



ST. MARK CATHOLIC SCHOOL
WHERE FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE MEET

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

2019-20

St. Mark Catholic School

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*This handbook contains information needed by both students and parents during the school year.
The information in the Handbook outlines the philosophy and policies of the St. Mark Catholic
Athletic Program.*

(Updated January 2019)

Dear Parents, Students, and Coaches,

"[I] consider sports as an instrument of education when it fosters high human and spiritual ideals; when it forms youth in an integral way in values such as loyalty, perseverance, friendship, solidarity, and peace. Surmounting differences of cultures and ideologies, sports offer an ideal occasion for dialogue and understanding among peoples, for building the desired civilization of love. To put into practice these values, based on the dignity of the human person, in face of possible interests that might darken the nobility of sports itself." - Pope John Paul II (September 16, 2002)

As a school community, we all must consider the appropriate role of athletics here at St. Mark Catholic School. A core characteristic of Catholic Christianity and Catholic schools is the concept of relationship and community and the conviction that humankind is "made for each other" (*Educating for Life*, Thomas Groome, p. 60). Our prayer is stronger in community. Pope John Paul II says that, as manifestations of the communal Body of Christ, athletics serve to unify all individuals, including coaches, student-athletes, and families in a spirit of peace.

This Athletics Program Handbook outlines the philosophy and policies of the St. Mark Catholic School Athletics Program for the school year. Please read this document carefully, sign the attached agreement, and return it to the school office before attending the first practice date. The agreement states that you intend to abide by the policies of the St. Mark Catholic School Athletics Program during the school year.

St. Mark Athletics extends the work of St. Mark Catholic School by offering another environment in which can foster high human and spiritual ideals to help children grow towards a deeper understanding of themselves and their roles in God's great world.

Thank you for doing your part to help positively affect and develop the lives of all children by building a peaceful environment within our school, our parish, and in our larger community.

-St. Mark Catholic School Athletics Program

St. Mark Catholic School Athletics Policy

The athletic program dedicates itself to the pursuit of excellence in athletics within the framework of a Catholic community and in accordance with its primary role as an educator and spiritual guide. The athletics program is committed to providing opportunities for each individual student-athlete to reach his/her highest potential, while developing the qualities and spirit of a Catholic Christian.

Philosophy

"Do you not know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? Run to win. Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one." - Corinthians 9:24-25

We recognize that the imperishable crown offered by Jesus Christ far exceeds any of the perishable crowns or trophies offered by this world. As a Catholic school, St. Mark upholds values and principles. Though our athletic teams strive to win in the sense of having the best score, we recognize that the real value of Catholic school athletics is realized only if it fosters the development of the human person, both in spirit and in body, by cultivating Christian character, strengthening personal integrity and responsibility, and promoting the pursuit of excellence in all endeavors.

Participation on a team is a privilege. With this privilege come responsibilities in the areas of preparation, attitude, sportsmanship, and academics. These responsibilities exist both in and out of school, both in athletic and non-athletic settings. We recognize the need for God's support and guidance in meeting these responsibilities.

"I can do all things through him who strengthens me." - Philippians 4:13

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Procedure for Registration

A student can become a full, participating member of a St. Mark athletic team once the following requirements are met:

1. Student has been registered for the specific sport online via the [school website](#) during the specified registration dates (refer to the "Weekly School Bulletin" and the specific sport web pages on the [school website](#) for all registration dates).
2. A current [Sports Physical Form](#) has been completed, signed by a physician, and returned to the school office prior to the first practice.
3. Student and parent/guardian have read the St. Mark Athletic Handbook, signed the [Parent Code of Conduct Agreement](#), and returned it to the school office.
4. The registration fee is paid prior to first practice.

Sports Registration

Parents/guardians of St. Mark students wishing to participate in a sport, must complete the online [Sports Registration Form](#) for the specific sport during the appropriate registration dates (refer to the "Weekly School Bulletin" and the specific sport web pages on the [school website](#) for all registration dates). An online registration form must be submitted for each sport, but will only be regarded if it is submitted during the registration dates for that sport. Important Note: Deadlines are not intended to prevent a student from participating on a sports team, but they are necessary to ensure that team sizes do not become too large to allow for proper instruction of participants.

Sports Physical Forms

A [Sports Physical Form](#) must be submitted on an annual basis for each student wishing to participate in a St. Mark sport. Sports Physical Forms must be completed, returned, and confirmed by the Athletic Director **immediately following submission of the online Sports Registration Form.**

Uniform Deposits

Student-Athletes will be issued a loaner uniform at the start of their sports' season. Uniforms must be returned within 30 days of the last game played. Uniforms must be returned in good condition (washed appropriately; no stains; no bleach; no tears or snags; no discoloration).

During the season, it is the responsibility of the student-athlete/parent/guardian to professionally mend the garment, if needed, before returning it to the Athletic Director. If a uniform is not returned, or is returned in poor condition, a uniform replacement fee will be charged based on the following schedule-

- \$100: football, baseball, softball, basketball
- \$50: soccer, volleyball, cross country, track
- \$0: cheer, tennis, swim

Registration Fees

All sports offered at St. Mark Catholic School have different operation costs associated with them. Fees for each sport are posted on the individual sport web pages at stmcs.net/athletics. After registration closes, families will be invoiced the fee assessed for that particular sport. Fee must be paid prior to the first practice.

School Sport Team Orientation Meeting

In April, prior to the beginning of the following school year, the Athletic Director will hold a mandatory meeting for all potential rising 5th grade student-athletes and their parents. During this meeting, the St. Mark Athletic Handbook will be reviewed. The varsity coaches will also facilitate sports-specific discussions during this meeting to introduce themselves and share their expectations specific to their sport. Parents should contact the Athletic Director prior to the meeting should they not be able to attend.

ATHLETIC TEAM GENERAL INFORMATION

Team Selection

In every sport, team formations are conducted by the Athletic Director after an evaluation process by an outside coaching source, with the exception of Football, Cross Country, Swimming, Soccer, and Golf team. Attendance at the evaluation process will be limited to registered athletes, the St. Mark Athletic Director, and the outside evaluation team. The St. Mark Athletic Director will determine the number of teams per grade based upon the number of registered students. Once teams have been determined, coach availability will allow completion of the team process. The St. Mark Athletic Director will position injured students on a team accordingly. Injury acknowledgement consists of a physician's note restricting a student from participating in scheduled player evaluations.

Coaching Selection

Coach assignments are determined after the completion of the evaluation process.

Levels of Competition

Development of the skills pertaining to each sport receives primary emphasis on each athletic team offered at St. Mark. Each team experience, however, may be slightly different, depending on the level at which the team is competing.

Grade 5

Junior Varsity level with an emphasis on education, participation, and development.

Team placement: All registered students are divided equally by ability to form a designated number of teams using the evaluation process described in the "Team Selection" paragraph above.

Grade 6

Junior Varsity level with an emphasis on education, participation, and development through competition. Participation-based league. Team placement: All registered students are divided by skill level and placed accordingly to form a designated number of teams using the evaluation process described in the "Team Selection" paragraph above.

Grades 7 and 8

Varsity level with an emphasis on development through competition. Team placement: All registered students are divided by skill level and placed accordingly to form a designated number of teams using the evaluation process described in the "Team Selection" paragraph above.

League Placement

Skill-based leagues are designed to allow the best opportunity for students to play at a comparable level with their peers. In all skill-based leagues, the school Athletic Director has the preliminary responsibility of selecting the division that he/she feels best suits each school team's ability level.

Division 1

Applies to all 6th-8th grade teams

Division 2

Applies to all 6th-8th grade teams

If there is a need to place multiple teams in Division 2, the evaluation staff will split players evenly into teams by skill level.

Division 3

8th grade leagues only

5th Grade

Student-athletes are divided as evenly as possible regarding skill level.

All-Star Selections

Candidates from the 8th grade Division 1 and if applicable Division 2 players and must meet the following criteria:

Skills

Represents the best skill level among their teammates

Leadership

Leads the team by example of Christian principle and good sportsmanship, and enables their teammates to achieve success

Team Ethic

Must have displayed a sincere dedication and commitment to the team

Participation

Must have played in the majority of the games during the season

Selection Process

The team members will vote for their choice based upon the above criteria. The Athletic Director organizes All-Star voting.

Exceptions to Criteria

- If St. Mark has no Division 1 team, then a player from Division 2 is selected.
- In the event that the student-athlete does not satisfy the academic and disciplinary requirements, he/she will be removed from the ballot before voting.
- Student-athletes with two detentions in a grading period are ineligible to play in the All-Star game and removed from the ballot.
- Students suspended or ejected from a game within the season are ineligible for ballot

placement.

- Upon completion of the review, the Athletic Director will release the final selections.
- The Athletic Director has the final decision regarding criteria and policy, and if a tie-breaker is required.

Transportation Policy

In accordance with the policies of the Diocese of Dallas, St. Mark Catholic School does not provide any transportation to or from athletic events. All transportation must be privately arranged by parent/guardians. St. Mark Catholic School and the Diocese of Dallas assume no liability for accidents that may occur in route to any sporting practice or activity.

COACHING EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Coaches are first and foremost, educators, and must work in coordination with the parents who are the primary educators of children. At all times, coaches must be examples of Christ the Teacher, and serve as role models for the student-athlete to emulate. They must be messengers of the school mission and ensure that athletic programs embody the Catholic characteristics prevalent at St. Mark Catholic School. The use of any tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, are prohibited when in the service as a coach.

Clearance Requirements

- All Head Coaches must be at least 18 years of age, and/or approved by the Athletic Director. Paid staff members and volunteers are under the supervision of the Principal and the Athletic Director.
- All coaches must be screened and trained through the [Safe Environment Program](#) and follow the guidelines of the program.
- All coaches must attend the DPL "Play Like A Champion" workshop.
- All coaches are strongly advised to attend a CPR/First Aid course.
- All coaches will be required to be in support of, and in compliance with, all aspects of the St. Mark Athletic Handbook.
- All coaches must read the [Coaching Agreement](#) found on the school website, initial all statements, sign it, and return it the Athletic Director annually.
- All coaches must know and understand the rules and regulations of the sport.

Goal Setting

When working with St. Mark student-athletes, a successful coach will work towards goals in the following three dimensions: team, personal, and school.

Team Goals

1. Creating a positive and memorable experience that will be cherished by the student-athlete for the rest of his/her life.
2. Teaching the specific and unique skills of the sport to the very best of his/her abilities by using all means, methods, and resources available.
3. Teaching the skills of healthy competition that will prepare athletes and the team to succeed.

Personal Goals

1. Modeling character, sportsmanship, self-discipline, and a lived faith.
2. Appreciating the moments of grace throughout a season, at times of winning and losing.
3. Becoming a lifelong learner of their sport.
4. Maintaining perspective in and throughout all athletic endeavors, realizing teachable moments exist in all experiences.
5. Fostering positive relationships with all community stakeholders.

School Goals

St. Mark coaches contribute to the school community by:

1. Infusing the school mission in all athletic activities.
2. Promoting academic excellence as an essential component in the development of student-athletes.
3. Committing to effective communication with the school Athletic Director, teachers, parents, and athletes.
4. Creating a culture of school unity and spirit as exemplified through sportsmanship, positive fan participation, and respect for all.

Conduct of Coaches

- Always set a good example for others to follow.
- Teach Christian values, such as respect, discipline, honesty, and hard work.
- Abide by the Athletic Handbook Policies
- Discipline those student-athletes who display unsportsmanlike behavior, and if necessary, forfeit their privilege of representing their school.
- Remain with the athletes until each has been released to their parent/guardian, whether at a game or practice.
- Be a perfect host to opponents, treating them as guests.
- At every opportunity, remind the spectators that the opposing team needs their respect and courtesy.
- Respect the officials' judgment and interpretation of the rules.
- Publicly shake hands with the officials and opposing coach before and after the contest.
- Require your team to publicly shake hands with the opposing team, coaches, and officials before and after the contest.

Treatment of Opponents

Although opponents are not a part of our school community, they are members of the larger Body of Christ and should be treated as such. Coaches should model such respect for their athletes and should instruct players on how to welcome their opponents and all visitors in a way that conveys a sense of hospitality and community.

Prayer

Team prayer is an essential component prior to the start of every contest.

Coaching Duties

In addition to serving as witnesses and models of faith, St. Mark coaches are expected to fulfill the

following duties:

- Plan out practices and games
- Supervise athletes at all times until they are picked up from practices/games
- Condition athletes properly and appropriately
- Instruct properly on what to do and what not to do
- Maintain safe playing conditions
- Ensure cleanliness of facilities
- Communicate practice and game schedules to athletes and parents
- I agree that both coaches will be present prior to the scheduled practice start time in order to meet the athletes upon their arrival. Students may not enter a practice facility without two Safe Environment trained adults present.

Communication with Athletes and Parents

St. Mark coaches should establish clear procedures and guidelines for communication with athletes and parents that align with the philosophy and mission of St. Mark Catholic School. Email should be used only to communicate basic information, such as time and location of games and practices. Discussions of concerns should be conveyed in person. If a face-to-face meeting is not possible, a phone call is acceptable. Before meetings, establish clear agendas and communicate that certain topics will not be discussed. Coaches do not have to discuss playing time, coaching strategies and specific plays, or information pertaining to other athletes.

STUDENTS EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Students and parents should recognize that participation in the athletic program is not a right of all students, but a privilege to those selected individuals who possess the ability, attitude, disposition, cooperative spirit, and desire to represent St. Mark in a favorable way. By joining the school's athletic program, a student becomes a representative of his/her team and of St. Mark Catholic School.

Academic and Conduct Qualifications for Participation

We expect student-athletes to maintain academic and general conduct standards in keeping with the St. Mark Catholic School Parent-Student Handbook and the teachings of the Catholic Church. These regulations and procedures apply while on school premises, during practices and competitions, and in the public arena.

The following qualification procedure is intended to apply to all extracurricular activities. Parent and student's cooperative implementation of this procedure is expected. When certain academic and/or general conduct standards are not met, certain consequences are applied to extracurricular activity. However, the intent is to encourage students to re-qualify for such activities after a reasonable amount of time.

Qualifications: A student will be considered *ELIGIBLE* to participate in interscholastic athletics at St. Mark Catholic School if their most recent academic report reflects:

1. A 76% or above average in each academic subject.

2. A *Satisfactory* grade or better in general conduct. Refer to the St. Mark Parent-Student Handbook to review conduct grade policy.

Procedure: When report cards are issued all students (even those who do not receive a warning notice) will be considered *INELIGIBLE* to participate for a two-week period he/she:

1. Receive below a 76% average in any academic subject.
2. A general conduct grade below *Satisfactory*. Refer to the St. Mark Parent-Student Handbook to review conduct grade policy.

Re-qualification: After a two-week period, parents or students may request a review of the student's grades and/or general conduct marks. Requests must be made in writing. If student's grades and/or general conduct marks comply with qualification standards, he/she will be eligible to re-enter activities. If not, the student's participation will be suspended for another two-week period of time, and the process for re-qualification will begin again.

Exception: If a student receives two detentions within a quarter, that student is immediately considered *INELIGIBLE* for the remainder of the quarter.

Ineligible students may not dress out and sit on the bench with other players. They may, however, attend games as part of the audience.

Notification of eligibility or requalification will come from a school administrator to the coach, and from the coach to the parents. Constant encouragement for every student-athlete is essential.

Student-Athlete Expectations

A student-athlete's behavior is governed by the same rules, regulations, and procedures that apply to all students, as set forth in the St. Mark Parent-Student Handbook. Each student-athlete is expected to demonstrate and encourage in others behaviors that reflect good sportsmanship. If behavior infractions occur, student-athletes may face both a school and an athletic consequence.

Attendance

All student-athletes must be marked as "present" in school on the day of a practice or a game in order to participate. Please see the Parent-Student Handbook for clarification.

Dress Code/ Uniforms

Student-athletes are highly visible representatives of the school and as such, are responsible for using good judgment in their overall appearance. All teams, regardless of level, have a responsibility to ensure that their game attire speaks volumes of their class and excellence. All game shirts must be tucked in. No player should make modifications to his or her uniform. Treat uniforms with respect. Teams that treat their uniforms with respect exude class.

SPORTSMANSHIP

Expectations of Players

All student-athletes are expected to represent St. Mark Catholic School in an exemplary manner. This

behavior is expected both on and off the court or field. Student-athletes are expected to display Christian courtesy and manners to all officials, coaches, opposing coaches, players, and spectators. At all times, good sportsmanship is the rule, not the exception. Penalty for unsportsmanlike behavior during a practice or game is left to the discretion of the coaches for each sport, along with input from the Athletic Director. This can range from sitting out at practice to a one-game suspension. For extreme cases, if an athlete has been ejected from a game by an official, disciplinary guidelines and policies will be followed from the Dallas Parochial League Handbook available online at dallasparochialleague.com/pdfs/DPL_Handbook.pdf.

Expectations of Parents and Stakeholders

"It is incumbent upon parents to cooperate closely with the school teachers to whom they entrust their children to be educated; in fulfilling their duty, teachers are to collaborate closely with parents who are willingly heard and for whom associations or meetings are to be inaugurated and held in great esteem."
-Code of Canon Law, 796

St. Mark Catholic School coaches and administrators respect the primacy of the parents as the first teachers of their student-athletes, and will partner with parents in the formation of student-athletes. Parents and other members of the community play a vital role in the holistic education of children including students' participation in school-sponsored athletics. Together, all stakeholders should actively work to ensure that the Catholic mission and identity of St. Mark Catholic School permeates the athletics program.

5 Ways to Support your Student-Athlete

1. **Be present-** Show up to games, cheer, and support our teams!
2. **Be positive-** Children learn from modeling. When talking about the game, season, performances and decision-making, please share the gift of a positive outlook on the milieu.
 - ↳ Stay positive in a winning and losing environment.
 - ↳ Do not applaud errors made by opponents or penalties assessed against them.
 - ↳ Refrain from sideline coaching, allowing your student-athlete to focus on his/her game, the coach, and his/her teammates.
 - ↳ Avoid profane language and obnoxious behavior that are contrary to the values of Christian behavior and good sportsmanship.
 - ↳ Communicate appropriately and respectfully with coaches on an individual basis. Mass emails voicing displeasure are neither productive nor respectful.
3. **Encourage independence-** Encourage student-athletes to be responsible for the care of their athletic gear and to prepare for practices and games.
4. **Observe the "24 Hour Cushion"** – Please allow coaches the time they need to process their decisions before approaching them with any questions.
5. **Model St. Mark's behavior expectations for visiting spectators-** Take pride in our athletic program and model for visitors how we:

- ↳ Cheer for our team rather than against our opponents.
- ↳ Respect the integrity and authority of game officials.
- ↳ Allow coaches to coach without criticism from the spectators.
- ↳ Help clean up at the end of athletic events.

All parents of student-athletes are expected to represent St. Mark Catholic School in an exemplary manner. This behavior is expected both at practices and games. Parents of student athletes are expected to display the best of Christian courtesy and manners to all officials, coaches, and opposing coaches, players, and spectators. At all times good sportsmanship is the rule not the exception. The penalty for unsportsmanlike behavior during a practice or game will be left to the discretion of the coaches of each sport with the input of the Athletic Director and the Principal. We must put the milieu in perspective and once again be aware of the education we are teaching our youth.

➤ All parents must read, sign, and return the [Parent Code of Conduct Agreement](#) to the [Athletic Director](#).

Transfer Students/ Injured Students

Transfer students or injured students will be eligible to participate on a team until the first three weeks after the season has begun.

GUIDELINES FOR ATHLETIC PRACTICES DURING HOT WEATHER

Incorporate the following guidelines during outdoor athletic practices to help prevent heatstroke and exhaustion in hot weather:

1. Each athlete must have a complete physical examination with a medical history and annual health history update.
2. Athletes will be acclimated to the heat by participating in graduated practice sessions for the first seven days.
3. Water will be on the field and readily available to the athletes at all times in unlimited quantities. Water breaks taken every fifteen minutes during each practice session. No athlete shall be denied water when requested.
4. After every half hour of heavy exercise in the heat, allow a 10-minute rest period in a cool shaded area. Remove helmets, jerseys pads, and other equipment during the rest periods.
5. The Head Coach will check the temperature and humidity before and during each practice session. The following guidelines regarding temperature, humidity, and air quality will be followed:

Temperature

Below 100	Practice may be conducted outdoors.
100	Practice may be conducted without helmets and pads.
101 and above	Limited practice may be conducted outdoors with extended water breaks and

rest periods under shaded areas. Conduct practice without helmets and pads.

Heat Index

Below 95	Practice may be conducted outdoors.
95 – 100	Practice may be conducted outdoors without helmets and pads. Frequent water breaks every 15 minutes. Rest periods under shaded areas.
101 and above	No outdoor practice. Practice may be conducted indoors.

Air Quality

Green 0-50	Outdoor practice
Yellow 51-10	Outdoor practice
Orange 100-150	Practice may be conducted outdoors, but can be altered at any time at the discretion of the coach.
Red 151-200	No outdoor practice
Purple 201-300	No outdoor practice

6. If adverse weather conditions are present, a parent may exclude their child from outdoor practice for health reasons. In such cases, the child will not be penalized for missing the practice session.
7. All athletes will be monitored closely during practice sessions and will be observed for any signs of heat-related illness.
8. Coaches will know the signs of heat-related illnesses and will be familiar with first aid practices.
9. Regarding weather changing conditions: All athletes and coaches must seek a safe structure when there is a flash-to bang count of thirty seconds.
10. Athletic activity may not resume until at least thirty minutes after the last flash of lightning or sound of thunder.

**Parents need to be advised if their child has a chronic illness and/or respiratory disease, prolonged outdoor exertion should be limited.

SCHOOL MASCOT AND LOGO REGULATION

The use of the name "St. Mark" or "St. Mark Lions" may only be used by those teams participating in the Dallas Parochial League as representatives of St. Mark Catholic School. The school administration strongly encourages and promotes school spirit and pride; however, the school cannot govern or accept responsibility for the St. Mark or St. Mark Lions identified teams that participate in non-diocesan organizations. Therefore, teams participating in these non-diocesan organizations (i.e., YMCA, ASA, PSA, etc.) are not allowed to use the St. Mark or St. Mark Lions school/team names.

All St. Mark/DPL teams are to be known as the "St. Mark Lions."

School Team Colors

All school teams must play under the green, gold, and white school colors that adhere to the St. Mark Catholic School official "Branding Guide" policy found on the school website.

School Team Mascot

All school teams must only play under the official "winged lion" logo described in the St. Mark "Branding Guide" policy found on the school website.

League Affiliation

St. Mark Catholic School participates in the Dallas Parochial League, a league comprised of Catholic schools within the Diocese of Dallas.

Use of the School Logo, Image, and Name

St. Mark maintains specific logo and image guidelines. Individuals or groups wishing to use the school logo, the school name, the school mascot, the "Lions" name, or to represent the school through written, digital or video formats in any way for any reason, must first receive permission from the school. This includes, but is not limited to, apparel of any kind, flyers, brochures, programs, signage, websites, videos, and social media pages. St. Mark team shirts, hats or other apparel may not be produced independently; permission must first be granted by the school. Please contact the Director of Marketing and Communications at 972-578-0610 for the official artwork files and permission to use them, as well as the guidelines for all applications.

Right to Amend

The Principal may make changes to any policies outlined in this handbook as needed, and has the final decision with regards to policy. Changes will be made public in the "Weekly School Bulletin."