

INTRODUCTION

Saint Thomas School is eager to welcome student athletes recognizing that athletics provide an additional and unique dimension to the student's education. The purpose of this handbook is to present a description of the athletic program at Saint Thomas School and the policies attendant to that program. This is done so that students and parents might understand fully the rules the rules outlined in this handbook and agree to the responsibilities stated and inherited in those rules. It must be noted that playing on an athletic team at Saint Thomas is a privilege and not a right and that participation on a team requires the acceptance of all rules by both students and parents. The handbook is also provided so that all might be aware of and be guided by the same policies and rules relative to sports at our school, permitting a consistency in this area of the student's education just as the Parent/Student Handbook permits an awareness of school policies for the entire Saint Thomas School community in all other areas of school activity. Thus, the Sports Handbook is an adjunct to the Parent/Student Handbook and incorporates the same authority and is consonant with the philosophy of the school stated in the Parent/Student Handbook.

OFFICIAL ROSTER

All St. Thomas School sports teams will have an official roster, which will list each participant with their grade level and other relevant information. This roster must be sent in to the league prior to the deadline. All participants must be in this official roster in order to be eligible for play.

PHILOSOPHY OF ST. THOMAS SCHOOL

Saint Thomas School is a faith based community dedicated to:

*Developing Lifelong Learners

*Instilling Christian Values

*Guiding students to a personal relationship with Christ

*Fostering a positive self image.

We work to create an interactive learning environment that is a flexible variety of teacher-directed and student-centered activities. We strive to adjust teaching for the individual child

to meet his or her learning needs. We do this with the goal of shaping each child to become an independent learner and critical thinker, as well as a witness of Christian consciousness and teachings. In light of this statement of philosophy, we profess the following goals.

That as a community guide each child in his/her development as a Christian.

That we develop the intellectual potential of each student to the fullest measure allowed by the school's resources.

That we assist each student in the cultivation of a positive self-image as well as the development of respect for the dignity of others.

That we identify the value of good health and physical fitness as essential to an attitude of self worth.

Participation in sports at our school is designed to promote an awareness in each child of his or her own importance to God, to each other, and to the human community as a whole. Playing a sport presents a challenge to a child in terms of their physical ability but more importantly, it provides the opportunity for a child to be challenged mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Often a memorable sporting event has not been marked so much by an extraordinary athletic feat but by the courage and determination, backed by faith that produced that effort. It is our goal to teach each of our student athletes to strive to do their best, individually and as a team, preparing them to carry that teaching into every aspect of their life throughout their life. This goal includes our desire to foster in the child an awareness of and gratitude for the gifts that God has given them that permit them to play a sport.

Integral to participation in sports at Saint Thomas is the formation of a person who is centered in the context of the Christian tradition. The athletic program at our school introduces a child to the concepts of trial and triumphs within a framework of caring support. This permits the child to grow

and develop, in a God-centered nurturing environment, preparing them well for the challenges, successes and disappointments they will find in life.

Playing a sport at Saint Thomas fosters independent and group achievement, pride in self and in school, commitment to excellence, and a awareness of the responsibilities to share one's talents. As such the athletic program complements the goals of the academic program and enables the students, teachers, coaches, and parents to work together to assist the students to learn to reach their highest potential for themselves and for the human community.

NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

St. Thomas School admits any students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students within the association. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its participatory policies, admission policies, or athletic programs.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT

1) All students participating in sports for Saint Thomas School must be made aware of and maintain the philosophy of the school throughout their sports career. This means that the student must:

- Be aware of the love God has for them that allows them the interest and talent they have in the sport.
- Realize their responsibility to themselves and to the team to strive to do their best always.
- Understand that they are part of a team that works together and that treats each other with kindness, understanding, and charity.
- Never patronize but encourage and share the benefit of their experience with younger, less experienced, or less talented persons with an interest in the sport.

2) All criteria required under the eligibility section of this handbook must be maintained.

3) All team members are subject to the same rules found in the Parent/ Student Handbook concerning appearance. In addition, no jewelry may be worn for practices or games.

4) All students must remember that they represent Saint Thomas School to the rest of the community whether they are practicing or playing a game at Saint Thomas School or away. As such, they must maintain the conduct expected of a Saint Thomas student. Appearance, word, and deed must reflect the training they have received in Christian values of respect, obedience, and responsibility. They are expected to behave properly and person of all others at all times.

Student Eligibility: Each student enrolled in the sports program will be assessed a Sports Activity fee to help cover costs. This fee is to be paid at the time of registration.

1) **Conduct:** Playing on a sports team is a privilege and not a right. A student may not be part of a team if conduct in or out of the classroom while under the authority of the school does not conform to the policies of the school as defined in the Parent/ Student Handbook or as noted by those in authority (Teacher, Coach, Athletic Director, Principal, Priest- Director). Permission to re-join the team will be dependent upon the agreement reached in the subsequent conference with the parent, student, teacher, and principal.

A student who is suspended from school is effectively suspended from any sports team sponsored by the school.

If a student fails to conduct themselves properly while under the authority of a coach, that coach may suspend the student from the team. If the suspension of the student is after school hours, the parent will be called and informed that the student

must be picked up immediately. Permission to re-join the team will be dependent upon the agreement reached in the subsequent conference with the parent, student, Athletic Director, coach, principal.

It is important to understand that participation in sports at Saint Thomas School is a privilege and not a right. The school reserves the right to revoke that privilege if the student athlete or his parents do not conduct themselves appropriately.

2) **Facilities:** The St. Thomas School gymnasium is located at the school and is where all indoor practices are held. Occasionally, outdoor sports will use this facility in the event of inclement weather. Any games that are listed as “home games” will be played at this facility unless otherwise noted.

An adult must accompany all children who use the gymnasium before or after regularly scheduled practices. No student should be in the gymnasium without an adult present. Students are not permitted to go into the equipment room or concession stand area without direct permission from the coach or Athletic Director. This is solely for the safety and well being of all children. The schedule for the gymnasium will be kept in the office. There are outside groups who use this gymnasium after hours, so please refer to this calendar when looking to see if a time slot is available. St. Thomas School has priority use of this facility and the Athletic Director will make other arrangements in the event of conflicting schedules.

3) **Playing Time:** Playing time for all participants is left up to the discretion of each individual coach (within the guidelines of the Athletic Director). However, there are some general guidelines that coaches follow in order to assist them in determining playing time for all participants. These are:

- Regular attendance at practices and games

- Good attitude
- Positive attitude and interactions with others
- Respecting players, parents, and coaches
- Obeying the rules set by the coaching staff
- Working hard at practices and games
- Being on time for practices and games
- Being responsible to the team by notifying the coach in advance of missing practices or games.

It is important to know that players who do not listen to the coach, follow directions, hustle, and/or display negative attitudes may not receive as much playing time as others who adhere to these guidelines

The coach, with the final approval from the Athletic Director (if needed), will determine playing time for each team member.

Please encourage your children to adhere to the above guidelines and consequently their playing time may reflect this effort.

4) **Academics:** students in grades eligible for team sports at Saint Thomas, Grades 4- 8 in Basketball, Grades 5-8 Soccer, Grades 5 – 8 baseball and Cheerleading must generally maintain an overall average of C for each marking period to be able to participate on a team. Should a student fail to maintain a C average in a marking period, the student may be suspended from the team until a C average is recorded. This policy may be modified when students require evaluation on an individual basis as determined by their teacher and the principal. In all cases, parents will be notified and afforded the opportunity to present their concern. Cognizant of the fact that students who lack confidence in their abilities academically may find new self confidence in athletic achievement that could positively influence their academic endeavors, it is the intent of our policy to provide the opportunity to play sports for as many interested students who meet minimum qualifications as a team can accommodate and for which funds are available as determined by the Athletic Director and School Board. Some

academic standards have been established because some students do not perform as well academically as their ability would suggest due to an overabundance of extracurricular activities. In cases where the academic standards are not achieved but the parent, teacher, and principal feel that participation in a sports program would benefit the student a waiver of the academic requirements will be the prerogative of the principal and/or priest-director after consultation with the teacher and parents.

5) Attendance: Attendance at school on the day of practice or a game is required for participation at practice or the game. Attendance and punctuality at practice and games are considered mandatory unless there is an excused absence. An excused absence will be granted if the student has an excused absence from school for the day or if the parent contacts the coach or the student with a reasonable request for the absence of the student from practice or a game. A student must participate in and be punctual for a minimum number of practices, established by the coach of the team prior to the start of the sport's season, to be eligible to play in a game.

6) Permission: Written parental and medical permission must be secured, as defined later in this handbook, before a student will be eligible to join a sports team.

7) Fees: The following fees will apply for students taking part in the sports program at St. Thomas school.

SOCCER: Co-ed Grades 5-8 - \$40 per participant, Maximum \$80 per family.

Season: September - October; 12 game schedule

BASKETBALL: Girls team and boys team Grades 4 - 8

Grade 7 & 8 and below Varsity

Grade 7 and below JV A

Grade 6 and below JVB

\$75 per participant, maximum \$150 per family

Season: November - March; 16 game schedule (varsity)

CHEERLEADING: Co-ed Grade 4 - 8

\$30 per participant, maximum \$60 per family

Season: November - March

BASEBALL: Boys, Grades 5 - 8

\$40 per participant, maximum \$80 per family

Season: April - June, 15 game schedule

Parent volunteers will be needed for the concession stand, gate fee, scoring and assistants, and for the sports banquet. All volunteers must complete a *Background Check Form* and attend the *Protecting God's Children Program (VIRTUS)*. If you have any questions you may contact Mr. Hergott.

DISCIPLINARY POLICY

In coaching any athletic team, it is crucial that every member of the coaching staff know what constitutes acceptable measures of disciplining a child or handling other problems. This helps to prevent many problems that can result from a conflict between coaches and players.

1. All children are to be treated with respect and are not to be demeaned in any way, shape or form.
2. Any child acting outside of the guidelines established by the coach will be warned as to what will happen if the behavior is repeated. This warning should include specifics, such a running 2 laps, sitting out the rest of practice, suspension from a game, etc. Penalties appropriate to the age and maturity of the children should be assigned. This warning will be communicated to the child's parents.
3. Should there be a time where an individual player has repeatedly become a problem, the parents and the Athletic Director should be notified before the next practice. A meeting with the parents and child to discuss the situation should be scheduled. (At no time should a child be separated from other children to be talked to by a coach).

4. At NO time should any person be berated, embarrassed or singled out as an "example".
5. The coach should initially handle any parent complaints and contact the Athletic Director of the situation. If the problem persists it may then be addressed by the Athletic Director.
6. Physical punishment is not an acceptable form of disciplinary methods with all children. No athlete should ever be given special treatment regardless of their talent level. Coaches who are models of fairness help children to learn values of equity.
7. Coaches should contact the Athletic Director regarding any issues or problems that are questionable in nature for further direction and/or actions to take regarding the situation.

MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 1) Parents and students agree by signing off on this handbook that any medical conditions that do not preclude a student from playing a sport but which would require a prompt response at a practice or game will be shared on a need to know basis only with appropriate supervisory personnel. Such information will be understood to be confidential by all with whom it is shared.
- 2) Parents and students agree that the supervisory person in attendance at a practice or game will obtain medical attention whenever it is deemed necessary for a student on a team. Parents agree by signing off on this handbook that the school and all its associates are released and saved harmless from any liability resulting from any illness or injury to the student due to the medical attention obtained.
- 3) All injuries and illnesses must be reported immediately to the coach.
- 4) Injuries and/or illnesses suffered by a student member of a team resulting from supervised, authorized activity during

practice or games is first covered by the student/ family medical insurance. The student - family insurance is the primary insurance. An insurance policy maintained by the school, a copy of which is in the School Office, serves only as a secondary insurance and has a deductible.

5) Parents agree by signing a waiver that the school and all its associates are released and saved harmless from any liability from any injury or illness incurred in a practice or game. Failure to sign this waiver will result in a student being deemed ineligible to play the sport.

6) If a student is treated by a physician for an illness or injury he must obtain the written approval of the physician to return to playing on a sports team.

TEAM SIZE

- 1) It is the intent of our policy to provide the opportunity to play sports for as many interested students who meet qualifications as a team can accommodate and for which funds are available as determined by the Athletic Director and School Board.
- 2) If the number of qualified applicants warrants the formation of a second team, and coaches and funds are available, a second team will be established so that each interested and qualified student may have the opportunity to play.

PRACTICES

1) Practices for any St. Thomas School athletic teams are held on a weekly basis under the direction of the Athletic Director. Times and schedules are announced daily through the school office.

LOST AND FOUND

Any items found in the gymnasium or on the field should be given to the Athletic Director or coach and placed outside the

school office. After a time they will then be sent to the Home-School room for uniform exchange or donated to charity.

SAFETY

The St. Thomas School Athletics provide a safe environment for all individuals. Verbal or written threats made against the physical emotional well being of any individual will be taken seriously. Anyone making such threats (seriously or in jest) faces suspension and/or expulsion from St. Thomas sports and possibly the school he/she attends.

WEATHER

Any school cancellations for St. Thomas School will result in cancellation of regular practices and events. In the event of poor weather conditions on game days, participants should check with the coach or Athletic Director to check for cancellations. Every effort will be made to let participants know before school day ends, if there is a cancellation of that day's event.

AFTER PRACTICE POLICY

Students participating in sports must be picked up at the end of their scheduled activity. There should be no student in the gymnasium without a parent or coach at any time before practices or games. This policy will be strictly enforced to ensure the safety of all St. Thomas School students.

TRANSPORTATION

- 1) The parent of the student is responsible for arranging transportation of the student to all games and practices that are played away from St. Thomas School.
- 2) The school and its associates are not responsible for transporting students to or from away games.
- 3) Signing off on this handbook signifies agreement that the school and its associates are released and saved harmless from any liability for any injuries or illnesses of students, drivers, or passengers or for damages to pedestrians, vehicles, or property resulting from the transport of students for school

sports events.

GAME RULES

- 1) All sporting events will be governed by the rules of the game in use by the official association league sponsoring that sport or by the rules used by the majority of the schools who play Saint Thomas School. The rules will be available in printed form in the School Office through the Athletic Director prior to the start of the sport's season.
- 2) It is the responsibility of the Athletic Director and the coaches to determine and abide by the appropriate rules for the sporting events played by Saint Thomas School Teams.
- 3) Playing time for the student athletes will be determined by the coaches with a view to allowing all team members an equal opportunity to practice and play in games.

TOURNAMENTS

St. Thomas School sports team's participate in tournaments during or at the end of their regular sports season. These tournaments will be approved by the Athletic Director in advance to ensure all related eligibility matters and fees are completed and sent to the appropriate place. The Athletic Director or coach will work on trying to set up opportunities for playing in these tournaments.

AWARDS

- 1) Goals for awards should be realistic and attainable according to the age and abilities of the students.
- 2) The Athletic Director, coaches and principal will establish published criteria that define the requirements for achieving awards prior to the beginning of the school year.
- 3) All qualified participants on sports teams for Saint Thomas School will receive recognition of their efforts.

ROLE OF PARENTS-Coaches and parents who participate

consistently in the sports program must attend Virtus Training Classes mandated by the Office of Catholic Schools.

- 1) The involvement and support of the parents of the student athlete are extremely important to the development of the child. For this reason, as much participation and encouragement as possible on the part of the parent is requested.
- 2) It is the intent of the sports program at Saint Thomas School to promote Christian values. It is expected that parents will provide an example of this type of conduct. When inappropriate conduct is displayed by a parent or spectator associated with Saint Thomas, it is the purview of the Athletic Director or coach to request that the parent modify their behavior. Should that fail to result in appropriate behavior, the parent will be expelled from the playing area. The Principal has the final say on removal of any coach.
- 3) It is the responsibility of the parent to enable the student to meet the obligations outlined in this handbook. No parent has the right to change or alter any sports uniform without the permission of the Principal.
- 4) Parents involved in sports, including cheerleading, must volunteer for the concessions stand, gate fee, scoring assistants and for the sports banquet during the season.

FUNDRAISING

- 1) All fundraising efforts must be approved by and coordinated through the School Administration.
- 2) All students involved with sports, including cheerleading, must participate in sport fundraising efforts.
- 3) Parents may not collect money or charge a fee without the permission of the Principal.

AGREEMENT TO TERMS AND POLICIES

- 1) Participation on athletic teams at Saint Thomas is completely voluntary.
- 2) It is required for participation in all sports at Saint Thomas School that the student athlete and parents sign all releases, waivers, and statements outlined in this handbook.
- 3) It is required for participation in all sports at Saint Thomas School that the student athlete and parents sign and return the statement found on the last page of this handbook which states that the student and parents have read, understand, and agree to all the terms within this handbook.

COACHES CREED

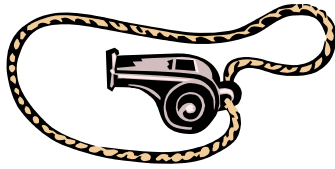
All St. Thomas School coaches will follow the Athletics Creed: I BELIEVE sports have an important place in general educational scheme and pledge myself to cooperate with others in the field of coaching to provide better opportunities for all participants.

I BELIEVE the other coaches of sports are earnest in their desire to keep the St Thomas School program on the plane of citizenship training and I shall do all that I can do to further their efforts.

I SHALL abide by the rules of the game in letter and in spirit. I BELIEVE in the exercise of all patience, tolerance, and diplomacy at my command in my relations with all players, co-workers, parents, game officials, and spectators.

I BELIEVE proper administration of all sports offers effective laboratory methods of development of high ideals of sportsmanship, qualities of cooperation, courage, unselfishness and self-control desires for clean, healthful living and respect for wise discipline and authority.

I BELIEVE in and support all reasonable moves to improve athletic conditions, to provide for adequate equipment, and to promote the welfare of an increased number of participants.



COACHING EXPECTATIONS & REQUIREMENTS

The St. Thomas Athletic Director, is committed to securing the best-qualified coaches for all its sports teams. These qualifications include, but are not limited to:

- Acceptance, integration, implementation and a clear understanding of the St. Thomas School Mission and Goals.
- Ability to constructively teach all participants, regardless of skill level.
- Ability to organize, run and control practices.
- Positive attitude and coaching style
- Good communication skills.
- Coaching ability to effectively teach the sport
- Adequate knowledge of the sport.
- Ability to provide a safe physical environment for all.

Coaches are required to have and attend practices, games, and meetings, related to their team within the league guidelines. Coaches are responsible for securing a substitute or notifying participants of a cancellation when they are unable to attend a practice. **ALL COACHES, SUBSTITUTES, ASSISTANTS, AND VOLUNTEERS ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK ON FILE WITH THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR PRIOR TO ANY INVOLVEMENT WITH STUDENTS.**

A coach is expected to be at practice before any student arrives and must make sure that all children have left before he/she leaves practice or must designate another adult who agrees to take on those responsibilities. Coaches also must not tolerate any abuse or mistreatment of players, parents, or others by any member of a St. Thomas School team. This means a zero

tolerance policy for “poking fun” at people or verbally (and physically) abusing others.

Coaches should attend every game and show up at least 20 minutes prior to the start of the game and prepare their team for the contest. It is important, and required, that coaches report any problems with equipment, and required, that coaches report any problems with equipment, players, parents (or others) to the Athletic Director within 24 hours of a problem. This will ensure the safety of all participants and allow for appropriate action to be taken by the Athletic Director when necessary.

Coaches should be patient and tolerant of all children, and understand the level of maturity at which they coach. They must be cautious not to have unrealistic expectations, but be willing to challenge each participant to reach potential goals not before attained. Coaches must have the understanding that their impact on the lives of many of these children is of incredible importance and thus must display good moral and ethical behaviors.

Coaches are the backbone of any sports program. There is always plenty of criticism and far too little thanks for the job they carry out. All parents and student participants in St. Thomas School Athletics should make sure to thank them and offer any means of support to help them be the best coach to all the participants.

RIGHT TO AMEND

The Right to Amend this document is reserved for any time it is deemed to be necessary. Such an amendment will not be made without sufficient appropriate notice to the students and parents of Saint Thomas School.

Sports Handbook



**Saint Thomas School
Southington, CT.**

Approved by the St. Thomas School Board

Revised, September 2010