

St. Thomas Catholic School Catholic Diocese of Peoria

Athletic Handbook 2023-2024

Mission Statement: The athletic program at St. Thomas Catholic School seeks to train each student athlete the skills needed to perform their respective sport or activity, teach concepts of fair sportsmanship, teamwork, and individual discipline, and develop character qualities within the realm of Catholic Christian traditions.

Pastor: Fr. Keith Walder, frwalder@stthomasphilo.org

Principal: Ms. Jean Holmes, jholmes@stthomasphilo.org

Athletic Director: Mrs. Beth Pugh, bpugh@stthomasphilo.org

Address: St. Thomas Catholic School
311 E. Madison St.
Philo, Illinois 61864
www.stthomasphilo.org

Phone: (217) 684-2309

Fax: (217) 684-2217

Athletic Philosophy

We have offered sports to God as a human activity aimed at the full development of the human person...

Pope John Paul II
Jubilee for the World of Sport

Peoria Diocesan Catholic Schools are dedicated to the development and growth of the whole person.

Jesus' teachings remain at the heart of virtues that ultimately contribute to making the athletic program a Catholic Christian experience. The program exists to develop and enhance the relationship between faith development and daily living.

Parents and legal guardians are the first teachers and models of faith development.

Myriad opportunities for spiritual, intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development exist within the religious and academic environment.

Athletics, as an extracurricular school activity at the elementary level, is a privilege, one that is earned and fostered by a student's Christian character and academic efforts. Athletics will be recognized as a supportive component to the total educational process, offering balance rather than prominence within its educational scope and practices.

Objectives

A balanced athletic program, a privilege in which elementary students may choose to participate, exemplifies and witnesses to the meaning of living in a Catholic Christian community by:

- Allowing participation of students regardless of their athletic abilities
- Developing character qualities within the realm of Catholic Christian traditions
- Providing opportunities for development of fundamental skills and self-confidence
- Developing habits of health, hygiene, and safety
- Providing opportunities for student athletes, parents/guardians, coaches, moderators, and spectators to celebrate their school communities as *Christ present among us*

At the minimum, outcomes flowing from the Philosophy and Objectives will include:

- Character formation
- A healthy sense of competition
- Development of basic skills
- Teamwork
- Sportsmanship
- School pride
- Self-discipline
- Enjoyment

TABLE OF CONTENT

I. Policies and Procedures..... 5

- Adult Supervision..... 5
- Affiliations..... 5
- Athletic Offerings..... 5
- Awards..... 6
- Concussions..... 6
- Eligibility..... 6
- Facilities..... 7
- Fees..... 7
- Finances..... 7
- Playing Up..... 8
- Transportation..... 8

II. Expectations..... 8

- Coaches..... 8
- Athletes..... 11
- Parents/Guardians..... 11
- Please Note..... 12
- Communication/Grievances and the 24-Hour Rule..... 12
- Student-Athletes/Parent Athletic Uniform Policy Contract..... 14

I. Policies and Procedures

Adult Supervision

Adequate adult supervision must be provided to student athletes every time they arrive, practice, participate in any manner, and wait for their rides. It is expected that one of the supervisors will be the coach. However, it is recommended that parents, guardians, and other adults oversee the student athletes at all times when they are in the school, on the school premises, or at games/events away from the school.

By the same token, parents and guardians must show their respect by bringing their children to practices and events and by picking them up at the recommended window of time designated by the coach or school.

The only supervision the school provides after school is the Aftercare program from 2:45-5:30. Homework Club is also an option for junior high students. After the end of day bell, students must go straight to Mrs. Gay's Room. If student athletes are not a part of neither the Aftercare program nor Homework Club, they should leave the school grounds after dismissal and not return for practice or a game/event until the time requested by the coach. If student athletes are leaving for practice or a game/event from the Aftercare program, they must be signed out by either the coach or their parent or guardian. Student athletes MAY NOT sign themselves out of Aftercare. All regular Aftercare fees will apply to student-athletes.

Affiliations

St. Thomas School is a member of the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA) and the Illini Conference and abides by their regulations and by-laws. All students who desire to be on a team and fulfill the requirements may be on the team. Students who meet all requirements will not be cut from a team. The only exception would be to comply with IESA tournament team limits (15) at the end of the season.

Athletic Offerings

All St. Thomas School students in 5th through 8th grade are invited to participate in speech, cross-country, basketball, volleyball, and track and field. Cheerleading is open to 4th- through 8th grade students if there is an interest. St. Thomas School will make every attempt to field seventh- and 8th-grade teams according to IESA and conference guidelines. All athletic offerings will depend on sufficient volunteerism in coaching and student participation. Fourth grade students may have the opportunity to participate in girls or boys basketball and volleyball if additional students are needed to field a 5th/6th grade team; 4th graders are not allowed to participate on 7th- or 8th-grade teams.

Awards

Awards are traditionally a part of the athletic program. Only athletic awards officially approved by the school administration and/or Athletic Committee may be presented to the students regardless of the funding source of the awards. They will be presented to student-athletes at the annual Sports Awards Ceremony in the spring.

Concussions

St. Thomas has a Concussion Protocol Team made up of Beth Pugh, AD, Tracy Cain, and Jean Holmes, principal. We follow all of the recommended guidelines given by the doctor. If a student has been determined to have a concussion we will follow all requirements. We will inform the student's teachers of the concussion and the teachers will follow the guidelines.

Eligibility

Developing a sense of responsibility is an important part of the curriculum in the education of children. Responsible players are needed for a team to succeed. Students should be aware that failure to abide by the requirements of the program entails personal consequences that also have an effect on the team. With this goal in mind, the eligibility policy has been developed.

St. Thomas School is a member of the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA) and complies with its eligibility standards. To participate in IESA activities sponsored by St. Thomas School, the following is required:

- A Sports Physical form is required each year for each athlete and must be on file before the first day of practice; the athlete may not participate until a current form is on file.
- A candidate for an athletic team must be covered by family insurance. Proof of insurance must be kept in the student's file in the school office.
- An athlete will not be allowed to attend practice or compete in an event if he/she was absent **half** of the school day (three [3] hours or more), due to **illness**.
- Eligibility requirements will begin for the athlete upon the start of the season, based on IESA regulations for the sport in which they are participating.
- An athlete must maintain a passing grade in every subject area. Grades shall be cumulative for the school's grading period. A student becomes ineligible when:
 - He/She has one "F" or two "D" cumulative averages in any subject;
 - He/She is late in completing extended-deadline work after an absence.
- Eligibility checks are made every Thursday at the end of the school day by the athlete's teacher(s).
 - The homeroom teacher will notify the student-athlete's parent(s) or guardian(s) by the close of the school day on Friday. The principal will notify the athletic director no later than Friday evening. The athletic director will notify coaches no later than Friday evening.
 - When a student is ineligible, he/she may not attend practice, dress in uniform, or

participate in any game/event during the time of ineligibility. Ineligibility starts on the upcoming Monday and remains in effect through the following Saturday. A student will be dropped from the team if he/she becomes ineligible five (5) times during one (1) sport for the remainder of that season.

- In cases where a contest has been postponed or rescheduled, the current week eligibility shall be used to determine a student's eligibility. For example, regarding a contest that is scheduled to be played on Tuesday and, because of poor weather, is rescheduled for two weeks later, a student who was grade-eligible for the originally scheduled game but is ineligible during the week of the rescheduled game is not eligible. Conversely, a student who was ineligible the week of the originally scheduled game but is grade eligible the week of the rescheduled contest is eligible to play.
- Behavior expectations that align to our school motto to *Live, Love, and Serve as Christ* also apply to extracurricular activities including but not limited to practices, travel, and games/events. Unsatisfactory behavior as determined by administration, athletic director, and coaches may make a student ineligible.
- Detentions are to be served regardless of the sports schedule.
- Please refer to the IESA Handbook, Section 2.040 *Scholastic Standing* for further information.

Facilities

All athletic home events will be held at St. Thomas School. The location of each athletic event will be noted on each sport's schedule and the St. Thomas School website calendar.

The admission price to regular season home games is:

- Adults (including high school students) \$3
- Senior citizens \$2
- K-8 students \$1
- Children under the age of five are not charged admission
- Bus driver of the opposing team, volunteer helpers, coaches, players, and St. Thomas School staff are not charged admission

Fees

There will be an annual \$75.00 athletic fee per student assessed for all participating students. This fee will be paid at the beginning of the school year through parents' online FACTS accounts. This is not a fee per sport, but rather *one total fee per student*. For example, if a student is in both basketball and volleyball, the fee is \$75.00. This money helps offset the cost for expenses associated with the athletic program. Inability to pay the athletic fee does not prohibit a student from participating in athletics. Please see administration if financial assistance is needed.

Finances

Income to meet athletic department expenses is accrued from concessions and gate receipts at both home and tournament events, student athletic fees, Hot Dog Lunches, and generous

donations.

All money that is earned or received for athletics is applied to the purchase of equipment and uniforms, officials, sports awards ceremony supplies, athletic awards, and any other Athletic Department needs.

Playing Up

In the event that a grade level does not have sufficient members to form a team, the athletic director and administration may allow student athletes to play up no more than two grade levels. Depending upon the number of available athletes in the particular sport, beginning with 5th grade, athletes may be asked to move up to play with higher grade levels. For example, 5th- and 6th-grade students could play on a 7th-grade team, while 6th- and 7th-grade students could play on an 8th-grade team.

Transportation

Transportation to away events is arranged by coaches using either the St. Thomas School bus or parent carpooling. The decision to take the bus must be approved by administration and the athletic director.

II. Expectations

Coaches

Coaches report directly to the athletic director

Those wishing to coach at St. Thomas School must submit their name to the athletic director. Final approval is the responsibility of administration and the athletic director. Coaches are recruited on an annual basis.

Certain factors are taken into consideration when selecting coaches. Those factors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- If the candidate is an active parishioner in good standing of St. Thomas Church or any affiliated parish
- If the candidate is a St. Thomas School staff member
- If the candidate is a St. Thomas School family member
- If the candidate has previous coaching experience

The responsibilities of coaches include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Represent St. Thomas School in good sportsmanship, good behavior, Christian conduct, and appearance at all times.
- Complete the Safe Environment Program training and all diocesan volunteer

requirements.

- Complete the IESA/Human Kinetics Coaching Essentials Course found on the IESA website under *Sportsmanship*.
- Complete the Protocols through IESA; the athletic director will provide course access.
- Refrain from berating the efforts of student-athletes.
- Pray with the student-athletes prior to the beginning and at the conclusion of events and games.
- **At no time should a coach be with athletes without another adult present. This includes, but is not limited to, practices, events, locker rooms, and travel.**
- Set the practice schedule in consultation with the athletic director.
- Communicate with the athletic director any information involving equipment needs, travel details, upcoming events, and disciplinary needs/concerns.
- Remain onsite after events and practices conclude until all participants have been secured.
- Solicit and ensure a scorebook is kept at each home and away game.
- Solicit and ensure a timekeeper is present for all home games.
- Determine award winners and supply that information to the athletic director after the season is complete; present awards at the annual sports awards ceremony.
- Conduct a parent meeting prior to the start of the season; at least one parent of the athlete must attend this meeting; this meeting date is to be communicated to the athletic director and principal at least one week prior to the meeting taking place.
- Communicate to parents and players a list of expectations, practice and game schedules, and additional information as needed.
- Assign and distribute uniforms at the beginning of the season.
- Collect uniforms at the end of the particular sports season (PLEASE SEE UNIFORM POLICY HEREIN).
- Assist with setup and cleanup of all home events
- If a player is needed to play up for an event, the player's coach needs to be asked for permission by the requesting coach; the player's coach has the final say whether the player can play up.
- Inform 7th- and 8th-grade athletes and parents of the coaches' interpretation of "equal" playing time; the school realizes that the 7th- and 8th-grade teams are involved in a more competitive environment, especially in tournament play. An attempt to win **AND** play everyone equally may not be possible in certain circumstances. To play all players in each game is a goal of our athletic program. Underclassmen will be allowed to "play up" in tournament play; observations and circumstances during practice sessions and games might cause a coach to deviate from this goal. For example, if a student misses practices or displays a negative attitude during practices or in games, a coach may withhold playing time from an individual.
- If a meeting with the coach is requested by a parent regarding a complaint and the **24-Hour Rule** was met, a summary of the meeting must be supplied in writing by the coach to the athletic director and administration within 48 hours after the meeting.
- Agree to the guidelines set forth in this document and sign the Coach Agreement Statement.

Athletes

Student-athletes should:

- Be genuinely interested in learning the rules and skills required for the sport
- Be willing and able to devote the necessary time to each activity; attend practices and events regularly and punctually; notify the Coach ahead of time of any scheduling conflict.
- Be respectful of all coaches, administrators, officials, supervisors, volunteers, fellow team members, and opposing team members at all events, games, and practices, and at school; abide by all team guidelines and expectations established by the coach.
- Respect all school property, both at St. Thomas School and hosting schools.
- Represent St. Thomas School in good sportsmanship, good behavior, Christian conduct, and appearance at all times.
- Work to meet eligibility requirements; make use of available resources for extra help as needed.
- Agree to the guidelines set forth in this document; sign the Parent/Player Agreement Statement provided by the coach or athletic director before the sport's season begins; this signed statement must be returned to the athletic director before participation will be allowed.

St. Thomas School offers an athletic program to its students as a privilege, not a right. This privilege may be revoked at any time.

Parents/Guardians

Parents or legal guardians are the first teachers of faith formation in their children's lives.

Parents should:

- Abide by the **24-Hour Rule** – Approaching a coach with a complaint immediately before, during, or after a game or practice, whether privately or publicly, should be avoided; coaches are asked to stay focused on the team/event; if after 24 hours the situation still needs to be addressed, please make an appointment with the coach(es); such matters should NOT be addressed in a public forum.
- Remain in their seats if their athlete is injured during an event until the coach or event administrator asks the parent to come to the athlete.
- Aid the athletic program by helping with such tasks as timekeeping, scorekeeping, concessions, admission gate, announcements, monitoring of all athletes, and any other such tasks; all athletes' parents are needed and expected to help in these ways. Coaches will have a signup for all parents at the parent meeting.
- Show respect toward all coaches, administrators, supervisors, volunteers, and officials.
- Understand coaching is the coach's responsibility; therefore, parents should not interfere

- during practices and events
- Show respect toward all student athletes.
- Make arrangements to pick up their athlete(s) promptly after practices and events; please be respectful of the coaches' time and make them aware if a late pickup is unavoidable.
- Exhibit good sportsmanship and Christian conduct at all athletic events.
- Agree to the guidelines set forth in this document; sign the Parent/Player Agreement Statement provided by the coach or athletic director before the sport's season begins; this signed statement must be returned to the athletic director before your child's participation will be allowed.
- Children must be accompanied at all times during athletic activities.
- Concessions will be open before games and during half-time only.

Please Note

Christian conduct is our goal at all times. Please remember that all involved—coaches, players, parents/fans, students—are representatives of St. Thomas School at all athletic events. As fans, we must show good sportsmanship at all times. The pastor, principal, athletic director, supervisor, and game officials have the right and the responsibility to eject spectators whose behaviors are unacceptable.

Communication/Grievances and the 24-Hour Rule

Keeping the lines of communication open between parents and coaches is vital to a successful athletic program. Please keep those lines open with your child's coach(es) throughout the season.

If a complaint arises, please respect the **24-Hour Rule**. Approaching a coach with a complaint immediately before, during, or after a game or practice, whether privately or publicly, should be avoided. Coaches are asked to stay focused on the team/event. If after 24 hours the situation still needs addressed, please make an appointment with the coach(es). Such matters should NOT be addressed in a public forum.

The proper chain of command for logging a complaint is (from bottom up):

Pastor
↑
Principal
↑
Athletic Director
↑
Coach
↑
Athlete/Family

In the event of a complaint for noncompliance to IESA rules, diocesan policies, or local school policies and administrative regulations, a written form should be completed by the complainant and submitted to the athletic director and the principal. Administration will make all final decisions regarding complaint resolutions.

*I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith.
2 Timothy 4:7*

St. Thomas Tigers Athletics



Student-Athletes/Parent Athletic Uniform Policy Contract

At the beginning of each athletic season, all athletes will be issued a uniform for his/her team. Each student/parent is responsible for his/her issued uniform. The school views the care and maintenance of uniforms as a very serious responsibility for all our student-athletes and parents. The return of well-maintained uniforms is imperative to keep our costs down.

Policies for uniforms are as follows:

1. Athletes must keep the uniform number they are assigned at the beginning of the season and at no time may they change their uniform with a teammate without permission of the coach.
2. WASHING INSTRUCTIONS! Athletes must wash and care for their uniforms after each game/contest.
 - a. Launder uniforms separately from other dark-colored clothes (green, white, etc.).
 - b. DO NOT wash with other NEW “first-time washed” clothing.
 - c. Wash all uniforms in COLD water.
 - d. Hang-dry uniforms. The uniform should NEVER be placed in dryer unless on low heat and should be removed from dryer promptly when dry.
 - e. DO NOT IRON!
3. Athletes may only wear the team uniform for scheduled games/contests or for other special events as requested by the coach, athletic director, and/or school.
4. At no time may anyone alter or change the original shape or form of the uniform.
5. Uniforms must be turned in within one (1) week of the last game. Uniforms must be washed and placed in a bag with your name on it to the athletic director through the school office.
6. The following will result in a \$100 fee paid by the student/parent to the school for uniform replacement (this will be billed through the school FACTS account):
 - a. Athlete does not return the uniform that was issued to them within one (1) week of the last game;
 - b. Uniforms that are not well-maintained (tears, stains, discoloration, alterations of any kind, damage to graphics);
 - c. Athlete loses his or her uniform.

Date: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____