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## ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY

The interscholastic athletic program at Our Savior Lutheran School is an integral part of the entire school structure. Athletics should never be thought of as being separate from, above, or beneath the normal operation of our school. The athletic programs should comply with and reinforce the school's overall statement of purpose. Our highest goal is to bring athletics under the lordship of Jesus Christ by encouraging the physical, emotional, and spiritual growth and development of all participants through their athletic experiences.

Properly done, athletics is a positive learning experience. The athletes learn to refine their skills and improve their physical fitness. Participants in the program experience the privilege of membership on a team and learn their responsibilities to each other, the coach, the spectators, their school, and their opponents. Being part of the group teaches the important life lesson of placing group goals ahead of personal ones and how to make a personal contribution to the welfare of the team. Athletes are taught how to control their emotions and actions in a Christ-like manner, a valuable skill that carries over into everyday life. Athletes learn sportsmanship. More than mere self-control, sportsmanship is being thoughtful, kind, generous, and courteous even while being intensely competitive. Participants learn self-discipline and the benefits of hard work. Athletes are encouraged to always use and develop their talents to the fullest. School sports teach team members how to both win and lose with grace and dignity.

Interscholastic sports provide an opportunity for participants to demonstrate Christian values, such as humility, compassion, and respect, even under the stress of competitive play. Everyone involved – players, coaches, and spectators – can witness to the world around them and can, by their behavior and attitude, bring honor to the name of Jesus Christ. The development of such Christian values in our youth and coaches is a high priority of Our Savior athletics.

Athletics are recreational. Team members are involved in activities that are healthful, developmental, and fulfilling. Participation in sports should provide student-athletes with beneficial outlets for self-expression and physical exercise in addition to the sheer fun of competitive play. Interscholastic sports are not only recreational for the players, but also for the spectators. They provide a means by which a community can come together and support the efforts of "their" team. It is the intent of our athletic program for everyone involved to glorify our Lord through their participation in Our Savior athletics, whether as fans or as active contestants.

School sports are an extension of the educational programs at our school. God created us with bodies, minds, and souls, and He is concerned about all three. Athletic education programs are an appropriate and necessary part of a complete, well-rounded Christian school. While those teams and athletes with exceptional skills may receive most of the publicity, the benefits of participation in our program are not limited to those few. Our hope is that all who participate will be better people as a result of their involvement in Our Savior athletics. With this in mind, athletics should be encouraged and must remain an essential part of the total school program.

## ROLE OF THE PARENTS

Parents need to set the standard of exemplary sportsmanship while attending games/matches and when discussing OSLS athletics with others and at home. Because of the nature of athletic competition, parents can be detrimental to a student athlete's development when they become too involved as aggressive spectators and/or when they act as self-appointed player "agents" or "bleacher coaches" who choose to publicly second-guess coaches' decisions. Also, parents can also be susceptible to the temptation to blame the coach for poor play or lack of performance by their student-athlete or the team. When these types of behaviors occur, the child of these parents may feel excused for his/her effort, (or lack thereof) and poor attitudes toward the coach, and the team may develop as a result. Parents need to trust the school and coach as partners in the Christian education and development of their child. Coaches are certainly fallible people who will make mistakes at times. However, there must be a trust that the coach is doing everything that he/she can to help their child in their growth as athletes and as young adults. Mutual trust, respect, and encouragement among coaches, players, and parents will result in a top-quality athletic program at Our Savior.

This is not to say that parents of a student-athlete should remain silent if a problem arises. Like relationships with teachers, parents should feel free to have open, constructive discussions with the coach on issues pertaining to their child. Parents should expect that the coach will respond with honesty, respect, and a mutual concern for the well-being of their child. Parents are advised not to discuss concerns with the coach "in the heat of the moment," but, rather, should wait (at least overnight as suggested in the following "Communication/Confrontations") until emotions have cooled. In addition, parents should use discretion and restraint when determining whether to bring a concern forward to a coach. In all such cases, the Communication Procedure that follows should be employed.

Parents (and grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, classmates, neighbors, and friends) in their roles as spectators should understand their responsibilities to be encouragers of the team, supporters of the school, and, most importantly, representatives of Christ. Spectators should remember that school athletics are learning experiences for the students and that mistakes are sometimes made. Athletes from all sports should be praised in their attempts to improve themselves as athletes and as people. In addition, appreciation for outstanding play by either team should be shown.

More specifically, spectators should be aware that it is a privilege to observe the game/match. Respect should be shown to the opposing players, coaches, spectators, and support groups. Treat them as our guests, or the name of Christ may be tarnished.

Game officials should be treated with respect. Understand that they, like you, are fallible and are doing their best to promote the student-athlete. Admire their willingness to participate in full view of the public and be eager to accept their authority.

## Parental Communications/Confrontations

From time to time, we can expect that there may be issues that parents, athletes, or coaches differ in opinion on and which require some level of resolution. The following are guidelines that may help parents and coaches resolve conflicts in a God-pleasing manner as they may arise.

In Matthew 18:15, Jesus says, **“If a brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you.”** Our Savior Lutheran Athletic Department is committed to communicating the goals and objectives of the athletic program, eligibility rules, and expectations of our athletes. If more information is required or should a concern arise during an athletic season, the procedure listed below should be followed:

1. The student-athlete should first speak directly with his/her coach,
2. If further clarification is required, a parent should then contact the coach (it is advised that no contact between parent and coach be made until, at least, the day after the incident/event in question – the so-called “24-hour rule”)
3. If the issue remains unresolved, the parent should then communicate his/her concerns to the athletic director in writing.

## ELIGIBILITY RULES

Students who wish to represent our school in athletics must exhibit adequate classroom progress and proper school behaviors. They must:

A. Be legally enrolled in Our Savior Lutheran School. This means that he/she must have been enrolled at Our Savior in the fall, attended Our Savior for all of the current and previous year, or transferred in from another school due to a change in residence.

B. Maintain a 78% grade average or better and may not have any F's on a mid-term or quarterly report. A student declared ineligible at the end of these marking periods will be ineligible for no less than 5 school days from the start of the new marking period. The student's progress will be reviewed by the principal, athletic director, and classroom teacher. If the student has demonstrated satisfactory improvement, the student will once again be eligible for athletic activities.

C. Be doing passing work in all courses each week in order to remain eligible. If at any time during the school year, the athletic director is notified of a student failing a class, the student will receive an eligibility warning. At the end of one week, the student-athlete must demonstrate that he has taken the necessary steps to correct the failing grade. If he/she is unable to do so they will become ineligible until they can prove they are passing all of their classes.

D. Be free from misconduct that might cause ineligibility

*The school recognizes that students are individuals, each one possessing different gifts and abilities. Because of this, there may be times when these eligibility guidelines may be tailored to the needs and abilities of the individual. The classroom teacher and principal are responsible for tailoring guidelines when necessary.*

## Student Expectations

Any child that participates in the athletic program does so as a student enrolled at Our Savior Lutheran School and is therefore subject to all the philosophies, policies, and guidelines spelled out in the Parent Handbook. It is expected that all things be done decently and in order and that all words and actions may glorify our Savior, Jesus Christ. The following policies have been established as well. If there are any specific questions, please contact the athletic director.

1. Players need to attend all practices and games unless excused by a parent, either verbally or with a note.
2. It is required that a player has a physical exam prior to participating in an extracurricular sport.
3. Parents and players are required to attend an informational meeting with the Athletic Director at the beginning of each year. Only one meeting needs to be attended throughout the year if their child is in more than one sport. The agenda will include a review of philosophy, guidelines, responsibilities, etc. Both parents and athletes are required to sign the Athletic Handbook agreement form before the first game of the season.
4. By joining a team, an athlete is indicating interest in the sport but is further making a commitment to the coach, teammates, and the school. As such, the coach will expect all athletes to attend all practices. Should an absence be necessary, all attempts should be made to inform the coach prior to the absence. If a child is absent from school due to sickness, he/she may not participate in practice or at a game that night even if they are feeling better. At times, a child may be ill in the morning and be able to return to school later on during the school day. That situation will be handled in this way. If the child returns to school before/by 12:00 pm, he/she is cleared to practice or play in his/her game. After 12:00 pm, he/she is NOT cleared to practice or play in his/her game.
5. A player should be present at all practices and games to be considered part of the team. Excessive unexcused absences may result in being suspended or dropped from the team's roster.
6. If a player is going to drop out of a sport, he/she needs to contact the Coach.
7. If a player consistently fails to show cooperation or Christian conduct, in practices or games he/she will receive a warning in the form of a reprimand. After the second occurrence, the parents will be contacted and the player will be suspended from the next game. On the third infraction, the child will no longer be part of the team.
8. Behavior that may cause removal from the team would include fighting, stealing, vandalism, and the use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco.
9. Any major disciplinary actions will be reported to the parents, Athletic Director and Principal.

## Requirements for Coaching

Coaches and assistant coaches are expected to maintain a high level of Christian behavior, sportsmanship, professionalism, and integrity both on and off the playing field. Coaching duties include keeping the “fun” in sports, developing God-given athletic abilities, teaching sport-specific skills, and instilling in the players an appreciation for the game. In detail, coaches are expected to:

1. Submit to a background check.
2. Uphold proper Christian conduct in the light of I Corinthians 10:31 **“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.”**
3. Treat every player, opposing coach, official, parent, and administrator with respect and dignity.
4. Have knowledge of this handbook, the school handbook, and the coach’s handbook, and be in agreement with it.
5. Have the fundamental skills, rules, teaching and evaluation techniques, and strategies of his/her sport.
6. Communicate to his/her players and their parents the rights and responsibilities of individuals on the team.

## Coaching Code of Ethics

A Coaching Code of Ethics has been made as a guide for our coaches to follow at Our Savior Lutheran School.

- **Focus on Christ** The coach must recognize and portray a Christian attitude in light of I Cor. 10:31, **“So whatever you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.”**
- **Integrity** The coach must act with integrity in performing all duties owed to athletes, the sport, other members of the coaching profession, and the public.
- **Competence** The coach must strive to be well-prepared and current in order that all duties in the respective disciplines are fulfilled in accordance with the mission of Our Savior Lutheran School.
- **Athlete’s Interest** The coach must act in the best interest of the athlete’s development as a whole person (spiritual, physical, intellectual, and emotional), not just as an athlete.
- **Respect for the Rules** The coach must accept both the letter and the spirit of the rules that define and govern the sport.
- **Respect for Officials** The coach must accept the role of officials in providing judgment to ensure that competitions are conducted fairly and according to established rules. While coaches may question calls, they are not to challenge them or to show disrespect at any time to the official.

## **Game Day Responsibilities**

### **Away Games**

#### **Transportation**

Parents are responsible for making sure that their players have a ride to away games. If the athlete cannot find a ride to the game, he/she must contact the coach, who may try to find a ride. Students are to conduct themselves in a Christian manner on their way to and from games. Failure to do so will result in loss of playing privileges.

#### **Use of Host Facilities**

The use of host facilities is a privilege. We are being invited to play at someone else's school. As a rule, all players and coaches will make sure that the locker room and bench area as well as any other part of the school are as clean as or cleaner than originally found. The host facility is not responsible for any lost or stolen items. Any misuse or disrespect shown towards the host facility will result in disciplinary action taken towards the offender. This may include monetary compensation and/or suspension from the team.

#### **Length of Supervision**

Coaches are expected to remain on site until all of their players have left the facility. In the event that a coach needs to leave a contest early, the coach will speak with the Athletic Director to ensure adequate supervision. Parents, please respect the fact that coaches have their own families, as well, and pick up your son or daughter as soon as possible after the game so that the coaches can get home as soon as possible. Please contact the coach if you are going to be late so he or she may make arrangements.

### **Home Games**

#### **Use of Facilities**

All athletes are to remain in the building unless leaving to go home. General horseplay on the playground equipment, etc., is not permitted. Athletes are not permitted to wander the hallways at any time without express permission and supervision from the coach.

#### **Length of Supervision**

Coaches are expected to remain on site until all of their players have left the facility. In the event that a coach needs to leave a contest early, the coach will speak with the athletic director to ensure adequate supervision. Parents, please respect the fact that coaches have their own families, as well, and pick up your son or daughter as soon as possible after the game so that the coaches can get home as soon as possible. Please contact the coach if you are going to be late so he or she may make arrangements.



### **Game Setup**

Home game setup is usually taken care of by the Athletic Director, but any help that coaches and players can offer is greatly appreciated.

### **Uniform Use**

Uniforms will be distributed at the beginning of the season to each player. Each player is responsible for the care and condition of the uniforms. If a uniform is damaged or lost, the parents of the player will assume the responsibility for the cost of repairing or replacing the uniform.

Distribution and Return - All uniforms will be distributed and collected by the coach or athletic director. Uniforms are to be returned upon the completion of that sport's season. Students must return the uniforms to the school office or athletic director in a timely manner.

Care - The individual athlete is responsible for the care of his/her uniform. Uniforms are to be washed in cold water and air-dried. Machine drying will damage the material and numbers. Do not use fabric softener when washing a uniform.

Damaged Materials - If a child loses or damages a uniform, he/she will be required to pay for the lost or damaged uniform before another uniform will be issued.

Forgotten Uniforms - Students are expected to bring uniforms to games. Both home and away jerseys are expected to be brought to each game for the Boys' and Girls' Basketball A-team. Extra uniforms will not be taken to away games. If a student forgets his/her uniform, he/she may not, depending on the sport, be allowed to play.

## **In Closing . . .**

All of the above guidelines and regulations exist so that in all things we may glorify God in an orderly fashion. If you have questions about a specific guideline, direct them to the athletic director. It is indeed a great privilege to offer God's children the opportunity to grow in their faith through the means of an interscholastic athletic program throughout their grade school experience. Regard this opportunity as a blessing from God, and never underestimate the impact that you as a parent or an athlete might have on the faith life of those around you. Use this avenue as an opportunity to witness your love for your Savior. God bless you as you go about His work!