

St. Joseph Catholic School Freeburg

Athletic Handbook

2025-2026



PURPOSE & PHILOSOPHY

The athletics handbook is designed to serve as a guide for our student athletes, coaches, and parents to help navigate through our sports at all levels. Here you will find our philosophy, rules, and other information that should help maximize the enjoyment and benefits that come with sports.

Our mission for the athletics program is to allow student athletes the opportunity to actively participate in a wide range of sports that will positively develop each student physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Few opportunities allow a student to develop these life aspects like sports. Students will get to experience teamwork, dedication, discipline, and hard work in a healthy, competitive environment to accomplish goals for themselves and their team. Each student will experience victory, defeat, growth, development, limitations, adversity, and competition at all levels.

At the heart of our athletics program is our strong Christian beliefs and values, and our love and trust in God that guide us. The athletics program gives our student athletes, coaches, and families the opportunity to grow and develop in the footsteps of Jesus. These values are what ultimately guide our decisions and actions.

SPORTS OFFERED

St. Joseph offers a wide range of sports for both boys and girls with equal opportunities for each sport.

Fall: Soccer, Cross Country, Baseball, Softball

Winter: Basketball, Volleyball

Spring: Track and Field, Golf

Currently, St. Joseph has a co-op with St. John the Baptist Catholic School in Smithton with all sports. In the event that St. Joseph cannot field a full team, every effort will be made to place a student with a school that has a team in that sport. Due to the roster size requirements for certain sports, co-ops may be formed with other schools to form a team. Students, parents, and coaches will be informed in advance of any such changes. In addition to this handbook, St. Joseph Catholic School follows all rules set by the Diocese of Belleville. The full details of the Diocese Athletics Handbook can be found on our athletics webpage. For any matters not explicitly covered in this handbook, refer to the Diocese Athletics Handbook.

REQUIREMENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN ATHLETICS

All students must have the following on file before participating in sports:

- A current physical from a qualified healthcare provider licensed in the state of Illinois or Missouri (MD, DO, APN)
- Athletic fees for that sport and any outstanding fees
- Parents code of conduct signed

- Online registration form filled out

FEES

Students are charged a \$50 fee for each sport he/she plays in. These fees help cover the cost of game officials as well as any other incidental costs. Given the unique demands of the sport, golf will have a \$100 fee and possible other costs for greens fees. ***All fees must be paid at the start of each season.***

CHILD PROTECTION

All coaches and volunteers are required to complete the necessary training as set by the Diocese of Belleville. All training must be up to date prior to coaching or interaction with students. Refer to Diocesan handbook for details

CODE OF CONDUCT

All coaches must sign the Diocesan code of conduct each year. Likewise, parents must also sign the code of conduct form. Coaches and parents will be held to the standards outlined in each set of guidelines. We hold our school in high esteem, and the behavior of our coaches and fans is a direct reflection of this. Coaches, players, and fans (both young and old) should be a direct extension of the Christian values we hold. Any type of verbal, nonverbal, or media harassment of officials, players, coaches, or other fans will not be tolerated. Any violations of the codes of conduct can include but are not limited to verbal warnings or removal from the site.

Student athletes shall also be held accountable for their actions. We expect our student athletes to always display good sportsmanship during both practices and games. Student athletes shall always treat coaches, teammates, game officials, and opposing teams with respect at all times. Student athletes whose behavior is not in line with our school's values and expectations shall be handled on a case-by-case basis. Corrective actions include but are not limited to verbal warnings, meeting with parents, loss of playing/practice time, or removal from the team.

PROBLEM SOLVING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

We understand that from time to time, problems or differences of opinion may arise in a sport. Problems are most likely to be resolved when approached positively by each party involved. We ask that the following procedures and chain of command be followed:

1. Wait 24 hours: Sometimes the emotion and intensity of a sport or moment can be overwhelming. It may take a little time to settle back in and rethink the issue at hand. Take a day to think about the issue and collect your thoughts. Please do not confront a coach, the athletic director, or the principal the same day that a problem occurs. We also ask that you keep any personal problems private and avoid voicing any displeasure to other people. The exception to this step would be if a child's safety is at risk.

2. Contact the Coach: Most problems can be resolved at this level. If a meeting with a coach is necessary, please make arrangements either by phone or email for a mutually agreed upon place and time. Please do not confront the coach in person before making arrangements. Any meeting should take place privately and away from students and other parents.
 3. Contact the Athletic Director: The athletic director is responsible for overseeing the entire athletics program. If the problem is not resolved after steps 1 & 2, a meeting with the AD can be arranged. Again, this should be broached by either phone or email first to decide on a meeting place and time. The AD will work with you and coaches or people involved to find the best solution. Please know that each person involved may not necessarily be in agreement with the AD's final decision.
 4. Meeting with Principal: If the AD feels like the problem needs to be addressed further, a meeting with the principal may be called. This will involve all parties.
- **Please do not call the Diocesan Office directly with problems regarding sports conflicts.****

STUDENT ABSENCES

Excused Absences: If a student misses a full school day due to illness, injury, or other health-related issues, he/she will not be allowed to participate in practices or games on the same day.

Doctor/dentist appointments that are planned and that the school is notified about in advance will not result in the loss of game/practice time.

Planned absences such as vacations, select sports, hunting, etc. that have parent permission will be counted as an absence, and the student athlete will forfeit participation in any practice or game that same day.

CONCUSSION AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

In accordance with Illinois State Law and Public Act 99-245 (Youth Sports Safety Act), all schools are required to have a concussion protocol and return to play (RTP) for students sustaining a head injury or concussion. This also includes a concussion oversight team. For St. Joseph Catholic School, this team will consist of the principal and athletic director.

Concussion Policy and RTP Guidelines

- Any student who suffers a head injury (whether direct or indirect) and exhibits signs of a concussion (which can include but are not limited to loss of consciousness, headache, confusion, altered balance, decreased coordination, dizziness, disorientation, and altered sensation or motor control) shall be immediately removed from play.
- Prior to any further participation, the student must be evaluated in person by a licensed Illinois or Missouri health care provider (MD, DO, APN). Chiropractors, physical therapists, and athletic trainers shall not be considered as qualified providers to provide return to play clearance. Telehealth visits will not be an acceptable method of clearance.

- If it is determined that the student did suffer a head injury or concussion, he/she shall not be allowed to participate in sports until fully cleared by a health care provider (as listed above) to return to learning and playing without restrictions.
- Parents must provide written clearance to the school office from a qualified health care provider listed above, stating that the student is cleared to return to sports without restrictions.
- If the student shows any neurological symptoms noted above or other concerning symptoms during a practice, game, or school day, he/she will be immediately stopped from further sports participation and will need to be re-evaluated by a licensed health care provider as stated above and cleared to return back to sport.
- If a student sustains a concussion, a student injury form shall be completed by the school athletic director or principal in compliance with the Diocese of Belleville and kept with the student's record.

Emergency Response

If a medical emergency occurs during a sport, the emergency response plan will be activated. An emergency situation would include any situation where EMS is needed to provide care and transportation to a hospital. These situations can include but are not limited to:

- Loss of consciousness
- Athlete is no longer breathing
- A serious neck or back injury is suspected
- A compound fracture or other visible deformity has occurred
- Severe heat exhaustion
- Uncontrolled bleeding

Emergency Plan Steps

- If an emergency situation has occurred, 911 shall be called immediately.
- If present, the principal or athletic director shall serve as the scene commander and direct any personnel needed. If the AD or principal is not present, the head coach shall serve as the scene commander.
- Those present and capable should be dispatched both outside and inside the facility to help guide EMS to the scene.
- Should the athlete lose consciousness and qualified people are present, the Basic Life Support (BLS) steps should be implemented, which could include performing CPR and/or use of an AED until EMS arrives.
- Any first aid steps able to be safely applied should be done until EMS arrives.
- If the student's parent(s) is not present, the scene commander shall attempt to make immediate contact with the parent(s) and advise them on the situation.
- Following an emergency, athletic staff present shall determine if the game is able to be played or shall be rescheduled.

ADMISSION

All regular season basketball and volleyball games will require paid admission. There will also be paid admission for all diocesan sports tournaments. These prices are set forth by the Diocese and will be displayed at the gate at each game.

VOLUNTEERING

Our athletics program relies on volunteers for each game. Opportunities include gate, concessions stand, and score table. These volunteer opportunities count toward the school's parent volunteer hours requirement. Volunteer opportunities will be shared prior to the season for each sport. It is the expectation that if your student is participating in a sport, your family will volunteer to help during that sport's season. Training will be provided free of charge for scoreboard and scorebook positions prior to the season.

FUNDRAISING

The primary fundraiser for the athletic department is our fall golf tournament. There are numerous ways to get involved, including sponsorships, participating teams, item donations, and volunteering. Other fundraising opportunities may occur during the year.