

St. Monica School

Athletic Handbook

(Revised August 2007)



Home of the Bulldogs

Governing Philosophy

Athletic participation is an educational activity that contributes to the physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual growth of the student-athletes involved, and therefore significantly contributes to St. Monica's stated outcome to develop well-rounded individuals.

Goals

The goals of St. Monica's athletic program are as follows:

- 1) To provide athletic opportunities which clearly reflect the governing philosophy.
- 2) To provide a quality athletic experience for all participants. This also necessitates providing the largest number of teams possible at a variety of sports which will allow each student-athlete to participate at a level in which he or she will be most successful.
- 3) To assist the student-athlete in understanding the importance of working together as a team.
- 4) To create opportunities to enhance community involvement in the school and parish.

Athletic Department

The principle administrator of the Athletic Department is the Athletic Director, who reports to the Principal and Pastor, and consults the faculty as needed. The Athletic Director's responsibilities include communicating with the appropriate leagues (e.g. CYO) and other schools, attending required clinics and meetings, registering teams, recruiting coaches, establishing practice times, distributing schedules, distributing and collecting uniforms, establishing and collecting fees. The Athletic Director is also responsible for addressing issues or concerns that may come up in the course of a season. In short, it is the Athletic Director who is chiefly responsible to ensure that St. Monica's philosophy and goals are implemented. Assisting the AD will be a Gym Director who runs the gym and oversees games and activities during the various seasons. Also in support is a standing Parent Club Sports Committee President, who acts as a liaison to the parent community (soliciting ideas, fundraising supporters, and parent involvement).

Eligibility

Student-athletes who participate in the in the athletic program must reside in St. Monica Parish or attend St. Monica School. If the child is not a member of the school, the family must be a member of the parish. Students outside the parish or who live within the parish but whose family is not a member of the parish may still be eligible subject to the needs of the teams involved and any applicable league rules on eligibility. (For example, CYO has strict rules regulating players coming from outside the parish).

Student-athletes in middle school (grades 6-8) must maintain a GPA above C- (1.7) on the current report card. Student-athletes failing any single subject in middle school, regardless of overall GPA, are ineligible. Teachers, parents, and coaches should work together to prevent a student from becoming academically ineligible.

Student-athletes from any grade must display at all times appropriate Christian behavior, good sportsmanship, and a willingness to follow the guidelines found in the *St. Monica School Parent Handbook*. Failure to do so can result in penalties ranging from suspension to dismissal. Any significant disciplinary action (suspension or dismissal) will occur only after consultation with the Athletic Director.

Since players are expected to attend all scheduled practices and games, failure to do so may result in reduced playing time (depending on league rules), or in excessive cases, suspension or dismissal. As important appointments, e.g. medical and dental, and family matters do arise from time to time, it is expected that the coach will be notified in a timely fashion. In the event that a particular situation will create a chronic failure to attend certain practices or games, the coach and athletic director need to be advised as soon as possible as this can impact the makeup of the team.

Student-athletes playing on a St. Monica team must pay the appropriate fee.

Fees

Fees are to cover the cost of the leagues, equipment, first-aid supplies, clock upkeep, and other small necessities associated with a sports program. Fees and fund-raisers together are to cover the costs of associated personnel (i.e. gym director and AD). Fees are charged per sport and are stipulated at the beginning of each season. Currently, the fees are \$50.00. They are due upon request from the AD. If payment arrangements are needed, parents must discuss such arrangements with the AD, who will also discuss the matter with the Principal. All details will be strictly confidential. A uniform fee will be charged in the event that the uniform is not returned or returned damaged.

Sports Offered

The program seeks to involve student-athletes in a range of activities that includes both indoor and outdoor experiences, fosters cardio-vascular and muscle coordination development, and is available school-year around.

- Fall (Sept.-Nov.): CYO Boys' Soccer
CYO Girls' Volleyball
CYO Cross-Country Meet
- Winter (Dec.-Feb.) CYO Boys' Basketball
City College Outdoor/Indoor Girls' Soccer
- Spring (Mar.- May): CYO Girls' Basketball
SFP&S Baseball*
CYO Track and Field Event

* The SFP&S Baseball League is open to both boys and girls. However, as that would give an unequal opportunity for girls, a girl must choose either SFP&S Baseball or CYO Basketball but cannot participate in both. In the event that a new opportunity opens for boys, then the restriction will be lifted.

Formation of Teams

The goal of the athletic program is to provide a team for each grade for each sport. Whether this is possible will be based on the number of student-athletes who sign-up. If there are not enough sign-ups we will attempt to combine grades. Generally, the minimum number of players required will allow for two substitutes. If two teams are needed, due to an overabundance of players for one team, then tryouts will be held in the presence of both coaches and the AD. Student-athletes will be assigned to the team which will allow for the greatest amount of participation and success.

No Coach -- No Team

All of the programs coaches are volunteers; thus, the Athletic Department is always looking for help. However, if a coach cannot be found for a team, then there will be no team.

Practice Policies

1. The Athletic Director will determine and announce the practice schedule for teams after consulting with the coaches involved. The usual policy is to practice two days a week for one hour per practice. Some variation will be permitted. Additional practices beyond two hours a week are permitted with approval. Such additional practices are considered voluntary and optional. No practices are permitted on Sundays or major holidays. Practices on Saturdays and vacation days are allowed upon approval.
2. All practices will be conducted with a coach present.
3. If an under-eighteen year-old high school student is coaching a particular team, there must be an adult present during practice or arrangements made with the AD for reasonable supervision.
4. If a student-athlete must leave before the scheduled ending time, the coach needs a written note advising him or her of the early departure.
5. Student-athletes practicing immediately after school (within fifteen minutes) should go directly to the gym after changing clothes and sit until practice begins. For practices scheduled at other times, participants should arrive no more than ten minutes before the scheduled practice. Parents should never leave a child unattended without an adult present.
6. No sibling should be present in the gym while practice takes place without supervision. Coaches are not supervisors for children not on the team. Unsupervised St. Monica students will be sent to extended-care, and appropriate fees will be charged.
7. Proper gym maintenance and care is expected from all teams.

Coaches

All Coaches and Assistant Coaches must be fingerprinted in the Livescan or current system that is required by the San Francisco Archdiocese and St. Monica school/parish. Candidate coaches can see the Athletic Director for details. Coaches are usually recruited from parents in the school or parish community. All parent coaches will receive hours to fulfill their obligation to the school. All coaches will be appointed by the Athletic Director. An addendum has been attached to give an idea of the considerations that go into selecting coaches.

Coaches' Responsibilities

1. Coaches must provide parents with their home or best “can be reached” number. It is the duty of the coach to keep the players and parents informed of any schedule changes.
2. Coaches may request up to two assistants depending on the size of the team. Parents who assist also receive hours for their work according to the amount of time in which they coach.
3. Coaches must be knowledgeable of the sport, follow the rules of the game, and the rules of the league in which they are coaching.
4. Equipment issued to coaches shall be returned at the end of the season in a timely manner.
5. Coaches must attend all mandatory clinics and make an effort to attend other clinics offered.
6. Coaches must attend any mandatory St. Monica meetings and league meetings.
7. If leagues require certification or attendance in specific coaching classes, coached need to attend.
8. Coaches do not drive student-athletes to the games or practices. In the event that the coach is transporting his or her own child, other players may go as long as they sign a waiver indicating that neither the school or league is transporting the player.
9. Coaches must be on time to practices and games.
10. **Coaches cannot leave a player unattended without adult supervision after a game or practice.**
11. Coaches must work to ensure that the governing philosophy is apparent in how the team conducts itself, how practices are carried out, and how games are played. When it comes to a “life lesson” versus a “win,” coaches should feel comfortable knowing the lesson trumps the win.

Parent's Responsibilities

1. Parents should be role models of positive support for their children, the team, and the coach. They have tremendous influence on how children experience their participation and how they respond to their coach and teammates.
2. As these are team sports, it is imperative for parents to get their child to practice and games on time. (On time means at the specified time the coach wants the players there). In the event a child can't make practice or a game, inform the coach ahead of time. Illnesses or other emergencies are the exception.
3. If scheduling conflicts are anticipated (e.g. music lessons, playing for a different league), please discuss these issues with the coach and AD.
4. Inform the coach of any medical condition (e.g. asthma) that the child has.

5. Parents need to understand that coaches have an obligation to reinforce specific standards of behavior and take appropriate actions in a non-demeaning way, e.g. extra laps, to ensure team discipline. Parents who disagree with coaching decisions need to address their concerns to the coach in a manner that is not disruptive to the team. If the matter needs to be addressed further, parents should discuss it with the AD.
6. Parents are responsible for their child's uniform. It must be cleaned before being turned in at the end of the season.
7. Transportation to practices and games are the parents' responsibility. More often than not, other parents are able to help.
8. Most leagues have strict rules about parents who display abusive or disruptive conduct at games towards the opposing team, coaches, officials, other parents, and even players on one's own team. No respectable league will tolerate public questioning of an official's integrity. Parents must respect the game, which includes respecting all those involved in the game. Official mistakes are part of the game.
9. Parents should encourage their child to practice on his or her own. Attend as many games as possible.
10. Sign any mandatory *Code of Conduct* forms that the various leagues may require.

Student-Athlete's Responsibilities

1. Players must always practice good sportsmanship, and behave in a manner that reflects St. Monica's high standards. Follow all league and gym regulations.
2. As part of a team, players must be punctual to both practices and games, and prepared to play. For example, players should wear appropriate athletic clothing and bring water for hydration.
3. Players are also responsible for the upkeep of their uniforms.
4. Student-athletes should challenge themselves to do their best. Practice is a time to work on new skills and improve existing ones; it is not a time to fool around and socialize. Practice time is not open gym time, and players should not impose on another team's practice.
5. **Keep up studies and grades.** A poor academic performance can result in a suspension or dismissal from the team, which can jeopardize the team's performance and possibly result in forfeits. Student-athletes should be prepared to make changes to use their time better.
6. **Keep winning and losing in perspective.**

Sport Fund-Raisers

Currently there are two fund-raisers that are specifically dedicated to help finance St. Monica's Sports Program: Sport-a-rama and the Jog-a-thon. Parents are encouraged to give their time and support.

Conclusion

The Athletic Department at St. Monica is open to your opinions, ideas, and time. The people involved, from the Pastor to the teachers, know the value of a quality sports program and encourage your participation. We thank the coaches and student-athletes in the past for their contributions, and look forward to continued support.

Addendum

Why does the program not have academic requirements for grades below middle school?

Several years ago the teachers agreed that if a student has not had sufficient exposure to the sport to value it then preventing the child from playing would have minimal impact on the child's motivation to do better. Furthermore, the health aspects of exercise at an early age are significant and should not be curtailed. Middle-school students are preparing for high school where satisfactory grades are required to play a sport. Also, time management skills are particularly appropriate to develop at the middle-school age.

What are the criteria for choosing coaches?

1. Parents with a coaching background or who are knowledgeable in a sport should be given an opportunity to coach or assist.
2. A non-parent with the same qualities just mentioned (such as a teacher) should also be given a chance to coach.
3. A coach, especially a parent, who has been currently coaching and whose players are developing skills and an understanding of the game commensurate with their age group will always be retained regardless of won/loss record.

4. If a coach has difficulty with a team and fails to uphold the governing philosophy, or the team has clearly not been improving as it should in terms of reasonable development, then certainly the student-athletes involved deserve a change. Replacing a coach or asking a coach to take on an assistant can be a tough issue. No matter what happens from a coaching standpoint, all coaches and former coaches are expected to be role models and supportive of the team.

5. All coaches and assistant coaches must be fingerprinted via Livescan and deemed eligible by satisfying the policies of both the San Francisco Archdiocese and St. Monica Parish/School.

What can parents reasonably expect from the sports program?

Parents can expect that their child will play in organized leagues, reasonably officiated, against opponents required to act in sportsmanlike manners. Parents should expect a sport to last anywhere from six to eight weeks. The level of skill development will depend largely on the efforts made by the student-athlete and the skill level of the coach. Two hours a week of practice and a weekly game for a particular sport during a season will not produce a highly skilled player, but should allow the player to understand the sport and play it in a way that facilitates enjoyment. The student should also have an increase in his or her fitness level. Lastly, the parent should begin to see the child's increasing maturity in social skills, pursuing group goals, and understanding ways to cope with both failure and success.

Over the last few years, the landscape of youth sports has changed dramatically with the introduction and growing popularity of club sports, travel or special selection teams. These teams require tryouts and a significant commitment in time and money. They will develop players in a much more competitive environment and focus on a single sport. Our sports program participates in what are considered "recreational" and instructional leagues. We encourage student-athletes to explore a variety of athletic opportunities. While many knowledgeable professionals in youth sports also agree that too much focus on a single sport is detrimental at an early age, we recognize that for some students such programs are very attractive and beneficial. With that in mind, coaches and the AD will generally work with those student-athletes to accommodate the other league as much as possible.

It is our sincere hope that those students will contribute their talents to our program, providing leadership and direction.