

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School

Sports Handbook

2008-2009

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School Sports Philosophy

St. Thomas the Apostle's athletic program is an integral part of the school's curriculum, and, as such, it provides opportunities for instruction, participation, and growth. Our athletic program strives to promote a Christian atmosphere where our athletes promote the ideals of teamwork, sportsmanship, leadership, hard work, self-discipline and respect.

Our goals are to challenge our student athletes to accentuate their Christian values which are essential for the formation into responsible young adults and to strive to be the best they can be on and off the field. Students are encouraged to strive to compete at the highest level their ability and performance will allow. Accordingly, St. Thomas the Apostle provides appropriate levels of competition for each athlete.

As a community, we meet the challenges of our athletic philosophy through the cultivation of the following values:

- A commitment to reinforcing Christian values that recognize the importance of God and Church and the need for community and the value of service to others;
- A commitment to achieving individual and team goals;
- A commitment to diligent preparation, fair play, and self-discipline;
- A commitment to exercise and competition which contributes to the development of an athlete's mental, emotional, and physical well-being;
- A commitment to age and skill appropriate coaching and competition at every level.

Athletic activities are a significant, valuable community effort, which foster loyalty, promote school spirit and student participation, and develop healthy competition and sportsmanship. Goals of the athletic program need to be meaningful to all the members of the community.

Students selected to represent St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School on an athletic team must realize that the school team requirements come first; league teams, for which the student may be a member, come second.

5th & 6th Grade Philosophy

This program is available to all students in the 5th & 6th grade.

At the 5th & 6th grade level the focus is on learning the athletic skill and game rules, fundamentals of team play, emotional growth, and healthy competition. Participation is a key component for our 5th & 6th grade.

When there are large numbers of students participating in a sport, there may be multiple teams. At the 5th & 6th grade level teams will be divided equally by ability and skill level.

7th & 8th Grade Philosophy

This program is available to all students in the 7th & 8th grades.

At the 7th & 8th grade level there is an increased emphasis placed on physical conditioning, refinement of fundamental skills, elements and strategies of team play in addition to emotional development, game knowledge, and rules.

Team selection at the 7th & 8th grade level will be based on ability and grade level whenever possible (exception: boy's football will stay by grade level). There may be circumstances where grade levels will be combined to form teams. This will be communicated to the athletes and parents ahead of time. St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School will make a concerted effort not to make cuts at any of these levels. However, if the number of students trying out for a team creates a situation that is difficult to manage, poses a safety problem or is problematic because of facility considerations, reducing the team size may be necessary. Ultimately, the number of teams and size of the squad in a sport will be determined by the availability of 1) qualified and certified coaches, 2) suitable facilities, and 3) a safe environment.

If necessary, a written evaluation will be done to rate the athletes in several areas. Scores will be given according to ability and skill level. Evaluations will be done by the Athletic Director and the Assistant Athletic Director when possible but there may be situations where it will be necessary to bring in outside evaluators. Again, this will be communicated to the parents and athletes ahead of time.

Absentee Policy

On a school day, if any athlete misses school because of illness or an injury, he/she will automatically be excused from practice or game for that day.

The coach must approve absences for any other reason in order to be deemed an excused absence for the practice or game. One unexcused absence from a game or practice will result in a one game suspension. An athlete suspended from the team three times may be removed from the team.

Any combination of three unexcused absences from either a practice or a game may result in removal from the team.

Accident/Injury

It is important that all coaches know how to care for their athletes in case of injury or accident. Coaches must have the basic knowledge of first aid and C.P.R. skills. It is also important that the coach knows what procedure to follow reporting an accident or injury. The coach should do the following:

1. If necessary call 911
2. Check the scene for safety
3. Care for the athlete by administering first aid
4. Give comfort to the athlete
5. Contact the parents
6. Contact the Athletic Director by leaving a message at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School
7. Contact the Athletic Director and the Assistant Principal immediately in case of a serious injury
8. Fill out necessary accident/injury report and turn in the report to the Athletic Director within 24 hours

Athlete Code of Conduct

Since athletes are representing St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School, they must follow a Code of Conduct at all times. The following is the Code of Conduct.

1. Seriously accept the responsibility and privilege of representing the school and community of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School.
2. Make a commitment to the team over other athletic activities.
3. Cooperate with the coach and fellow athletes in trying to promote sportsmanship.
4. Never criticize or disrespect the coach.
5. Respect the judgment and strategy of the coach.
6. Treat opponents with the respect that is due them as guests and fellow competitors.
7. Exercise self-control at all times, accepting decisions and abiding by them.
8. Respect the judgment of the officials and their interpretation of the rules.

9. Never argue or make gestures indicating dislike with an official's decision.
10. Never be boastful or bitter, accept both victory and defeat with pride and compassion.
11. Congratulate the opponents in a sincere manner following either a victory or defeat.
12. Never taunt an opponent or celebrate an accomplishment in such a way as to "show up" the opponent or demonstrate a lack of respect or to provoke another team or its spectators.

Awards Ceremony

In recognition of our athletes and coaches, an award ceremony for grades 5-7 will be held at the end of the school year. Coaches, parents, and friends are invited. Each athlete will receive a certificate of appreciation from St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School. Up to 3 awards will also be given out as determined by the coach of a particular sport. Eighth grade awards will be awarded at the graduation dinner.

Behavior

As an athlete, the student is considered a leader and a role model for fellow students of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School. They must conduct himself/herself with respect and consideration for others. They must abide by the behavior guidelines of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School.

Coaches Code of Conduct

Since coaches are representing St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School they must follow a code of conduct at all times. The following is the code of conduct.

1. I hereby pledge to live up to my responsibilities as a coach at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School.
2. I will place the emotional and physical well being of my players ahead of myself.
3. I will remember to treat each player as an individual, remembering the large spread of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
4. I will play each player up to or beyond the standards set forth by the C.Y.A.A.
5. I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
6. I promise to review and practice the necessary first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.
7. I will lead, by example, in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to my players.
8. I will use coaching techniques appropriate for each of the skills I teach.
9. I will insure that I am knowledgeable in the rules of the sport that I am coaching, and I will teach these rules to my players.
10. I will be sensitive to the score and the game conditions so as to not to embarrass or belittle an opponent.
11. I will respect the judgment of the officials and their interpretation of the rules.

12. I will put sportsmanship over winning.
13. I will model ethical behavior and sportsmanship.
14. I will remember that I am a youth coach, and that the game is for the athletes and not the adults.

Commitment Agreement

We value your child's participation in our sports program. We understand there are other opportunities for your child that may come up during the season however; we also consider your decision to participate on one of our teams as a binding agreement for the duration of the season. A typical season lasts about 6-8 weeks. Please take into consideration you commitment level prior to your child trying out for a team.

Missing practices, games, and/or tournaments can be a source of frustration to the coaches, teammates, and other parents of your team. If your child has other activities that interfere with their participation prior notification in writing must be given to the coach and athletic director. Failure to properly notify may result in suspension from the team or from trying out for other teams in the future.

In addition, if a player decides to quit a team after team selection, is tardy to practices and/or games, or does not regularly abide by the Athlete Code of Conduct; such behavior may be taken into consideration when placing that student on a future team.

Eligibility

1. Student must be enrolled in St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School to be eligible to play.
2. Student enrolling from an out-of-state school may participate at any time once they are enrolled.
3. Student must have a medical authorization dated after June 1 of the current school year to participate.
4. Student must attend at least a ½ day of school the day of the game to participate.
5. Athletes must maintain a 2.0 G.P.A. with no failing grades "F/N/U" in all courses.
 - A. The following report dates will be used to determine eligibility:
 - Mid-Term from 1st Quarter
 - Report Card Sent Home
 - Mid-Term from 2nd Quarter
 - Report Card Sent Home
 - Mid-Term from 3rd Quarter
 - Report Card Sent Home
 - Mid-Term 4th Quarter
 - B. If an athlete has been determined ineligible his/her playing status will be suspended for the following week. Changes in ineligible status may take place on a weekly basis with a grade check on Monday.

Emergency Numbers

In case of an emergency, the following telephone numbers should be used.

Principal: Mary Coffman (602) 954-9088 ext. 5253
Athletic Director: Karen Franco (602) 954-9088 or (602) 370-3827
Assistant Athletic Director: Ted Cruz (602) 954-9088 ext. 5256
St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School: (602) 954-9088
St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Office: (602) 954-9089
Emergency help: 911

Fees

Due to league fees, tournament fees, cost of officials, and update of uniforms, participants will be assessed a fee of \$75.00 per sport (there is a \$15.00 added fee for baseball for a hat). This fee must be paid before the start of the season or arrangements must be made with the Finance Office. This fee is non-refundable to those who drop out of the program, are suspended or ineligible due to grades or conduct. The athletes are responsible for the uniforms and maintaining the condition in which they are given. Uniforms must be cleaned before they are returned. If a uniform is lost or damaged, an additional \$25.00 per piece will be charged to replace the item.

Fundraisers

All funds raised by St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School or its employees and/or coaches for the athletic program shall be strictly accounted for and reported to the Finance Office and Principal. All such funds shall be deposited in an authorized school account, not outside accounts.

Due to the expenses incurred with each sport and not wanting to unduly increase student fees, a fundraiser may be necessary for every/some sports. Each sport must be reconciled with a positive financial balance.

Grievance Procedure

Please remember our coaches are volunteers. There are situations that may require a meeting between the coach and the parent. When these conferences are necessary, there are procedures that must be followed which will help promote a resolution of the concerned issue.

1. Call the Athletic Director to discuss the issue.
Athletic Director will contact the coach to set up a meeting with both parties.
2. Contact a member of the Sports Committee to set up a meeting with the parents and the Sports Committee.

3. Call and set up an appointment with the Principal if the matter cannot be resolved.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:

1. The treatment of your child, mentally and physically
2. Ways to help your child improve
3. Concerns about your child's behavior

Issues Not appropriate to discuss with coaches:

1. Playing time
2. Team strategy
3. Play calling
4. Other student athletes

Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a game/practice. These can be emotional times for both the coach and the parent. Meetings of this nature usually do not promote resolution.

Pre-Season Requirements

Before an athlete can begin participating and competing for a particular activity, the following criteria must be met.

1. Athletes must have received a physical and turned in the completed physical form.
2. Athletes must have turned in a completed permission form marked for that sport, consent for emergency care form, driver information form, and the transportation form that **must be notarized**.
3. Athletes and parents/guardians must have read this Sports Handbook and turned in the sign off page.
4. Athletes must have paid the participation fee for each sport. The participation fee is \$75.00 per sport per athlete.

Practice/Game Uniforms

Students participating in St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School Sports Program will be required to wear the physical education uniform for all practices.

School issued uniforms must be worn for all games. If shorts are not issued from the school, regulation physical education shorts (red) must be worn by all the players. Teams may agree to wear a different color short. The Athletic Director and the Assistant Principal must approve any changes to the uniform policy. If a student does not have a uniform for a game they will not be permitted to play in the game but they will be required to attend the game.

Role of the Athlete

All eligible athletes are encouraged to participate in the various C.Y.A.A. activities. Students who choose to participate in C.Y.A.A. activities must make a commitment to their team. Any player who chooses to play on a team must also make a commitment to his/her coach and teammates as well as himself/herself in order to remain on the team until conclusion of the season.

1. Give fully of himself/herself during practices and games.
2. Make a commitment to the team over other activities.
3. Be accepting of his/her honest mistakes.
4. Strive to achieve without placing undue pressure on self or teammates.
5. Recognize and respect the strengths and weaknesses of teammates.
6. Exhibit sportsmanship at all times.
7. Accept the guidance of coaches.
8. Respect the coaches and their decisions at all times.
9. Respect the decisions of officials at all times.
Never criticize coaches, officials, or fellow athletes.
10. Refrain from offensive or abusive language and actions.
11. Maintain a minimum standard of 2.0 G.P.A with no failing grades "F/N/U" in ***all courses***.
12. Follow the Athlete's Code of Conduct.
13. Sign the form that they have read the regulations and agree to abide by them.
14. Attend all practices and games.

Role of the Athletic Director

The Athletic Director is responsible for the overall administration, supervision, and coordination of the interscholastic athletic program for St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School.

1. Submit completed coaching application to the administration.
2. Follow Diocesan and St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School guidelines when recommending coaches to the administration.
3. Notify coaching assignments to all coaches.
4. Explain the Diocesan and St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School policies in detail to all the coaches.
5. Review policies regarding fingerprinting, CPR certification, and the Diocese of Phoenix Safe Environment Policy with all coaches.
6. Review all disciplinary policies regularly with coaches.
7. Review mandatory student participation time set forth by the C.Y.A.A. with coaches.
8. Interpret eligibility policies with students, parents, and staff with the cooperation of the administration.
9. Enforce eligibility standards and policies as set forth by the C.Y.A.A. and St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School.

10. Work with the administration for recruitment of coaches.
11. Keep an accurate account of all violations of policies and record the action taken in each case. Inform the administration of all actions taken prior to enforcement.
12. Provide written communication to coaches, parents, and athletes as needed.
13. Update master game schedule as needed.
14. Manage athletic contests.
15. Prepare and manage the athletic budget, requisition supplies and equipment, prepare all purchase orders, and maintain inventories for all athletic activities.
16. Complete all responsibilities associated with the program on a daily basis.
17. Keep record and if necessary offer training for C.P.R. for all coaches.
18. Submit all necessary documents to the C.Y.A.A. upon their due dates.
19. Keep the administration informed of any policy violation or sports concern.
20. Interact regularly with the assistant principal on all aspects of our athletic program.
21. Give out, record, and collect all uniforms.
22. Conduct mandatory parent meetings.

Role of the Coach

A coach has a strong influence on the children with whom he/she works. It is of utmost importance that a coach displays the qualities of good sportsmanship and Christian attitudes. A coach should be an instructor and disciplinarian to the team players. The coach must abide by the C.Y.A.A. Code of Conduct.

1. Be committed to the philosophy of the C.Y.A.A. Program.
2. Be knowledgeable of the C.Y.A.A. rules and applicable AIA rules.
3. Be knowledgeable of the C.Y.A.A. Code of Conduct for all participants.
4. Make good use of practice time for instruction of all players in fundamentals and rules.
5. Have all necessary documents for all players in case of injury.
6. Guide team members in cooperating with one another and accepting the weakness and strengths of team members.
7. Ensure all players participate up to or beyond the C.Y.A.A.
8. Supervise the athletes at all times. This includes practices and before, during and after games. An adult must stay with the athletes until they have been picked up.
9. Coaches should be present before the team arrives for practices or games.
10. Ensure that an adult is present at all times who possesses basic first aid and CPR training and certification.
11. Oversee the safety and maintenance of athletic equipment. The coach should notify the Athletic Director of any faulty equipment.
12. Evidence a positive attitude in relating to athletes.
13. Refrain from offensive language and tobacco products at all times in the presence of the players.

14. Respect the judgment of the officials and their interpretations of the rules.
15. Refrain from discussing publicly with spectators in an abusive manner an official's decision.
16. Refrain from physical or verbal abuse of a player at all times.
17. Be responsible for unruly actions or the misconduct of his/her spectators before, during, or after the game.
18. Never appear in an intoxicated condition, or have the presence of alcoholic beverages.
19. Insist his/her team shakes hands and be courteous at all times with the other teams/ coaches.
20. Hold a pre-game prayer.
21. Scheduled games must be played. Advise the Athletic Director of any conflict A.S.A.P.
22. Follow the directives of the Athletic Director and Administration.
23. Attend or have on file evidence you attended the "Safe Environment Policy" training.
24. Be fingerprinted or have a DPS clearance card.
25. Ensure that everyone associated with the team conducts himself or herself in a Christian manner.
26. Sign the form on the C.Y.A.A. Code of Conduct Agreement.

Role of the Parent

Parents of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School Athletes participating in the C.Y.A.A. league should be aware of the philosophy and guidelines set forth by the C.Y.A.A.

1. Be a positive spectator when present for any practices or games.
2. Show cooperation and respect when relating to coaches and officials.
3. If you witness a coach's behavior, which is not consistent with the C.Y.A.A. philosophy, alert the Athletic Director and administration in writing.
4. Know and demonstrate the fundamentals of sportsmanship.
5. Refrain from offensive language and actions. Taunting and/or swearing will not be tolerated at any time.
6. Help censure fellow spectators who display negative behavior.
7. Monitor the academic progress and school behavior of their child to ensure they maintain the minimum standard of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School. The minimum standard at St. Thom as the Apostle Catholic School is a 2.0 G.P.A. with no failing grades "F/N/U" in **all courses**.
8. Sign the form that they have read the C.Y.A.A. and St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School philosophy, rules, and regulations and agree to abide by them.

Suspension and Removal from the Team

Players must follow certain guidelines while participating for St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School. An athlete, who violates the rules listed below, could be suspended or removed from the team. A coach must notify the Athletic Director of any violation before taking any action to suspend or remove a player from a team. A player may be suspended or removed by the Athletic Director once he/she has been notified of a violation under the following conditions.

One Game Suspension

1. Receiving any notices of concern that the administration determines is substantial enough to warrant disciplinary action.
2. 2 unexcused tardies from practices
3. 1 unexcused tardy from a game
4. 1 unexcused absence from practice
5. 1 unexcused absence from a game
6. Misconduct during practices or games that a coach feels is substantial enough to warrant action.
7. Violation of the Athlete's Code of Conduct

Removal from the Team

1. Athlete is suspended from the team three times
2. Athlete receives three unexcused absences from practices and/or games.
3. Fighting – during the school day, practices, and/or games.
4. Excessive inappropriate behavior towards coaches, teammates, officials, or the opposing team.
5. Failure to bring grades up to 2.0 average and/or maintaining F/N/U in any course.
6. Any action the administration determines is substantial enough to warrant disciplinary action.

Supervision

1. Athletes must report to the coach or designated adult when they arrive at the practice or game site.
2. Athletes will not leave a site without permission.
3. Coaches or designated adult must be present before team members arrive for practices or games.
4. Coaches must supervise players until all have been picked up from a practice or a game. Parents must be on time to pick up athletes. If parents are more than ten minutes late the athlete could be sent to aftercare at the parent's expense.

Tardy Policy

An athlete is tardy when he/she arrives at a practice or a game after the designated starting time as determined by the coach.

Any combination of 2 unexcused tardies to a practice or a game will result in a one game suspension. Any athlete suspended from the team three times may be removed from the team.

Team Pictures

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic school team pictures will be announced during the school year.

Team Schedule

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School teams are limited on the amount of time they may have for practices and games. Practices or games, except tournaments, are Monday through Thursday. If a practice or game is held during the weekend it cannot be mandatory.

Team and master schedules will be available on the school website shortly after the season begins.

Transportation

Parents are responsible for transporting their children to and from games and practices. If you are not able to transport your child you must make arrangements with another parent. In order for a child to be allowed to ride with anybody else other than that child's parent, St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School must have a Transportation Consent Form on file. This form must be notarized. St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School cannot arrange carpools. Coaches are not permitted to transport team players unless the athlete is their child or part of their carpool. Accidents should be reported to the school administration and parents should be notified even if students are not injured.