



St. Mark Lutheran School Athletic Handbook

**“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for
the glory of God.” — 1 Corinthians 10:31**

<https://lion-athletics.stmls.org/page/home-page>

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Philosophy

As a Lutheran elementary school, St. Mark strives to apply and teach Christian attitudes in all school activities, including athletics. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:31:

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

Athletics provide students the opportunity to use their God-given abilities to reflect the love of their Savior. Our sports program is designed to be a Christ-centered environment where student-athletes are challenged to:

- **Grow** in self-esteem, work ethic, and competitive drive
- **Develop** important leadership and teamwork skills
- **Experience** safe and enjoyable activity in a Christian environment

We believe athletics are an important part of the total education process at St. Mark.

We are also part of the **Fox Valley WELS Athletic League (FVWAL)**. The Fox Valley WELS Athletic League has been formed to promote Christian fellowship and competition in the area of athletics to further strengthen the FVL Federation K-12 concept.

Objectives

St. Mark's athletic program aims to:

- **Develop Skills:** Provide opportunities for students to develop their God-given skills in a specific sport.
- **Promote Christian Sportsmanship:** Teach the importance of Christian sportsmanship while competing, regardless of the outcome.
- **Teach Fundamentals:** Instruct students in the rules and strategies of their sport.
- **Encourage Christ-Centered Conduct:** Encourage students to give glory to God through their conduct on and off the court.

Team Sports

The following is a summary of team sports at St. Mark.

Team	Grade Eligible	Season	Team	Grade Eligible	Season
Volleyball - Girls*	grades 5-8	Aug. - Oct.	Basketball – Girls *	grades 5-8	Nov. - Feb.
Soccer*	grades 5-8	Aug. - Oct.	Basketball – Boys *	grades 5-8	Nov. - Feb.
Cross Country	grades 3-8	Aug. - Oct.	Wrestling	grades K-8	Jan. - March
Cheerleading -Girls	grades 5-8	Nov. - Feb.	Track	grades 5-8	April - May
			Softball**	grade 8	April - May

* Grade/team divisions for A, B, and C teams will be determined on a year-to-year basis.
Some teams may include grade 4.

** If not enough 8th graders participate, will then include 7th grade.

Expectations & Participation Guidelines

Participation is generally open to grades 5–8 (with occasional 3rd-4th-grade exceptions. Please see the *Team Sports* chart above). Practices are vital, and repeated absences may reduce playing time.

C Team (Developmental): Equal playing time; focus on skill-building and learning the game.

B Team (Developmental): Significant playing time for all; some adjustments during tournaments.

A Team (Competitive): Playing time is not necessarily equal and not guaranteed, especially in tournaments. Players are encouraged to continue developing skills outside of school at this level.

- Grade eligibility may vary year-to-year depending on participation numbers. Please see *Team Sports*.
- Practice schedules are determined before each season, based on coach/facility availability. Most after-school sports have two practices per week.

Coaches

Coaches and assistants are expected to demonstrate Christian behavior, professionalism, and integrity. Their responsibilities include keeping sports enjoyable, teaching skills, and fostering appreciation for the game. Specifically, coaches should:

- **Spiritual Leadership:** Model proper Christian conduct (1 Corinthians 10:31).
- **Respectful Interaction:** Treat players, parents, officials, administrators, and colleagues with respect. Represent St. Mark, your team, our Savior with professionalism and at all times.
- **Skill & Strategy:** Stay knowledgeable about skills, rules, strategies, and teaching methods.
- **Communication:** Clearly communicate expectations and responsibilities to players and parents.
- **Positive Environment:** Prioritize the physical and emotional well-being of all student-athletes.

Coaches/assistants are also required to have an up to date background check on file.

Players

Players participate to have fun, develop skills, and use their God-given talents. With that privilege comes responsibility. To ensure students represent Christ and St. Mark honorably, players are expected to:

- **Cooperate with coaches and teammates:** Students must show a willingness to learn and cooperate with coaches. Failure to do so may result in loss of playing time or removal from the team.
- **Work hard:** Commit to improving skills and abilities. Be receptive to coaching even when what you are being asked to do is difficult.
- **Display Christian conduct:** Disrespect toward coaches, officials, fans, or players will not be tolerated. Accept responsibility for your behavior on and off the playing field or court. Win with humility, lose with grace. In all things, honor God. Discipline steps are as follows for infractions:
 - 1st—warning and parent contact
 - 2nd—parent contact and suspension for one game
 - 3rd—dismissal from team
- **Attend all practices and games:** Students should be excused by a parent beforehand. (Players missing the practice before a game may not start at coach's discretion.) Students absent at school due to illness may not participate that day. (Exceptions: arrival before noon or

cleared by school policy.) If a student goes home sick during the day and does not finish the day at school, they are not allowed to come back for practices or games that same day. Unexcused absences from practice may result in loss of playing time.

- **Be reliable and a team player:** Players should attend practices and games to be recognized as team members. Conflicts must be communicated to coaches ahead of time. It is up to the coaches and the athletic director's discretion whether a player is recognized as a team member should issues arise. Quitting forfeits all recognition as a member of the team. Be positive, encouraging, supporting and acknowledge your teammates on and off the court or field.
- **Put academics before athletics:** Students must maintain school responsibilities to remain eligible. Please also see *Eligibility Guidelines and Disciplinary Procedures*.
- **Bring proper uniforms and wear appropriate attire:** Please also see *Uniforms/Team Apparel*.
- **Prioritize St. Mark team activities:** If a student is also playing on an outside team, we ask that you prioritize their St. Mark team.

Players are also expected to be familiar with the rules and expectations stated in the athletic handbook. Additionally, athletes are expected to adhere to all behavior guidelines as listed in the school's handbook. Failure to do so may also result in loss of playing time or removal from the team.

Parents

Parents are an important part of the athletic experience. Their role is to support, encourage, and model Christ-like behavior. Parents are expected to:

- **Be involved:**
 - Try your best to ensure that your child attends all scheduled practices, games, and tournaments.
 - Pick up your child within 10 minutes of the end of practices or games. Habitual tardiness may result in the student athlete being removed from the team.
 - Learn and appreciate the rules of the game to better understand the flow and decisions made by players and officials.
 - Help in various capacities to ensure the games run smoothly. Parents will be asked to volunteer at home events (concessions, scorebook, etc.).
 - Parents must attend mandatory preseason athletic meetings and read the athletic handbook.
 - Complete, sign, and submit a Permission Form for each sports season.
 - Read, complete, and submit a Concussion Information Form (once a year).
 - **Model Christ's Love:** Reflect Christ's love in your words and actions, recognizing the influence on your child, other athletes, and spectators. Serve as role models by treating event workers and visiting teams, fans, and coaches with respect.
 - **Respect Authority:** Respect officials and accept human error as part of the game.
 - **Encourage All Athletes:** Encourage skilled performance from all players, not just your own child.
 - **Trust the Coaches:** Avoid coaching from the sidelines or criticizing coaches, players, or officials publicly.
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Handling Conflict/Concerns

In the spirit of Matthew 18:15, concerns should be addressed privately and respectfully through proper communication by scheduling a private meeting with the coach(es) or parties involved.

- **Appropriate concerns:** your child's physical/mental well-being, skill development, or behavior.
- **Inappropriate concerns:** playing time, strategy, play-calling, or other athletes.

Those concerns will be handled as follows:

1. As part of the educational process, parents are encouraged to guide their children in addressing coaches personally.
2. Parents are encouraged to address coaches directly rather than talk among themselves. Approaching the coach before, during, and/or after a game is not the appropriate time to talk. Coaches have other responsibilities at those times.
3. Should a player-coach, parent-coach, or player and parents-coach conflict not be resolved, the parents and student may contact the Athletic Director to seek resolution.
4. If no resolution has been reached, the student/parent may present the case to the Principal.
5. If no resolution is reached, the student/parent or Principal may present the matter to the Education Council, where a final resolution will be determined.
6. When a group of players or players/parents has the same concern, the above process is also expected to be followed.

Transportation & After School Plans

- Parents are responsible for transportation to/from practices, games, and tournaments. Maps are available online at **stmls.org > Athletics > Maps**. Specific addresses of locations can also be found on TeamSnap.
 - Families are encouraged to attend games to support all athletes.
 - On game days and practice days, students **MUST** either be picked up by a parent after school, go to after school care, or have a scheduled plan to be supervised by an adult before their game or practice starts. Players are not allowed to wander the school building or be in the gym unsupervised.
 - Students are allowed to leave after school care or get ready 30 minutes before a game and 15 minutes before a practice, unless otherwise directly instructed by a coach.
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Eligibility Guidelines & Disciplinary Procedures

- Students must maintain a **C– average (1.665 GPA)** and proper school behavior.
 - If a student does not maintain adequate progress:
 - The student will be ineligible for 14 days.
 - After 14 days, eligibility will be reviewed. Individual circumstances may be considered, recognizing the student's unique gifts and abilities.
 - Five late assignments in one quarter result in a detention. The teacher will inform the parents when the detention needs to be served. With any additional late work after the first five, students will not participate in any extracurricular activities until all late work is turned in. This is also equivalent to a Level 2 discipline issue.
 - Detentions given on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday will be served on Thursday until 4:00 p.m., and detentions given on Thursday and Friday will be served on Monday until 4:00 p.m.
 - Students will not be able to participate in any extracurricular activities until their detention is served.
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Fees

The St. Mark athletic department requires all students who participate on an athletic team to pay an athletic fee of \$20 per student-athlete per sport to offset the cost of operating our athletic program. Fees will be billed through FACTS in September for fall sports, December for winter sports, and April for spring sports to ensure that the athlete will actually be participating. The fee covers the costs of coaches, referees, conference dues, uniforms, and equipment. Please note Athletic Directors nor coaches can accept fees. Parents will be charged through FACTS only.

Uniforms/Team Apparel

The purpose of the school uniform and jersey policy is to promote a positive learning environment, minimize distractions, and encourage school pride. All students are expected to follow the guidelines below.

- Uniforms will be distributed and collected by the athletic director or coach.
- The school will provide uniform tops for all sports. Students should provide their own shorts for volleyball, soccer, and cross country.
- On designated days (such as game days or school spirit days), students may wear their school team jerseys or approved spirit wear.
- Jerseys should not be altered (e.g., cut, written on, or otherwise modified).
- Students are responsible for the care and maintenance of their uniforms and jerseys. Please do **NOT** wash using a detergent with a bleach solution or additive.

Mandatory Personal Items: Examples of these items vary by sport.

Soccer: cleats, shin guards, black shorts for games

Cross Country: running shoes, running/athletic shorts for meets

Volleyball: gym shoes, knee pads, black shorts for games

Basketball: gym shoes

Cheer: black spandex shorts, white cheer shoes (if size is not available in our donated inventory)

Softball: glove

Track: running/athletic shorts for meets

Optional Apparel and Items:

Examples of these are: t-shirts, warm-up/shooting shirts, water bottles. St. Mark does not supply these items.

Volunteer Opportunities

With the number of sports and students involved, we rely on volunteers to make our program successful. We need help with:

- Coaching
- Scorebook keeping
- Concessions
- Other event support

Parents of athletes are expected to help in these capacities throughout the season. Coaches and assistants are exempt from having to help cover other positions. Anyone volunteering as a head coach must be a WELS member.

Any school parent, St. Mark congregation member, or WELS member is eligible to help in the other volunteer positions. You do **not** need to have a child currently participating in that sport to volunteer