

# St. Mary's School Athletic Handbook

2009-2010

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(Changes are in bold italics.)

## **CATHOLIC SCHOOL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

“From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith and having its own unique characteristics, an environment permeated with the Gospel spirit of love and freedom....”

### **The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, #25**

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Peoria are established to assist the Bishop and Pastors in the transmission of the faith to the young people of the diocese. We welcome non-Catholic students into our schools who wish to take advantage of the opportunities provided by Catholic education. Every school must have as its main goal to help each student develop a personal and ecclesial relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ, who is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6). The principles, practices, and beliefs of the Catholic Faith must be fully integrated throughout the school’s curricula, service projects, co-curricular activities, and culture.

Students in our Catholic schools are reminded of their dignity as children of God through the study of Catholic doctrine, frequent opportunities for personal and communal prayer, and active participation in the sacramental life of the Church. Together with parents, the primary educators of their children, our Catholic schools pursue academic and spiritual excellence by helping students to develop their intellectual abilities, foster wholesome friendships, practice discipleship, strengthen their daily prayer life, grow in virtue, and become leaders through serving others.

All personnel that work in our Catholic schools must have at heart the promotion of the educational mission of the Church, and live as visible role models of faith within the parish/school community. Catholic doctrinal, moral and social teaching is an integral part of each school. Therefore, all faculty, staff, administrative, and volunteer personnel must support the teachings of the Church, actively practice their faith in daily life, and be loyal to the Church’s Magisterium. Our Catholic school personnel share this educational mission and its various commitments and responsibilities with parents and the local Church communities.

“It is crucial that the policies and procedures of Catholic schools reflect that primary purpose and that the Catholicity of the school and its faithfulness to the teaching authority of the Catholic Church (Magisterium) are not compromised.”

**Sister Mary Angela Shaughnessy, SCN, J.D., Ph.D.**

### **MISSION STATEMENT OF ST. MARY'S SCHOOL**

St. Mary's School, Pontiac, Illinois, is a coeducational Catholic elementary school affiliated with St. Mary's Parish and the Peoria Diocese.

It is...

A grade school that is committed to the teaching of the Catholic faith and values from kindergarten through eighth grade.

It is...

A caring community where the Pastor, Commission on Education, administrator, teachers, and parents work together to ensure that children receive the finest possible education through a progressive program emphasizing religious education, basic skills, academic excellence, the fine arts, and physical fitness.  
(11/9/91)

### **SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY**

St. Mary's School is a Catholic co-educational community where human culture and knowledge illumined by Faith is shared and where students are helped to develop a sense of God, a sense of responsibility, a sense of direction, and a sense of mission.

### EXTRA-CURRICULAR PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The St. Mary's School extra-curricular program is devoted to the overall enrichment of our students' spiritual, moral, academic, physical, and social development. Its purpose is to increase each student's self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-respect through participation in a variety of activities and to help each student to apply Christian principles in all aspects of their lives.

This program recognizes certain requirements of students, coaches/sponsors, and parents to achieve these goals. Without participation and cooperation of all three parties, this program would not exist. Each student, their parents, and coaches/sponsors in the St. Mary's School extra-curricular program must understand that their participation is a privilege. This privilege is earned through certain academic requirements of players/participants as well as exhibiting exemplary character during, as well as outside of, a competition.

This extra-curricular program will strive toward excellence in every activity through an underlying philosophy of teamwork, good sportsmanship, and character. These are the driving principles that govern all extra-curricular activities at St. Mary's. **As per Diocesan and school policy, all games or activities should begin and end with a team prayer, and coaches/sponsors are encouraged to begin each practice with a prayer.**

The rules and requirements of this handbook are designed to give all coaches/sponsors the necessary information to have a successful experience with their students. Any changes in this handbook by the administration will be promptly communicated to all involved parties. **The "Diocese of Peoria Athletic Handbook for Elementary Schools" takes precedence over all local handbooks in the event of a conflict.**

### **Coaching Decisions**

Coaches/sponsors are assigned to their positions because of their expertise in that area. They are in charge of decisions regarding strategy, playing time, and so on as long as their decisions follow the guidelines of this handbook and the “Diocese of Peoria Athletic Handbook for Elementary Schools.” Players/participants should not be placed in the position of making team decisions regarding these issues.

### **Code of Conduct for Coaches/Sponsors**

\*No form of corporal punishment may be used, including but not limited to hitting, pushing, pinching, and so on.

\*No form of harassment may be used, including but not limited to name-calling, improper touching, verbal abuse, leaving someone out of an activity, and so on.

\*Coaches/sponsors should use only positive reinforcement teaching methods and recognize that coaching is teaching.

\*Coaches/sponsors should teach their students to use only legitimate and ethical strategies in competition.

\*Coaches/sponsors should remind their students that academic work comes first and extra-curricular activities come second.

\*Coaches/sponsors should make sure that obscene language and other offenses against honesty and decency are not allowed at any time during their activity.

\*Coaches/sponsors should help players/participants to understand that they are all members of a team working toward a common goal.

\*Coaches/sponsors are required to conduct themselves, and their program, in a manner consistent with Christian values and leadership. Abusive behavior and/or profane language will not be tolerated.

\*If a coach/sponsor chooses to take disciplinary measures towards members of his/her team or activity, the measures should not be excessive or degrading and should follow the discipline policies of St. Mary’s School.

### **Dress Code for Students**

Those players attending athletic events in which they will participate will follow this dress code:

**Boys** – Slacks (no blue jeans), collared shirt or sweater (no T-shirts), shoes (athletic shoes not being worn for the game are acceptable; open-toed shoes are unacceptable), crew or dress socks, and a belt if the pants style requires one.

**Girls** - Dress, or skirt/slacks (no blue jeans), a modest top of acceptable length and fit or a sweater (no T-shirts), hose or crew or dress socks, shoes (athletic shoes not being worn for the game are acceptable; open-toed shoes are unacceptable), and a belt if the pants style requires one.

The dress code for non-athletic events, such as math team, Scholastic Bowl, band, and chorus, may involve special shirts worn with khaki or navy slacks. These arrangements will be decided by individual sponsors.

It is the intention of this policy to insure that students representing S.M.S. be appropriately attired in clothing which meets St. Mary’s School standards. Sweatsuits and/or nylon jogging outfits are not appropriate for this dress code. Students who are inappropriately dressed will not be allowed to participate.

### **Eligibility – Attendance**

1. **ATTENDANCE** - Any player at school during the day and not in attendance at a scheduled practice or game must inform the coach prior to the practice or game and present an excuse signed by the parent upon return. Any player must be in attendance at school by 9:30 a.m. to play in a game on that day. An exception is an excused absence pre-arranged with the principal.

2. **EXCUSED/UNEXCUSED ABSENCES** - Whether an absence from a game or from practice is excused or unexcused will be determined by the coach.

a. First unexcused absence - suspended from the next game.

- b. Second unexcused absence - suspended from the next two games.  
(Note: Suspended students may still practice with the team.)
- c. Third unexcused absence - dismissed from the team.

### **Eligibility - Grades**

All students participating in competitive and/or IESA-sponsored events must meet the eligibility rules of St. Mary's School in order to compete and/or participate in contests. The following rules will govern eligibility at St. Mary's School:

1. Eligibility sheets will be turned in by each teacher by 8:00 a.m. on Friday or the last morning of the school week. Eligibility will be computed for the first time approximately two weeks before the first game or event of each season.

2. The office will send a letter home with the child on Friday informing the parents of an ineligibility. Only students who have a D or F average in one or more subjects will receive a letter. **ONLY F GRADES MAKE A STUDENT INELIGIBLE**; parents and coaches will be informed of D grades only so that the student can be encouraged to raise the grade before an ineligibility occurs.

3. The student must return the letter signed by a parent on the following Monday or the first day of the school week; for every day the letter is late, ineligibility will be extended by another day. If a D letter is not returned on the first day of the week, the student will receive one day of grace; however, the student will not be allowed to practice with the team if the letter is not returned on the second day.

4. A list of those who are ineligible will be left in the office for each coach on the last day of the school week.

5. Eligibility will run from Monday through Sunday. This means that a student who receives an ineligibility letter on the last day of the school week may still play through that Saturday.

6. If a student is ineligible, the player cannot play or practice but must be present for games or events. **The player must sit with the team but will not dress in uniform.** The player's presence at practices will be determined by the coach.

7. Eligibility is cumulative for the nine-week grading period. At the beginning of a nine-week period, only one or two grades in a subject area may determine whether a student is eligible so students should take extra care in completing work.

8. **If a student is ineligible for three consecutive weeks, the player is off the team for the season.**

9. In case of serious misconduct, the Principal may suspend a student from games and practices immediately. Parents and coaches will be notified. (Commission, 11/20/01)

### **Forms**

Coaches/sponsors must have on file at the school an application, a signed job description, a background profile containing emergency information, and a completed emergency card.

As described under the entry "Safe Environment Training," found in this handbook, a fingerprint card and a CANT form must also be turned in to the office.

### **Gratuities**

All coaches/sponsors are volunteers. However, if funds are available at the end of the year, the Booster Club makes an effort to provide some type of gratuity to the coaches/sponsors and to the heads of the concession stand.

### **Injuries, Inhalers, and Other Medical Issues**

A first-aid kit must accompany every athletic team to away events. First-aid supplies will be available in the school for home games. Coaches/sponsors will also carry emergency medical forms to all events. All athletic coaches are required to attend the first-aid presentation arranged by the athletic director(s) at the beginning of each school year.

Some students with asthma or other breathing problems need to have their inhalers near at all times. Older students may carry this on their person for non-athletic events, but athletes should put inhalers in the hands of the coach during play so that it is not left unattended.

For serious injuries, medical information on the emergency medical forms should be followed, including calling 911 if an ambulance is needed.

If a student is excused from P.E. for a medical reason, he or she is automatically excused from athletics. Any exception to this rule would be by doctor's orders only and in consultation with the principal.

### **Instruction of Students and Playing Time**

Coaches/sponsors are expected to instruct and practice with all participants, not just those who are starters on a team or in an activity. All players/participants will be members of the team and will get some playing time throughout the season (the exact amount of time to be determined by the coaches/sponsors).

### **Keys**

Coaches/sponsors and their assistants will be issued a key fob for the security system located on the Main Street and outer gym doors. They will also receive a numbered key to the outer office. Athletic coaches will also receive a key for the padlocks on the sports equipment lockers located behind the stage. Keys are never to be copied or given to unauthorized users.

### **Moving Players Up**

For St. Mary's School sports teams, if at all possible, players will play at their own grade level. If there is a shortage of students as determined by the coach and athletic director(s), the principal and athletic director(s), in consultation with the coach, will make any decisions to move students up to the next level. **This decision will be made at the beginning of the season. As a general rule, extra players will not be added to a team's roster for the state tournament series. If an emergency situation arises, such as an injury, a flu epidemic, ineligibility, etc., and a player is brought up for the state tournament series, he/she will not play unless there are not enough upper grade players to field a team.**

If it is determined that additional players are needed for the season, the normal procedure followed is to first ask for volunteers from the lower level team. If there are too many volunteers, try-outs may be held. The selected players, with their parents' permission, then become permanent members of the upper grade team and are considered to be equal members of the team. If no volunteers are found, a few players may be rotated from the lower grade team to the upper grade team on a game-by-game basis. **These lower grade temporary players will be used only when there are not enough upper grade players to field a team. All decisions are under the jurisdiction of the athletic director(s) and the principal and may not be made without their consent.**

As a general rule, students who are moved up to a higher level stay with that team for the whole season and for tournaments. Athletes do not come back to the lower level team for its tournaments. However, exceptions may be made by the principal and athletic director(s) if special circumstances warrant. Students have the choice of not moving up. In case of temporary lack of numbers due to illness, injuries, or ineligibility, a coach may bring a player up for one game after consulting with the principal and/or an athletic director.

### **Pep Assemblies**

Pep assemblies for athletic events will follow these guidelines:

\*Sectional Championship – 15 minute pep assembly at the end of the school day

\*State Tournament:

~20 minute pep assembly for the first State game with Booster Club providing balloon bouquets for players, coaches, and cheerleaders)

~Booster Club pays for State T-shirt for each coach  
 ~20 minute pep assembly for 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> place games (No pep assemblies will be held for games between the first game and the finals.)

### **Practice Schedules**

The athletic director(s) is responsible for setting up athletic practice schedules for St. Mary's teams. To hold a practice that is not on the schedule, coaches should contact the school office to check the calendar. Additional practices should then be written on the main calendar located on the counter of the school office. **Please note in the Diocesan policies that *practices, games and tournaments will be limited to five days per week.***

### **Removal of Coaches/Sponsors**

Should circumstances arise that warrant the removal of a coach/sponsor, the following procedure will be utilized: (1) the principal and athletic director(s) will review the facts regarding the grounds for dismissal, (2) if, upon review, the circumstances warrant further action, the matter will be brought before the pastor. The pastor will make the final decision.

### **Safe Environment Program**

All coaches/sponsors and volunteers who work with students of the Catholic Diocese of Peoria must participate in the Safe Environment program. **Four** requirements of the program are (1) a criminal background check through *live scan* fingerprinting, (2) a background check by the Department of Children and Family Services conducted by filing a CANT form with the school, (3) attending the Safe Environment program (formerly known as the Protecting God's Children program), a workshop on detecting abuse in children which is offered throughout the year at St. Mary's Parish and throughout the diocese, **and undergoing drug testing when they begin coaching and being on a random drug testing list thereafter.**

### **Selection and Assignment of Coaches**

The athletic director(s) and principal are responsible for obtaining volunteer coaches for all extra-curricular activities at St. Mary's School. Coaches/sponsors will complete an application indicating which activity and level they wish to work with, but final assignments will be made by the athletic directors and principal. ***As much as possible, coaches will be assigned to only one head position at the seventh and eighth grade levels so that students have the benefit of a variety of experiences and viewpoints.***

### **Sportsmanship**

Coaches/sponsors and students are expected to display good sportsmanship in all situations both as winners and as losers. This means that all participants will be respectful to each other, to opponents, to officials, to fans, and to property at all times. Players/participants and coaches/sponsors will be expected to shake hands with opponents after competitive events and to remain in place for award ceremonies.

### **Student Conduct**

All St. Mary's School students are expected to conduct themselves according to Christian values and the policies found in the St. Mary's School Student/Parent Handbook at all times. All coaches/sponsors will receive a copy of the Student/Parent Handbook. Coaches/sponsors are responsible for monitoring and correcting behavior whenever students are under their supervision. The discipline policies of St. Mary's School must be followed during all extra-curricular activities.

Some disciplinary measures that are appropriate to coaches/sponsors are verbal warnings, time on the bench or out of the activity, being denied playing time in a scheduled event, and being referred to the principal for consultation. In cases of severe behavior problems, the student may be suspended from or

dropped from the sport or activity. Before that point is reached, coaches/sponsors should have talked with the principal.

All behavior management on the part of the coach/sponsor must be rendered in a calm and respectful manner, even though the behavior of the student may be disrespectful. The coach/sponsor is a role-model for rational behavior.

### **Sunday/Holiday Games and Practices**

**In accordance with Diocesan policy, no games or practices, including tournaments or open gyms may be scheduled or played on Sundays. In addition, no practices games, tournaments and open gyms may be scheduled or played on Holy Days of Obligation, Holy Thursday, and Good Friday. Practices, games and tournaments will be limited to five days per week, per team. Practices should not exceed one and a half (1.5) hours per day.**

**Parish events and school events such as seasonal programs, fairs and concerts *should* take precedence over practice, games, and tournaments.**

### **Supervision During Practices and Games or Events**

Coaches/sponsors are responsible for having their players/participants supervised at all times. Coaches/sponsors should arrive at least 15 minutes before the students are told to be there and must stay until all students have been picked up. **Students participating in practices or events may not be in the building without an adult supervisor present.**

In the case of athletics, male coaches of girls' teams should arrange to have a female adult available to supervise in the locker room; female coaches of boys' teams should arrange to have a male adult available to supervise in the locker room.

### **Team Rules**

Coaches/sponsors should submit a copy of their specific team rules to the principal or athletic director(s) before the season begins and before the rules are given to students.

### **Technical Fouls and Game Ejections**

**Head coaches must notify the principal within 24 hours if a coach or student is given a technical foul or is ejected from a game. A coach who receives a technical foul may continue to coach in that game only if there is no assistant or second coach to handle the remainder of the game. Contingent upon the reason for the technical foul, the Principal may impose sanctions on the coach, including sitting out one or more games or dismissing the coach.**

**If a student-athlete commits two technical fouls related to unsportsmanlike conduct in a season, he or she will not be allowed to participate in the sport for the remainder of the season.**

**St. Mary's School has a good reputation for sportsmanship, and incidents which endanger that reputation will not be tolerated.**

### **Training for Coaches**

**Effective with the 2009-10 school year, IESA has directed that all members of a school's athletic coaching staff that do not hold a valid teaching certificate must have successfully completed an approved coaching education program. IESA encourages all schools to require this training beginning in 2008-2009. The training is for both head and assistant coaches.**

**An ASEP/IESA Coaching Essentials Course will be available online starting in August, 2008. The cost of the course is \$19.95, which will be reimbursed by the Booster Club, and the course takes an average of 3 hours to complete.**

### **Transportation**

Buses and drivers provided by Pontiac Township High School will be used whenever possible for out-of-town extra-curricular events, except for away events with Pontiac Christian School and Pontiac

Junior High School. For these two exceptions, parent drivers will be used, with team parents making the arrangements for drivers. Alternative arrangements are also at the discretion of the athletic director(s) and principal when special circumstances, such as a small group to be transported, are present. All drivers transporting children must have a copy of their current insurance card and their driver's license on file in the school office.

All players/participants, cheerleaders, and coaches/sponsors are required to ride the bus to all sporting events in which St. Mary's participates. An exception will be made if a student resides in or near the town where an away game is being played. In such cases, the parents may notify the coach/sponsor at least one day prior to the game that the student will be transported to the game by the parents. Students may ride the bus after the game/event to return to St. Mary's, or a parent only may sign the authorization form at the game/event (or in the school office during the school day) to provide their own transportation for their child. Coaches/sponsors must turn in bus release forms to the school office in a timely manner.

Parent drivers may be used for some extra-curricular events, including, but not limited to, Scholastic Bowl team, speech team, math team, cheerleading contests, Student Council trips, and nursing home Masses. Proof of insurance and driver's license from said alternate transportation provider(s) must be retained on file at St. Mary's School.

### **Use of Supplements in Athletics**

In order to minimize health and safety risks to student athletes, maintain ethical standards, and reduce liability risks, school personnel and coaches should never supply, recommend, or permit the use of any drug, medication, or food supplement solely for performance enhancing purposes. (Diocesan Policy C-310, 3/2004)

### **Weather Changes**

Coaches/sponsors are encouraged to keep in close contact with the school and/or the athletic director(s) when inclement weather exists or seems imminent. Every effort will be given to issue cancellations or changes in a timely manner. Local radio stations will be used to publish changes in the schedule.