

**Diocese of Peoria**

**Athletic Handbook**

**for**

**Elementary Schools**

**Revised April 2009**

# Diocese of Peoria Athletic Handbook for Elementary Schools

## Athletic Philosophy

*We have offered sports to God as a human activity  
aimed at the full development of the human person...*

Pope John Paul II  
Jubilee for the World of Sport

Peoria Diocesan Catholic Schools are dedicated to the development and growth of the whole person.

Jesus' teachings remain at the heart of virtues that ultimately contribute to making the athletic program a Catholic Christian experience. The program exists to develop and enhance the relationship between faith development and daily living.

First and foremost, parents and legal guardians are the first teachers and models of faith development.

Myriad opportunities for spiritual, intellectual, physical, social and emotional development exist within the religious and academic environment.

Athletics, as an extra-curricular school activity at the elementary level, is a privilege, one that is earned and fostered by a student's Christian character and academic efforts. Athletics will be recognized as a supportive component to the total educational process, offering balance rather than prominence within its educational scope and practices.

## Objectives

A balanced athletic program, a privilege in which elementary students may choose to participate, exemplifies and witnesses to the meaning of living in a Catholic Christian community by:

- Allowing participation of students regardless of their athletic abilities
- Developing character qualities within the realm of Catholic Christian traditions
- Providing opportunities for development of fundamental skills and self-confidence
- Developing habits of health, hygiene and safety
- Providing opportunities for student-athletes, parent(s)/legal guardian(s), coaches, moderators and spectators to celebrate their school communities as *Christ present among us*

At the minimum, outcomes flowing from the Philosophy and Objectives will include:

- Character formation
- A healthy sense of competition
- Development of basic skills
- Team work
- Sportsmanship
- School pride
- Self discipline
- Enjoyment

### **Governance**

The Diocese of Peoria Athletic Handbook for Elementary Schools shall serve as policy for all diocesan schools.

Diocesan schools with athletic programs are encouraged to seek membership in the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA). Schools with membership in the IESA should abide by the association's regulations.

### **Lines of Authority**

Recognizing that the Pastor is ultimately responsible for all parish activities, the Principal will provide the leadership and responsibility for all athletic programs at the local elementary school level.

These responsibilities will then extend to the Athletic Director, coaches and moderators, students-athletes and their parent(s) or guardian(s).

### **Safe Environment Training Program (SET)**

Every person is uniquely created and gifted by God. Catholic social teachings remind us that human life is sacred and...*that every person is precious, that people are more important than things and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.*

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

In order to guard against incidents of sexual abuse of minors, Safe Environment Training is required of adults who work with youth on a regular basis. The training establishes acceptable behavior that is legal, professional and responsible. It includes standards of conduct regarding sexual abuse and harassment. (cf. Diocese of Peoria Policy C-402)

A further description of SET is found at [www.usccb.org/comm/envguide.shtml](http://www.usccb.org/comm/envguide.shtml).

## **Participation Expectations and Responsibilities**

*It must be emphasized that an authentic human and Christian formation of athletes indirectly becomes an educational instrument on a more vast social level.*

Pope John Paul II  
*The Most Authentic Dimension of Sports*

### **Student-Athletes**

Students who demonstrate Christian conduct and achieve academically according to their abilities may participate in athletic activities.

Only full time students enrolled in Diocese of Peoria Catholic elementary schools may participate in their respective athletic programs.

Previous to the beginning of each sport during the school year, participants will be required to have on file:

- ✓ Parental/Guardian Consent Form and Liability Waiver (cf. School Forms – website)
- ✓ Acknowledgement and Adherence Form regarding the Diocese of Peoria Athletic Handbook for Catholic Elementary Schools and the local school's Parent/Student Handbook, signed by the student-athlete and his or her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) (school-generated form)
- ✓ Medical Information and Emergency Form (cf. School Forms – website)
- ✓ Annual Proof of Physical Examination, signed by a licensed physician

### **Code of Conduct**

Student-athletes are expected to model appropriate Christian behavior at all times.

**Every diocesan Catholic school sponsoring athletic programs shall determine the requisites for acceptable student-athlete conduct and delineate policies and administrative regulations for their dissemination through the Student/Parent Handbook.** These shall form the basis for behavioral expectations on the local level and will be shared with and understood by the student-athletes, their parent(s) or legal guardian(s), the Athletic Director, coaches and assistant coaches, moderators and faculty members.

Sanctions for inappropriate and unacceptable behaviors may include, but not be limited to, verbal and written warnings, documentation, communication with parent(s) or guardian(s), limited suspension, permanent suspension and expulsion.

Behavioral policies and administrative regulations at the diocesan and local school levels shall have precedence over IESA behavioral guidelines and sanctions.

The Principal will determine the final sanctions for unacceptable behaviors, other diocesan policies not withstanding.

### **Academic Responsibilities**

Each school will establish the academic criteria for eligibility. However, at a minimum, students must receive passing grades in all subjects to remain eligible.

Consistent academic performance and progress is expected according to one's ability. This progress should be monitored on a weekly basis as set forth at the local school level; it should be done as a collaborative effort among teachers, the Principal, the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and the student-athletes.

**Requisites for adequate academic progress according to one's ability shall be set forth in the Parent/Student Handbook, including procedures for review, notification and sanctions if requisites are not met.**

### **Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s)**

Parents or legal guardians are the first teachers of faith formation in their children's lives.

Display of Christian conduct is paramount to modeling what is expected of one's own child. Parents and legal guardians represent themselves, their children, the coaching staff and the school community. Encouragement and positive role modeling through acceptable words, actions and support of the local school's policies and administrative regulations, give evidence and example of commendable sportsmanship.

It is a gift to student-athletes when their parents and legal guardians emphasize good sportsmanship rather than excessive competition and when they praise rather than criticize the efforts of their children, their children's teammates, opposing team members, coaches and officials.

It should be remembered at all times that the program belongs to the children.

### **Athletic Director**

The Athletic Director will be selected and approved by the Principal and will be directly responsible to the Principal.

The Athletic Director will meet the following requisites before being employed:

- ✓ Completion of Safe Environment Training (SET)
- ✓ Background check and fingerprinting (cf. Diocesan Policy C-403)
- ✓ Screening for drug usage, if paid (cf. Diocesan Administrative Regulation C-312)

- ✓ Bloodborne Pathogens (annually)
- ✓ CPR and AED training
- ✓ Submission of a resume
- ✓ Meeting for the purposes of discussing athletic philosophy, duties and responsibilities with the Principal
- ✓ Understanding and agreeing to abide by the policies and regulations set in the Diocese of Peoria Athletic Handbook and the local Parent/Student Handbook

The Athletic Director will oversee all aspects of the athletic program, working in close collaboration with the Principal in matters beyond routine responsibilities. Examples of collaboration include fundraising decisions, purchase of uniforms, purchase of equipment, athletic activities that require transportation to out of town locations and significant concerns warranting administrative guidance.

The Athletic Director will maintain a permanent record of coaches' certifications. A copy of the record should be filed with the school.

The Athletic Director's agreement will include a job description. (cf. Appendices -Athletic Director Job Description)

The Principal will informally evaluate the Athletic Director periodically.

### **Coaches, Assistant Coaches and Moderators**

Coaches and moderators at the elementary school level in diocesan Catholic schools are generally volunteers. They are approved by the both the Athletic Director and Principal and are ultimately responsible to the Principal.

Before coaches and moderators begin the position in any of the sports offerings, they must have completed:

- ✓ Safe Environment Training (SET)
- ✓ Background check including fingerprinting. (cf. Diocesan Policy C-403)
- ✓ Screening for drug usage, if paid. (cf. Diocesan Administrative Regulation C-312)
- ✓ Bloodborne Pathogens training (annually)
- ✓ CPR and AED training
- ✓ Acknowledgement and Adherence to the Diocese of Peoria Athletic Handbook). (School-generated form)

- ✓ The coach/moderator's agreement should include a job description (cf. Appendices – Coach/Moderator Job Description)
- ✓ Participation in an annual workshop for coaches and moderators

Each coach or moderator must be at least 21 years of age. In the event that someone wishes to coach or moderate who is 18 - 20, he or she may be chosen by the Athletic Director to assist a coach under the guidance and supervision of the coach or moderator. Assistant coaches will be responsible to meet all of the above-bulleted requirements.

Careful selection of those expressing an interest to coach or moderate shall be required of the Athletic Director and the Principal. Candidates must have given evidence of their commitment to living Gospel values prior to their selection.

All coaches shall be trained toward the goal of certification. Training should include, but not be limited to:

- Basic preparation in the Catholic Christian philosophy of coaching
- Risk management and the prevention and treatment of injuries
- Specific sports preparation including rules, practices, organization, skill development and coaching behavior

The IESA is currently preparing an online coaches' training program that will be available by Fall 2008.

A listing of responsibilities shall be attached to and signed by the coach or moderator. Those responsibilities from a listing in the Appendices should guide each local school in determining what the expected and acceptable practices are. (cf. Appendices -Coach/Moderator Job Description)

Coaches and moderators will:

- Provide each student-athlete with opportunities participate
- Promote good sportsmanship, that is, fairness, respect for opponents and graciousness in winning or losing
- Represent themselves as positive role models to their players, opponents, game officials and the school community
- Pray with the student-athletes prior to the beginning and at the conclusion of practices and games
- Refrain from using alcohol and tobacco in the presence of student-athletes at school-sponsored athletic events

- Refrain from using abusive and foul language and gestures as well as making inappropriate remarks
- Refrain from berating the efforts of student-athletes

The Principal at the local level will establish a written process for sanctioning misconduct that violates the expected behavior of coaches. Behavioral expectations as well as the sanctioning process should be delineated in the job description or in a written Code of Conduct.

### **Spectators**

Spectators have distinct roles as participants at athletic events. While they may be considered guests, they are bound by the same rules of conduct as student-athletes and their coaches and moderators. Schools should delineate their own set of rules for spectator/fan behavior. These expectations should be written into the school's handbook.

The Principal, Athletic Director, coaches and officials have the right and the responsibility to eject spectators whose behaviors are unacceptable.

### **Structure, Organization and Management**

*The interscholastic athletic program should be looked upon as the pinnacle and not the foundation of a school's physical education endeavors. A school should provide, first a program of physical education for all children, second an intramural sports program for all who desire some participation in competitive sports, and finally, an athletic program of competition in the skill sports.*

Archdiocese of Milwaukee

All students in Grades 5-8 may participate in athletic programs offered by their respective schools. Local schools will determine if the programs are intramural or interscholastic sports.

It is recommended, however, that those participating in Grades 5 and 6 be in intramural programs, ones that provide student-athletes with as much participatory time as possible.

Further, it is recommended that teams participating at the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels be considered interscholastic programs in which every player ordinarily plays a portion of every game in order to build individual and team skills and self-confidence.

Approval of all scheduled offerings, requisites for grade participation, duration of each offering and exact dates from beginning practices to final games/contests, will be planned and communicated before each academic year begins.

Ordinarily, games should not be started after 8:00 p.m. on school nights.



### **Cheerleading/Pom-Pons**

The cheerleading moderator is under the direction of the Athletic Director.

All cheerleaders and pom-pons must follow IESA rules and regulations. (cf. *Spirit Rules Book*)

If a mascot is used to help with cheerleading and development of school spirit, he or she will follow the student-athlete conduct and academic expectations as listed in this handbook and the local Parent/Student Handbook.

### **Games, Tournaments and Practices**

The Principal will determine the number of games and tournaments at each grade level before the beginning of each school year.

Whether or not they hold IESA membership, all diocesan schools with existing athletic programs will adhere to the following maximum number of games and tournaments each season.

#### Baseball:

- 16 games including tournaments

#### Softball:

- 16 games including tournaments

#### Basketball:

- Grade 5 – twenty (20) games including tournaments
- Grade 6 - twenty (20) games including tournaments
- Grade 7 - twenty-two (22) games including tournaments, exclusive of the end-of-the-season Catholic school championship tournament series or the IESA state tournament series
- Grade 8 – twenty-two (22) games including tournaments, exclusive of the end-of-the-season Catholic school championship tournament series or the IESA state tournament series

#### Football:

- 9 games including tournaments

#### Soccer:

- Grade 5 – twelve (12) games including tournaments
- Grade 6 – twelve (12) games including tournaments
- Grade 7 – fourteen (14) games including tournaments
- Grade 8 – fourteen (14) games including tournaments

### Track and Field:

- Twelve (12) meets
- Note: some student-athletes may qualify for regional and state meets beyond the scheduled meets

### Cross Country:

- Twelve (12) meets
- Note: some student-athletes may qualify for regional and state meets beyond the scheduled meets

### Volleyball:

- Grade 5 – Twenty (20) games including tournaments
- Grade 6 – Twenty (20) games including tournaments
- Grade 7 – Twenty-two (22) games including tournaments, exclusive of the IESA tournament series
- Grade 8 – Twenty-two (22) games including tournaments, exclusive of the IESA tournament series

### Cheerleading/Pom-Poms

- Grades 5 and 6 – to coincide with regulated games and tournaments
- Grades 7 and 8 – to coincide with regulated games and tournaments

### **Tournaments**

The Diocese of Peoria does not sponsor diocesan tournaments. For this reason no tournaments may be referred to as “Diocesan” or “Diocesan-wide” tournaments.

No school may sponsor league or non-league tournaments requiring overnight stays.

### **Tryouts**

Because of its very nature, trying out for membership or participation on a team should be discouraged. At the elementary level it precludes student-athletes’ participation at a period in their lives when opportunities to develop interests and learn fundamental skills should be paramount to excluding them because their abilities are not as obvious as others in their age and grade ranges.

### **Team Rosters**

An official team roster for each sport sponsored by the school must be on file in the school office and with the Athletic Director and the individual coaches or moderators. Rosters will also be made available to the IESA and other schools conducting approved and scheduled tournaments.

The team rosters should contain information only about the student-athletes’ names and birth dates.

### **Frequency of Participation**

Ordinarily, every player should play in every game.

Coaches and moderators at the Grades 7 and 8 levels may use discretion in allowing participation as far as possible based on student-athletes' attitudes, behavior, attendance and effort at practices and cooperation with coaches, moderators and team mates.

### **Practices, Games and Tournaments Exclusions**

No games or practices, including tournaments or Open Gyms, may be scheduled or played on Sundays.

In addition, no practices, games, tournaments and Open Gyms, may be scheduled or played on Holy Days of Obligation, Holy Thursday and Good Friday.

Practices, games and tournaments will be limited to five days per week, per team. Practices should not exceed one and a half (1.5) hours per day.

Parish events and school events such as seasonal programs, fairs and concerts should take precedence over practice, games and tournaments. Careful scheduling of all such events including athletic scheduling should be precisely planned into each year's school calendar and placed on the parish master calendar.

Practice schedules will be part of the complete description and the rules and regulations of each sports offering. These will be written and communicated to all participants before the beginning of each season. The Principal will approve all decisions regarding this written notification.

### **Scrimmages and Drills**

All scrimmages and drills with any outsiders will be considered as scheduled games.

### **Playing Up**

In the event that a grade level does not have sufficient members to form a team, the Athletic Director and the Principal may allow student-athletes to play up; however, those playing up will be from the next lower grade level only. Any exceptions to this requirement shall be granted by the Office of Catholic Schools on a case-by-case basis. The total number of team members will not exceed a reasonable number if there was a need to have lower grade student-athletes play up. The Principal will determine what the "reasonable" number is.

### **Complaint Procedures**

In the event of a complaint for non-compliance to IESA rules, diocesan policies or local school policies and administrative regulations, a written form should be completed by the complainant and submitted to the Athletic Director and the Principal.

The Principal will make all final decisions regarding complaint resolutions.

### **Disputes Between or Among Schools**

In the event of a dispute between schools with opposing teams, the schools' Principals and Athletic Directors shall initially meet to address the concern. The Principals will resolve the matter internally.

IESA guidelines should be utilized if the schools involved in the dispute hold IESA membership.

If not, the schools may seek a resolution through the Diocesan Office of Schools from the Superintendent or his representative.

### **Open Gym**

Open Gyms may occasionally be held as gymnasium use permits and the Principal approves. As stated previously, Open Gyms may not take place on Sundays and the additional dates as ascribed. Coaching, competitive play and offering of critical comments shall not take place during Open Gyms.

The minimum standard for supervision of Open Gyms will be a person who is 21 or older who has completed Safe Environment Training (SET), has had a background and fingerprinting check and has been screened for drug usage, if paid. (cf. Appendices – Diocesan Administrative Regulation C-312) An adult trained in CPR and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED) must be present at all times.

### **Fundraising/Support From Businesses**

The Principal shall approve businesses who wish to support logos or signs placed in gymnasiums, products promoted through concessions and business names sponsoring ticket stubs and/or programs.

The Principal will make final decisions regarding the type and number of fundraising projects.

## **General Directives**

### **Technical Fouls**

Technical fouls committed by student-athletes will result, at a minimum, in exclusion for the remainder of the game if the technical foul resulted from unsportsmanlike conduct.

If a student-athlete commits two technical fouls related to unsportsmanlike conduct in a season, he or she will not be allowed to participate in the sport for the remainder of the season.

Coaches who receive technical fouls may continue to coach unless an assistant is available to coach the remainder of the game. Contingent upon the reason for the technical foul, the Principal will have sanctions in place and act upon them as soon as possible after the game.

### **Travel and Transportation**

The Principal will determine the maximum distances for traveling to away games.

Games that may require overnight stays may not be made for any sporting event at the elementary school level.

### **Weather-Related School Days, Saturdays and Holidays**

On school days, Saturdays and school holidays when severe weather conditions may preclude practices, games and/or tournaments, the Principal and the Athletic Director will determine whether or not practices, games and/or tournaments will take place or be cancelled.

A reliable relay system for communicating cancellations or changes to parent(s) or guardian(s) and student-athletes should be planned, written and distributed to coaches and moderators prior to each sport's season.

### **Uniforms and Equipment**

The Principal shall be responsible for approving the purchase of team uniforms. Uniforms will be issued annually. A timetable for their expedient return should be determined by the Athletic Director.

Normal wear and tear is expected. In the event the uniform is returned in less than acceptable condition, the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) will be assessed the cost for its replacement.

Some costs for the completion of the entire uniform will become the responsibility of the parent(s) or legal guardian(s). For example, such items may be shoes, socks, warm up tops and outfits as well as ball caps.

Equipment should be inventoried after practices as well as after home and away games.

### **Adult Supervision**

Adequate adult supervision must be provided to student-athletes every time they arrive, practice, participate in any manner and wait for their rides. It is expected that one of the supervisors will be the coach. However, it is recommended that parents, legal guardians and other adults oversee the student-athletes at all times when they are in the school, on the school premises or at games and contests away from the school.

By the same token, parents and legal guardians must show their respect by bringing their children to events and picking them up at the recommended window of time designated by the school.

### **First Aid**

It is the responsibility of the Athletic Director to provide First Aid supplies to the coaches and moderators.

A box that can be accessed only by the Athletic Director, the Principal, coaches and moderators, should contain student-athlete emergency information, the score book and student-athletes' addresses and phone numbers.

OSHA guidelines must be followed in the event of bodily spills. Disposable gloves and biohazard bags for containment of blood and bodily fluids are mandatory.

Everyone who is at reasonable risk of exposure shall participate annually in a Bloodborne Pathogens information meeting. This universal precautions training will provide basic information regarding exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens including Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) through bodily blood and fluid spills.

### **Medications and Supplements**

Under no circumstances may medications and/or supplements be supplied, recommended, permitted or dispensed to student-athletes (cf. Diocesan Policy C-310)

### **Reporting Injuries**

Whether at home or away or whether serious or not serious, all injuries must be reported to the Principal, the Athletic Director and the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) as soon as possible during or after an athletic event.

The Principal will determine who is to report an accident/injury to the parents/legal guardians; this administrative regulation will be communicated to the Athletic Director, coaches and moderators.

Schools that participate in the blanket accident insurance program offered by the diocese must submit a claim form to the company that documents the cause and nature of the injury. The person completing the form should certify that the student-athlete sustained the injury while practicing or playing in a school-sponsored sports program.

### **Intramural Programs in Lower Elementary Grades**

If a school has an intramural program, the Principal will approve volunteers who oversee intramural programs. They should be at least 21 years of age and have completed Safe Environment Training (SET) as well as background and fingerprinting checks. If paid, they will also be screened for drug usage.

### **Awards**

Awards including trophies are traditionally part of athletic programs. Factors to consider in selecting awards should be size, cost, appropriateness and proportionality.

Only athletic awards officially approved by the school may be presented to students regardless of the funding source of the awards.

*I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith.*

**2 Timothy 4:7**