

# ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

2025-2026



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# The Athletic Program of St. Mark's Lutheran School

## Mission of St. Mark's Lutheran School

St. Mark's lives to **GLORIFY** God, **GROW** in his Word, and **GO** with the Gospel. In carrying out this mission, St. Mark's Lutheran School strives to serve families with excellence in Christian education.

## Goals of the Athletic Program

The athletic program is a vital part of our school's program of Christian education. It helps accomplish each of the three goals of the St. Mark's mission:

- For Student-Athletes to **GLORIFY** God by developing and using their athletic abilities.
- As Jesus grew "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52), students have opportunities through the athletic program to **GROW** whether that is in the classroom, or on the court/field.
- Students **GO** with the Gospel by representing their Savior and school with God-pleasing effort and conduct in all athletic activities.

## Components of the Athletic Program

### ***Recess (all grades, required)***

- Develop social and athletic skills in an informal and fun supervised environment.
- Provide breaks in the school day for physical activity and recreation.

### ***Physical Education (all grades, required)***

- Understand that physical activity provides opportunities to glorify God through enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and social interaction.
- Develop and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness.
- Apply movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of motor skills.
- Demonstrate competency and proficiency in many movement forms, games, and sports.
- Exhibit responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity settings.

### ***Interscholastic Sports (grades 3-8, optional)***

- Offer a competitive atmosphere for those children who have the desire and God-given ability to grow and excel in athletics.
- Represent St. Mark's Lutheran School by fielding teams that exemplify Christian conduct, good sportsmanship, leadership, teamwork, effort, and diligent preparation.
- Provide an atmosphere in which team goals take precedence over individual goals.
- Help each student-athlete understand his role on a team and fulfill it faithfully.
- Help student-athletes recognize their athletic capabilities and strive to improve them to God's glory.
- Provide activities that build school unity and pride.
- Help student-athletes realize that participation in interscholastic programs is a privilege with accompanying responsibilities.
- Prepare student-athletes to handle situations that are physically, mentally, and emotionally challenging that may even result in failure.

### ***Youth Sports (grades K-8, optional)***

- Summer sports camps enable children to further develop sport-specific skills.
  - Summer Lions Basketball Camp Grades 3-6
  - Summer Lions Volleyball Camp Grades 5-8

- The St. Mark's Youth Basketball League (SMYBL Grades K-2) enables young children to begin learning the game of basketball within the context of a team.
- Our youth sports programs serve the children of our school, church, and community. Summer Camps also allow for students to volunteer their time talents and abilities. It is also an opportunity to bring students to St. Mark's.

## Interscholastic Sports Program

### Interscholastic Sports Teams

St. Mark's Lutheran School offers the following interscholastic sports depending availability, enrollment, and participation numbers:

Fall – Volleyball (co-ed B-level, boys and girls A-level)

Winter – Basketball (boys and girls C, B, and A-level)

*\*Depending on enrollment and participation numbers, our league allows us to play co-ed sports if need be.*

Interscholastic teams for volleyball and basketball are usually formed in the following way, each level emphasizing growth, participation, and competition.

#### C-Level Teams

At this level students are introduced to team sports. These teams are composed of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders. Players will have opportunities in practices and games to learn fundamental skills and apply them to game situations. All players who fulfill their commitment to team goals will receive ample playing time to develop their skills in game situations.

#### B-Level Teams

At this level participation receives higher emphasis. These teams are usually composed of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Players from 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade may also be recruited depending on enrollment as determined by the coach. All players will receive playing time to develop their skills in game situations.

#### A-Level Teams

At this level, competition receives higher emphasis with the focus on achieving victory and representing our school to the best of our teams' ability. These teams are usually composed of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Players from 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade may also be used depending on enrollment as determined by the coach. Playing time will be determined by players' skill, attitude, and game situation. Teams may also be Co-ed Depending on numbers

### Interscholastic Sports Expectations

The following are the basic expectations for all **coaches, players, and parents** of St. Mark's Lutheran School involved with interscholastic sports. Coaches, players, and parents are expected to:

- Conduct themselves in a God-pleasing manner in all things and at all times and recognize that their behavior represents their Lord, family, and school.
- Be humble in victory and properly attribute success to God's blessing and good team play.
- Be gracious in defeat and take responsibility for shortcomings and mistakes.
- Treat Opponents, opposing facilities, and referees with proper respect and recognize them as fellow children of God.
- Be present and on time at scheduled events (practices & games) and faithful to their commitment to the team.
- Give thanks to God for all the opportunities offered in the athletic program.

- Strive to have fun coaching, playing, or watching sports.

### **Coaching Responsibilities**

- Coaches will conduct themselves as Christian role models for their players.
- Coaches will encourage their players to fully develop and use their God-given abilities.
- Coaches will strive to use constructive criticism in working with their players and team that has the player's best interest in mind in the long term. All Criticism is used to make the player(s) grow physically, mentally, and personally.
- Coaches will prepare diligently and teach their players the fundamental skills, rules, and strategies of the sport.
- Coaches will model a respectful attitude toward officials.
- Coaches will make sure that the facilities of St. Mark's and other schools are treated with care and respect.
- Coaches, recognizing the unique abilities of their players, will strive to put players in game situations where they are prepared to succeed and help the team reach its goal.

### **Player Responsibilities**

- Players will understand that participation in interscholastic sports teams cannot compromise the academic performance and other responsibilities.
- Players will realize their role as ambassadors for their Savior and school.
- Players will compete as part of a team, not for themselves.
- Players will strive to understand their roles on the team and put team goals before their own.
- Players will respect and accept the decisions of the officials without question.
- Players will compete with Christian sportsmanship.
- Players will give glory to God, demonstrating humility in victory and grace in defeat.
- Players will respect and care for the facilities and equipment of St. Mark's and other schools.
- Players will attend all practices and games, unless an excuse for missing a practice or game is sent from a Parent, by email, phone call, or conversation with the Coach or Athletic Director.
- Players will respect and follow the directions of the coach.
- will make sure that the facilities of St. Mark's and other schools are treated with care and respect.

### **Parent Responsibilities**

- Parents will realize their role as ambassadors for their Savior and school and as role models for their children.
- Parents will support the school, its coaches, and its programs.
- Parents will avoid the temptation to "coach" their children from the sideline during games. Cheering and encouragement should be team-focused and general in nature. Specific instructional comments directed at individual players should be avoided. Players' attention needs to be solely focused on the game and coach's instruction.
- Parents will not speak negatively about coaches, other athletes, or officials.
- Parents are encouraged to support St. Mark's teams with positive, enthusiastic cheering. Cheering against other teams and officials is inappropriate.
- Parents will transport their children to and from away games or arrange transportation for them.
- Parents will strive to understand the role their child has on the team and support the goals of the team.
- will make sure that the facilities of St. Mark's and other schools are treated with care and respect.

- Parents are encouraged to ask the Athletic Director about ways to volunteer. There are many tasks to be completed at a game, practice, or transportation, as the Athletic Director, Coach, and Teachers can only do so much.

### **Questions and Concerns**

At times, parents may have questions or concerns about interscholastic sports at St. Mark's Lutheran School. It is important to follow an orderly procedure to address these questions or concerns.

Parents may contact a coach/Athletic Director with questions or concerns about the following:

- Child behavior
- Treatment of a child
- Ways for a child to improve
- Playing time
- Coaching strategy
- Other student-athletes
- Officiating

Discussing such questions or concerns with a coach must be done in a respectful, self-controlled, objective manner with team goals in mind. Such discussions should take place removed from a game setting.

The following progression should be followed when addressing questions or concerns:

- Take some time away, do not bring the issue up right away. After a game the Coach or Athletic Director has many things going on. Take time to decompress and have a clear mind before the discussion takes place.
- Speak with the coach.
- If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved with the coach, the coach and parent should bring it to the Athletic Director's attention.
- If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved with the Athletic Director, the coach, parent, and Athletic Director should bring it to the Principal.
- If the question or concern is not satisfactorily resolved with the Principal, the coach, parent, Athletic Director, and principal should bring it to the attention of the Board of Child Discipleship.

### **Transportation to Away Games**

Parents are responsible for securing transportation for their children to and from away games. Every effort should be made to arrange transportation to away games without the assistance of the Coach/Athletic Director although coaches may be willing to transport players if they have room. Coaches/Athletic Director need to work and plan many things for a single game. Parents have the schedule ahead of time and should be in contact with multiple parents before asking the Coach/Athletic Director.

Parents that transport athletes to games are responsible for bringing the athletes back to school but also need to wait until the athlete's parent is picked up, unless excused by the Athletic Director.

### **Attendance**

Players are expected to be on time for all practices & games. Parents are expected to excuse their child's absence from a game or practice as far in advance as possible. The notice should be made in person or by email or phone call. If a player is not present at school by noon on a game day, he is ineligible for that

day's game. If a player misses practice(s) prior to a game, his playing time for upcoming games may be affected.

Attendance of games need to be under supervision of their parent(s) if the student is not on the designated team. If their parent(s) are not there to watch the child, they will be put in the afterschool program.

### **Eligibility**

Participation in interscholastic sports teams is a privilege. Students must therefore maintain good academic standing in order to participate. The following guidelines will be used to determine students' eligibility to participate in interscholastic sports teams:

1. The student must have no more than three D's and no F's on the quarterly or midterm report preceding the sport in which he wishes to participate.
2. If a student's academic performance does not meet this standard, participation in interscholastic sports teams may be suspended. This suspension will be reviewed the next time a quarterly or midterm report is issued (or sooner if improvement is apparent). The review will be handled by the Athletic Director and the student athlete's Teacher(s).
3. Students who have outstanding incomplete work may be ineligible to attend practices or games until the work is completed in a satisfactory manner and is turned in to the teacher.
4. Teachers and coaches reserve the right to remove eligibility for students who meet the minimum requirements but consistently achieve below their ability level.
5. In some cases, exceptions to the eligibility requirements may be made when a student has not been blessed with the ability to meet those requirements. In such circumstances, the principal, teacher, coach, and parent will meet to determine what is best for the child.

An academic suspension from an interscholastic sports team may be appealed to an ad hoc committee consisting of the principal, coach, and a member of the Board of Child Discipleship. The committee will consult with the student's classroom teacher before making a final decision.

The eligibility policy is in effect for all St. Mark's Interscholastic events.

### **Practice and Game Attire**

Athletic shoes with non-marking soles designated exclusively for indoor use are required for volleyball and basketball. Quality athletic shoes are a worthwhile investment as they help prevent injury and maximize performance and help maintain the facilities that God has blessed us with.

Players wear uniforms for all athletic contests. School-owned uniforms are issued for volleyball and basketball. School-owned uniforms are to be taken home and cleaned before the next competition. The uniforms are the school's property, so should be handled with care.

Having sharply-dressed teams reflects positively on our school and helps foster a sense of pride in our student-athletes. For this reason, an athletic fee of \$20 is assessed at the start of each sports season to enable the upkeep and regular replacement of uniforms, along with helping to pay for officials.

Players are expected to take good care of uniforms. Parents are responsible for lost or damaged uniforms.

### **Conclusion**

It is our belief that if the terms of this handbook are upheld, the athletic program of St. Mark's Lutheran School will be successful in helping carry out the mission of our school.

*Approved by St. Mark's Lutheran School's Board of Child Discipleship on 05.06.25*