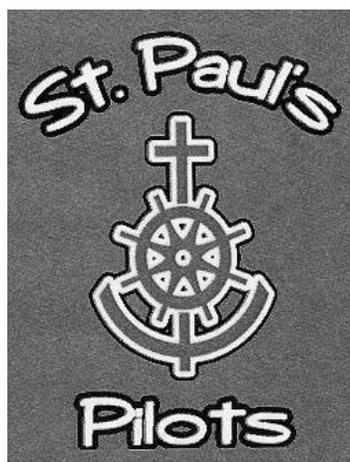

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

St. Paul's Lutheran School

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Message from the Athletic Directors

What an opportunity your child has to participate in athletics at St. Paul's! By being a part of a team, regardless of the time spent in competition, your child can learn many valuable lessons – such as citizenship, sportsmanship, appreciating good play by an opponent, working together for a common goal, responsibility, accountability, loyalty, humility, learning to accept instruction and criticism, respect for others, winning and losing with dignity, self-control, and being responsible for one's own actions. If parents and coaches work together for the benefit of the children, their athletic experiences can prove to be a very positive and educational process.

Remember that sports, although they may imitate life, are NOT life. They are beneficial and important, but they are not MOST important. Coaches, parents, and students must keep athletics in the proper perspective, and always keep their Savior the number one priority. Long after the score is forgotten, how we behaved as Christian athletes, coaches, and fans will most be remembered.

Keep in mind your motivation in life – that is to glorify God. Should we want to do our best and strive to win? You bet! God expects and deserves no less than your very best efforts to use the gifts He has given to you. God expects excellence; therefore we ought to excel through Christ! Keep your motivation for excellence based on your desire to serve God with your gifts. He will bless those efforts!

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide parents, teachers, and students an understanding of the goals, objectives, and philosophies of St. Paul's athletic program. It is also meant to provide guidance to the Athletic Director, coaches, and faculty representatives concerning the make-up and participation of athletic teams at St. Paul's Lutheran School.

Once the decision is made to participate in athletics, there are often many questions that students and parents may have regarding the St. Paul's athletic program. In order to assist in making the athletic experience a positive one, this handbook has been assembled to answer questions about the guidelines and philosophy of the St. Paul's athletic program.

General Philosophy

As Christian parents and teachers, it is our responsibility to encourage our children to use all their gifts and abilities, and to provide opportunities for them to do so. Participation in athletics is one way for children to use their athletic abilities to God's glory. The emphasis of our athletic program at St. Paul's is to not only promote Christian fellowship with other schools, but also to aid Christian students in learning the skills necessary to compete with other young people. Some of these skills include teamwork, organization, decision making, dedication, commitment, discipline, and stewardship of healthy bodies.

Our athletic programs are designed for all children beginning in the fourth grade and continuing through sixth grade. We are also part of the Michigan Lutheran Middle School Titan Program, which provides athletic opportunities for St. Paul's athletes in seventh and eighth grade. More information about the Titan Program can be found on pages 3-4.

If we do not have enough participation for a given sport, or no coach approved by the Athletic Director, that sport may be dropped for that season.

Attitudes and Values

We believe that a winner is one who is humble in victory and gracious in defeat.

As representatives of our school and our Lord, students, parents, and coaches should exhibit Christian behavior at all times. Disrespect toward coaches, officials, other players, or fans will not be tolerated. Misuse of property or equipment also will not be tolerated.

Athletics provide students with a sense of enjoyment and satisfaction.

Athletics teach students to use their God-given talents as directed by God Himself. At the same time, they will learn to appreciate that everyone is blessed with various gifts and abilities.

Athletics help foster Christian fellowship and friendship among students here at St. Paul's, as well as with students of other Christian Day Schools. Athletics also give students an opportunity to put their faith into action and be a Christian example to non-Christian witnesses.

Athletics teach that a participant has a responsibility toward his/her coach and teammates. This is most evident in faithful attendance at practices and games.

County Lutheran Athletic League

St. Paul's is a member of the County Lutheran Athletic League. In given seasons, it is composed of up to seven schools for sports in grades 3-6. The following schools may field teams:

Grace Lutheran School

404 E. Glenlord Rd.

St. Joseph, MI 49085

Christ Lutheran School

4333 Cleveland Ave.

Stevensville, MI 49127

Trinity Lutheran School

613 Court St.

St. Joseph, MI 49085

Trinity Lutheran School

9123 S. George St.

Berrien Springs, MI 49103

St. Paul's Lutheran

718 Arbor Court

South Haven, MI 49090

Resurrection Lutheran Academy

6940 Nimtz Pkwy.

South Bend, IN 46628

We may play other schools during a particular season, but they are not members of our County Lutheran Athletic League.

SPORTS OFFERED

Volleyball – fall

“B” Team Girls (Grades 4-6)

Soccer – fall

“B” Team (Co-ed Grades 4-6)

Basketball

“C” Team Boys (Grades 3-4) Nov.-Dec.

“C” Team Girls (Grades 3-4) Jan.-Feb.

“B” Team Boys (Grades 5-6) Nov.-Dec.

“B” Team Girls (Grades 5-6) Jan.-Feb.

Cheerleading

“B” Team Girls (Grades 4-6) Nov/Dec.

FALL Sept-Oct

Girls' Volleyball
Grades 4-6

Co-ed Soccer
Grades 4-6

Titan Volleyball
Grades 7-8

Titan Soccer
Grades 7-8

WINTER Nov-Feb

Girls' Basketball
Grades 3-6

Boys' Basketball
Grades 3-6

Girls' Cheerleading
Grades 4-6

Titan Basketball
Grades 7-8

Titan Cheerleading
Grades 7-8

Spring
Girls' Titan Soccer
Grade 7-8

Levels of Competition

St. Paul's athletic program has an open roster. Athletics can be a very rewarding and educational experience and we hope to involve as many students as possible for each of the sports offered. St. Paul's sports programs will not cut players.

SPORTS LEVEL PHILOSOPHIES

"C" Team (3-4 Grades)

Participation at this level is developmental. The fundamentals of the sport are strongly stressed. Winning is not emphasized. Instead, the emphasis is placed on the development of team play and individual skills. Coaches are encouraged to involve all team members. Therefore, playing time is generally equal among team members and a running score is not kept.

A note about our fourth graders: In basketball, our fourth graders will have the option to "play up" to the B-level. This option is given primarily to ensure that our B-team has an adequate number of participants. The athletic director and coach will determine how this option to "play up" will look before the start of the season and then discuss with the fourth grade parents. Families with fourth graders have the option of declining this "play-up" option.

"B" Team (4-6 Grades)

Participation at this level is again developmental. The fundamentals of the sport continue to be emphasized with greater attention to technique and team skills. Team success is a priority but not the number one emphasis. Student-athletes must be willing to discover and accept their role on the team. For a variety of reasons, playing time may be unequal, but everyone will have playing time.

Playing time is based on the athlete's attitude, practice presence, and skill levels. Absence from games, practices, and arriving late or leaving early may result in loss of playing time.

Titan Middle School Program (7-8 Grades)

Students in grades 7 and 8 will have the opportunity to use their skills in a competitive setting at the middle school level. Depending on the number of participants, the middle school may be divided into two teams – such as a seventh grade team and an eight grade team. Nate Sievert, the middle school program director, will make this determination before the season based on the sign-ups for each sport. The middle school teams focus on providing a higher level of competition. Because of this, playing time may not be equal for all participants. For more information about the Titan middle school program, contact Nate Sievert at: sievertn@gracestjoseph.org.

Eligibility

Players must have a physical exam each year to be eligible for St. Paul's athletics. Parents should submit a copy of the completed physical form to the school office or our athletic directors. Blank forms are available in the school office. Physical forms are due by the first practice of the season.

Parents and players are required to attend an informational meeting with the Athletic Director at the beginning of each athletic season. The agenda will include review of philosophy, guidelines, responsibilities, etc. The coach of the team is to be informed if a student has physical problems of any kind.

Students who wish to represent our school in athletics must exhibit adequate classroom progress and proper school behaviors. They must:

- Maintain a C grade average or better and may not have any F's on a mid-term or quarter report. A student declared ineligible at the end of these marking periods will be ineligible for no less than 10 school days from the start of the new marking period. The student's progress will be reviewed by the principal, the athletic director, and the classroom teacher. If the student has demonstrated satisfactory improvement, the student will once again be eligible for athletic activities.
- The school recognizes that students are individuals, each one possessing different gifts and abilities. Because of this, there may be times when these eligibility guidelines may be tailored to the needs and abilities of the individual. The classroom teacher and principal are responsible for tailoring guidelines when necessary.

Players should have no behavioral or late-work detentions. A student that receives a detention will be ineligible for 5 consecutive school days. This time period begins the day after receiving the detention.

If a player fails to show cooperation or Christian conduct in practices or games he/she will receive a warning in the form of a reprimand. After the second occurrence, the parents will be contacted and the player will be suspended from the next game. On the third infraction the child will no longer be part of the team.

Behavior which may cause removal from the team would include fighting, stealing, vandalism, and use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco.

School Attendance Requirements

Participation in practices and games hinges on school attendance. In order for a student to participate in a school-day practice or competition, the student must be in attendance by 12 PM. Field trips, medical/dental appointments, and special family situations (i.e. funerals and weddings) are generally considered excused absences, and the student will be allowed to play. A student who is ill or has an unexcused absence the day of an event will not be allowed to participate in that day's event. Please communicate all known absences ahead of time with your child's coach and/or the Athletic Director.

Practice / Game Attendance Requirements

When signing up for a sport, a participant is making a commitment to that team and is expected to be present at practices and games.

We know that absences from practices and games may occur occasionally. If a player will be absent from a practice, it is the parent's responsibility to contact either the coach or athletic director prior to the absence. Repeated absences may result from the player being dropped from the team's roster.

If a player would like to drop out of a sport, he/she must contact the coach or athletic director.

Behavioral Requirements for Players

In the spirit of Christian faith and love, it is expected and encouraged that the following God-pleasing behaviors and priorities He exhibited by the members of our teams:

- Witness their love for their Savior by representing Him, their parents, their school, their team, and themselves well
- Using speech that always honors and never dishonors the Lord
- Display respect for rules, officials, coaches, and all who are in authority
- Display a spirit of cooperation and teamwork
- Follow the rules and guidelines found in this handbook

Only those who are receptive to the discipline of those in authority will get the privilege to represent their school. Students failing to show cooperation and Christian conduct may jeopardize the amount of playing time they would otherwise expect.

Repeated failure to live up to these requirements may result in suspension from a team for a time or for the remainder of the season, whether these failures are noted by classroom teachers, coaches, or any authority at school.

Christian Sportsmanship for Parents

Parents can be a very positive example for their children and others through their conduct in the stands, in the hallways, and at home. At St. Paul's, we expect that each parent to:

- Be a Christian role models and examples of sportsmanship
 - Support the efforts of his/her child regardless performance
 - Encourage his/her child to perform to the best of his/her God-given abilities
 - Support the coach(es) without interfering or coaching from the sideline
 - Support his/her child's teammates
 - Support his/her child's opponents
 - Support all officials and referees
 - Refrain from criticizing officials, coaches, other parents, and your child's own teammates
 - Support the St. Paul's athletic program through volunteer work (i.e. working concessions, score table, supervision during games, etc.)
-

Requirements for Coaching

Coaches and assistant coaches are expected to maintain a high level of Christian behavior, sportsmanship, professionalism, and integrity, both on and off the playing field. Coaching duties include keeping the “fun” in sports, developing God-given athletic abilities, teaching sport-specific skills, and instilling in the players an appreciation for the game. In detail, coaches are expected to:

- Submit to a background check.
- Be members of a WELS/ELS congregation if head coaching.
- Be in good standing with the pastors of St. Paul’s Church.
- Uphold Christian conduct in the light of I Corinthians 10:31 “So whatever you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.”
- Treat every player, opposing coach, official, parent and administrator with respect and dignity.
- Have knowledge of this handbook, the school handbook, and the coaches handbook, and be in agreement with it.
- Have the fundamental skills, rules, teaching and evaluation techniques and strategies of his/her sport.
- Communicate to his/her players and their parents the rights and responsibilities of individuals on the team.

Parent/Coach Relationship

Both parenting and coaching are extremely challenging, as well as rewarding, vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other, providing greater benefit to the children. As parents, when your child(ren) become involved in our program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child’s program.

Communication you should expect from your child’s coach:

- Philosophy of the coach
- Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all the players on the team
- Locations and times of all practices and games
- Any discipline that results in the denial of your child’s participation
- Expectation of parent’s role in the athletic program

Communication coaches expect from parents:

- Concerns expressed directly to the coach
- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
- Specific needs of the athlete
- Specific concern in regard to a coach’s philosophy and/or expectations

As your children become involved in the programs at St.Paul’s, they will experience some very rewarding moments. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way your child wishes. At these times discussion with the coach is encouraged.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:

- The treatment of your child, mentally and physically
- Ways to help your child improve
- Concerns about your child's behavior
- Level of competition

It can be difficult to accept your child's not playing as much as you may hope. Our coaches are not professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can be and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things, such as those below, must be left to the discretion of the coach.

Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches:

- Playing time
- Team strategy
- Play calling
- Matters concerning other student athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

If you have a concern to discuss with the coach:

- Call or speak to the coach to set up an appointment.
- Please **do not** attempt to confront a coach before or after a game or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meeting of this nature do not promote resolution. Please wait 24 hours before addressing such issues.

What can a parent do if the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution?

- Contact and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.
- At that appointment it will be determined if any further action is necessary.
- St.Paul's Lutheran School, in conjunction with the Athletic Department, follows the chain of command listed below. We ask that you observe the order of this line of communication.
 1. Assistant coach (if issue is with the asst. coach)
 2. Head coach
 3. Athletic Director
 4. Principal
 5. Board of Education

Home Games

Use of Facilities

All athletes are to remain in the building unless leaving to go home. General horseplay on the playground equipment, etc., is not permitted. Athletes are not permitted to wander the hallways at any time without express permission and supervision from the coach. No food or drinks are to enter the gymnasium.

Length of Supervision

Coaches are expected to remain on site until all of their players have left the facility. In the event that a coach needs to leave a contest early, the coach will speak with the athletic director to ensure adequate supervision. Parents, please respect the fact that coaches have their own families, as well, and pick up your son or daughter as soon as possible after the game so that the coaches can get home as soon as possible. Please contact the coach if you are going to be late so he or she may make arrangements.

Away Games

Transportation

Parents are responsible for making sure that their players have a ride to away games. If the athlete cannot find a ride to the game, he must contact the coach, who may try to find a ride. Students are to conduct themselves in a Christian manner on their way to and from games. Failure to do so will result in loss of playing privileges.

Use of Host Facilities

The use of host facilities is a privilege. We are being invited to play at someone else's school. As a rule, all players and coaches will make sure that the locker room and bench area as well as any other part of the school are as clean as or cleaner than originally found. The host facility is not responsible for any lost or stolen items. Any misuse or disrespect shown towards the host facility will result in disciplinary action taken towards the offender. This may include monetary compensation and/or suspension from the team.

Length of Supervision

Coaches are expected to remain on site until all of their players have left the facility. In the event that a coach needs to leave a contest early, the coach will speak with the athletic director to ensure adequate supervision. Parents, please respect the fact that coaches have their own families, as well, and pick up your son or daughter as soon as possible after the game so that the coaches can get home as soon as possible. Please contact the coach if you are going to be late so he or she may make arrangements.

Parental Supervision of Players and Siblings

When not under the care of a coach, parents are responsible for the supervision of their children before, during, and after all sporting events. It is expected that all spectators, adults and children alike are attending sporting events to watch the games. Please spend the majority of your time in the gymnasium, so that hallways and exit areas do not become congested. Running in the halls, playing in the bathrooms, and general horseplay are not allowed.

Uniforms

All uniforms will be handed out and collected by the Athletic Director or designated coach.

The individual athlete is responsible for the proper care and possession of his/her uniform. Most uniforms should be washed in warm water, inside out, and tumble dried with no heat. Please refer to the specific care instructions located on each uniform.

Uniforms should never be altered in any fashion, unless it is cleared by the Athletic Director first.

Uniforms are not to be worn to school, practices, or for leisure. They are intended for game use only. Students failing to follow this guideline will be asked to change immediately. Exceptions to this rule are granted by the Athletic Director only (i.e. the day of the Pep Rally).

If a child loses, misplaces, or damages a uniform beyond normal wear, he/she will be required to pay for the lost or damaged uniform before another uniform is issued.

Extra uniforms are not taken to away games. If an individual forgets his/her uniform, the athlete may not, depending on the sport, be allowed to participate.

All uniforms must be returned to the school within one week of the ending of the child's sport. It will be assumed that uniforms not returned after one week are lost and will need to be replaced. Parents will be notified by letter or email in such a circumstance and will be billed for the full replacement cost of the missing uniform(s).

In Closing...

Any child that participates in the athletic program does so as a student enrolled at St. Paul's and is therefore subject to all the philosophies, policies and guidelines spelled out in the this handbook as well as the St. Paul's School Handbook. It is expected that all things be done decently and in order, and that all words and actions may glorify our Savior, Jesus Christ. If there are any specific questions, please contact an athletic director.

It is indeed a great privilege to offer God's children the opportunity to grow in their faith through the means of an interscholastic athletic program throughout their grade school experience. Regard this opportunity as a blessing from God, and never underestimate the impact that you as a parent or an athlete might have on the faith life of those around you. Use this avenue as an opportunity to witness your love for your Savior. God bless you as you go about His work!