

11. ATHLETIC PROGRAMS AND POLICY

Mission Statement

CHRIST IS THE REASON FOR ST. STEPHEN SCHOOL. HE IS THE UNSEEN BUT EVER PRESENT TEACHER IN OUR CLASSES. HE IS THE MODEL OF OUR FACULTY AND THE INSPIRATION OF OUR STUDENTS.

In this spirit-filled, safe and supportive environment, the dedicated faculty of St. Stephen School works closely with families to provide students with a solid academic foundation for their future studies and a solid spiritual foundation, based on the values of the Catholic faith, to last a lifetime. We want our students to catch this Spirit.

Philosophy

The St. Stephen School Athletic program will provide the students with an opportunity to play organized team sports in a safe and supportive environment. The programs will provide training and teaching of the fundamental skills needed to play the game and compete, while at the same time promoting the importance of sportsmanship and teamwork.

Academic Eligibility for Athletics

Athletics are secondary to academics. Students must be in good standing in their course work in order to participate in the athletic program of St. Stephen School. Students must receive a minimum grade of 75 in all of their six core subjects of religion, English, literature, mathematics, social studies and science in order to participate in the athletic program. Eligibility will be determined on the basis of the student's grades on his/her most recent quarterly report card or midterm progress report.

Behavioral Eligibility for Athletics

Athletes are expected to exhibit good behavior and a positive attitude. Athletes are expected to abide by all school policies. Students who violate school policies as stated in the Parent/Student Handbook or who exhibit negative or behavioral issues may be suspended or dismissed from the team at the discretion of the Administration.

Athletic Fee

There will be a \$50.00 per student/per sport fee to help defray the cost of membership, uniforms and gym rentals. This fee must be paid to St. Stephen School before participating in any sport. The fee is non-refundable after the first practice.

Sportsmanship and Teamwork

The ideas of sportsmanship, teamwork, and integrity should permeate all the Athletic Programs in our school community. Sportsmanship involves those qualities of behavior which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. The Athletic Programs of St. Stephen School should be a laboratory to produce good sportsmanship and teamwork reflecting "fair play" in every area of life. Students are taught to work together and be good losers as well as gracious winners.

Athletes are required to demonstrate proper sportsmanship when participating in any sporting event or team practice. Intimidation, abusive language or abusive action towards any other player, coach, official or fan will not be tolerated. All property including, equipment, uniforms, and facilities, must be respected by an athlete.

Program Basics

The Athletic Programs will teach valuable lessons in self-confidence, teamwork, fair play and competition. Participation in the program will encourage fitness and the development of physical skills and coordination. Lessons learned from fairly played athletics, through games and practices, are a benefit to students. The program should be enjoyable for both the participating students and their families.

Sport Programs Offered – (Grade eligibility and offering is subject to change)

Sport programs are offered based on the availability of volunteer coaches and a sufficient number of students participating.

Soccer Grades 5 through 8
Baseball Grades 6 through 8

Basketball Grades 5 through 8
Softball Grades 6 through 8

Head Injury Policy

In compliance with Mass General Law Chapter 111 Section 222 regarding interscholastic athletic head injury safety, signatures of both athletes and parents/guardians are required to acknowledge their responsibility to provide the school/athletic director/coaches “information relative to any sports head injury history at the start of each sports season.” Failure to sign the documents sent home will result in removal from the team.

As a result of this new law, **parents and students** who plan to participate in any athletic program at St. Stephen School must take a free on-line course to educate themselves about sports-related head injuries and concussions. The state has made available free on-line courses that contain all of the information required by law. The course is through the Center for Disease Control (CDC). At the end of the course you will receive a certificate – print a certificate for at least one parent as well as the student athlete. These must be sent to the school.

To learn more about concussion and take the online course, please visit www.cdc.gov/Concussion.

From the CDC: “Children and teens with a concussion should NEVER return to sports or recreation activities on the same day the injury occurred. They should delay returning to their activities until a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion says they are symptom-free and it’s OK to return to play. This means, until permitted, not returning to:

- Physical Education class
- Sports practices or games, or
- Physical activity at recess

Athletic Director's Responsibility

The AD is responsible for

- managing and scheduling athletic events
- organizing team participation
- maintaining a gym schedule
- making recommendations for head coach selections
- selecting assistant coaches
- monitoring all teams and coaches

- settling player, coach and parental disputes.

Parents, athletes and coaches are expected to bring any concerns or issues to the attention of the Athletic Director.

Coaches/Assistant Coaches

Coaches shall identify and develop a player's knowledge of the sport and athletic skills as they relate to the fundamentals of the sport. They shall build a sense of esteem and confidence by developing all players regardless of talent level. They shall exemplify an appreciation for full team participation, fair play and sportsmanship. All coaches shall portray that winning is secondary to sportsmanship, skill development and creation of self-esteem among all team members and participants in the program.

Coaches should be the first to arrive and the last to leave practice sessions and games. At all times the coach will keep the school's Athletic Director informed of sporting events, practices and issues concerning athletics.

All coaches and assistant coaches must adhere to St. Stephen School's Athletic Program and Policies and are subject to the Administration's approval. All coaches, assistant coaches and volunteers must pass a CORI review and complete the diocesan mandated Safe Environment Training as well as mandated concussion training.

Student athletes must commit to their teams at St. Stephen School first.

They may only participate on one team per season at the school. Lack of commitment could result in teams having to forfeit games, which would jeopardize the School's eligibility in any league.

All team participants must adhere to St. Stephen School's Athletic Program and Policy. All athletes must have a current health form on file with the school that states the student is fit to participate in sports. All athletes must have a Sports Examination form on file before they can participate on any athletic team. These forms are available from your doctor's office. All athletes must sign a Student Athlete Code of Conduct Form. All parents must sign a Parent Code of Conduct Form and fill out the Sports Emergency Form (this form will be kept on file at the school and a copy will be given to your child's coach in case there is an accident or emergency situation during practice or a game), as well as any other permission slips/forms provided by and required by the school.

Athlete Contract

As an athlete, I will:

- Meet academic eligibility requirements.
- Have all necessary health information and documentation on file.
- Attend all practices, games, meets and team meetings faithfully. However, if I have been absent from school, or dismissed from school due to illness, I will not participate in that day's practice, meet or game.
- Be on time for all practices, meets and games.
- Contact a coach personally before a practice, meet or game if I must miss it.
- Maintain good sportsmanship behavior at all times.
- Treat all teammates, opponents, coaches and officials with respect.
- Inform the coach if I am unable to participate in a meet or a game due to a detention.

- Adhere to the policies of the school's Student Handbook and behave accordingly. Obey all gym rules.
- Report any personal or teammate injury to a coach immediately.
- Pay for any damage or loss of school property due to my negligence.
- Pick-up the benches and playing area of any trash after a practice, game or meet.
- Follow all reasonable requests made by the coaches involving diet, rest and independent practices.
- Represent my school in a Christian manner which is consistent with my religious education. I will remember that my behavior and actions, on and off the field, reflect on me, my team and my school.

Parent Contract

As a parent, I will:

- Have read and understood the School's athletic policy.
- Monitor my child's academic performance and assistance when necessary.
- Ensure that my child does not participate in athletics on days that he/she is absent/or dismissed due to illness from school.
- Provide transportation to sporting events and practices for my child.
- Be on time, especially when picking my child up from practice.
- Not drop my child off at a practice, game or meet unless I know a coach or assistant coach is present.
- When unable to provide transportation, I will arrange transportation and provide the necessary documentation to the coach.
- Contact the coach with any issues or concerns with my child's participation on a school team.
- Maintain good sportsmanship behavior at all times.
- Support and encourage my child and his/her entire team at all times.
- Understand that all players will receive playing time, but they may not all play for the same amount of time.
- Treat all opponents, parents, coaches and officials with respect.
- Report any injury to my child to the coach immediately.
- Pay for any damage or loss of school property due to negligence of my child.
- Support all reasonable requests made by the coaches involving diet, rest and independent practices for my child.
- Understand all decisions regarding sports teams, as well as team and player recognition will be determined solely by the school administration, athletic director and/or coaches.

Required Documentation

Please note that students will **not** be allowed to participate in any athletic practices or games without the required documentation and sports fee.

Permission Slip

A permission slip will be sent home before the start of practices/games for **each** sport. This information must be sent in with the Athletic Fee by the due date specified on the form.

The following forms are to be sent in at the beginning of the year and will be kept on file for any sport your child(ren) play. Any changes or updates to the Sports Emergency Form or Health Form should be sent into the school as they occur.

Sports Emergency Form

The Emergency Notification Form must be filled out completely. This form will be kept on file at the school and a copy will be given to your child's coach in case there is an accident or emergency situation during a practice or a game.

Health Form

For the safety of our student athletes, all students participating in a sport must have proof of a physical examination, done by the student's primary care provider within 13 months of the beginning of the season in which the student is participating in a sport. If your child has had a physical examination within this time frame, please contact the physician and request a copy of your child's "Health Form" (sometimes referred to as a *School, Camp, Sports Health Examination Form*). You may bring the form to the school or have it faxed (508-770-1052) directly from the physician's office.

If your child has not had a physical examination within the last 13 months, please schedule an exam as soon as possible, let us know when the exam is scheduled for and request a medical clearance letter from your physician for the child to play until the exam can be completed.

Concussion Forms (Parent and Student)

Parents/guardians are required by Mass General Law Chapter 111 Section 222 regarding interscholastic athletic head injury safety, to provide *"information relative to any sports head injury history at the start of each sports season."*

To learn more about concussion and take the online course, please visit www.cdc.gov/Concussion.

Athlete and Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct Forms

The Code of Conduct forms must be signed by athletes and parent/Guardians. Read these forms carefully, fill out, sign and return the bottom portion of these forms and retain the top portion for your information.

Parents/Guardians and Students must adhere to the St. Stephen School Athletic Policy.