

**St. Thomas Catholic Grade School
Athletic Handbook
2011-2012
Catholic Diocese of Peoria**

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

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I. General Information

Athletic Offerings

All St. Thomas School students in fifth through eighth grade are invited to participate in cross country, basketball, volleyball, and track and field. Speech will be offered to all students at St. Thomas School in grades six through eight. Cheerleading is open to fourth through eighth grades if there is an interest. St. Thomas School will make every attempt to field seventh- and eighth grade teams due to the IESA and conference guidelines. All athletic offerings will depend on sufficient volunteerism in coaching and student participation.

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. Depending upon the number of available athletes in the particular sport, beginning with fifth grade, athletes may be asked to move up to play with higher grades. Example: fifth and sixth graders could play on a seventh grade team; sixth and seventh graders could play on an eighth-grade team.

Affiliations

St Thomas is a member of the Illini Conference and abides by its regulations and by-laws. Schools within our Illini Conference are Thomasboro, St. Malachy, Ludlow, Gifford, Judah Christian, Holy Cross, University High and St. Thomas. St Thomas is a member of the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA) and abides by its regulations. All individuals 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, except to comply with IESA tournament team limits (15) at the end of the season.

Facilities

All boys' and girls' seventh- and eighth-grade home tournaments for basketball and volleyball games will be played at the Thelma Melohn Gym in Philo. Boys' seventh- and eighth-grade home games and girls' home volleyball games will be played either at the St. Thomas Gym or the Thelma Melohn Gym in Philo. All girls' seventh- and eighth-grade basketball games will be held at St. Thomas Gym. If there are fifth- and sixth-grade games, those events will be held at St. Thomas Gym unless noted on the calendar. In case of any scheduling conflicts with either of the gyms, it will be noted on the schedule and the calendar on the school web site.

Fees

There will be a \$45.00 athletic fee assessed for all participating students annually. This fee can be paid at the annual fee day or by the set date noted on the form. If a student is in basketball and volleyball, for example, the fee is only \$45.00: it is not a fee *per sport*. This money will help offset the cost for the expenses associated with the athletic program. The admission price to the regular season home games, is adults (including high school students) \$3, senior citizens \$2, and grade school students \$1 (K thru

eighth grade). The bus driver of the opposing team, coaches, players, and teachers of St. Thomas School are not charged admission to the home games.

Awards

Awards including trophies are traditionally a part of the athletic program. Only athletic awards officially approved by the athletic committee may be presented to the students regardless of the funding source of the awards. They will be presented to all students-athletes at the annual sports banquet in the spring.

Finances

The athletic department operates as a non-budget function of St. Thomas School. Income to meet expenses is accrued from concessions and gate receipts at home sporting events, tournament sponsorships, student fees, and generous donations. Any amount of money that is earned or received for athletics is applied to the purchase of equipment, uniforms, officials, athletic banquet, athletic awards, and any other expenses that may occur within the athletic department.

Transportation

Traveling to away games will be attempted through carpooling for cross country athletes. For the other activities that are offered at St. Thomas, the decision to take the bus will be made by the Administration and the Athletic Director. If the decision is made to take the bus to away events, there will be an additional fee (transportation fee) that will be assessed to each athlete's family for the expense in taking the bus. The Athletic fee does not cover this expense. Communication of the transportation fee will be made at the parents' meeting.

II. Policies and Procedures

Eligibility

The St. Thomas School sports program is run by volunteers who work many hours with our children. Team members are required to keep up with their schoolwork.

1. Sports Physical Forms are required each year for each athlete and must be on file before the first day of practice or the athlete may not participate until a current one is on file.
2. 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's office.
3. An athlete will not be allowed to attend practice or compete in an event if he/she was absent **half** of the day, which is three (3) hours or more, due to **illness**.
4. 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.
5. An athlete must maintain a passing grade in every subject area. A student becomes ineligible when:
 - a. He/She has an "F" average in any subject area
 - b. He/She has a "D" in two or more subject areas

- c. He/She has a “D” in one or more subject areas due to incomplete or missing assignments

Eligibility checks are made every Wednesday at the end of the class day by an athlete’s teacher(s). When a student is ineligible, he/she may not attend practice or suit up for any sporting event during the time of ineligibility. Ineligibility starts on the upcoming Saturday and he/she is not eligible to play or attend practice for seven (7) days from the ineligible 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.

6. If the Principal finds an athlete ineligible on Thursday morning, the athlete’s homeroom teacher will send a parent notification form home for a parent’s signature at the close of the school day on Thursday. The Principal will give the names of ineligible players to the Athletic Director no later than Thursday evening. Coaches will be notified by the following day (Friday) by the Athletic Director of any player(s) currently ineligible. The ineligible athlete will be unable to attend practice, dress in uniform, and play starting on that upcoming Saturday and the ineligibility will remain in effect for seven (7) days.

7. Detentions are to be served regardless of the sports schedule.

8. The Principal has discretion regarding eligibility matters.

III. Expectations

Athletic Director

The Athletic Director reports directly to the Principal and the Pastor of St. Thomas School. The responsibilities or duties of the Athletic Director include, but not limited to, the following:

1. The Athletic Director must have completed “Protecting God’s Children” program/Safe Environment program.
2. Schedule all athletic events for St. Thomas School.
3. Update the Web site calendar of all games and practices.
4. Recruit coaches and submit selections to the Administration for annual approval.
5. Maintain a permanent record of coaches’ certifications.
6. Maintain updated records of the athletes required forms for that year.
7. Provide the coaches with medical forms and contact information for the parents in case of emergency prior to the season.
8. Administrate the finances in consultation with the Administration.
9. Secure referees and officials for home games.
10. Monitor the condition of athletic equipment and make purchases when necessary.
11. Communicate with the Administration and coaches on matters involving player discipline and academics in a timely manner.
12. Communicate with the Administration and the custodians on matters involving scheduling and building use for games and practices.
13. Communicate with coaches annually on expectations for the athletic program and athletes.

14. Communicate with opposing schools to confirm scheduled games and tournaments prior to the event.
15. Arrange with each team to have necessary first aid and appropriate safety items for each scheduled event.
16. Communicate with the Administration regarding any coach who defies the policies and expectations of the athletic program and those of St. Thomas School, which could lead to suspension or dismissal of a coach.
17. Coordinate on-site supervision of school administration and/or staff for all St. Thomas home events.
18. Attend coaches/parent meetings before the first practice of that sport.
19. Supply a monthly athletic report to Administration.
20. Must not plan any overnight games or tournaments without prior consent by the Administration and the Catholic Diocese of Peoria.
21. Order all recognition awards for the yearly athletic banquet.
22. Must sign and agree to the guidelines set forth in this document. A signature form will be provided to the Athletic Director by the principal.

Coaches

Coaches must be an active parishioner of St. Thomas parish in Philo, Illinois, or any of St. Thomas School's affiliated parishes, and in good standing. Someone wishing to coach at St. Thomas School but is not a parishioner and/or of the Catholic faith, may submit their name to the Athletic Director for approval by the Administration and the Athletic Director. People interested in coaching can submit their names in the spring on the "Are You Interested in Playing" survey. All Coaches are recruited by the Athletic Director and approved by the Administration on an annual basis. Those wishing to be an assistant to a coach or to help in another way with the sports' program are to be recruited by the coach and approved by the Athletic Director and Administration before they can help with the team. The responsibilities or duties of the coach include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Represent St. Thomas School in sportsmanship, behavior, Christian conduct, and appearance at all times.
2. Coaches and assistant coaches must have completed "Protecting God's Children"/Safe Environment program.
3. Coaches and assistant coaches are asked to complete ASEP/IESA Coaching Essential Course prior to the season in 2008-2009; it is an IESA **requirement** after this year.
4. Refrain from berating the efforts of student-athletes.
5. Pray with the student-athletes prior to the beginning and at the conclusion of practices and games.
6. All coaches will have another adult, who has completed the "Protecting God's Children/Safe Environment Program," present when addressing the athletes in the locker room at all times before, during, or after a game. (This may be the combination of a coach, his/her assistant coach, or parent.) **At no time should a coach be with athletes without another adult present.**
7. Set the practice schedule in consultation with the Athletic Director.

8. Communicate with the Athletic Director any information involving equipment needs, traveling details, upcoming games, and disciplinary needs and concerns.
9. Supervise all practice sessions along with another adult and remain at the practice site until all participants have been secured.
10. Supervise or ensure a scorebook is kept at each game.
11. For all home games solicit and ensure a clock keeper is present.
12. Determine award winners, supply the information to the Athletic Director after the season is complete and present the awards at the sports banquet at year's end.
13. Coaches are required to have 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 one week prior to the meeting takes place.
14. Communicate to parents and players a list of expectations and current information as the need arises.
15. Communicate all practices and game schedules to players and parents.
16. Collect, distribute, and clean all uniforms before and after each event.
17. Ensure the set-up and clean-up of all athletic events--i.e., public address system, clock, chairs and benches.
18. The coach or assistant coach (two adults at the minimum) will be required to ride the bus (if the bus is used) with the team to and from all away athletic events.'
19. If a player is needed to play up for an event and it is not their normal team, the coach of the player needs to be asked by the coach requesting the player to play up. The player's team coach has the final say if the player can play up in the next game or not. Example:

The eighth-grade team is short a player. The coach of the eighth-grade team must consult with the coach of the seventh grade team prior to asking the player of a seventh grade team and parents if the student can play up. If the seventh grade coach says 'no' that is the final decision.
20. Seventh- and eighth-grade coaches should inform athletes and parents of their interpretation of "equal" playing time. The school realizes that the seventh- and eighth 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 the St. Thomas School's athletic program. Underclassmen will be allowed to "play up" in tournament play.
21. Observations and circumstances during practice sessions and games might cause a coach to deviate from this goal. (Missing practices or displaying a negative attitude during practices or in games would be two examples where a coach might withhold playing time from an individual.) Once the coach is made aware of this behavior, the coach should confer with the athlete as soon as this occurs.
22. If a meeting is requested by a parent with the coach and/or coaches regarding an issue or concern they have and the "24 Hour Rule" was met, a summary of the meeting must be supplied by the coach to the Athletic Director and Administration within 24-48 hours after the meeting.
23. Coaches must sign and agree to the guidelines set forth in this document. A signature form will be provided at the coaches' meeting by the Athletic Director.

Athletes

St. Thomas school offers an athletic program to all students as a privilege and not a right and can be revoked at any time.

1. Be genuinely interested in learning the rules and skills required for the sport.
2. Be willing and able to devote the necessary time to each activity.
3. Be respectful of all coaches, administration, officials, fellow team members, and opposing team members at events, games, practices, and school.
4. Respect all school property, both at St. Thomas School and hosting schools.
5. Represent St. Thomas School in sportsmanship, behavior, Christian conduct, and appearance at all times.
6. Attend practices regularly and punctually, and notify the coach of any conflicts.
7. Abide by all team guidelines and regulations established by the coach.
8. Must sign and agree to the guidelines set forth in this document. A signature form will be provided at the parents' meeting by the coach.

Parents

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

1. **24 Hour Rule** - If there is a problem during a game, event, or practice that a parent would like to discuss with one of the coaches, that parent must wait 24 hours after the problem arises, and then he or she may make an appointment to speak to the coach in private.
2. Parents will 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.
3. Parents will assist coaches with timekeeping, scorekeeping, and monitoring of all athletes. A sign-up sheet will be available on fee day or at the parents' meeting.
4. All parents of athletes are expected to help work the concession stand at home games, as well as chaperone at away games. Sign-ups for these volunteer opportunities will take place prior to the sport's season starting. The athletes' parents will be expected to volunteer in the concession stand/gate admissions a minimum of four times.
5. Parents will not compete with the coach; parents will be honest about their child's athletic ability, attitude, sportsmanship, and skill level.
6. Parents should not coach from the sidelines during games or practices.
7. Parents will not compare his/her child's ability, attitude, sportsmanship, and skill level with those of other members of the team.
8. Parents will make arrangements to pick-up athletes promptly after practices and games. No coach shall be expected to remain more than ten minutes after a practice or game. If this happens, the coach will inform the Athletic Director.
9. Parents should exhibit good sportsmanship and Christian conduct at all athletic events.

10. Parent misconduct will result in disciplinary action by Administration.

11. Parents must sign and agree to the guidelines set forth in this document. A signature form will be provided at the parents' meeting by the coach.

Spectators

Spectators have distinct roles as participants at athletic events. While they may be considered guests, they are bound by the same rules of conduct as student-athletes and their coaches and moderators.

Propriety demands respect for school rules and procedures including but not limited to, remaining in the locations where the games are being played, staying seated, refraining from stomping on benches, cursing, booing, yelling and making noises that disrupt activities.

The Priest, Principal, Athletic Director and game officials have the right and the responsibility to eject spectators whose behaviors are unacceptable.

Complaints/Grievance Procedures

Complaints should be logged appropriately. For example, approaching a coach with a concern or complaint before, during, or after a game or practice, whether privately or publically is UNACCEPTABLE and will not be tolerated by St. Thomas School. The coaches have been informed to stay focused on the team/event and ask for you to make an appointment omit up with them after 24 hours have passed. They will not address the issue before that time. An appointment should be set up between the complainant and the coach in private, not in a public forum.

The proper chain of command in logging a complaint should be the following (from bottom to up):

Organizational Chart

Pastor

↑

Principal

↑

Athletic Director

↑

Coach

↑

Athlete/Family

In the event of a complaint for non-compliance to IESA rules, diocesan policies, local school policies, or administrative regulations, a written letter should be completed by the complainant and submitted to the Athletic Director and Administration. This must be done within one week (seven days) of the initial meeting. The 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*