

# St. Ambrose Catholic School

## Athletic Program Handbook



**2025-2026 School Year**

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The purpose of the athletic program at St. Ambrose Catholic School is to complement the home, church, and school in the development of the whole person. Activities of the program are for the benefit of the children suited to their age and physical growth. The goals are to recognize the need of physical fitness in the wholesome growth of the child and to provide enjoyable recreational activity that develops Christian attitudes of sportsmanship and fair play that can be sustained beyond the elementary level. The primary function of elementary athletics should not be the development of exceptional athletes. Rather, it must be the participation and development of student-athletes who genuinely display the Christian qualities of good sportsmanship and fair play in every aspect of life. The successful operation of athletics depends upon a true commitment from all adults involved.

## **STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The St. Ambrose Catholic School Athletic Program is separate from the St. Ambrose Catholic School Physical Education program. The Physical Education Program is provided to all students grades PK-8 during regular school hours. The athletic program provides students in grades 3 through 8 with the opportunity to improve their skills in specific sports through practice and competition outside of regular school hours.

The St. Ambrose Catholic School Athletic Program is an extension of St. Ambrose Catholic School and is subject to the policies of the Pastor, Principal, Athletic Association, and School Advisory Council. The general administrative responsibilities are conducted by the Principal. Policies and operating guidelines for the athletic program are recommended by the St. Ambrose Catholic School Athletic Association and approved by the St. Ambrose Catholic School Advisory Council, Principal, and Pastor. The purpose of the Athletic Association is to provide a fun, instructive and positive sporting environment where children can learn sportsmanship and the fundamentals of sports along with other life skills that are consistent with the teachings of St. Ambrose Catholic School.

The Athletic Association consists of the following positions:

- Athletic Director / President
- Treasurer
- Concessions Director
- Secretary
- Class Representatives

The **Athletic Director(s)** reports to the Principal and is responsible for the implementation of the policies and guidelines established by the Athletic Association and the School Advisory Council. The Athletic Director(s) is responsible for the scheduling and coordinating of all athletic program activities and serves as president of the Athletic Association.

The **Treasurer** performs all accounting duties associated with the Athletic Association. He/She is responsible for depositing athletic fees and fundraising monies, and providing a financial status report at each Athletic Association meeting.

The **Concession Director** is responsible for control of concessions/admissions monies, payments to referees, and providing a status report at each Athletic Association meeting.

The **Secretary** records the minutes of each Athletic Association meeting and distributes the meeting minutes to each member of the Athletic Association and to the school Principal.

The **Class Representatives** will consist of a parent for each 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades boys and girls team. Class Representatives are responsible for the coordination of the parent game day volunteers, and the distribution and collection of school athletic uniforms.

## SPORTS OFFERED

The following sports/activities will be offered for the school year:

### Fall

Boys and Girls Golf

Boys Baseball

### Winter I

Boys and Girls Basketball

Cheerleading

### Winter II

Boys and Girls Volleyball

### Spring

Boys and Girls Track and Field

There is a participation fee set annually by the Athletic Association. The fee must be paid by the stated deadline for each respective sport. Late fees will be assessed for payments received after the due date. Families with special needs may be exempt from this fee at the discretion of the Athletic Director or Principal.

In addition to the fee, **PARENTS ARE REQUIRED TO VOLUNTEER** a proportionate amount of time to benefit the St. Ambrose Athletic Program if their child participates. Parents are needed to coach, work the score table, admissions table, and the concession stand. A work schedule will be distributed when game schedules are made available. **Parents who cannot work their scheduled time slot are responsible for finding a replacement worker** (i.e. another parent). If no replacement can be found, the parent needs to contact the Class Representative the day prior to the game. An inconvenience fee (\$25.00 per shift assigned to work) payable to the Athletic Association will be assessed if the school is required to find a replacement worker.

## PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Each student athlete is required to submit the following information **prior** to his/her participation:

- St. Ambrose Athletic Program Handbook-Consent with Paid Fees
- Current Physical-Statement of Good Health or Sports Physical

- Proof of Insurance
- Athletic Handbook Consent

## **ATHLETIC PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND ELIGIBILITY POLICY**

### Athletic Eligibility

Grades will be averaged and submitted each Monday by 2:00 pm. Any student athlete having a grade percentage of 59% (F) or lower in one or more academic or non-academic subjects will not be allowed to participate in sports for that week (Tuesday to Monday). When an ineligibility occurs, the Athletic Director will be notified who will, in turn, notify the coach. The entire week of ineligibility will be served. This applies to practice as well as games. The following week, every effort will be made to provide sufficient opportunity to improve the grade. Any athlete participating in a sport while knowingly ineligible will serve an immediate in-school suspension.

### Academic Probation or Suspension

A student whose academic performance indicates serious deficiencies may be placed on academic probation. Academic probation impacts a student's ability to participate in extra-curricular activities to include school-sponsored athletics. The Principal and Dean of Students will determine the length of probation. Any athlete that is ineligible multiple times within a sport season may be placed on academic probation. Any student that is suspended from school, either ISS or OSS, may not participate in extracurricular activities during the suspension (practices and games).

The following are requirements of elementary school-sponsored athletic programs:

- Rules shall adhere to the Springfield Diocese athletic program requirements
- Written permission of parents.
- Physical examination within the appropriate school year.
- Proof of medical insurance coverage.
- Competent supervision by qualified adult coaches who understand the sport, child growth and development, and first aid.
- Students shall be grouped into teams on the basis of grade level or with grades one level above or below depending on numbers of participants.
- Sports Eligibility shall be established by the St. Ambrose Policy and Procedure Handbook.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT ATHLETE**

Student athletes are expected to understand the following:

- Abide by the eligibility standards, fulfilling academic requirements.
- Adhere to all game rules of play.
- Accept the decisions of the referees/officials.
- Participate in practices and games, being prompt and attentive for both.
- Notify the coach if they are not going to be able to attend a practice or a game. That absenteeism may result in reduced playing time or game suspensions.
- That permanent suspensions due to behavior or attendance issues are the decision of the coach in consultation with the Athletic Director and Principal.
- Conduct themselves in a spirit of good sportsmanship.
- Abide by the rules and instructions of the coaches and other supervising adults.
- Show respect for all buildings, equipment, and uniforms used during athletic practices and competition. Adhere to the posted gymnasium rules.
- That they are not to leave the gym during practice without the permission of the coach.
- That if they are excused from Physical Education classes, they will not be eligible to practice or play in a game.
- That they will be suspended from one game or more, depending upon severity of the offense, for abusive language, fighting, obscene gestures, insubordination, or other misconduct that occurs at school, practice, or a game.
- That the use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs, anytime or anywhere, by the student will result in permanent suspension from the team.
- That if they quit or are dismissed, they will not be recognized at the athletic awards banquet.
- That they are a team player. They should help others to become better players, thus making their team better.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS**

Parents are expected to:

- Complete all necessary forms and submit appropriate fees.
- Volunteer their time to benefit the St. Ambrose Athletic program.
- Find a replacement worker if they are unable to work their scheduled shift.

- Be a positive fan of the team.
- Treat all coaches, referees/officials, and opponents with respect and courtesy.
- Discuss any complaints with the coach (**Make an appointment away from the game and practice site after a 24 hour cooling off period**) and attempt to resolve the concerns at that level before bringing them to a higher level.
- Ensure that athletes do not arrive more than ten minutes before the start of practice and that athletes are picked up within ten minutes after completion of practice.
- Provide transportation to and from all games, both home and away.
- Have their own insurance to cover the athlete.
- Be responsible for the maintenance of their child's uniform. If damaged or lost, the athlete must pay the cost of repair or replacement. Clean uniforms are to be returned to the coach at the end of the season.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF COACHES**

All coaches and assistant coaches must complete the Safe Environment program of the Diocese of Springfield, including having fingerprints run, complete a background check, and complete concussion protocol training. Any parent volunteers must have Protecting God's Children or Safe Haven.

Coaches are responsible for their team. Any concerns by athletes or parents should be handled by the Head Coach. Unresolved issues may then be brought to the Athletic Director, followed by the Principal. Any issues that do not follow this will be referred back to the Head Coach.

If an issue does reach the Principal's desk, the following items will be looked at to see how to address the conflict:

Did the coach follow school policy?

Did the coach consistently follow his/her own stated team policy/rules?

Did the coach act reasonably?

Coaches should maintain open communication with team parents and provide answers to any questions about their athlete.

Coaches are asked to not speak negatively of any other school, program, or coach.

Coaches are asked not to allow any unregistered students to participate in practices.

Coaches and coaching staff are not permitted to use alcohol or tobacco products on school grounds while coaching.

It is a violation of federal medical confidentiality statutes to discuss the medical status of a student-athlete. If asked about a players' injury just reply that "Student medical information is confidential.

If needed, there is an AED machine located near the stairs in the gym.

No practices on Sundays before noon. Also no practice on Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Christmas Eve, or Christmas Day.

Sportsmanship should be a priority for all teams. All technical fouls, flagrant fouls, unsportsmanlike conduct, player ejections, and coach ejections must be reported to the Athletic Director.

Any fan who causes disruption, engages in abusive behavior, or uses derogatory/inflammatory remarks to /about coaches, players, officials, or other fans, at an athletic activity will be asked to leave the site. The fan is subject to exclusion from future athletic contests.

## **Accident Reports**

Coaches or a member of the coaching staff will be responsible for filling out an accident report for an injured athlete. Once completed, the report must be given to the school office. Coaches should always have accident reports on hand. For home games accident reports will be in a yellow folder in the box on the scorekeepers table.

If there is a fan injury the volunteer working the Gate table will need to fill out an injury report and submit that to the school office.

Coaches are expected to adhere to the following: General

### Responsibilities

- Be aware of and adhere to the diocesan and St. Ambrose athletic guidelines.
- Have a completed copy of the St. Ambrose Sport Participation Health Record for each of their student athletes with them at all practices and games.
- Discipline fairly and consistently.
- Keep documentation on all disciplinary actions and forward it to the School Office and Athletic Director(s).

### Pre-season Responsibilities

- Complete the requirements of Safe Environment training/expectations of the Diocese of Springfield.
- Meet with the athletes and parents at least once before the season begins and explain all rules regarding practices, play, uniforms, etc.



- Notify athletes and parents of the necessary forms that must be completed before they will be allowed to participate. The school office or Athletic Director(s) will distribute the necessary forms to the coaches.
- Attend a meeting with the Athletic Director(s), commissioner, and other coaches for their sport to schedule practice times, discuss rule changes, have a gym key issued, and share all other necessary information.
- Complete the Concussion training.

#### During-the-Season Responsibilities

- Teach fundamental techniques and skills that enable the student athletes to develop to their fullest potential.
- Give all student athletes equal coaching time and encouragement.
- Organize and schedule practice sessions on a regular basis with the idea of developing the athlete's greatest potential.
- Work with the Athletic Director to set up initial practice schedules and reservation of facilities for practices. If a coach wishes to schedule practice for a time other than originally scheduled, the coach should contact the Athletic Director.
- Apply Catholic discipline in a firm and positive manner consistent with the St. Ambrose School athletic philosophy. Treat all student athletes fairly with respect and dignity.
- Give all student athletes the opportunity to participate.
- Model good sportsmanship whenever they are with student athletes or representing the school as a coach. Avoid the use of inappropriate language, loss of temper, etc.
- Be present for all practice sessions and games. When this is not possible, the coach should find a qualified adult replacement (assistant coach or commissioner) to coach the team. If unable to find a replacement for a game, notify the Athletic Director.
- Be responsible for the safety and behavior of the athletes from the time they arrive for a practice or game until the time they leave the school premises. Students should not be allowed to remain after the practice session without adult supervision. The coach should be the last person to leave.

#### Post-season responsibilities

- Attend the St. Ambrose School Athletic Awards Banquet that is held toward the end of the school year.

- Give feedback regarding the season and make recommendations regarding policies, procedures, and equipment to the Athletic Director.

### **ATHLETIC FEES**

All St. Ambrose sports require a participation fee. Fees vary depending on the needs of the sport, with fees typically around \$45. Students will only have to pay a maximum of 2 athletic fees during a school year. All athletic fees must be submitted before the first game or contest. If the fees have not been paid by the first contest, the student will not be able to participate until the fee is paid.

### **CANCELLATION OF GAMES**

In the event of a cancellation of games or practices, the coach will contact his or her players as soon as possible. However, if there is a **school cancellation due to inclement weather** such as a **snow day**, it should be presumed that all school sponsored events and extracurricular activities will be **canceled for the day**. Scheduled practices on snow days should be considered canceled unless the coach receives permission from the Principal.

### **UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT**

Uniforms will be purchased by the school, distributed to the athletes, and collected at the end of the season in the school office. It is the responsibility of the athlete to launder the uniform according to instructions. The athlete will be charged for damage beyond normal wear, or for failure to return the uniform to the school at the end of the season. The athlete will not be allowed to participate in another sport until the uniform is returned or the obligation is paid. In addition, grade cards will be held and students will not be allowed to participate in graduation or other events until all uniforms have been returned and obligations have been met.

### **POLICY REGARDING PLAYING TIME**

The emphasis of the athletic program in grades three through five shall be learning fundamental skills and gaining self-confidence. Coaches shall give each student athlete equal playing time and playing time at different positions if possible. The student athlete's attendance, attitude, and behavior at practices and games will also help determine playing time.

Playing time and selection of starters in grades six through eight will be at the discretion of the coaches and will be dependent upon a coach's evaluation of the student athlete's ability, attendance, attitude, and behavior at practices and games. All student athletes in good standing should receive at least 20% of the playing time available in a given season.

### **POLICY FOR PLAYING UP**

A student athlete may “play up” a grade level to help another team avoid forfeiture.

### **EXTREME WEATHER PROTOCOLS**

The recommended IESA/IHSA wet-bulb globe index will be used for athletic contests when heat may be a concern. Outdoor activity will be cancelled when temperatures or wind chills are below freezing.

### **CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR FOR STUDENT ATHLETES**

At all times St. Ambrose students participating in athletics or extracurricular activities are expected to act in a Christ-like manner. Expectations include;

- Being supportive and respectful towards teammates and coaches
- Being supportive and respectful towards opponents
- Being respectful towards officials
- Refraining from the use of inappropriate language, inappropriate gestures, inappropriate symbolism, or inappropriate markings on the body or uniform

If at any time a student participant acts in a manner that is deemed UNCHRISTIAN by the Coach, Official, Athletic Director, Principal, or Pastor, they are to sit for the remainder of that contest. Further incidents may lead to additional consequences, including possible suspension or being removed from the team.

If at any time a student participant uses profanity, inappropriate gestures, or displays other inappropriate behavior, they are expected to sit out the remainder of that contest.

### **PROBLEMS / SUGGESTIONS**

Occasionally the student athlete, parent, or coach may have a question, a suggestion, or a problem relating to the student’s involvement in the athletic program. Prompt, open communication is important when this occurs and can usually resolve the situation before it becomes a major issue. The recommended sequence for this communication is as follows:

- A. The **STUDENT ATHLETE** and the **COACH** should discuss the situation / issue.
- B. If not resolved, the **COACH**, the **PARENTS**, and possibly the **STUDENT ATHLETE** should meet to talk about the issue.
- C. If the issue is still not resolved, the **PARENTS**, the **STUDENT ATHLETE**, the **COACH**, the **ATHLETIC DIRECTOR(S)** should discuss the issue.

D. If still not resolved, the **PARENTS**, the **STUDENT ATHLETE**, the **COACH**, and the **PRINCIPAL** should meet to discuss the issue.



## Concussion Information

A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, force, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, **all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly.** In other words, even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Headaches</li><li>• “Pressure in head”</li><li>• Nausea or vomiting</li><li>• Neck pain</li><li>• Balance problems or dizziness</li><li>• Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision</li><li>• Sensitivity to light or noise</li><li>• Feeling sluggish or slowed down</li><li>• Feeling foggy or groggy</li><li>• Drowsiness</li><li>• Change in sleep patterns</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Amnesia</li><li>• “Don’t feel right”</li><li>• Fatigue or low energy</li><li>• Sadness</li><li>• Nervousness or anxiety</li><li>• Irritability</li><li>• More emotional</li><li>• Confusion</li><li>• Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)</li><li>• Repeating the same question/comment</li></ul>
Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appears dazed</li><li>• Vacant facial expression</li><li>• Confused about assignment</li><li>• Forgets plays</li><li>• Is unsure of game, score, or opponent</li><li>• Moves clumsily or displays lack of coordination</li><li>• Answers questions slowly</li><li>• Slurred speech</li><li>• Shows behavior or personality changes</li><li>• Can’t recall events prior to hit</li><li>• Can’t recall events after hit</li><li>• Seizures or convulsions</li><li>• Any change in typical behavior or personality</li><li>• Loses consciousness</li></ul>	

## **Concussion Information Sheet**

### **What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion or returns too soon?**

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athletes will often fail to report symptoms of injuries. Concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key to student-athlete safety.

### **If you think a child has suffered a concussion**

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours, days, or even weeks. The Return-to- Play Policy of the IESA and IHSA requires athletes to provide their school with written clearance from either a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches prior to returning to play or practice following a concussion or after being removed from an interscholastic contest due to a possible head injury or concussion and not cleared to return to that same contest. In accordance with state law, all schools are required to follow this policy. In addition to written clearance from a physician or a certified athletic trainer all athletes must follow the Return to Play Policy (see below). St. Ambrose Catholic School has a Concussion Oversight Team that helps ensure Return to Play policies are followed. The Concussion Oversight Team consists of the Athletic Director, Assistant Athletic Director, Principal, Pastor, and other appointed members.

If you think that your child may have a concussion, please inform the coach immediately. Remember it's better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the athlete sits out.

For current and up-to-date information on concussions you can go to:

<https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/index.html>

## **Return To Play Process / Steps**

It is important for an athlete's parent(s) and coach(es) to watch for concussion symptoms after each day's return to play progression activity. An athlete should only move to the next step if they do not have any new symptoms at the current step. If an athlete's symptoms come back or if he or she gets new symptoms, this is a sign that the athlete is pushing too hard. The athlete should stop these activities and the athlete's medical provider should be contacted. After more rest and no concussion symptoms, and under the direction of a medical professional, the athlete can start at the previous step.

### **Step 1: Back to regular activities (such as school)**

Athlete is back to their regular activities (such as school) and has the green-light from their healthcare provider to begin the return to play process. An athlete's return to regular activities involves a stepwise process. It starts with a few days of rest (2-3 days) and is followed by light activity (such as short walks) and moderate activity (such as riding a stationary bike) that do not worsen symptoms. You can learn more about the steps to return to regular activities at: [https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/concussion\\_recovery.html](https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/concussion_recovery.html).

### **Step 2: Light aerobic activity**

Begin with light aerobic exercise only to increase an athlete's heart rate. This means about 5 to 10 minutes on an exercise bike, walking, or light jogging. No weight lifting is recommended at this point.

### **Step 3: Moderate activity**

Continue with activities to increase an athlete's heart rate with body or head movement. This includes moderate jogging, brief running, moderate-intensity stationary biking, moderate-intensity weightlifting (less time and/or less weight from their typical routine).

### **Step 4: Heavy, non-contact activity**

Add heavy non-contact physical activity, such as sprinting/running, high-intensity stationary biking, regular weightlifting routine, non-contact sport-specific drills (in 3 planes of movement).

### **Step 5: Practice & full contact**

Young athlete may return to practice and full contact (if appropriate for the sport) in controlled practice.

### **Step 6: Competition**

Young athlete may return to competition.



**Student/Parent Consent and Acknowledgements**

By signing this form, we acknowledge we have been provided information regarding concussions.

**Student**

Student Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardians Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Each year IESA member schools are required to keep a completed Acknowledgement and Consent form and a current Pre-participation Physical Examination on file for all student athletes.

Adapted from the CDC and the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Concussion in Sport