

St. John's/Word of Life Lutheran School

Athletic Handbook

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Message from the Athletic Director

What an opportunity your child has to participate in athletics at St. John's/Word of Life! By Being a part of a team, regardless of the time spent in competition, your child can learn many valuable lessons – such as citizenship, sportsmanship, appreciating good play by an opponent, working together or a common goal, responsibility, accountability, loyalty, humility, learning to accept instruction and criticism, respect for others, winning and losing with dignity, self-control, and being responsible for one's own actions. If the parents and coaches work together for the benefit of the children, their athletic experiences can prove to be a very positive and educational process.

Remember that sports, although they may imitate life, are NOT life. They are beneficial and important, but they are not MOST important. Coaches, parents, and students must keep athletics in the proper perspective, and always keep their Savior the number one priority. Long after the score is forgotten, how we behaved as Christian athletes, coaches, and fans will be most remembered.

Keep in mind your motivation in life – that is to glorify God. Should we want to do our best and strive to win? You bet! God expects and deserves no less than your very best efforts to use the gifts He has given you. God expects excellence; therefore we ought to excel through Christ! Keep your motivation for excellence based on your desire to serve God with your gifts. He will bless those efforts.

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide parents, teachers, and students an understanding of goals, objectives, and philosophies of STJ/WOL athletic program. It is also meant to provide guidance to the Athletic Director, coaches, and faculty representatives concerning the make-up and participation of athletic teams at STJ/WOL.

Once the decision is made to participate in athletics, there are often many questions that students and parents may have regarding the STJ/WOL athletic program. In order to assist in making the athletic experience a positive one, this handbook has been assembled to answer questions about the guidelines and philosophy of the STJ/WOL athletic program.

Introduction and Philosophy

The purposes of interscholastic athletics are for the child to grow in his/her God-given skills and abilities and to allow the child to have the opportunity to use those skills in competition against other teams. It is our goal to give all team members at the B-team level a chance for meaningful participation in all games and practices.

Those who desire to continue to use their skills at a more competitive level will have the opportunity to try out for the A-team. While the primary focus of the B-team is on participation, the primary focus on the A-team will be on competition. A-team coaches will make every effort to give all team members playing time during games; however it will vary according to the player's ability level and his/her attitude and effort in practices. Players wishing to compete at the A-team level should develop their skills more fully through individual off-season practices, summer

leagues, camps, etc.

As Lutheran elementary schools, St. John's and Word of Life will expect a Christian attitude to be the foundation of the athletic program. Colossians 3:17 tells us, "Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." We must never forget that this includes athletic events. As children of God, parents, students, and coaches will use these opportunities to demonstrate their love for their Savior.

We believe that a "winner" is one who is humble and gracious in victory and defeat. As a representative of our Lord and Savior, and of our school, Christian behavior is expected at all times. It is the most important element of our program. Disrespect towards coaches, officials, other players, and fans will not be tolerated.

STJ/WOL schools expect our players, coaches, and spectators to conduct themselves in a Christian manner at these contests.

Attitudes

The following guidelines have been established so that all things can be done decently and in order, and that all words and actions may glorify our Savior, Jesus Christ.

1. All practices and games should be attended. Players who are missing from practice will see less playing time. Players who have an unexcused absence prior to the game day may not be allowed to play in the next game, but must suit up and support the team.
2. If a child is considering dropping out of a sport, he/she needs to contact the coach.
3. To show a desire to learn the skills of any extracurricular activity the student must be willing to cooperate with the coaches and/or assistants.
 - a. To practice willingly.
 - b. To show respect to those in authority, based on the 4th commandment, for example...
 - i. No talking back;
 - ii. No grumbling or complaining;
 - iii. Willingness to follow direction.
 - c. All of the above can have a negative impact on playing time.
4. To reflect the love of our Savior, we should portray Christian sportsmanship at all times toward;
 - a. Each other and opposing team players;
 - b. Coaches and assistants;
 - c. Fans and referees.
5. The students are expected to take care of the facilities and all equipment that has been provided for the STJ/WOL sports program. The students are asked to help coaches gather equipment before and after practice and games. The students will be asked to pay for any damage to any property, which is beyond normal wear. In every possible way the students are expected to assist in keeping the property in such a way that gives glory to God.

Athletic Policy

Any child that participates in the athletic program does so as a student enrolled at St. John's/Word of Life or other Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Schools and is therefore subject to all the philosophies, policies, and guidelines spelled out in the Parent-Pupil 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 coach that is in charge of that activity.

1. It is recommended that a student have a physical exam prior to participating in an extra-curricular sport.
Parents are required to fill out and sign a participation waiver for their child for the school year. If that

waiver is not returned by the time the season starts that child may not participate until it is turned in.

2. Parents of team members are required to attend an informational meeting with the Athletic Director at the beginning of the school year. The agenda will include review of philosophy, guidelines, responsibilities, etc. The coach of the team is to be informed if a student has physical problems of any kind. **A child will not be allowed to continue participation in the sport without the parent having attended the respective meeting, or having met individually with the coach or Athletic Director.**
3. **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 or Athletic Director prior to the absence. If the player is absent from school due to illness he/she may not participate in the game or practice that is scheduled for that day. The coach need not be contacted if the child leaves school due to illness. This may not apply if the child needs to leave school for reasons other than illness (i.e., doctor's appointment, etc.) Please contact the Principal or Athletic Director for eligibility questions.
4. An individual should be present at all practices and games to be considered part of the team. Unexcused absences may result in being suspended or dropped from the team's roster. Coaches are responsible for keeping track of attendance. A coach may allow a student who misses due to excused absences for an extended period of time (e.g. illness, late slips, conduct referrals, grade ineligibility) to return to the team that season, if he/she feels it is workable.
5. If a player is going to drop out of a sport, he/she needs to contact the coach or Athletic Director.
6. If an individual 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, he/she will no longer participate in the practice or game, but must remain within the supervision of the persons in authority (i.e., **not** left alone in the hallway).
7. Any major disciplinary actions will be reported to the Athletic Director and respective principal.

Game 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 must contact the coach, who will try to find a ride for him. 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 the 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 or to go upstairs at any time without express permission and supervision from the coach. No food or drinks are to enter the gymnasium.

Length of Supervision

Coaches are expected to remain on site until all 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.

Parent Responsibilities

Volunteers are needed to assist with the responsibilities of running a home contest each season. Please contact the athletic director if you are willing to assist.

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. Taking down the equipment after a game will be the responsibility of the last team to play.

Tournaments

Limits

Volleyball and Basketball A-teams are limited to five tournaments each season, B-team to three tournaments. This includes the league tournament held near the end of the regular season. All scheduling of tournaments and games will be done by the athletic director. See the section titled "Scheduling" for more information on the scheduling of practices, scrimmages, games, and tournaments.

Transportation

Parents are responsible for making sure that their players have a ride to tournaments. If the athlete cannot find a ride to the game, he must contact the coach, who will find a ride for him. 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.

Coaching Philosophy

St. John's and Word of Life schools will not change their coaching philosophy during tournaments from that used during the regular season. Coaches must follow all tournament rules put out by the host school.

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 athletic director. If an athlete has more than one sport in a school year they will not get the uniform for the next sport until the previous uniform has been returned.
- **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.
- **Return of Uniforms** - 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.

Scheduling

The athletic director will handle all scheduling, and distribute season schedules approximately 4-6 weeks prior to the beginning of that sport's season.

PRACTICES & GAMES

For a number of reasons, there is a limit on the number of practices that a team may have in one week. There have been cases where students have not had enough time to adequately prepare their homework. Scheduling each group in the gym fairly has been a problem when teams request three practices a week. Some students who have been in a number of sports at a time may have suffered minor injuries as a result of the many practices. As a result, each sport may have a maximum of three practices per week prior to the first game, and two practices per week thereafter. If there are two or more games in one week, there should be only one practice that week. A scrimmage is considered to be the same as a practice. Students may participate in sports that run concurrently with the consent of parents and all coaches. Practice, meets, games, and tournament days should not exceed a total of four per week combined. Exceptions may be negotiated for situations when sports taking place in separate seasons overlap.

If school needs to be called due to inclement weather, all practices scheduled for that day will be canceled, as well. If there is a home game it will be canceled. If it is an away game it depends on if that school is closed. If a game needs to be called during the day due to inclement weather, the athletic director will notify students and coaches as soon as possible, usually before 12:00 Noon. If a coach needs to cancel a practice for whatever reason, he will make every effort to notify the athletic director during the school day to allow him time to contact the students who may be participating in that sport. If the athletic director cannot be contacted, the coach is responsible for contacting each player with the news of the cancellation.

Eligibility

Parents are able to remove their athlete from any sport when they feel their child is underperforming. St. John's/Word of Life has eligibility requirements in their respective Student Handbooks. Please refer to them for each school's specific rules.

Requirements for Coaching

We include this section to inform the parents and athletes of St. John's and Word of Life of the requirements we have for the coaches serving our schools. In order to ensure a solid doctrinal foundation for our students and athletes, the following criteria must be met by all coaches and assistants before they will be allowed to coach:

- The coach must be a member of St. John's, Word of Life, or other WELS/ELS churches.
- All head coaches must be at least 21 years old, unless approved by the athletic director.
- Head coaches must be at all practices and games if assistants are less than 21 years old.
- The coach will possess a working knowledge of the sport which he/she plans to coach and will be willing to further his knowledge and competence by attending clinics, etc.

Coaching Code of Ethics

A Coaching Code of Ethics has been made as a guide for our coaches to follow at St. John's/Word of Life.

- **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 St. John's/Word of Life Lutheran Schools.
- **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.

- **Personal Conduct** The coach must maintain the highest standards of personal conduct and support the principles of fair play.

Spectator Code of Ethics

A Spectator Code of Ethics has been made as a guide for all people to follow at St. John's/Word of Life.

- **Focus on Christ** The spectator 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."
- **Respect for Officials** The spectator must respect the role of officials in providing judgment to ensure that competitions are conducted fairly and according to established rules. The officials have a great deal of responsibility in officiating these contests and we are not to challenge them or to show disrespect at any time to the officials.
- **Personal Conduct** The spectator must maintain the highest standards of personal conduct and support the team in a Christian manner.

Parental Communications/Confrontations

From time to time, we can expect that there may be issues which parents, athletes, or coaches differ in opinion on and which require some level of resolution. The following are ideas that may help parents and coaches resolve conflicts in a God-pleasing manner as they may arise. The guidelines offered here will give an idea of what parents and athletes need to know from their coaches and what obligations parents and athletes have as participants of St. John's/Word of Life's athletic program. Do not expect these ideas to apply to all situations, as all situations will differ.

What the coach should communicate to the parent...

- philosophy of coaching
- discipline
- expectation of players
- location and times of all practices and games
- event of injury
- team requirements (i.e., practice attendance, special equipment, out-of-season conditioning, etc.)

What parents should convey to the coach...

- concerns regarding coaching philosophy and expectations should be expressed to the coach during a

- scheduled appointment
- immediate notification of any schedule conflicts

Inappropriate issues for parents to discuss with the coach...

The following issues are inappropriate for a parent or athlete to raise to the coach's attention. The coaching staff has been chosen based on a variety of criteria. As such, the coach is given the prerogative to coach his team according to his own philosophy, provided that his philosophy coincides with the basic philosophies of St. John's and Word of Life Lutheran School. Should an issue arise where the parent feels that the coach's philosophies are at odds with those of St. John's and Word of Life, he should raise that issue with the coach according to the guidelines outlined above.

These issues are *not* considered appropriate issue to discuss with the coach:

- playing time
- team strategy
- play calling
- issues involving other students (i.e. gossiping)

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!

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