

# St. Bernard School Athletic Policy

ST. BERNARD SCHOOL  
September 2016

## **I. PHILOSOPHY**

The purpose of athletics at St. Bernard School is to instruct student athletes in the many and varied aspects of competitive sports. The most important goal is to offer a Christian ethical role model for competitive activity. Other aspects include: the instruction of the fundamentals of the athletic activity, the physical skills associated with it, the importance of individual effort, its relationship to and integration with team participation and cooperation, and the development of a sense of justice, fairness, and concern for the well being and health of all participants.

Youth develop and mature at different rates and those individuals have varying degrees of talents. The instructional purpose shall be to take each individual athlete at his/her own point of development and allow him/her to improve his/her understanding and skill of the athletic event in question. Each individual shall be afforded the same opportunity, the same degree of coaching, the same degree of positive encouragement and the same degree of participation. In order to achieve this, it is important to have all interactions emphasize fun, work and positive growth. The goal is to allow each individual child to develop his/her own skills to their maximum potential and to allow each individual child to participate meaningfully in all aspects of the game. This includes practice, competitive events, social activities, instructional sessions, etc.

Winning competitive events is desirable but it is to be emphasized that the object of winning is to be accomplished through meaningful participation of all athletes. It is therefore incumbent on all coaching staff to coach athletes up to their maximum potential so that this can be achieved. Intrinsic to this policy is a “no cut” policy. A selection process is not to be allowed at any level whether before, during, or after the forming of teams nor by overt or covert means.

Further it is important to understand the athletic activities at St. Bernard are provided by volunteers. It is therefore necessary that all parts: coaches, faculty, athletic board, students, Site Advisory Council, and parent’s function as a team. It is also necessary that all involved volunteer their individual talents to accomplish for success.

## **II. JURISDICTION & GOVERNANCE**

The St. Bernard School athletic program falls within the jurisdiction of St. Bernard Parish. The St. Bernard Parish shall review and have input to all policies relative to athletics. The principal is charged with the responsibility for administration and implementation of the program under the jurisdiction of St. Bernard Parish. If the principal chooses to delegate these responsibilities to an athletic club president, that president is responsible to and reports to the principal. The athletic club will appoint a member from leadership to attend all regular SAC meetings. He/she

shall report to the SAC and represent the athletic club's position on relevant issues. It is the responsibility of the athletic board to appoint, lead, and support sports coordinators, coaching staff, and other athletic volunteers.

The Athletic Club Board consists of five voting members who are charged with the ongoing governance of the athletic program. This includes President, Vice-President, Past-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Three of the positions on the Athletic Club Board are selected through an annual nomination/ election process. These are the treasurer, secretary, and the vice-president. The vice-president role is a three year term that consists of one year as the vice-president, one year as the president, and one year as the past-president. The treasurer and secretary roles are one year assignments (with the potential to serve multiple years if there is continued interest). Open nominations will be sought prior to the Athletic Club's May meeting. Interest for Athletic Club positions is solicited via the brown envelope with responses going to the principal and existing Athletic Club Board. The election process is normally held at the Athletic Club's May meeting. Nomination for each position is required and followed by a secondary motion. The individuals nominated are then voted upon by everyone present.

An Athletic Club Board meeting is held monthly throughout the year from August to June. The annual term runs from August through July.

The president is responsible for setting the monthly agenda. It is expected that the president will assume the position of past-president the following year.

The vice-president is responsible for all duties of the president if the president is unavailable or resigns his/her position. It is expected that the vice-president will assume the position of the president the following year.

The past-president is a voting member of the Athletic Club board and is expected to serve in an advisory role.

One member of the athletic board will serve as liaison to SAC to keep SAC informed of all Athletic Club topics, events, and/or issues. This position should be volunteered but if no volunteers the position belongs to the past-president.

The treasurer is responsible for the Athletic Club finances including communication of all expenditures and financial statements to the Business Administrator and to the SAC. It is expected that the treasurer will adhere to all guidelines established by the Business Administrator and SAC.

The secretary is responsible for recording minutes of Athletic Club meetings, posting such minutes to the St. Bernard's website, and the distribution of those minutes to the Principal, Athletic Club members and the SAC.

If a vacancy of an officer position should occur prior to the conclusion of that position's term, it will be filled by a special election of the remaining Athletic Club Board members.

The Athletic Club and/or Principal may appoint an Athletic Director, with a paid stipend to be a liaison for the Principal and the SAC from the Athletic Club.

The Athletic Club Board is charged with the following responsibilities (in addition to whatever else the SAC deems appropriate):

- Fall sports – Boy's and Girl's soccer (5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades), Girls volleyball (5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades)\*
- Winter sports – Boy's and Girl's basketball (5<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> grades and 3<sup>rd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> grades instructional), Cheerleading (8<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Spring sports – Boy's and Girl's track (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades), Boy's and Girl's tennis (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades)
- Enforcement of the Athletic policy
- Uniform replacements
- Physical Education equipment
- Playground related expenses
- Fundraising via sports tournaments, wreath sale, athletic banner etc.

A team of sports coordinators is a subset of the Athletic Club. Our coordinators are critical to the success of each of the respective sports they are responsible for. Duties include coordinating skill assessments, ensuring that teams are fairly split, scheduling practice time, working with league officials on game scheduling, representing the school at league functions for that sport, working closely with the Athletic Club board to ensure that things are running smoothly for student-athletes and coaches and collection of uniforms from student athletes at the end of each season. These positions are appointed by the Athletic Club board based on the volunteers who are interested. It is expected that there is good knowledge of the sport that is being coordinated. If there is interest in coordinating and a need to learn about a sport the board will take necessary steps to accommodate this desire.

It is beneficial to have as many volunteer coordinators as possible in order to pass knowledge on from year to year. **There is room for multiple coordinators for all sports. These positions are strongly encouraged to have a multiyear commitment due to the need for continuity and in-depth understanding.**

### **III. REGISTRATION**

- All required registration, sports physical, Athletic Club Policy Sign-Off, medical emergency forms, concussion forms and payments must be returned to the Registration Coordinator prior to the sport's registration deadline.
- Student athletes will not be allowed to participate in any scheduled practices/games until all appropriate forms have been returned to the Coordinator.
- All registration deadlines will be considered **FINAL**. Exceptions to these deadlines will be by special consideration only on an individual basis, first by the Athletic Director and only if needed by the Athletic Club Board. This is intended to be fair and to give all respective parties the opportunity to plan for the upcoming season. Registration from a student transferring into St. Bernard during the current season of a respective sport is allowed, a late fee will not be assessed. If an exception is granted to other late registrations, there will be a \$20 late fee added to the \$40 sports fee.
- Due to financial and personnel commitments, registration fees will not be returned. However, certain circumstances may require the return of registration fees and will be considered on an individual basis, must be submitted in writing, and will be reviewed by Athletic Board President
- All uniforms must be handled with reasonable care. Uniforms must be returned at the end of each sport season or a reasonable replacement fee will be billed to the student athlete.

### **IV. ELIGIBILITY:**

All St. Bernard's sports teams are considered school teams and not parish teams. Due to the large number of students at St. Bernard School most teams can be filled with students that attend St. Bernard School. If a team cannot fill its roster with members of St. Bernard School, priority is given to other Catholic schools who may not have enough players to form a team. Coaches and Coordinators need to contact those other schools and see if there are other Catholic school students who need a team to play for.

Priority is given to students who enroll at St. Bernard. If the size of the team roster is such that adding more members would create problems with coaching and/or playing time then the Athletic Board can decide not to allow players from other GRACE schools.

Due to St. Bernard having school teams, students who are parish members are not allowed to participate in St. Bernard athletics. If there is no team in the area (within reason) available for that student to be a part of an exception may be made as long as it does not interfere with the creation of teams and playing time for St. Bernard's school athletes. In order to accomplish this request and pursuant to how St. Bernard School families pay tuition, any external athlete, outside of the GRACE system, must pay tuition in the amount of the daily tuition for the days they will participate in St. Bernard Athletics. This collected fee will be split between the school and the parish.

### **Athletic Academic Eligibility**

It should be considered a privilege to participate in athletics. Athletics should be secondary to academic effort, attitude, and conduct. Any individual not performing adequately in any of these primary areas should not be allowed to participate in athletic events. At no time should athletic events be performed to the detriment of the three primary factors. (Specific details outlining academic suspension should be referred to in the Parent handbook (The Parent Handbook is printed as part of the school calendar distributed at the beginning of each academic year)).

The Athletic Director and faculty will determine if he/she is working to his/her ability. If it is determined that a student is not working to that level, then he/she shall be excluded from athletic activities until the above requirements are stratified. Student athletes must have no recorded F grades and no more than one D grade in the core subjects. **For the trimester reporting periods, beginning with the mid-trimester progress report of the first trimester, student athletes who do not maintain their studies satisfactorily will be required to serve one of the following suspensions:**

- **for a mid-trimester progress report, the student athlete will miss a minimum of one week of athletic activities and a minimum of one game;**
- **for a trimester final report card, the student athlete will miss a minimum of two weeks from all athletic activities and a minimum of two games.**
- **These suspensions include all games and practices.**
- **If the minimum game suspension is not fulfilled in the prescribed period of time, the game suspension will continue until the game minimum is fulfilled. (Start date of any suspension will be specified by the school administration.)**
- **If a student is suspended three consecutive grading periods the 3<sup>rd</sup> suspension will result in loss of privilege to play sport for one entire season or for the remainder of the school year.**

The expectations and consequences will be included in the student's athletic contract that he/she is to read and sign prior to the participation in any activity. Coaches will not be allowed to challenge any school suspension.

### **V. PARTICIPATION:**

Student athletes should participate in all aspects of the game, specifically practice and competitive events. Student athletes choosing to participate in sports at St. Bernard School agree to act in a manner that positively represents themselves, their team and St. Bernard School.

There will be a “no cut” policy to be followed under all circumstances. At no time is it acceptable to pursue a covert cut policy by the exclusion of or otherwise encouragement of individual students to drop out.

No student may be allowed to participate in more than one Diocesan sanctioned sport at a time. More specifically, a student may choose only one of the following sports sponsored by St. Bernard: Fall (soccer, volleyball) Spring (track or tennis).

### **Participation Requirements**

#### **· 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade...**

League games – Each child plays a minimum of 50% of the event time.

Tournament games – Each child plays a minimum of 25% of the event time

#### **· 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade...**

League games – Each child plays a minimum of 25% of the event time

Tournament games – Each child plays a minimum of 25% of the event time

Coaches shall be allowed to discipline students by limiting their participation. This may be done for a variety of reasons including lack of participation, behavior, attendance, etc. (this will include excused and unexcused practices). It is to be emphasized that this is a measure of last resort and is to be applied fairly to all participating individuals without exception.

All student athletes must be in school the last half of the school day in order to participate in any practice or games.

### **Practice**

Practices are intended for registered athletes in that particular sport. It is at a coach’s discretion to allow other “documented” athletes to participate in practice in order to accomplish successful practice numbers. “Documented” includes the participation of students meeting all physical, concussion, and insurance coverage for participation. Additional athlete participation should never impact the practice time or participation of registered athletes for the given time slot or given team.

### **Tournament Play**

It is not allowed to add a player to the team roster just to enhance that teams chances in tournament play. To qualify for tournament play on a team, the player must participate in ½ of

the team's league scheduled games and paid full participation dues along with completing the required physical and have a signed athletic participation contract.

It is the intent of the Athletic Club to allow as much playing time per player as possible. As a result, the number of team participants is intentionally kept low. It is against policy to combine teams for tournament play. Exceptions can be made under the following:

1. Any team with 7 or more players (basketball), teams cannot be combined.
2. Any team with less than 7 players can add other players from the same grade (up to 7) if:
  - a. The League Coordinator has been contacted and permission has been granted.
  - b. The St. Bernard Athletic Director must objectively pick eligible additional players by putting all players' names in a hat, and picking names.
  - c. In the order picked, the Athletic Director will call the student and the parents until the team totals 7 players.
  - d. If any original team members (who originally could not play) are now able to play (prior to the first game of the tournament), the added players will be dismissed in reverse order.

The objective is to play with the original team roster. Players from other teams are added only to supplement the original team.

## **VI. COACHES:**

Coaches are viewed as members of the paraprofessional staff. They are selected by the Athletic Club Board and the principal. Coaches are responsible for understanding and upholding the athletic philosophy of the parish. It is the responsibility of the Athletic Director and Coordinators to meet with all coaches to inform them of these philosophies and of the expected standards of personal conduct. It is the responsibility of the Athletic Director and Coaches to ensure all teams are split fairly. The principal will have on file these policies signed by each coach testifying to the fact that he or she has read, understands, and will adhere to the philosophies and regulations stated.

All coaches should lead the student athletes in a Christian based athletic environment. It is expected that our coaches lead our athletes in prayer prior to sporting events and continually remind our athletes of the role God plays in our athletic pursuits.

All coaches are required to attend Virtus training prior to coaching any athletic teams and in conjunction with school policies.

Coaches are responsible to sign up for coaching when coaching sign up forms become available for a particular sport. Coaches can sign up to coach together up to a maximum of 2 to avoid stacking of teams. Additional coaches will be added to a team after teams are divided. Any conflicts will be resolved by the Athletic Club Board.

Coaches shall be allowed to discipline students by limiting their participation. This may be done for a variety of reasons including lack of participation, behavior, attendance, etc. (this will include excused and unexcused practices). It is to be emphasized that this is a measure of last resort and is to be applied fairly to all participating individuals without exception.

Any coach that violates any Athletic Club Policy will be subject to review by an executive session of the Athletic Club board for possible suspension or removal from coaching. Any decisions from these executive sessions will be presented at an executive session of the Site Advisory Council for final approval and enforcement. Appeals, as requested, will also be directed to the executive session of the SAC.

## **VII. REFEREES**

It will be the responsibility of coaches and coordinators to find adequate officiating coverage for their respective events. Coaches and coordinators will be responsible for determining whether to hire officials or to recruit volunteers but at no time should anyone on the coaching staff of the team participating in their team's event be allowed to officiate. Coaches from both teams can agree, prior to the start of the event, to use an assistant coach to referee if no volunteers are available.

## **VIII. TEAM SIZE:**

The St. Bernard Athletic Club encourages small teams so we can maximize student-playing time.

· **SOCCER or VOLLEYBALL:** Many years there are two leagues, a combined 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade and a combined 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade league. Students in these two divisions will be pooled and teams selected from these two pools regardless of grade. The teams will be divided equally and divided by talent. Teams are not to be stacked. The team division and final rosters are at the discretion of the specific sport coordinator. Within reason, and at the discretion of the coordinator, players may have the ability to play one grade above their current enrollment for specific reasons.

· **ALL OTHER SPORTS:** Teams will be divided equally by grade and divided by talent. Teams are not to be stacked.

### **IX. SUPERVISION:**

All athletic events whether practice, contest, or any other related gathering must be supervised by a responsible adult (an adult is an individual eighteen years of age or older) from first arrival to last departure. This includes cheerleading. Coaches and staff are responsible for the conduct of their players and this conduct must be reflective of appropriate Christian behavior. In addition, it is strongly encouraged that the adults present lead students in prayer before any athletic event. Every effort should be made to drop off student athletes no earlier than the time dictated by their coaches and picked up immediately following their scheduled event completion. At no time, should younger siblings of student athletes be left unsupervised while their older sibling participates in practice or games to the extent they cause a distraction to the team.

### **X. BOOSTER CLUBS AND ATHLETIC ASSOCIATIONS:**

The purpose of the Athletic Club is to give support to the athletic program. All activities of the athletic club including fundraisers, expenditures, and budget must be approved by the Site Advisory Committee.

### **XI. INSURANCE:**

It is the student athlete's legal guardian's responsibility to be covered by family or student insurance for both travel and competition. A written permit from parents and a medical examination are required before participation. The permit and exam form is to be kept on file in the administrative offices. Coaches are expected to have their own health coverage. Liability insurance shall be offered by the Diocese and as provided by the parish.

### **XII. AWARDS:**

Recognition should be given to all participants equally. Award expenses should be kept to a minimum. No individual awards may be put forward - as examples: most valuable player, most improved player, etc. are not to be granted. (The Raymond Murphy student athlete award is an exception to this policy). All awards must be approved by the athletic board regardless of who finances the award.

### **XIII. Games:**

Games shall not start until school is in session. Effort should be made to schedule an average of one game or contest per week excluding tournaments in all sports. Contests shall not be scheduled after 8 p.m. In any sport, it is preferred that athletes not be involved in more than one contest per day.

- **GAMES:** A game is defined as competitive play between two teams during which the time and score are kept.

- **SCRIMMAGE:** A scrimmage is defined as a play in which not time or score is kept and coaches may interrupt to give advice.

- **COMPETITION:** Players shall not be switched to other teams for tournament play. A player may not be switched upwards or downwards, e.g. an 8<sup>th</sup> grader may not play for a 7<sup>th</sup> grade team or a 7<sup>th</sup> grader may not play for an 8<sup>th</sup> grade team unless such activity is defined and allowed by specific league or tournament rules.

- **LEAGUES:** Leagues exist to provide structure that helps make athletic programs more effective. League rules and policies need to be on file in the administrative offices and reviewed annually by the Site Advisory Council for conflict with existing SAC policies.

**Interschool Competition:** In Soccer, interschool competition is to be limited to grades five through eight. In Basketball, interschool competition is to be limited to grades three through eight. In Track, interschool competition shall involve grades six, seven and eight. In Tennis, interschool competition shall involve grades six, seven and eight.

- **Basketball:** Boys and girls in grades three through four can play in 10 games maximum, no tournament play.

- **Basketball:** Boys and girls in grades five through eight can play 16 games maximum plus tournaments

- **Soccer:** Boys and girls in grades five through eight can play 12 games maximum plus tournaments

- **Track:** Boys and girls in grades six through eight can participate in 10 track meets maximum plus invitationals

- **Volleyball:** Girls in grades five through eight can play in maximum of 12 matches plus tournaments

- **Tennis:** Boys and girls grades six through eight can play a maximum of 6 matches plus tournaments

- **Cheerleading:** The “no cut” rule referred to previously pertains to cheerleading teams as well. Rotation of participants is permissible. Participation in cheerleading and other sports is permitted. Cheerleading teams must have adult supervision that is responsible to the Athletic Director.

#### **XIV. TOURNAMENTS:**

Students are limited to the following number of tournaments:

- Grades 7 and 8: Two tournaments per sport plus the league tournament
- Grades 5 and 6: Two tournaments per sport

A tournament is defined as competitive play where a loss or losses result in the elimination of a team from further play. Tournament fee caps will be published on a year-to-year basis. Any tournament entrance fee requests to be paid by the Athletic Club must be submitted to the Athletic Club Board in a timely fashion. Each team will be allowed to participate in a maximum of two tournaments not to exceed the tournament fee cap for that year.

#### **XV. STARTING DATES and ENDING DATES:**

Practice prior to the first scheduled game will be limited to 12 practice sessions before the first contest. Each sport ends their practice time after the league tournament for their sport. If more practice time is desired after the league tournament, gym time priority is given to the next sport to begin their season and may not be available.

#### **XVI. AWARD BANQUETS:**

No alcoholic beverages or smoking shall be permitted at any athletic banquet or function intended to honor and acknowledge the student athlete.

#### **XVII. ENFORCEMENT OF REGULATIONS:**

Enforcement of these regulations is the responsibility of the Athletic Director and Athletic Club Board. It shall always be done fairly, in the best interest of those whom it serves and in the spirit rather than the letter of its content. All disputes will be handled with the interest of the student athlete, their families, and St. Bernard School in mind.

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