

ST. MARY OF THE LAKES ATHLETIC MANUAL

INTRODUCTION

This Athletic Program Manual (“the Manual”) is meant to assist St. Mary of the Lakes School (SML) administrators, and volunteers who provide hours of service to the participating students. By articulating our mission statement, principles and procedures, it is hoped that St. Mary of the Lakes Athletic Association (“SMLAA”) can optimize and channel effectively the efforts of those who help make the SMLAA program (“The Program”) a vibrant part of our school.

I. MISSION STATEMENT & PRINCIPLES:

SMLAA MISSION STATEMENT: Consistent with the school’s mission statement, the SMLAA program’s mission is to provide athletic programs for St. Mary of the Lakes School students that promote fair play and a spirit of good sportsmanship flowing from the foundations of the Catholic Faith and based on the love of God and one another.

A. PRINCIPLES:

1. By providing athletic opportunities, the Program seeks to be a valuable part of the total educational process for the SML student that integrates character formation and spiritual growth with academic achievement.
2. Extracurricular athletic participation is an encouraged part of the educational experience at St. Mary’s of the Lakes. To accomplish this goal, the school sponsors athletic teams and activities.
3. Athletic participation is an important component of a SML education because it teaches important values such as teamwork, discipline, setting and striving for goals, good health habits and good sportsmanship.
4. The Program should be structured and administered to encourage these values while seeking wide participation by the student body.
5. Participation in any athletic program is always contingent on the academic eligibility and record of good conduct in the classroom by the student.
6. The Program should be sufficiently varied to provide student athletes competitive challenges with other grammar schools and, as well as, provide instructional athletic programs to those who are not ready to participate at a

higher level of competition. To that end, wherever possible, SMLAA strives to field teams at varying skill levels; varsity, jv, sophomore, and freshmen.

7. Varsity level programs are more challenging and selective in participation due to the higher level of league competition. Those teams should strive for excellence and team achievement.
8. Junior Varsity, Sophomore and Freshmen level teams should emphasize participation, instruction and teamwork.
9. The Program admittedly may be unable to provide an opportunity for every student to participate fully in every sport. However, the goal remains to build upon the solid foundation and tradition of athletic participation at SML and to provide athletic opportunities for SML students.
10. We define quality as the degree of excellence attained in the achievement of the Program's mission guided by the Program's principles and not the number of wins and losses of teams.
11. The SMLAA, coaches, school administration and the parents of student-athletes are all responsible for ensuring that the Program strives for excellence in carrying out its mission. All must be committed to the Program.
12. The SMLAA shall review the operation of the Program as a whole and each team in particular. This review is undertaken to ensure that the Program's direction is consistent with its mission statement and adheres to the principles as defined earlier.

II. PURPOSES OF THE MANUAL

- A. The Manual describes the structure, procedures, responsibilities and the policies of the Program.
- B. The Manual is an outline of our Program. It does not provide every detail, answer every question, or address every situation that might arise. It does, however, provide our coaches and administrators with the structure, guidelines and principles upon which they should conduct themselves in the course of running a team and guiding the children entrusted to them.
- C. The Manual will be readily available to our school so that coaches, parents and students will understand the principles guiding the Program and the procedures in place to achieve its mission.

III. ST. MARY'S OF THE LAKES SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

There shall be a St. Mary's of the Lakes School Athletic Association. The Bylaws and Constitution of the SMLAA are incorporated herein by reference.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. ATHLETIC PROGRAMS AND TEAMS: The SMLAA will establish and support athletic programs and teams based on the interest of the SML student population.

Current athletic programs include:

- **Fall:** Soccer and Field Hockey
- **Winter:** Basketball
- **Spring:** Baseball, Girl's Lacrosse and Softball

New athletic programs: The SMLAA will explore the establishment of other athletic programs based on interest expressed by student and/or parent population.

1. **Field Hockey** All girls in grades 5 through 8 are invited to try out for the field hockey team
2. **Soccer:** Girls and boys in grades 6 through 8 are invited to try out for the co-ed soccer team.
3. **Cheerleading:** Girls in grades 5 through 8 are invited to try out for cheerleading.
4. **Basketball:** Basketball teams for both girls and boys include:
 - a. **Varsity Basketball:**
 - The Varsity team is generally limited to 7th and 8th graders. Exceptions, based on ability of a 6th grader, can be made by the coach and parents, in consultation with the Athletic Association.
 - b. **Junior Varsity Basketball**
 1. The JV team is generally limited to 5th and 6th graders. Exceptions, based on ability of a 4th grader, can be made by the coach and parents, in consultation with the Athletic Association
 2. All 4th and 5th grade students who do not make the junior varsity team will be permitted to try out for the sophomore basketball team (if there are a sufficient number of qualified players to support a sophomore team).

c. Sophomore Basketball:

1. All 4th or 5th grade students are eligible to try out for the sophomore team.
2. The determination of whether a Sophomore team will be established each year will be made at the discretion of the SMLAA.

d. Freshmen Basketball

1. No tryouts will be held for the Freshman Teams. All interested 3rd and 4th grade students can participate on a Freshman Team
2. The focus of the Freshman team is educational and non-competitive.

5. Baseball

- All boys in grades 6 through 8 are invited to try out for the baseball team.

6. Softball

- All girls in grades 6 through 8 are invited to try out for the softball team.

7. Lacrosse

- All girls in grades 5 through 8 are invited to try out for the lacrosse team.

V. COACHES

A. SELECTION OF COACHES:

1. Head Coaches:

- a. An open head coaching position should be advertised through the school, the parish bulletin and by informal word of mouth in the community. The search for coaches shall be coordinated by the SMLAA. All candidates will be interviewed by the SMLAA. The objective is to find the best available volunteer who can carry out the philosophy, mission statement and procedures described in this manual. The final decision on all coaches will be made by the SMLAA.
- b. Consistent with the bylaws, a Board member of the SMLAA cannot be a JV or Varsity head coach, but may serve as assistant coach.

2. Assistant Coaches:

- a. The assistant coaches can be selected by the head coach with the approval of the Athletic Association.
- b. The Assistant coaches must follow the qualification of coaches and coach's responsibilities as outlined in this document.
- c. An assistant coach may be a member of the SMLAA.

B. QUALIFICATION OF COACHES

1. In undertaking the position of coach, one agrees to follow the mission statement, principles and procedures of the program, while providing for the needs of our student-athletes. Coaches are a key element in the athletic experience. They are responsible for not only teaching the skills associated with their sport, but most importantly, they are uniquely able to help the student-athletes develop and mature both socially and emotionally, within the context of the Christian community that is St. Mary's of the Lakes School. Coaches are role models for their players. A coach can impart to young athletes valuable lessons about maturity, self-control, honesty and attainment of goals through hard work.
2. A coach is a model for all that the Program represents. A Coach needs to be a leader who stresses sportsmanship, fairness, discipline, teamwork, goal setting and communication. The coaching position is difficult because coaches must be accountable to themselves, the Program, the players and their families, the school, and the parish community. In order to undertake such a responsibility, and in order for the Program to be able to provide adequate instruction to the student participants, coaches must have adequate knowledge of their respective sports, be able to communicate that knowledge to others and be willing to obtain additional training when feasible.
3. All coaches must be certified by the Rutgers Training course (or some equivalent), attend Virtus training, be AED trained and be fingerprinted.
4. All coaches must, at all times exhibit the highest personal integrity and hold him/herself accountable to the Program for the manner in which the team is run and in which the players conduct themselves. Therefore, the SMLAA will evaluate its present and prospective coaches using various criteria, including, but not limited to: attitude, social maturity, leadership, discipline, communication and knowledge of the sport.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES OF COACHES

1. COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENT-ATHLETES AND THEIR PARENTS

- a. It is important for coaches to communicate with parents and players early and often so that it is clear what is expected of both the athlete and the parent. Initial communications should include discussions of the following points:
 1. SML program mission statement and principles;
 2. SML athletic fees;
 3. Forms that need to be completed and signed;
 4. Team rules and the coaches' approach to team discipline;
 5. Expected time commitment and the need for punctuality and communication when unable to make games or practices;
 6. Requirements for parental involvement
 7. General philosophy of the team depending on the level of competition, playing time, substitutions, requirements to attend practices, and overall commitment to the team.
 8. Academic and conduct requirements: To participate, all students must remain academically eligible as determined by the school administration
 9. Coaches are responsible to communicate to students and parents if a game or practice is cancelled. All coaches are responsible to:
 10. Place the cancellation notice on the school's athletic phone hot line
 11. Inform parents to call the athletic hot line to verify cancellations
 12. Inform the school office so that a school announcement can be made
 13. Communicate with parents via e-mails, and/or phone tree
 14. Appoint a parent to notify the school web site web master to place cancellation notice on the school web site.

VI. CODE OF CONDUCT:

- A. Coaches, parents and players are required to read, sign and abide by the Trenton Diocesan Athletic Code of Conduct.

- B. Any action that results in ejection by a game official must be reported within 24 hours to the League Divisional Representative. In addition, the player/coach or fan will be ineligible for the next league game (including playoffs) that is played by that team. If the ejected player/coach participates in the next league game (including playoffs) the game will be declared a forfeit.

VII. SAFETY AND LIABILITY

- A. The safety and well being of our student-athletes is our highest priority. SMLAA strives to provide a consistently safe environment for all its athletes in all sports activities. Coaches should report any and all potential safety concerns to the SMLAA who will bring all safety issues to the Principal for action and resolution.
- B. In order to ensure the safety and welfare of the student-athletes, SMLAA coaches are required to undergo fingerprinting. All coaches are also required to attend the Rutgers Safety course and Virtus training and be fingerprinted.
- C. All communication to parents should emphasize that the coach will take measures during practice and games to ensure the safety of students (ie locked doors), however, parents are welcome to attend all practices and games and should enter through the designated doors.
- D. For outdoor sports, coaches should evaluate if a practice or game should be cancelled if the weather or field conditions create excess risk for player safety.

VIII. PLAYER RESPONSIBILITIES & REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM

- A. Participation in athletic activities is contingent upon the student receiving satisfactory marks in both academic subjects and school conduct.
- B. Students who are excused from participating in a SML physical education class as a result of injury, illness or physical infirmity are not eligible to participate in interscholastic athletic activities, including practices and games. The school nurse and coach must be notified whenever a case is referred to a physician or hospital. Student participation in athletics can only resume upon clearance with a doctor's note.
- C. Students who are absent the day of a game or practice are not permitted to participate in interscholastic athletic activities, including practices and games.
- D. Participation in multiple school sports during a single season is not permitted.

- E. Students are responsible to return their uniform and/or equipment at the end of the season in reasonable condition. If not returned, the player's parents will be responsible to pay the replacement costs.
- F. Players are required to read, sign and abide by the Trenton Diocesan Athletic Code of Conduct.

IX. PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A. Before any athlete tries out for a sport, the parent/student must provide the following documents to the school health office: Without these forms, an athlete is not permitted to participate.
 - 1. the annual NJ Dept of Education Athletic Pre-participation Examination Form
 - 2. an updated annual sports physical
- B. Before any athlete tries out for a sport, the parent/student must provide the following documents to the coach/SMLAA: Without these forms, an athlete is not permitted to participate.
 - 1. athletic registration form and fee
 - 2. a medical release form
 - 3. release from health office documenting annual sports physical
 - 4. signed code of conduct form signed by parent and student
- C. Parents are responsible for the transportation of their child to each practice and game. Delivery and pickup of all children must be punctual.
- D. Parents of all student-athletes are required to volunteer their time in the snack bar during the regular basketball season, during any tournaments held at the school and during any playoffs scheduled in the SML gym. The revenue from the snack bar and tournaments benefits the entire athletic program, not just basketball, therefore all team parents are expected to volunteer
- E. Parents are responsible to ensure that their child returns their uniform and/or equipment at the end of the season. If not returned, the parents will be responsible to pay the replacement cost.
- F. Parents are required to read, sign and abide by the Trenton Diocesan Athletic Code of Conduct.

X. COMMUNICATING SUGGESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

- A. Any suggestions and/or complaints concerning a team on which a child is participating must be communicated initially to the head coach of the team.

Should a parent not be satisfied with this discussion of the head coach, communication then should be directed to the SMLAA.

- B. To bring a suggestion, complaint and/or issue with a policy decision to the SMLAA, the parent should notify the SMLAA in writing at least 5 days before the next SMLAA monthly meeting. Meeting dates are listed on the school web site.
- C. The SMLAA Board will address the issue at that month's meeting and provide a response to the parent within 3 days following the meeting.
- D. If a parent is still not satisfied with the decision, the appeal can be taken to the School Advisory Council ("SAC"). A subcommittee of three SAC members will evaluate the issue and make a decision. The SAC decision is final.

XI. "INSEASON" Guidelines

- A. Priority for after-school gym use is always given to the "in season" team. The out door sports (soccer, field hockey, baseball and softball) will have use of the gym 3-5pm in case of bad weather.
- B. Scheduling: Tryouts and practices for upcoming sports will not be scheduled to conflict with "in season" games or practices.

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