

**St. John Paul II Catholic School**

**5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Athletic Manual**



**Greater-Houston  
Catholic Athletic Association  
(GHCAA)  
Middle School Athletic Program**

**Athletic Director: Mary Beth Hewitt**

## **PHILOSOPHY OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC PROGRAM**

The philosophy of the Middle School Athletic Program at St. John Paul II Catholic School is in accordance with the school's overall philosophy statement. It is the primary goal of St. John Paul II Catholic School that the education of students is centered on the development and formation of the whole Christian person.

St. John Paul II Catholic School recognizes that an important component of a student's well-being is that of physical development. In addition, it is important for students to develop socially as they learn to work in a team situation and to practice good sportsmanship. The goal of the middle school athletic program is to produce young men and women of strong character, develop and cultivate school spirit, gain athletic ability, and strive to be successful in the competitive society in which we live.

### **INTRODUCTION**

St. John Paul II Catholic School offers a variety of competitive sports for both boys and girls in middle school, including: football (7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> only) volleyball, soccer, basketball, cheerleading and track. Additional sports, such as cross country, baseball and softball, are considered if there is sufficient interest on the part of students and parents. In addition, and depending on interest, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders can participate in non-competitive sports through West Houston Christian Sports Association. The athletic program falls under the jurisdiction of the School, and is administered by the Principal, the Athletic Director, full and part-time coaches, and parent volunteers. St. John Paul II Catholic School is a member of the Greater-Houston Catholic Athletic Association (GHCAA).

GHCAA (Greater Houston Catholic Athletic Association) is a competitive league for our middle school students. Coaches are hired by St. John Paul II. There are two practices and two games during the week. Most sports require mandatory tryouts to select the team. Participation in a Middle School sport is a serious commitment. Parents are responsible for helping with transportation to and from games. There is a fee for participating in each Middle School sport. **To be eligible for practice or game participation, a student must attend school that day.**

**\*All middle school students trying out need to have a physical after June 1<sup>st</sup>, with the form completed, signed, and turned into the school nurse before they can tryout. Medical forms can be found on the [jp2.org](http://jp2.org) website.** Please see the athletic manual located in the back of this handbook for further details.

### **ELIGIBILITY AND COMMITMENT OF STUDENTS**

Participation in GHCAA, Middle School athletics including WHCSA is a privilege, not a right. Students earn the privilege of participating through hard work, dedication, desire, and self-discipline. **In addition, participation requires a commitment by the student to attend all practices and games with the exception of illness.** Parents must call the coach in the event a student is ill and will miss a practice. Prior to tryouts, all athletes/families must commit to a Monday through Thursday athletic schedule.

**Grade Level Requirements:** Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 are eligible to participate in the various sports.

**Age Requirements:** Students on the varsity team may not turn 15 before September 1. Students on the junior varsity team may not turn 14 before September 1. Eighth graders may only play on the Varsity team and sixth graders only on the Junior Varsity team. Seventh graders can play on either.

**Financial Obligations:** Students will be required to pay an athletic fee for each sport in which they participate. Athletic fees are non-refundable. If financial assistance is needed, please contact the Principal.

**Attendance:** Students who are absent on the day of a game or practice may not participate in athletic activities that day. Students must be in attendance at school by 11:30 a.m. in order to participate that day. Students who choose to miss practice to attend activities such as, but not limited to practices/games of non StJPII teams will not start in the following StJPII game.

Students are to go directly to practice or games and roll will be taken. Students may not walk around campus or leave campus between dismissal and practice/game.

**Probation and Eligibility Requirements for both GHCAA/WHCSA MS Sports:**

Any student with a grade below 70 or two or more grades below 78 will be placed on probation from the activity. Students may also be placed on probation for on-going or serious behavior issues. As long as a student is not failing any classes (below 70), he/she may participate in practices, and may sit on the bench in uniform for games. Students failing a class may not attend practices or games.

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**\*Note** – Once on probation, grades and/or conduct will be checked at the midpoint of reports (approximately two weeks).

**Students on probation will be allowed to play if their grades and behavior have improved to passing when probation is checked.**

**Team Make-Up:** Middle school sports are for teaching skills and rules of the game, sportsmanship, and self-esteem. Each sport may add a student manager to their team roster. The team rosters will be composed of:

| <b>SPORT</b>  | <b>TEAM SIZE</b> | <b>TEAM TYPE</b>                  |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Football      | Up to 30 players | Boys, Varsity                     |
| Soccer        | 16 players       | Co-ed, JV and Varsity             |
| Volleyball    | 10 players       | Girls, JV and Varsity             |
| Cross Country | 10-25 players    | Co-ed                             |
| Basketball    | 10-12 players    | Girls and Boys Teams, JV, Varsity |
| Track*        | Up to 55 players | Co-ed                             |
| Softball      | 13 players       | Girls                             |
| Baseball      | 15 players       | Boys                              |
| Cheerleading  | Up to 16         | Girls                             |

**\* For MS students interested in playing less competitive sports please see WHCSA manual.**

**\*Track participants are expected to arrive at the meet one hour prior to the usual scheduled event and remain until the event is complete.**

**Sportsmanship:** Any student or parent athlete whose conduct, dress, public or private remarks, or other display of behavior of unsportsmanlike conduct that might discredit the reputation of this school, may cause a student or parent to be declared ineligible for athletic competition or participation. Such decisions are made by the Coach in consultation with the Athletic Director and Principal and are final.

**ATHLETIC CODE**

**The coach's code includes:**

- Treating athletes based on what is best for the education, general welfare, and health of the student.
- Professional loyalty to other coaches.
- Coaches will take roll at beginning of practices and games and require a late pass from any students coming late. If a late pass is not received, the coach will contact Athletic Director.
- Fairness, willingness to motivate, help and improve students' skills through constructive criticism that's true and fair to philosophy of the athletic program.
- Adhering to in season and out of season practice regulations.

- Consistent communication with parents and students.
- Adhering to policies which do not force athletes to specialize or restrict them from participation in other sports.
- Allowing students to participate in one school sport without requiring, as a prerequisite, participation in another school sport.
- Coaches may not require a player to participate in a camp, clinic, Sports Association or other non-school athletic event in order to participate on a school team.
- Avoiding any coaching practice which would endanger the welfare or safety of any player.
- Emphasizing the academic and behavioral progress of all participants by a regular, documented check of their academic and behavior standing.
- Assigning a team parent to arrange phone trees, email lists, driving schedule (unless buses are used as transportation), etc.
- Scheduling games and practices to avoid unnecessary loss of study or class time.
- Utilizing the best and most current teaching, coaching, and training methods through affiliation with professional associations and publications.
- Abstaining from any practice that solicits teachers to modify a student's grade for eligibility purposes.
- Coaches will not tolerate the use of performance enhancing drugs by athletes and will inform the school administration upon knowledge of such drug use.
- Coaches will assess all injuries carefully before allowing a student to return to play.

#### **The student-athlete:**

- Accept and understand the seriousness of your responsibility, and the privilege of representing your school and the community.
- True and fair to philosophy of the athletic program.
- Live up to the standards of sportsmanship established by the school administration and the coaching staff.
- Learn the rules of the game thoroughly.
- Treat opponents the way you would like to be treated.
- Wish opponents good luck before the game and congratulate them in a courteous manner following either victory or defeat.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. The officials are doing their best to help promote you and your sport. Treating them with respect, even if you disagree with their judgment, will only make a positive impression of you and your team in the eyes of the officials and all the people at the event.
- It is your responsibility to maintain your grades and behavior.
- Dedicate self to strong effort for improvement of skills, team spirit, and sportsmanship.
- Christian behavior/attitude should be exemplified at all times and no profanity should be utilized at any time.
- Avoid playing when injured.

#### **The spectators:**

- Remember that you are at the contest to support and yell for your team and to enjoy the skill and competition; not to intimidate or ridicule the other team or its fans.
- Remember that school athletics is a learning experience for students and that mistakes are sometimes made. Praise student-athletes in their attempt to improve them as students, as athletes, and as people as you would praise a student working in the classroom.
- Learn the rules of the game and the Sports Association, so that you may understand and appreciate why certain situations take place.

- Show respect for the opposing players, coaches, spectators, and support groups. Treat them as you would treat a guest in your own home.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Understand that they are doing their best to help promote the student/athlete, and admire their willingness to participate in full view of the public.
- Recognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team.
- Use only cheers that support and uplift the teams involved.
- Be a positive role model at events through your own actions.
- Please respect the buildings and property of the facilities that are used by controlling children, pick-up trash, and following rules as displayed.
- Be sure to ensure the safety of children who are spectators by supervising them inside and outside the facilities you are using.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Team Selection:** The head coach or sponsor is responsible for the team selection process for the individual sport/activity. Expectations for participation will be explained to students prior to tryouts being conducted. **All try-outs are closed to parents and the public.**

**Team Meeting:** All coaches will hold preseason meetings. **Attendance of at least one parent is mandatory.** This requirement must be met prior to the student being allowed to participate in competition as the philosophy of the school and season guidelines are discussed. Students will be provided with fee requirements, practice schedules, game schedules, and game maps. A copy of the Athletic handbook is on our website.

**Practices\Games:** Students are expected to attend all practices, games, and meetings called by the coach. **A student will be excused only for a death in the family, illness, or prior approval of the coach.** Students who miss practices, games, or meetings will lose playing time in future games. **GHCAA is a competitive league and playing time is not guaranteed in every game. However, in keeping with the philosophies of the school and athletic program, coaches will make every effort to play all team members unless the student has been absent, a behavior problem or is not putting forth real effort.**

**Transportation:** Parents are responsible for providing transportation to/from all games, practices, competitions and tournaments. Students are expected to be picked up immediately at the game's conclusion with definite plans prearranged. A 5-minute grace period for athletes will be allowed prior to late fees of \$2.00 per minute being assessed. This procedure adheres to general school policy for late pick ups.

**Uniforms and Equipment:** School issued uniforms and equipment are to be used only for St. John Paul II Catholic School games, competitions, practices, and special activities. The wearing of team uniforms for PE classes is unacceptable. Care must be taken to keep uniforms and equipment in good condition. At the end of the season, all uniforms and equipment must be returned to the school in a plastic bag labeled with the player's name. Football and cheerleading are required to pay for certain uniform items and equipment. Students are responsible for furnishing their own socks, shoes, knee pads, safety glasses, shin guards, etc. These must meet team specifications for color, etc. A student's report card may be withheld at the end of the quarter if uniforms and equipment have not been returned. Students who leave a team before the end of a season must return uniforms and equipment immediately.

**Facilities and Practice Equipment:** St. John Paul II Catholic School is responsible for providing the facilities and equipment needed for practices and games.

**Injuries:** Students should never play with injuries. Permanent damage can result from trying to “work through” pain and injuries. It is the responsibility of parents to provide insurance coverage for their child or to pay the expenses. The school nurse and Athletic Director must be notified in the event of any injury. The school provides an opportunity for concussion screening prior to each sport. Coaches will follow appropriate procedures in the event of a possible concussion.

**Expectations:** Students are expected to follow team rules set by the coach. These may include items such as dress, grooming, practice attendance, warm-ups, transportation, uniforms, etc.

**Thunder and Lightning Policy:**

Prior to the start of play, the athletic director and coaches will review St. John Paul II’s thunder and lightning policy with the officiating squad and opposing team. At the first sound of thunder or the first sound of lightning, the officials (umpires and referees) shall suspend the game and clear the field. All coaches, players, referees, and spectators are to withdraw from the field and seek proper shelter. If a building is not available, everyone should take shelter in vehicles. Avoid convertibles and cars without metal roofs.

Games will not resume for at least 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder or the last sound of lightning flash. After 30 minutes without thunder or lightning, an “all clear” signal will be given and games may resume. If thunder is heard or lightning is seen again within that 30 minute time frame all activities will be cancelled for that time frame.

Any new activities that follow shall have to repeat this same policy before starting.

## **GHCAA PARENTS CODE OF ETHICS**

I will at all times during my child's sports related activities make his or her spiritual, emotional and physical well-being my number one priority.

I will lead by example in demonstrating Christian Love, fair play and sportsmanship to all players, fans, officials, parents and coaches.

I will only address officials, opposing teams players, parents and coaches in a positive, respectful and encouraging manner in the spirit of the game.

I will stand behind the coach and support his or her decisions at all times. I will not place the coach in a position to have to be concerned with my behavior rather than the game being played.

I will in no way disrupt the game that I am attending. I will express concerns regarding any rules or call only to the proper league officials through the proper channels, once the game has concluded.

I will remember that the game is for the children and not for adults.

I have read and signed the Parents Code of Ethics and agree to share this information with any and all person's who will be with me in attendance at my child's sporting events during the course of the season. I agree to abide by these codes as well as the rules, regulations, guidelines and interpretations of the GHCAA. I understand that any violation of these by myself or anyone in attendance with me is subject to review by the GHCAA and/or the administration.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Player Contract**  
**St. John Paul II Catholic School**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have agreed to demonstrate the following behavior as a St. John Paul II student athlete:

- I will do my very best to be a good teammate, both on and off the courts/fields. My teammates will draw inspiration from my play and work ethic in practice and games.
- I will celebrate with my team respectfully during victories; I will be humbled with my teammates during losses.
- I will treat coaches, players, officials, and administrators on and off the campus with respect.
- I will accept consequences, and be held accountable for my behavior and attitude at all times.
- I will not use inappropriate language in front of a coach, player, fellow athlete, student, parent, official, or faculty member.
- I will strive to be my very best, in both my attitude and athleticism, and most of all my faith. I will keep God first at all times in my words and actions as a representative of St. John Paul II Catholic School.

If players do not follow these rules, you may be suspended from a game/s, or asked to leave the team.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Athletes Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parents Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date