

ST. AGNES ACADEMY
UPPER SCHOOL ATHLETIC PROGRAM

STUDENT AND
PARENT HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ST. AGNES ACADEMY STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAGE NUMBER</u>
UPPER SCHOOL SPORTS AT ST. AGNES ACADEMY	3
PHILOSOPHY OF INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS	3
NINTH GRADE AND JUNIOR VARSITY PROGRAMS	4
VARSITY PROGRAM	4
CODE OF BEHAVIOR	5
SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY	5
REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION	6
MEDICAL CERTIFICATION	6
REQUIRED ATTENDANCE AT PRACTICE	6
ACADEMICS	6
SCHOOL ABSENCES	6
EQUIPMENT/UNIFORMS	7
TRANSPORTATION	7
FAMILY VACATIONS	7
OUTSIDE TEAM PARTICIPATION	7
JOBS/DRIVER EDUCATION	8
COACHES' RESPONSIBILITY	8
ATHLETIC TRAINER	8
NUTRITION	8
RISKS	9
INSURANCE	9
PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION	9
- Communication Parents can expect from a Coach	9
- Communication Coaches can expect from a Parent	9
- Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with a Coach	10
- Issues Not Appropriate to Discuss with a Coach	10
- Procedure to Follow if you Have a Concern to Discuss with a Coach	10
- Procedure to Follow if the Meeting with the Coach did not Provide a Satisfactory Solution	10
SUMMARY	11

ST. AGNES ATHLETIC PROGRAM
STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to the St. Agnes Interscholastic Athletic Program. This handbook has been developed to provide information that will help you understand the policies and procedures of the Athletic Department, which have been established to enable the coaches and administrators to conduct an athletic program that is educationally sound, safe and productive. Athletes, parents and guardians are encouraged to read the entire handbook and refer to it throughout the year for all sports.

Any questions or concerns about this handbook should be directed to Jim Lassandrello, Director of Athletics at 435-5827.

UPPER SCHOOL SPORTS
AT ST. AGNES ACADEMY

FALL

Ninth Grade Volleyball
JV/Varsity Volleyball
JV/Varsity Soccer
Varsity Cross Country
Golf

WINTER

Ninth Grade Basketball
JV/Varsity Basketball
Swimming
Bowling

SPRING

Varsity Track
Tennis
Softball
LaCrosse

PHILOSOPHY OF INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

We at St. Agnes Academy considers interscholastic athletics to be an important and integral part of the educational programs of the whole school. In keeping with the school's mission statement, the athletic program provides experiences that will develop skills and self-confidence in each girl so that she can reach her greatest potential and develop lifetime skills that will help her now and in future years. Participation in sports offers students opportunities to achieve through participation in activities that require integration of mind and body, requiring them to strive for mental and physical excellence both in practice and in competition.

The Athletic Department seeks to hire qualified coaches providing them with the unique opportunity to teach positive lifetime skills and values. In order to ensure that athletes are prepared for the commitment and personal sacrifice needed to be successful in athletics, coaches must help them develop and understand the roles that desire, dedication and self-discipline play in reaching individual and team goals. These are lifetime values that promote and nurture integrity, pride, loyalty and overall character.

While striving for victory is the nature of athletic competition, it is only one criterion when determining a season's success. Guiding a team to reach its maximum potential and an athlete to reach her maximum potential are the ultimate goals. Along with this comes emphasis on good sportsmanship which includes being modest in victory and accepting in defeat.

NINTH GRADE AND JUNIOR VARSITY PROGRAMS

The ninth grade and junior varsity programs exist for those athletes who have the desire and potential to eventually compete at the varsity level. The ninth grade teams are made up of only ninth graders, but the junior varsity programs can be made up of ninth, tenth and eleventh graders. It is not unusual to see sophomores and juniors play at both the varsity and junior varsity level, which is permissible as long as the restricted allowable playing time is not exceeded for any one day. Occasionally, an outstanding ninth grader may see varsity playing time.

A high level of commitment and dedication is expected at these levels. The demands of physical conditioning increase along with continued work toward refining fundamental skills and game strategies. During participation in these programs, a continued growth in the athlete's socio-emotional development will be emphasized. Athletes will continue to work toward individual goals and improvement plus increased team interaction to achieve team goals. Striving for victory, the outcome of the contest will become more of a consideration at this level.

Regular attendance, along with focus and concentration, during the practice sessions are essential to the success of these programs and will have a direct affect on the level of achievement during competition. Every effort will be made to allow for meaningful contest participation during each season; however, a specified amount of playing time is never guaranteed. Work habits and attitudes that are developed during this phase of an athlete's sports program will prepare her for the necessary commitment, dedication and time demands required at the varsity level. Most practices and contests will be scheduled during the week, but occasionally they may be scheduled on the weekend or during school holidays.

VARSITY PROGRAM

Varsity competition is the culmination of each sports program. Athletic ability, socio-emotional development and playing experience are the major factors in team selection and playing time. While varsity teams are made up primarily of upperclassmen, it is not unusual to see an outstanding underclassman playing at the varsity level. This is particularly true in the sports commonly classified as "individual" such as track, golf and tennis.

Squad size will vary from sport to sport and is based on the number needed to conduct an effective and meaningful practice and to be competitive on the playing field. It is important that each player understand her role on the team and be informed of its importance. Coaches will make every effort to allow each athlete to have the opportunity to compete at the varsity level, but a specified amount of playing time is never guaranteed. The dedication and commitment of a varsity athlete should never be questionable, and regular attendance at practice and athletic contests are required for participation. Some practices and contests may be held on weekends and during the holidays.

The varsity coach in each sport is the leader in that sports program and determines the system of instruction and strategy for that program. Regular communication will take place between the varsity coach and all the coaches of the teams in that sport. The coaches will work together to provide the optimal learning experience for each athlete.

Striving to win should be the goal every time a team puts on the blue and white because it means giving all that you have both physically and mentally until the final whistle blows, the finish line is crossed or the last ball is hit. We may not always get the victory but we can always “win” if we can leave the contest knowing there was nothing left to give.

CODE OF BEHAVIOR

- * Participating in interscholastic athletics is a privilege. Athletes should conduct themselves at all times in a manner that reflects positively on their school.
- * Each athlete should strive to perform to the best of her ability both in practice and in competition to achieve her own individual goals and the goals of her team.
- * The time commitment for participation in athletics is demanding and requires proper physical and mental preparation. It is important that athletes maintain a healthy lifestyle and work to promote good health.
- * The “Code of Behavior” adopted by the Athletic Department prohibits the use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs during an athlete’s sport season. Use of these substances is in direct conflict with maintaining a healthy lifestyle, because they are all proven hazardous to one’s health and can prevent the normal physical and mental development of an athlete.
- * To promote a healthy lifestyle, we encourage all athletes to adhere to the “Code of Behavior” at all times, not just during the sports season.
- * N.B. See the SAA-SDS Parent Handbook for all rules covering behavior.

SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY

During home contests, the St. Agnes community serves as hosts to visiting team members, students, and adult spectators who are considered guests of our school. They are to be treated accordingly, and should be extended every courtesy and consideration that a well-mannered and well-intentioned host would normally give. Visitors are expected to act as invited guests, using the home school’s facilities with care and respect while also abiding by the rules and customs of the home school.

Certified and qualified officials are assigned to all athletic contests and are the proper authorities to make decisions regarding rules and their interpretations. These decisions should be accepted. Officials are expected to be treated with respect at all times both on and off the court or playing field.

Spectators, students, athletes and coaches must recognize that their conduct plays an important role in establishing the reputation of their school and that their positive actions can contribute directly to the success of their teams.

For further reference to the rules of fair play and good sportsmanship, visit the TSSAA website: www.tssaa.org.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

All athletes must have on file the completed and current sports medical form and a current and signed trip permission form to be eligible for participation.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATION

Student athletes are required to have a physical examination by a physician for each school year. This examination may take place anytime after May 1 for the upcoming year. TSSAA sports medical forms must be completed and on file in the school office. Parents must complete and sign the trip permission form prior to each school year and file it with the school office.

REQUIRED ATTENDANCE AT PRACTICE

All student athletes are expected to attend all scheduled practice sessions and games unless excused by the coach. In the Upper School fall practices may begin as early as August 1, and those athletes who wish to participate should arrange their summer vacations accordingly.

ACADEMICS

The Athletic Department recognizes that academics are the number one priority in the lives of the student athlete. Athletes are expected to fulfill all classroom requirements on time and to strive to reach their academic potential in all of their classes. Athletes must sometimes miss classes for athletic contests, in which case they must let their teachers know of the absence ahead of time. The St. Agnes faculty are more than happy to help student athletes who miss class, **as long as** those student athletes display a conscientious effort to do the right thing.

N.B. See the SAA-SDS Parent Handbook for all rules covering "Participation in Extracurricular Activities."

SCHOOL ABSENCES

Student athletes who miss school due to illness or fatigue will not be allowed to participate in practice or competition the day of the absence. In extreme circumstances this policy may be waived with permission from the appropriate Dean. (This is a school-wide policy which governs participation in all our extracurricular activities.)

EQUIPMENT/UNIFORMS

All equipment and clothing checked out to athletes must be returned to the coach at the end of the season. Failure to return equipment or clothing will result in the athlete paying for the missing article and could jeopardize their participation in the next season. The cost of athletic equipment and clothing rises each year, and it puts a burden on the athletic budget when these items are not returned.

TRANSPORTATION

There are times when athletes will be transported to and from campus practice and competition by a school vehicle. In the Upper School students often transport themselves when the event is not far from school. Student drivers will not be allowed to transport other students without written permission from the driver's parents and the passenger's parents.

FAMILY VACATIONS

When athletes miss a practice and/or a competition during a sports season due to family vacations, it must be understood that the time missed by the student/athlete can affect team chemistry and personal conditioning. Athletes who miss practices or competitions for any reason may have their position or playing time adjusted. Sport schedules and practice schedules will be posted as far in advance as possible and be made available to players and parents. Coaches must be informed in advance and in writing of all planned absences.

OUTSIDE TEAM PARTICIPATION

Many St. Agnes girls choose to participate on teams outside of the school setting, such as travel soccer teams, AAU basketball teams, and church league basketball. For those girls who are in high school sports, TSSAA prohibits any participation on an independent team during the same sport season as the school sport. For example, a girl playing basketball for St. Agnes could not play on a church league team until her high school season has been completed.

If an athlete is participating on a non-school team of one sport while participating on a St. Agnes team in another sport, she should realize that her commitment should always be to the school regarding practice, meetings, and games scheduled by her coach. If an athlete believes that she has a conflict, then she should schedule a meeting with the coach well in advance of the upcoming season to discuss the situation. Occasionally, coaches of these outside teams put unreasonable pressure on the girls to choose between their team and the school team. This is not in the best interest of the girls or the athletic program at St. Agnes. If this occurs, please let the athletic department know, so that we may communicate with the other coach and remove the athlete from being in the middle of any conflict.

The athletic program supports the development of its athletes in all phases and encourages them to continue to work toward their own personal development in their chosen sports. At the same time, we understand the demands made on their time with academic requirements and extracurricular activities and are in a position to help them learn to balance their time and to make good choices.

JOBS/DRIVER EDUCATION

It is strongly advised that athletes schedule Driver's Education and after school jobs in their off-season if possible. If this presents a problem, they are to see their coach prior to the beginning of the season.

WELLNESS AND SAFETY

COACHES RESPONSIBILITY

St. Agnes coaches are charged with the responsibility of guiding and directing their student/athletes through practices, scrimmages and games. Activities are conducted in such a way as to promote and foster the health, safety and well-being of all participants. Along with teaching physical skills, coaches promote the ideals of good sportsmanship, ethical conduct and fair play in accordance with the philosophy of the Athletic Department.

ATHLETIC TRAINER

The Athletic Trainer is available once a week for the prevention and care of athletic injuries. Student/athletes have the benefit of having injuries evaluated and treated and when necessary being referred to a physician. After an injury, the athletic trainer will follow up with coaches, parents and often the physician for proper care and rehabilitation. Any athlete under the care of a physician for illness or injury must receive written permission from the physician to return to active status in the athletic program.

NUTRITION

Eating properly is critical to achieving peak performance in athletics. Maintaining a healthy diet is crucial in the training process, and parents, athletes, and coaches must be informed about proper nutrition. Food is fuel for the body and provides the energy necessary for sustenance during the sports season for practice and competition. Below are listed some dietary guidelines which should assist in making choices about one's diet:

- * Eat more complex carbohydrates
- * Eat moderate amounts of protein
- * Eat less high fat foods

- * Drink a minimum of 6-8 glasses of water a day (stay well-hydrated)
- * Maintain a healthy body composition
- * Don't be tempted by nutritional supplements or other advertised performance enhancing drugs
- * Eat three meals a day beginning with breakfast

RISKS

Providing a safe environment for practice and competition is a priority of everyone involved in the athletic program. Every step is taken to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants. Student/athletes and their parents must be aware, however, that certain risks of injury are inherent in athletic participation. Although not probably, accidents resulting in brain injuries, paralysis or even death may occur.

INSURANCE

Expenses for injuries that require medical attention must first be submitted to the parents' insurance carrier. Any remaining balance can then be submitted to the school's insurance carrier which supplements the parent's coverage in limited ways.

PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION

Parenting and coaching are both extremely difficult vocations. Understanding each others' roles and following proper channels of communication will enable parents and coaches to effectively work together to provide a meaningful experience for student athletes while they are participating on a St. Agnes team. It is important for parents to realize that they are a child's greatest role model. Attitudes of parents are readily adopted by their children and it is with that in mind that we stress the importance of a cooperative spirit/atmosphere between parent and coach.

Communication Parents can Expect from a Coach:

1. Philosophy of the coach
2. Locations and times of practices and contests
3. Expectations the coach has of the players and of the team
4. Team requirements
5. Team rules and disciplinary action for violation of team rules
6. Procedure followed if your child should become injured in practice or in competition
7. What (if any) role parents may play to help the coach or team (i.e. volunteer help, transportation, team meetings, or meals.)

Communication Coaches can Expect from a Parent:

1. Any concerns they may have (These should be expressed directly to the coach.)
2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
3. Health issues concerning your child

One of the goals of the athletic program at St. Agnes is to provide a positive experience for each athlete and to help each girl reach her greatest potential. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. When this occurs, parents are encouraged to have a discussion with the coach.

Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with a Coach:

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

Open communication between parents and coaches is encouraged on each of the issues listed above.

Issues Not Appropriate to Discuss with a Coach:

1. Playing time
2. Team strategy
3. Other student athletes
4. Player's position on the team

There are times when it may be difficult to accept your child's not playing as much as you would like or the position your child is playing on the team. Recognizing that coaches are the ones who work with the team on a daily basis in practice and competition, it is important to understand that they will make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all athletes involved. Listed above are those issues that should be left to the discretion of the coach.

Procedure to Follow if you Have a Concern to Discuss with a Coach:

1. Call the coach to set up an appointment
2. The St. Agnes main office number is 767-1377.
3. The Athletic Department number is 435-5827
4. If the coach cannot be reached, call the Athletic Director, Jim Lassandrello, to set up a meeting place and time.
5. *It is important to not confront a coach before, during or after a contest or practice. These are emotional times for parent and coach and are not wise times to make an attempt toward a resolution of the problem.*

Procedure to Follow if the Meeting with the Coach did not Provide a Satisfactory Solution:

1. Call the Athletic Director, Jim Lassandrello, to set up an appointment to discuss the situation.

IN SUMMARY

Research shows us that experiences gained through participation in extra-curricular activities at school help prepare our students for life beyond their years of formal education. Many of life's lessons are learned through the challenges and discipline of a strong athletic program. The Athletic Department at St. Agnes recognizes the role coaches and parents play in providing these opportunities for our athletes. Together we can make these experiences positive, meaningful, and successful. We hope the information provided in this handbook will make both you and your child's participation in the athletic program positive and enjoyable.