

**St. Joseph Catholic Academy 2023-2024  
Athletic Handbook**



From the Athletic Department  
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# Letter to Families

To Parents and Student Athletes:

Welcome to the 2023-2024 Athletic School year at St. Joseph Catholic Academy.

This handbook contains the philosophies, policies and guidelines which govern the St. Joseph Catholic Academy Athletic program(s), as well as some of the more important rules and regulations required by the school and governing leagues. Although it is intended to be comprehensive in nature, there will inevitably be situations that occur that are not outlined in this handbook. Having a common understanding of the rules and regulations that govern athletics will assist in significantly reducing concerns and unforeseen problems. We ask that you read this handbook thoroughly with your student-athlete(s).

The Front office must have a current, sports physical on file before a student-athlete can participate.

Here is a listing of ACAA sports: Flag Football, Volleyball, CO-ED Soccer , Basketball, Cross Country, Track & Field.

We look forward to a great year in our Athletics program  
Go Tigers!!

Athletic Department  
St. Joseph Catholic Academy

# **St. Joseph Mission Statement and Vision**

To provide academic and spiritual excellence in a Catholic environment by providing a strong commitment to academic excellence, and the spiritual development of our student athletes.

St. Joseph Catholic Academy is committed to educating students in Catholic values and traditions, developing a firm foundation in academics, and fostering respect and service.

## **Nondiscriminatory Policy**

St. Joseph Catholic Academy is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and does not discriminate in the terms, conditions, or privileges of students on account of race, age, color, gender, national origin, physical or mental disability, or religion or otherwise as may be prohibited by federal and state law.

## **Purpose for Christian Athletics**

At St. Joseph Catholic Academy we strive to encourage students to foster a love of Jesus Christ through all that we do in the Athletics Department. We believe that participation in athletics is a potent way for students to enhance the overall quality of a Catholic Education. Additionally, because athletics touches almost every facet of our lives, Christian athletes are given the chance to gain understanding in the truth through the formation of their mind, body and spirit.

## **Mission - St. Joseph Athletics**

The Church values sport in itself, as an arena of human activity where the virtues of temperance, humility, courage and patience can be fostered and encounters with beauty, goodness, truth and joy can be witnessed. Here at St Joseph's we will not discriminate against any student nor any student athlete regardless of race, color, and nationality or ethnic origin or background; these are our rights, privileges, programs, and activities that are outlined by the administration in our participatory policies, admissions policies, and Athletic Department.

# St. Joseph Athletics General Philosophies

Athletics are an important component of our mission at St. Joseph Catholic Academy. In addition, we hold fast to the following philosophies:

## 1. Spirituality in Athletics

We affirm through our speech, actions, and decisions that Jesus Christ is Savior on and off the court/field.

## 2. Importance of Students and the School Community

The welfare of all student athletes and the school community are always at the forefront of decision making.

## 3. Academics and Athletics

Academic success is crucial to the individual. The athletic and academic programs at St. Joseph can and will work harmoniously together to ensure the success in both arenas.

## 4. Winning

Winning is one of many goals that is balanced with ensuring the quality of the program fits with the overall mission of the school.

## 5. Roles we Play

All players, coaches, and fans are an extension of the school community.

## 6. Program Equity

All Athletic programs are viewed as equally important.

## 7. Athletic Participation

Athletic participation in multiple sports are avenues for a well-rounded individual. Furthermore, athletes who participate in multiple sports are maximizing their contribution to the school and community.

# Athlete Standards at St. Joseph

- Motivated to team achievement
- Committed to making it happen
- In control of his/her actions
- Honorable towards the game and sportsmanship
- Accountable to team rules, fellow players, coaches, officials and school.
- Excited at sharing Christian spirit in a competitive framework.
- Respectful of all authority and decisions

## Athletic Code of Conduct

- The athlete's conduct is always a credit to the Lord and to the school, on the athletic field and in the community. The student Code of Conduct for St. Joseph students applies at all times and places, including athletic events.
- The athlete recognizes and abides by the coach's particular rules and procedures as approved by the Athletic Department. Parents receive these rules and guidelines prior to the beginning of each sport season.
- The athlete abides by the authority of the coach at all times.
- The athlete shows respect to all those in authority.
- The athlete obeys all rules set by the school and complies with the spirit and letter of the rules year round, including summer break.
- The athlete that has a tattoo must keep it covered at all times without drawing attention to self.
- Music that is played in locker rooms, gym, or anywhere else on campus must be within the spirit of the mission of the school.
- The athlete cares for equipment issued and complies with all instructions that may accompany it. Such equipment is worn only on the athletic field, not to school or in the community unless the athletic director gives special permission. Lost or misused equipment is replaced at the athlete's expense. At the end of the season the athlete turns in all equipment on the date requested. If after seven (7) days, the equipment is not returned, the athlete is billed for the equipment, unless otherwise approved by the athletic director.
- Athletes who miss more than half a day of instruction in the classroom may not be eligible to compete in competitions or practices on that day.
- The athlete is aware of and maintains academic eligibility.
- The athlete adheres to the philosophy and standards for Christian athletes as described in the SJCA Student Handbook and strives to serve Christ through the medium of Christian athletics.

- The athlete adheres to the philosophy and standards for SJCA students as described in the SJCA Student Handbook. **This includes dress code and grooming.**

## Athletic Administration Framework

The athletic director will be responsible for the athletic department in its entirety. The athletic director will rely on the head coaches to create athletic programs that work to build, grow and maintain competitive balance between SJCA and opponents. Ultimately, the athletic director will have authority on any decision made by all members of the athletic department and coaching staff. The athletic director and the head coaches will work together to create an atmosphere of collegial unity. This is of the utmost importance in developing consistency in the programs.

## Governing Body

St. Joseph is a part of the Austin Christian Athletic Association (Elementary and Middle School) Leagues. St. Joseph adheres to all policies and procedures established by the league such as rules, regulations, and by-laws. All ACAA policies can be found at, and downloaded from <https://www.acaaathletics.org/> . High School League information is with the TCAF ( Texas Christian Athletic Fellowship ) and can be downloaded from <https://www.tcafellowship.com/> . All coaches are responsible for knowing the rules of ACAA and TCAF as they pertain to their sport and grade level. Coaches who are not in compliance with ACAA/TCAF rules will be disciplined accordingly.

## Athletic Physicals

All athletes must have on file with the Front Office a pre-participation sports physical and medical history completed by an appropriately licensed medical professional prior to participation in any athletic event or contest.

## **Sports Physicals in accordance with the State of Texas and our Athletic League's:**

### **Section 1205: ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY**

(a) INDIVIDUAL REPORT FORMS. It shall be the responsibility of each school to keep on file the following required annual forms for each student who participates in any practice, scrimmage or game.

(1) Pre-participation Physical Examination. Upon entering the first and third years of high school, a physical examination signed by a physician, a physician assistant licensed by a State Board of Physician Assistant Examiners, a registered nurse recognized as an advanced practice nurse by the Board of Nurse Examiners or a doctor of chiropractic is required. Standardized pre-participation physical examination forms, available from the League office and authorized by the UIL Medical Advisory Committee, are required.

(2) Medical History Form. Each year prior to any practice or participation a UIL medical history form signed by both student and a parent or guardian is required. A medical history form shall accompany each physical examination and shall be signed by both student and a parent or guardian.

(3) Parent or Guardian Permit. Annual participation permit signed by the student's parent or guardian. (4) Rules Acknowledgment. Annual UIL Rules Acknowledgment Form signed by the student and the student's parent or guardian.

(5) Parent/Student Illegal Steroid Use Form. The parent/guardian of each high school athlete, along with each high school athlete, shall annually sign the UIL Illegal Steroid Use and Random Steroid Testing Parent and Student Notification/Agreement Form.

## **SJCA (ACAA) Athletics**

St. Joseph offers a variety of sports across genders. Sport seasons are broken into three main seasons: fall, winter and spring.

Fall sports include: Flag Football (Elem and Junior High only), Volleyball, Cross Country..

Winter sports include: Boys Basketball and Girls Basketball.

Spring sports include: Co-ed Soccer (Elem and Junior High) Track & Field.

Each and every sport that students are wishing to participate in must fill out a Permissions slip either hard copy or we are working on loading them digitally for your convenience, Permission slips must be completed and returned to be put on file for the



physical year of school. There will be a set date for each sport that must be completed before a student athlete will be able to play, after a deadline has passed the athlete must see the Athletic Director. These deadlines are not intended to prevent a student from participating in the particular sport, they are necessary to make sure that teams do not become too large or unqualified student athletes.

Fees for all sports offered at St Josephs are \$100.00 dollars for 4th-8th graders, this is a per student fee to participate in each sport.

Fees for all sports offered at St Josephs are \$125.00 dollars for 9th-11th graders, this is a per student fee to participate in each sport.

**New for this year, we would like to add the option of a yearly payment fee for Registration fees. You will have the opportunity to pay a one time fee of \$250.00 dollars, this would cover the academic school year of Registration fees for a Family with more than one student that wants to play more than 2 sports each in a school year. (Ideally this is for 3 sports or more in order to save money over the year.)**

**Every Family is responsible for 1 hour per sport during the school year (Volleyball 1 hr, Flag Football 1 hr, 1 hr , Cross Country 1 hr, Basketball 1 hr, CO-ED Soccer 1 hr, and Track & Field 1 hr.)**

Parents will be asked to help with our concession stand or Admissions table during our home games when the Booster Club is able to have food and snacks at the games.

There will be a SignupGenius link in order to sign up for the games.

Transportation will not be provided by St Joseph Catholic Academy to nor from any event, in such cases that we are able to use the bus parents must sign a bus permission slip, otherwise it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to transport their student athlete to all away games.

## Athletic Program Structure

Each high school jv/varsity head coach, in accordance with and assistance of the athletic director, will be responsible for his/her program from the top down. This includes the following:

- Oversight of program goals, teachings, terminology, practice plans, training and fundamentals.
- Periodic monitoring of sub-varsity practices and competitions.
- Help in finding Volunteer Coaches.
- Education, Training, and Evaluation of the sub-varsity Coaches.
- Parent communication with all levels of the program. This includes annual parent meetings. We believe that the varsity programs are the pinnacle of the athletic

experience student-athletes enjoy during their school years at St. Joseph. We also believe that to effectively develop strong programs, it is important that the varsity programs establish consistency in all levels. For this reason, the head coaches should work to be visible institutions at the school for all levels of their program.

## Commitment of Athletes

If students choose to participate in athletics, they are expected to fulfill the commitment to the best of their abilities. Every athlete is responsible for attending all practices and games. All absences must be due to an emergency. Keep in mind that any absence excused or otherwise, results in that player losing preparation time and may alter the normal line-up or positional assignments for upcoming contests. This is not necessarily reflective of disciplinary action.

## Disciplinary Policy

The SJCA administration and athletic staff are very concerned that the attitudes displayed by our athletes be representative of our school on and off the playing field or court. Many times the only contact that people have with our school is through their observations of our athletic teams. We believe that a student's behavior in the classroom is a clear indication of what their behavior can be on the field or court. If a student athlete cannot act in a Christ-like manner with peers and teachers, then we cannot expect that student to be a good representative of our school in the medium of athletics.

When a negative attitude or behavior occurs, it is dealt with as soon as possible. After consultation with the athletic director to decide upon the discipline, the coach meets with the athlete and explains the decision. Each case is handled independently and on a case-by-case basis. This may or may not be the same for all students. Great concern is taken by the St. Joseph staff to ensure appropriate discipline for each individual student.

Any offense to a team or school rule or expectation may result in the following actions deemed appropriate by the coach, athletic director, and/or Administration at St. Joseph:

- Suspension from competition and events .
- Dismissal from the team
- Calisthenics or other physical activity.
- Community service hours and/or activities
- Other appropriate actions chosen by the coaching/administrative staff/Head Master

## Recruiting Policy

Students and families are encouraged to follow the admission procedures established by the school prior to any involvement with the athletic department. Contact with St. Joseph initiated by a parent or prospective student allows the school to promote itself to the prospective family. Initial contact of a student or family for the purpose of athletic recruitment is prohibited. Any means that circumvent the spirit of the regulations prohibiting recruitment of student athletes, such as contact by parents or members of The Booster Club is also prohibited. Students or families involved in one school program who choose to change must be willing to certify that the decision was theirs and not a result of financial enticement by St. Joseph Catholic Academy. St. Joseph will not offer or support any form of enticements, including athletic scholarships, by the athletic department or anyone associated with St. Joseph Catholic Academy.

## Participation and Multi-Sport Athletes

Junior high and high school students are strongly encouraged to participate in athletics. Head coaches, along with the support of the athletic director, may reserve the right to hold **tryouts**. However, coaches will not be allowed to cut athletes. Additionally, it is the vision of the athletic department that all students wishing to participate in multiple sports will be allowed to do so without penalty. Coaches will, under no circumstance, discourage students from participating in one sport over the other. This includes verbal warnings and/or playing time as leverage. Additionally, coaches should work to ensure that students do not discourage one another from playing other sports. We expect all programs to be supportive of other programs on campus.

When conflicts arise with participation in multiple sports, coaches will work together to manage the time commitments of athletes so as to honor the commitment to multi-sport athletes. As a general rule of thumb, all sports in district play or playoffs will have priority over other sports and practices. Any exceptions to any of the above issues must have approval of the athletic director.

**New for this year, we would like to add the option of a yearly payment fee for Registration fees. You will have the opportunity to pay a one time fee of \$250.00 dollars, this would cover the academic school year of Registration fees for a student that wants to play more than 2 sports in a school year.**

## Yearly Parent Meeting

This should be coordinated by the Athletic Director/Head Coaches and properly put on the calendar.

Athletic Director/Head Coaches should contact all parents of players via e-mail and a group-messaging app, to ensure all parents know when the meeting will take place.

Additionally, the pre-season meeting should be scheduled at a time that is conducive to most parents' schedules and communicated to maximize participation.

## Parent Concerns/Complaints

The head coaches, along with the athletic director, will address all parent complaints.

Coaches should direct all parent complaints to the athletic director for proper communication. Whenever there is a conflict, the coach and athletic director will conference with the parent on the nature of the complaint and work to rectify any situation that arises. Most of the time, proper communication will alleviate parent complaints prior to them becoming an issue with school administration.

## Uniforms, Practice Attire and Equipment

Student-athletes will take responsibility for any equipment issued. This includes making sure that all issued equipment is cleaned on a routine basis. Proper sanitizing of uniforms and equipment should occur routinely to combat any bacterial collections as well as to protect the integrity of the equipment. If at any time the equipment and/or apparel become damaged, it is crucial that the player let the coach know prior to participation in practice and/or games.

Athletic Director/Head Coaches are responsible for issuing and collecting all uniforms, practice equipment and attire. Coaches will take care to ensure that all equipment is accounted for and that inventory is not lost. Inventory must be stored properly and protected against theft and damage. Before, during and after a season, coaches should request damaged inventory to be replaced or refurbished. The financial burden of any equipment/apparel lost or stolen will rest solely on the player.

## Saturday Practices

High School League information is with the TCAF ( Texas Christian Athletic Fellowship ) and can be downloaded from <https://www.tcafellowship.com/> .

High school level programs may practice on Saturdays. This is consistent with other

programs across the state and gives us competitive balance. However, we expect that all time used on weekends will be efficient and valuable as parents and families use that day as rest and relaxation. Coaches should ensure that all Saturday workouts are communicated to the families of the players well in advance of the practice. Additionally, coaches will notify the athletic director in advance of all practice dates and times.

## Academic Eligibility

All athletes must meet ACAA requirements of academic eligibility as well as those imposed by St. Joseph. At St. Joseph, we feel that athletics is an important motivational tool that complements academics. It follows that all athletes must meet minimum expectations concerning academic standing.

## Academic Programs

**Grade checks are done every Monday morning for the upcoming week. If a student is failing (under 70%) in ANY subject at the time of the check- they are ineligible to play in ACAA/TCAF games for the entirety of that week. They can participate in practices. Parents will receive an email notification on that Monday if their child is ineligible to play that week.**

### Academic Eligibility Periods

The first eligibility period will begin six weeks after school begins. Thereafter, grades should be checked at the end of the nine week grading period. Any student failing any class at the end of grading period will be ineligible to play in games for the upcoming week. At that time, grades will be checked again. If the student is not passing all subjects, the player will remain ineligible until the grade comes up to a 70%. If said student is passing all classes, they will once again be eligible for play. When a student is ineligible, they are not allowed to dress out and participate in games or competitions with the team. They cannot wear their jersey on a game day or spirit day. The student-athlete is still allowed to practice. Any student or coach violating this rule will be subject to sanctions, forfeitures, or expulsion.

## Holidays/Semester Finals

Holidays/non-school days may be used for practices and games at the discretion of the Athletic Director unless prohibited by ACAA. Practices and games may be scheduled while Semester Finals are being held, if necessary, and approved by the athletic director.

## Travel to Away Contests

During travel to an away event, the Athletic Director is responsible for organizing and ensuring safe travel for all students. If transportation is needed, the head coach should work with the athletic director and transportation director to requisition transportation needs well in advance of the contest. When necessary, a team may require an overnight stay and/or travel expenses to some venues. In these situations, parents may be asked to provide additional funding to support these events. St. Joseph is committed to limit these fees when possible.

- **All athletes must be in school uniform or game uniform during travel. Athletes must remain in school uniform until they change into game uniform. This also includes team managers or trainers. Coaches are expected to dress appropriately for their sport.**

## Injuries

When a student is injured, it is recommended that they see a licensed physician to ascertain the exact nature of the injury and to seek appropriate care and rehabilitation. Once a student sees a licensed practitioner, it is St. Joseph policy that the injured student must have a signed release from the doctor to allow them to return to practice and/or competition.

Section 1205, of the State of Texas Athletic Eligibility states:

(6) Concussion Acknowledgement Form. According to section 38.155 of the Texas Education Code, 'a student may not participate in an interscholastic athletic activity for a school year until both the student and the student's parent or guardian or another person with legal authority to make medical decisions for the student have signed a form for that school year that acknowledges receiving and reading written information that explains concussion prevention, symptoms, treatment, and oversight and that includes guidelines for safely resuming participation in an athletic activity following a concussion .....' \* This section also applies to students participating in the cheerleading program at the school.

(7) Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness Form. Each year prior to any practice or participation in athletics, a UIL Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness form signed by both student and a parent or guardian is required.

## Insurance Coverage

St. Joseph does not assume responsibility relative to doctor, ambulance or medical expenses in case of a medical emergency. Athletics are a voluntary, extracurricular program in which students may participate if they desire, but do so at their own risk. Parents or guardians must obtain adequate insurance coverage for their students through a family insurance policy. Any liability or cost incurred is the responsibility of the family of the student-athlete

## Spectators Code of Conduct

- Spectators are to treat our coaches and players, opposing coaches and players, and the officials in a respectful, Christ-like manner. The actions of fans are a witness to our community. They should remember that they represent our school.
- Spectators are to exhort our players and teams in a positive manner.
- When applicable, spectators may be asked to leave the premises and not return to St. Joseph athletic events. The Athletic Director/Administration reserves the right to make this decision at any time.

## Media Coverage

All athletes, at any time in or out of season, can have their names and/or photos published in local newspapers and the school website or social media accounts. If a parent or guardian does not wish to have their athlete's name and/or photo released, a written request must be submitted to the athletic director.

## Valuables

Under no circumstance should students ever come to school with a large amount of cash or expensive valuables. St. Joseph will do its best to ensure that facilities are secure, but each individual is ultimately responsible for their valuables. Because locker-rooms are used by multiple teams and school programs, we cannot ensure that valuables will be protected. We ask that all students leave expensive items at home.

## Fundraising

Fundraising at a private school is a very delicate matter. We want all of our programs to be successful and have the best resources available, but we also have to balance this with the financial contribution the parents and community members already make to the institution. Any coaches or community members wishing to fundraise for a program or the department must be approved by the Booster Club, Athletic Director and Administration Leaders.

## Apparel Design

When a program needs either new uniforms or apparel that represent the school, approval for all color schemes and designs is required prior to ordering. This includes apparel purchases by supporters other than the school as well. All must be pre approved by the Booster Club, Athletic Director and Administration Leaders.