



# **St. Athanasius School Athletics Program**

## **Policies and Guidelines**

Revised 2025

Love. Learn. Lead.

## 1.1. Mission & Philosophy of St. Athanasius Athletics

In accordance with the philosophy of St. Athanasius School, the mission of the Athletics Program is to provide an environment that supports the educational objectives, academic progress and spiritual welfare and development of our students by offering them the opportunity to participate in athletic training and competition in an Athletics Program that promotes fair play, good sportsmanship, and ethical conduct.

The St. Athanasius Athletics Program offers various intramural and interscholastic sports and activities that supplement the school's spiritual and academic objectives.

St. Athanasius School believes that all students should be offered a well-rounded educational experience and that through participation in the Athletics Program student-athletes will develop a love of healthy competition, self-confidence and positive values. These values include leadership, teamwork, school spirit, respect, good sportsmanship and self-discipline and are instilled in our student-athletes through positive motivation.

## 1.2. General Guidelines

St. Athanasius School Athletics Program complies with the policies of the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Council II-3A Athletic League.

St. Athanasius School has a universal participation (i.e., no cut) policy; every student-athlete has the opportunity to participate. The St. Athanasius School Athletics Program is open to any interested student-athletes in grades 4 through 8 who are enrolled at St. Athanasius School. **Student-athletes who have paid their fees and submitted their health forms are eligible to participate on the first day of practice.**

St. Athanasius School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, programs, loan or scholarship programs, athletics or any other school-administered program.

While St. Athanasius School supports student efforts to develop athletic skills via sports programs offered outside of our school, St. Athanasius games and practices take priority over activities sponsored by non-St. Athanasius programs. **Absences due to external team commitments may reduce playing time at the 7th and 8th grade level.**

Our primary focus at the 4th-6th grade level is the development of each player's confidence, skills, and values. All student-athletes in these grades will have equal playing time, subject only to the effects of unexcused absences and 6th graders are also subject to academic qualification. In 7th and 8th grades the leagues become more competitive and coaches have more discretion in the determination of each student-athletes' playing time. In 7th and 8th grades each student-athlete should have meaningful playing time over the course of the season and in 7th grade each student-athlete should expect to play in each game. "Meaningful playing time" means playing a player for an amount of time that will allow them to learn, grow and make a meaningful contribution to the game in which they are participating.

St. Athanasius is committed to ensuring that all student-athletes in grades 4 through 8 have an opportunity to play in all available sports. If any class does not have enough participants to field a team, one or more student-athletes will be asked to play up from a lower grade. When class size or a student's athletic ability warrants it, the Athletic Director may move a student-athlete to a different level to ensure proper instruction or to provide greater opportunity for participation. Such a move will be done only after consultation with the student-athletes, their parents and coaches. Depending upon the league rules such student-athletes may be able to play for both classes or just the higher grade. Priority will always be given to the higher grades, but all student-athletes will have an opportunity to play either in their own grade or the grade above. As a member of Council II-3A, St. Athanasius is committed to fielding a varsity team in all league sports in which St. Athanasius participates.

<b>Sport</b>	<b>Season (est'd)</b>
Co-Ed Cross Country	Late Aug – Early Oct
Cheerleading	Late Aug – Early Nov
EC Tackle Football	Late Aug – Early Nov
Co-Ed Flag Football	Early Sep – Late Oct
Girls Volleyball	Late Aug – Late Oct
Girls Volleyball	Mid Aug – Early Nov
Boys Basketball	Late Nov – Early Mar
Girls Basketball	Late Nov – Early Mar
Boys Volleyball	Early Mar – Mid Apr
Co-Ed Track & Field	Late Mar – Early Jun
Co-Ed Golf	Mid Apr – Late May

### 1.3. **Administration**

The principal is responsible for the St. Athanasius School Athletics Program and delegates authority to the Athletic Director

#### 1.4. **Booster Club**

The St. Athanasius Booster Club is comprised of parents, alumni and friends of St. Athanasius School. The purpose of the Booster Club is to promote school spirit and pride through various activities and events, while encouraging independent financial support for the Athletics Program

## 1.5. **Athletic Council**

The Athletic Council advises and supports the Principal and Athletic Director with a goal of fostering an Athletics Program that encourages participation by a broad range of students, teaches athletic skills and good sportsmanship, enhances school spirit, instills confidence, responsibility and self-discipline in our student-athletes, maintains a safe and just environment and recruits coaches and volunteers that can align with this mission. The Athletic Council will act as an advisory board, reporting to the School Board, that will make recommendations to the Athletic Director and the Principal on matters affecting the St. Athanasius Athletics Program and will provide support to the Athletic Director to enhance the experiences of the student-athletes.

## 1.6. **Athletic Director Duties**

St. Athanasius School employs one Athletic Director for all sports. The Athletic Director and the Principal are St. Athanasius School's official representatives regarding league matters for each sport.

The Athletic Director acts as the liaison among the coaches, parents and school administration. It is his/her responsibility to communicate the mission, goals and objectives of the Athletics Program to the coaches and parents and to ensure that these are clearly understood and followed.

The Athletic Director recruits and hires all coaches for the various sports. If more volunteers come forward than positions available, an interview process will be initiated to fill the openings in accordance with the Archdiocese of Chicago's coaches selection process as described in its [Handbook for Athletics](#).

The Athletic Director coordinates coaches' development. He/She also supervises and evaluates all coaches to ensure their compliance with the athletic policy and the smooth and efficient operation of the Athletics Program.

The Athletic Director ensures that all coaches meet the Archdiocesan Compliance requirements, which require that coaches complete an online background check, submit an annual CANTS form, submit Certificate of Completion of the Protection of God's Children (Virtus) training and attend an in-service clinic for their sport when available. He/She also provides coaches with First Aid equipment and ensures that at least one coach per team holds a current First Aid/CPR/AED certificate.

The Athletic Director is responsible for collecting all fees and maintaining the approved Athletics Program operating budget, scheduling games / matches / 3 contests, ensuring an adequate inventory of team uniforms and safe equipment, and informing parents of academic ineligibility.

The Athletic Director assists the principal in preparing the annual budget for the Athletics Program.

## 1.7. Coaching Duties

Coaches are personal examples of and role models for leadership, sportsmanship and fair play. As such, they are expected to be respectful when interacting with everyone: refs, opposing teams and coaches and parents.

Coaches will strive to develop the skills, confidence and potential of each student-athlete. Coaches will also balance the desire to compete and win with the more important educational and spiritual goals and values of our school.

Coaches will recognize and understand that each student-athlete is a unique individual with special skills, abilities and outlook. They will always treat each student-athlete with respect, never resorting to insulting or disrespectful words, gestures or actions.

Coaches are directly accountable to the Athletic Director. Coaches will be familiar with the mission, policies and guidelines of the St. Athanasius School Athletics Program and Council II-3A. They will be knowledgeable of the rules of their sport and techniques for teaching its fundamentals and basic strategies appropriate for the age and skill levels of their student-athletes.

Coaches are responsible for the welfare and safety of their team and its members. They will have on-hand a first aid kit and team members' emergency information at every practice and game. One coach per team is required to hold a current First Aid/CPR/AED certificate. Coaches are required to have completed a concussion safety training course in compliance with the Illinois Youth Sports Concussion Safety Act and to submit to the Athletic Director proof of completion of such training course.

Coaches are responsible for maintaining safe equipment and the proper use of the facilities where practices and games are held. Coaches will ensure the proper behavior of team members and maintain discipline of their team; serious disciplinary cases will be referred to the Athletic Director.

St. Athanasius head coaches must be at least 21 years of age. Coaches will meet the Archdiocesan Compliance requirements, which require that coaches complete an online background check, submit an annual CANTS form, submit Certificate of Completion of the Protection of God's Children (Virtus) training and attend an in-service clinic for their sport. Candidates should submit their name and a short resume to the Athletic Director and be available for an interview if necessary.

Seventh and eighth-grade level coaches are offered a stipend. Non-parent coaches at the seventh and eighth-grade level will receive a full stipend, while parent-coaches are not eligible for stipends and are considered volunteers. In the event that qualified non-parent coaches are unavailable, stipends may be offered to other junior varsity coaches. To facilitate coaching arrangements, non-parent coaches may choose to have a parent-coach volunteer as an assistant coach, provided the parent-coach is VIRTUS certified. Parent-coaches in this capacity may attend practices but may not sit on the bench during games unless the non-parent coach is unavailable.

For cross country, track & field, and golf, parent-coaches may be selected as head coaches, given that participation and strategic decisions in these sports are less objective - based on time and/or score. For seventh and eighth-grade basketball and volleyball teams, coaches with no children on the same team are highly-preferred due to the increased discretion in determining playing time. This guideline

aims to ensure objective decision-making in line with the playing time standards outlined in this Athletic Policy. Exceptions to this general guideline must receive approval from the principal or his/her designee and should only be considered as a last resort and temporary until a non-parent coach is hired/selected.

## 1.8. Guidelines for Student Athletes

Participation in the St. Athanasius School Athletics Program is a privilege, not a right.

Student-athletes will act in a manner that reflects the principles of Christian values that are the basis of St. Athanasius School and its Athletics Program. Student-athletes show respect for coaches, team members, fans, opponents and officials of their sport. Student-athletes understand that the team goals always have priority over individual goals. Student-athletes are expected to arrive promptly to all practices and games, show good sportsmanship and play by the rules. They are always supportive of their team.

Student-athletes adhere to the standards of eligibility as set by St. Athanasius School. See the Academic Eligibility policy below.

Every student-athlete must have a parent permission form, a concussion information form and a medical form completed and on file in the Athletic Office before he/she can participate in practices or games. Every student-athlete is expected to read and abide by the St. Athanasius Athletics Code of Honor and the junior varsity and varsity student-athletes are required to sign the Code prior to participation. Each student-athlete must care for and return the uniform and equipment issued to him/her.

Student-athletes must return the equipment from one sport before being allowed to participate in another sport. Student-athletes are responsible for the replacement cost of any lost items. The Athletic Director will notify parents if equipment is missing.

Participation in team practices is of utmost importance. Practices serve as a platform for learning and refining essential physical skills, developing strategic acumen, fostering teamwork, and enhancing physical conditioning—critical elements for safe participation in games, matches, or contests. Excused absences, permissible in instances of illness, injury, or extraordinary family emergencies, must be communicated with the coach. The coach holds the authority to determine the impact of missed practices on a student-athlete's eligibility for games.

It is emphasized that, at the 4th-6th grade level, playing time is equal in all scenarios presented. For 7th and 8th-grade levels, the coach's discretion regarding playing time in relation to practice attendance applies. A student-athlete who misses school due to illness or any other reason is ineligible to participate in games or practices on that day. If a student-athlete recovers sufficiently from illness-related absences on a Friday, their Saturday or Sunday playing time remains unaffected. Unexcused absences from practices and games may result in a reduction of playing time at the coach's discretion, and repeated unexcused absences will be reported to the Athletic Director.

In addition, for sports that allow cross-grade participation—such as boys volleyball and golf—the Athletic Director and Principal must sign off on all team placements. While tryouts are not always required, when they are, players may be evaluated using grading rubrics conducted by coaches and the Athletic Director to determine the most appropriate team assignment. These evaluations are used to assess skill level, team fit, and developmental readiness. It is important to note that team placements are not solely



determined by a student's grade level; rather, they are based on a combination of ability, team needs, and what is developmentally appropriate for each athlete.

## 1.9. **Guidelines for Parents**

At least one parent or guardian must attend the following meeting for his/her student-athlete to be allowed to participate on the team:

Coach's Team Kick-off Meeting for Parents and Players: The head coach holds this meeting prior to the start of the season each year to review the mission, policies and guidelines of St. Athanasius School Athletics Program and of the particular sport. This meeting is the time to ask questions related to playing time and coaching philosophy, receive other pertinent information. Attendance at these meetings ensures the smooth operation of the program and maximizes the potential for a positive experience for all.

Parents are responsible for paying Athletic Fees, submitting permission and medical exam forms, and purchasing uniforms and/or equipment in a timely manner as directed for each sport.

Parents ensure that athletes arrive on time, are picked up on time, and participate in practices and games. If an athlete is unable to attend a practice or game, parents are responsible for notifying coaches as soon as possible. Parents are responsible for making sure the athlete's uniform is clean, in good repair, and available for each game.

Parents are role models for proper competitive play as well as keeping wins and losses in perspective. Parents should make no attempt to instruct or direct the play of a student-athlete or team during games or scrimmages. Likewise, they should not criticize the play of any student-athlete or any team. Questioning, criticizing, or berating coaches, officials, or opponents is inappropriate behavior.

Parents are responsible for directly supervising their non-participating children who are attending an athletic contest, whether at home or away.

If questions or issues arise, parents should first encourage their child to discuss them with his/her coach. If there are still issues or questions, parents should direct their concerns to the coach themselves. If the parent wishes to pursue the matter further, he/she should consult the Athletic Director. If the issue or problem persists, the parent should contact the principal. If the matter is still unresolved, the parent should contact the Pastor.

## 1.10. **Eligibility**

At St. Athanasius School, we encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning, strive for strong academic achievement, and participate in the school's co-curricular program, including athletics. Participation in co-curricular activities is beneficial to the growth and well-rounded development of our students and enhances their overall learning experience.

In order for students to participate in co-curricular activities, they must be productive and in good standing in the classroom. If a student does not meet the standards set forth by the school, he/she becomes ineligible to participate in co-curricular activities. This eligibility policy applies to all grade 6-8 students.

Eligibility will be assessed at a point in the middle of each trimester and again at the end of each trimester. If a student-athlete's grade in any subject drops below seventy-seven percent (77%) a week before the mid trimester or end of trimester, he or she will be issued a probationary form. The cut-off for turning in any outstanding work to teachers will be 3:30 pm on the Mid-Trimester/End of Trimester eligibility dates. Any student who received a probationary form must, prior to the cut-off date, submit any missing assignments to the issuing teacher and return a signed and completed probation form signed by a parent or legal guardian and completed by the issuing teacher indicating the student's grade.

The probation form must be submitted to the Assistant Principal. Any student whose grade is still below 77% or fails to return the signed and completed probation form by the cut-off date, will be ineligible for one game or co-curricular activity contest. If the above eligibility requirements are met, the student is eligible to participate in co-curricular activities.

Within 3 school days, the Assistant Principal will notify the Principal, student's parents, the athletic director, and activity advisor(s) regarding a student's eligibility. Independent of the eligibility requirements, students may be excluded from games, practices or meetings at the request of the coach, advisor, parent and/or the Principal. After missing the game the student again becomes eligible to participate in games.

The Principal may determine a student's eligibility at other than the times described above.

## **ZERO TOLERANCE BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

### **Bullying**

As Catholics we believe in the dignity and respect of each individual created in the image of God. Bullying is contrary to Gospel values and has no place in the Catholic community.

Bullying is:

- any intentional, repeated, hurtful act or conduct (physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual) including communications made in writing or electronically,
- occurring on campus or off campus during non-school time,
- directed toward another student or students, that has or can be reasonably predicted to:
  - place the student or students in an unreasonable fear of harm to the student or student's person or property;
  - cause a substantially detrimental effect on the student or student's physical or mental health;

- interfere substantially with the student's academic performance;
- interfere substantially with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school.

Bullying can take many forms, including violence, harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, cyber stalking, theft, public humiliation and retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying.

Cyber bullying can include all of the above as well as the use of electronic tools, devices, social media sites, group chats, blogs and websites to harm a student or students with electronic text, photos, or videos.

Bullying acts or conduct described above can include the following:

- Physical—which includes, but is not limited to, punching, poking, stalking, destruction of property, strangling, hair pulling, hitting, biting, spitting, stealing, pinching and excessive tickling;
- Verbal—which includes, but is not limited to, name-calling, teasing, taunting, gossip, and threats whether in person or through any form of electronic communication and the Internet;
- Emotional—which includes, but is not limited to, intimidation, rejecting, terrorizing, extorting, defaming, humiliating, blackmailing, rating/ranking of personal characteristics such as race, disability, ethnicity, perceived sexual orientation, manipulation of friendships, isolating, ostracizing and peer pressure.
- Sexual—which includes but is not limited to many of the emotional acts or conduct described above as well as exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual propositioning, sexual harassment and abuse involving actual physical contact or sexual assault.

No student shall be subjected to bullying:

- during any school sponsored education program or activity, while in school, on school property, on school busses or school vehicles, or at school sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities
- through the transmission of information from a school or home computer network, or other similar electronic school or home equipment.

All members of the Catholic school community, parents/guardians, teachers, staff, administrators and others, are expected to work together in preventing bullying and promoting Gospel values in a Christ-centered environment. Students are expected to participate in age-appropriate educational programs developed by the school that address bullying and teach respect for all.

Bullying by a student or students may result in suspension and/or expulsion from the school.

### Harassment

The Pastor, administration, and staff of St. Athanasius School believe that all students and employees are entitled to work and study in school-related environments that are Christ-centered and free of harassment.

The school will treat complaints of harassment seriously and will respond to such complaints in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner. Harassment of any type is not tolerated, and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. Disciplinary action may include suspension, expulsion, or termination.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to the following examples:

- verbal or written taunting
- bullying
- offensive, intimidating, hostile or offensive conduct
- ranking/rating of personal characteristics such as race, disability, ethnicity, or perceived sexual orientation
- jokes, stories, pictures, cartoons, drawings or objects which are offensive, tend to alarm, annoy, abuse, or demean an individual or group

#### Athletics Disciplinary Action – Serious Offense

Serious offenses include, but are not limited to, physical or verbal altercations, bullying, graffiti, cheating and insubordination.

When a case of bullying or harassment is reported to a teacher or faculty member, Principal, or the Athletic Director; the Athletics Council will determine the level of severity of a student's misbehavior. The Athletics Council may issue a corrective action which will include the level of severity of that student's actions. Discipline based on the student's actions will follow a tiered-occurrence structure as such:

#### **Level 1 Corrective action or 1st Occurrence**

- The student will be ineligible for one game or co-curricular activity contest for all athletics teams the student participates in

#### **Level 2 Corrective action or 2nd Occurrence**

- The student will be ineligible up to 50% of all events, practices, and contests (i.e. if a season has 20 regular season games, the student will be ineligible to participate in all activities through the 10th contest post-discipline notice – if there are only 5 regular season games remaining, the student will be ineligible for the remainder of the season)

#### **Level 3 Corrective action or 3rd Occurrence**

- The student will be ineligible for the remainder of the season (inclusive of all contests, games, practices, and team events) and will be ineligible to participate in the following athletics season (i.e. if student is issued a Level 3 corrective action for a spring sport, student will be ineligible to participate in any St. As athletics for the proceeding fall season)

### 1.11. Council II-3A League Regulations

The St. Athanasius School Athletics Program, its Policies and Guidelines, along with the Principal, Athletic Director, coaches, student-athletes, and spectators shall at all times be subject to and adhere to, the Catholic Council II-3A Athletic League Regulations, including the Catholic Council II-3A Athletic League Code of Ethics.

The Council website is <http://www.c23athletics.org/>

### 1.12. Uniform & Equipment Requirements

All Uniforms and team gear (e.g. warm-ups) must be approved by the principal or his/her designee

Sport	Team Level	Distribution
Co-Ed Cross Country	5-8	Issued by AD/Coaches
Cheerleading	8	Issued by EC Football
EC Tackle Football	JV-V	Issued by EC Football
Co-Ed Flag Football	4-5	Issued by AD/Coaches
Volleyball	4-8	Issued by AD/Coaches
Basketball	4-8	Issued by AD/Coaches
Co-Ed Track & Field	4-8	Issued by AD/Coaches

### 1.13. League Participation

<b>Sport</b>	<b>Team Level</b>	<b>Distribution</b>
Co-Ed Cross Country	5-8	Chicago Archdiocese
Cheerleading	8	Council II-3A
EC Tackle Football	JV-V	Council II-3A
Co-Ed Flag Football	4-5	City of Evanston
Volleyball	4-8	Council II-3A
Basketball	4	City of Evanston
Basketball	5-8	Council II-3A
Co-Ed Track & Field	4-8	Catholic Youth Organization/Chicago Archdiocese/District 65
Golf	6-8	Council II-3A