

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:

- Students **GLORIFY** God by developing and using their God-given 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** in four ways – intellectually, physically, spiritually, and socially.
- Students **GO** with the Gospel by representing their Savior and school with God-pleasing effort and conduct in all athletic activities.

Scriptural Support of Athletics

Jesus' love for us as demonstrated by his death on the cross motivates us in all aspects of Christian living.

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

God has blessed our students and expects them to use the gifts they have been given in a faithful manner.

Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. 1 Corinthians 4:2

Using these gifts to their fullest potential gives glory to God.

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31

Scripture uses athletics to emphasize living for Christ:

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.

1 Corinthians 9:24

Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Hebrews 12:1

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.

Morning Fitness Break *(all grades, required)*

- Develop physical fitness through endurance running and strength, speed, and agility training.
- Encourage an active and healthy lifestyle.

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.

Intramural Sports (*grades 5-8, required*)

- Develop the principles of Christian sportsmanship, conduct, and teamwork.
- Provide low pressure game situations so students can learn to enjoy participating in popular team sports.

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.

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

- Summer sports camps enable children to further develop sport-specific skills.
- The St. Mark's Youth Basketball League (SMYBL) 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.

Interscholastic Sports Program

The St. Mark's Way

Student-athletes who participate on St. Mark's interscholastic sports teams strive to glorify God, grow in the game, have fun, work hard, and play together.

Interscholastic Sports Teams

St. Mark's Lutheran School offers the following interscholastic sports:

- Fall – volleyball (co-ed B-level, boys and girls A-level)
- Winter – basketball (boys and girls C, B, and A-level)
- Spring – track and field

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 3rd and 4th 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 5th and 6th graders. Players from 3rd and 4th grade may also be recruited depending on enrollment and/or skill level as determined by the coach. All players who fulfill their commitment to team goals 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 7th and 8th graders. Players from 5th and 6th grade may also be used depending on enrollment and/or skill level as determined by the coach. Playing time will be determined by players' skill, attitude, and commitment to team goals.

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 with respect and recognize them as fellow children of God.
- Be present and on time at scheduled events 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 realize that they are 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 individual players and team.
- Coaches will help educate parents on the rules of the sport so they can be informed fans.
- 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 will monitor the academic progress of their players.
- Coaches will consider the emphasis of each level of competition (A,B,C) when considering growth, participation, and playing time.
- 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 realize their role as ambassadors for their Savior and school.
- Players will compete as part of a team, not for self-glorification.
- 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, excusing their absences with the coach as far in advance as possible.
- Players will respect and follow the directions of the coach.
- Players will understand that participation on interscholastic sports teams cannot compromise academic performance and other responsibilities.

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.

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 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:

- Speak with the coach
- If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved with the coach, the coach and parent should bring it to the activities director.
- If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved with the activities director, the coach, parent, and activities director should bring it to the principal.
- If the question or concern is not satisfactorily resolved with the principal, the coach, parent, activities 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, although coaches may be willing to transport players if they have room. A \$5.00 contribution toward the cost of fuel is suggested if another parent or coach is providing transportation.

Attendance

Players are expected to be on time for all games and practices. 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 by written note, 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.

Eligibility

Participation on 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 on interscholastic sports teams:

1. The student must have no more than one D 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, his participation on interscholastic sports teams will be suspended. This suspension will be reviewed the next time a quarterly or midterm report is issued.
3. Students who have outstanding incomplete work will 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 volleyball, basketball, and the CVLSAC track meet. The policy will not affect participation in the NorCal WELS track meet because it is a part of our regular physical education curriculum.

Incomplete School Work

As a way of praising God, it is our desire that students complete their work to the best of their ability. To document any incomplete homework and to communicate with parents that it may be necessary to encourage their children to complete homework on time, Incomplete Homework Notices will be utilized. This notice will list the incomplete work, the frequency of occurrence, and the consequence. This notice will require the signature of a parent. There will be copies for parents, teacher, and school office.

As a means of curbing delinquency in the completion of homework, beginning in fifth grade, all unexcused incomplete homework will receive a failing grade (59%), although the student will still be required to satisfactorily complete it. Beginning with the fourth occurrence of incomplete homework each quarter, the student will serve a one hour detention after school the same day. He will also forfeit the privilege of participating in extracurricular activities going on after school that day. In extreme cases of homework delinquency, additional disciplinary measures may be taken.

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 help prevent injury and maximize performance.

Players participating on B and A-level teams are required to wear their P.E. uniform to practices.

Players wear uniforms for all athletic contests. School-owned uniforms are issued for volleyball and basketball. The P.E. uniform is worn for track and field. School-owned uniforms are collected at the end of each game, washed by a team parent, and distributed to players prior to each game.

Having sharply-dressed teams reflects positively on our school and helps foster a sense of pride in our student-athletes. For this reason, a uniform usage fee is assessed at the start of each season to enable the upkeep and regular replacement of uniforms.

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.

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