will be at least three assistant coaches who will report to the manager. Which allows for then two coaches per team.

Split Teams

If there are 12 players or more who want to participate in a sport, teams will be split.

When deemed necessary, the Athletic Director will arrange for a talent evaluator, knowledgeable in the sport to assist the coaching staff in the evaluation of talent for the grade level to be split and recommend the division of team players.

- **5th & 6th Grade:** Dividing of teams will be done to balance the ability of the students as evenly as possible between two teams. Which will be based on position and skill by position.
- **7th & 8th Grade:** Dividing of teams will be split A-B according to ability/skill, effort and players positions. The A-B split will be based on tryout performance, past performance with the team, attitude and effort. The Co AD's, Coordinator and Evaluator will make all split decisions and all decisions will be final.
 - When and IF “special circumstances” arise (large numbers, coaches input of athletic ability of players v.s. numbers) Athletic Directors will be notified by said coaches and both parties will discuss for further consideration on the matter.

Playing Time

For 5th & 6th Grades:

Playing time will be distributed as evenly as possible and practical. Each player is to play **a minimum of half of a game** if the team has 10 players or less.

Playing time should be spread evenly for teams larger than 10 players. The emphasis at this level is on the basic skill development of the player. Playing time may be impacted by athletes attendance at practice.

For 7th & 8th Grades:

Playing time will be based on skill, attendance at practice, effort and attitude. Players will be treated fairly. However, equal playing time is not guaranteed. The level of play is competitive and coaches will provide a competitive environment.

Coach Coverage at Functions

There will be at least two coaches present at all practices, games or functions. In the absence of one coach, a parent may substitute with the Sports Coordinator approval.

Borrowing Players

When not allowed to borrow players:

If a team is able to field enough players for a game (7 in volleyball, 7 in basketball) player borrowing is not allowed.

Player Borrowing Procedures

- When it is unlikely that enough players will be available for a game, a player(s) may be borrowed to allow the team to meet its roster needs.
- Borrowing is only allowed from a lower level team of the same grade, or from the next grade lower whenever possible.
- Borrowing is allowed at the same age/grade level when a “B” team player is being borrowed (moved up) for the “A” team.
 - Lower team level to a higher team level
 - A player who is on an “A” level team cannot be borrowed for a “B” level team in the same age/grade level.
- Borrowed players MUST be registered in the St. Mary School Athletics Program and be on an active roster for the current sport/season.
- Playing time of the borrowed player should not exceed the playing time of anyone on the current team. Borrowed players do not start games over players who are registered and active on current team/sport.
- Borrowing from a team at the same grade level in a different conference is allowed, but with the consent of the Athletic Director.
- All borrowing must be coordinated through the coaches of the teams involved, as well as the Athletic Directors being notified for borrowing.
- Should a long term borrowing situation occur, manager and coaches involved shall develop a plan to address the need and will review the plan with the Sports Coordinator and Co AD's.
- Borrowing plan must be approved before taken into effect and Athletic Directors must be notified of plan as well.
- Coaches of teams having 7 or fewer roster players are encouraged to develop a borrowing plan prior to the actual need.
- Diocesan guidelines pertaining to the maximum number of gatherings per week and games per season for individual players are still applicable. It shall

be the manager's responsibility to insure the student does not exceed the guideline.

Athletic Eligibility Standards

- All student athletes must comply and meet the academic standards that are defined in the Sports and Eligibility section of the Family Handbook.
- If a student athlete is on academic probation, the student will not be allowed to attend practices or participate and attend games.
 - Students are also not allowed to sit on the bench with the team during games, if they do attend the game, they are to sit in the stands as a spectator.
- All student athletes must be at school on days of practices and games in order to participate that day.
 - If student is absent from school he/she is not eligible to participate in any extracurricular activity during that 24 hour period.
 - Students must be in attendance at the end of the school day for eligibility to be granted;
 - Leaving early is considered an absence except in the case of a funeral or a school sponsored activity. (dentist or something comes up at end of day)
 - An absence on Friday renders a student ineligible for that Friday game only.
 - An absence on the last day before a break renders a student ineligible for that day only.

Student Athlete & Parent Responsibilities

Student Athlete's Responsibilities

- Will sign Code of Conduct
- Display respect at all times for coaches, referees and parents.
- Show respect for opposing teams and spectators, as well as showing respect for property.
- Display sportsmanlike behavior.
- Be at the gym ready to play and practice;
 - Arrive 30 minutes before scheduled games
- Wearing school appropriate uniforms for games
- Other rules/regulations will be set with coaches

Parent's Responsibilities

- Will sign Code of conduct
- Display respect at all times for coaches, referees, other parents, opposing teams and spectators.

- Display sportsmanlike conduct at all games.
- Register and complete the Parental Permission form and paying all fees at the time of registration.
- Uniform deposit
- Children are picked up promptly after practices.
- Care for child's uniform according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Assigned seasonally to help cover the gym during home games. Assignments can include working in the concession stand, at the gate, table, as line judge, set up or clean up.
 - Assignments are made my team parent
 - Schedule will be made available in advance
 - If unable to work as assigned, a parent is responsible for finding a replacement.

Parental Concerns Regarding Coach Conduct

Coaches are expected to comply with the coaching requirements as noted.

- Parents must wait 24 hours after a game or practice situation to approach the coach about issues observed during that game or practice.
- Parents with concerns about coaches should initially address the situation directly with the coach involved.
 - This may take place over the phones, in person, or via email
 - Information should be factual and non-judgmental.
- If direct communication between the parent and coach does not resolve the matter, the parent or coach should contact the Athletic Director to schedule a meeting with the parent(s), coach and Athletic Director to resolve the issue.
- If the remedies suggested during the meeting of the concerned parties mentioned above do not resolve the problem, the parties will meet with the Principal to discuss other avenues of resolution.
- If, after all the above steps have been taken, and a solution has not been reached that is mutually agreeable to all of the parties involved, the School Board may act on the problem.

Violation of Rules or Policies by a Coach or Coaches

- When a coach is observed violating the policies of the Athletic Association Handbook, the Athletic Director should be notified as soon as possible.
- The Athletic Director will discuss the violation with the coach and establish expectations for future behavior.
 - This conversation should be followed up with an email or letter to the coach.
- A second offense of the same or other rules will result in a minimum one game suspension for the coach(s) involved.

- The coach(s) will be required to attend a meeting with the Athletic Director and one or more members of the Athletic Board prior to being allowed to return to coaching.
- A third offense by the same coach(s) will result in termination of their coaching privileges at St. Mary School for one calendar year.
 - Will be re-evaluated for next year if will be able to coach or not.

Note: the severity of any offense may result in termination of their coaching privileges, at the discretion of the Athletic Director and the principal.

Failure to follow Responsibilities/Code of Conduct; Student Athlete & Parents

- First time/infracton have a meeting with coach(s)
 - If student athlete
 - Conversation between Coach and Student Athlete
 - If parent;
 - Conversation between coach(s) and parent
 - Co AD's are notified immediately.
- Second time/infracton have meeting with coach(s) and Co AD's.
 - If student athlete, parent(s) will be present
 - Athletic Director is also notified and will be present if necessary.
 - If parent, between coach(s) and Co AD's
 - Principal(s) will also be notified
- Third time/infracton have meeting with coach(s), Athletic Director(s) and Principal
 - If student athlete, parent(s) will be present
 - There will also be loss of privileges or will be suspended for certain amount of time.
 - If Parent
 - Suspension from games;
 - Attending
 - Coaching (if coach)
 - (will be agreed upon by Athletic Directors and Principal)
 - Potential Suspension from the sport for the remainder of the year.

Note: this will also depend on infractions, above is more for: (1) Respect (2) Attitude (3) Behavior (4) Language/Comments

Diocesan Guidelines

Maximum Games Allowed

For all grades/sports, gatherings are limited to 4 per week.

- A “**gathering**” is defined as a game or a practice.

The maximum games allowed are as follows:

- **Volleyball:**
 - 5th & 6th Grade; maximum of 15 games per season
 - 7th & 8th Grade; maximum of 20 games per season
- **Basketball:**
 - 5th Grade: maximum of 15 games per season
 - 6th Grade: maximum of 20 games per season
 - 7th & 8th Grade: maximum of 26 games per season

The number of guaranteed games for any given tournaments are included in the number of games allowed, for the season.

Guidelines for Use of The Gym

In an effort to maximize the use of St. Mary Parish Center and to preserve the safety and welfare of the children, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

- Coaches must always arrive early and should always be the first person(s) in the gym.
- No children shall be in the gym unsupervised.
- It is the responsibility of the coach to ensure that the children enter and exit the gym appropriately and that they remain in the supervised gym area.
 - There is NO playing:
 - In the hallways
 - On the Stage
 - Franciscan Room
- In the event of an injury, emergency service shall be called by using a coach’s or parent’s cell phone. The parent or guardian of the injured player shall also be called.
- Students are not allowed to be touching equipment that is NOT part of their sport or will help with practice.
 - Keys for facilities
 - Coaches/Adults should only be working with keys
 - AV/Gym Speakers
- Prior to leaving the gym, the following shall be completed:
 - All equipment shall be returned to the proper storage location.

- The gym, washrooms, stage area and locker rooms should be checked for person or personal items, gym clothes, equipment.
- All gym doors should be checked and secured.
- Lights (gym, hall, bathrooms, ect.) should all be turned off.
- The gym shall be checked for debris. All debris shall be placed in the proper receptacle.
- The coach should be the last person to leave the gym after practice.

Administration of Home Games

It is the responsibility of the Athletic Board to provide adequate coverage for all tasks required in sponsoring athletic contests in our Parish Center.

- The Parent Participation Coordinator will organize and coordinate teams consisting of Board Members and parent volunteers to provide support for all home games.
- All parents of an athlete participating in the season sport are eligible and required to assist in a fair share of home game coverage duties.
- Cash Handling:
 - All cash handling will be managed by the supervising Board Member at each home event, using the following procedure:
 - A petty-cash balance of \$200 will be maintained in the Athletic Association cash box for home games.
 - The box will be kept in a locked closet on school property between games.
 - The Cash Management envelope will be completed by the supervising board member, recording all gate and concession revenue, as well as expenses paid in cash (scorekeepers).
 - The envelop should be sealed at the end of the evening and returned to the safe, in the trophy case.
- Officials' fees are paid by check within 3 weeks of working the event.
- It is the responsibility of the supervising Board Member to ensure that all equipment is returned to its appropriate storage place and the Parish Center and kitchen are clean prior to allowing the parent workers to leave.
- The Board Member should be the last person to leave the school at the end of the night.

Parent Volunteering Guidelines

- It is noted that each parent has agreed and acknowledged when registering their children's participation on SMS Athletics to:

"I understand that parents are required to assist with admissions or concessions for home games and tournaments hosted by the St. Mary Athletic Association. I agree to work my assigned times and assist with set-up, admissions, concessions, and clean

up of the gym. If I am unable to work the time assigned by the team parent, it is my responsibility to arrange for a replacement.”

- High school or teen children are not to “replace” the adult as a volunteer.
 - A high school student is allowed to help the parent volunteer, but the adult (parent) who volunteered to be on duty is present as well.

“Having parent volunteers at SMS home events is an important support role in addition to the coaches, board members and other volunteers. Parent volunteers not only perform specific volunteer duties (like concessions or admission) but also assist and represent the School as vigilant and conscientious members of our athletic events to be watchful and assist in ensuring as safe, respectful and fun environment is maintained for children, patrons, visitors and athletes. Parent volunteers are expected to be ‘parents of our athletes’. Parent volunteers should not have the teenage children, ‘replace’ them as volunteers. If teenage children wish to volunteer to help and/or obtain service hours; they can participate as volunteers in addition to, and alongside, their parents”