



**SAINT JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL
ATHLETIC HANDBOOK
2024-2025**



Sanctity Justice Honor Scholarship



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Letter from the Athletic Director

Dear Parents and Student-Athletes,

We would like to welcome you to the Saint Joseph High School Athletic Program! As a member of the Saint Joseph High School athletic family, you are now part of a long standing tradition of excellence set forth by previous student-athletes. We believe that participation in sports provides a wealth of opportunities and experiences that assist students in personal growth and development.

Saint Joseph High School offers sports that compete during the fall, winter, and spring seasons. This Athletic Handbook contains important information that will assist you in your role as a part of the Saint Joseph High School Athletic Department.

Athletes must have the following turned in to the Athletic Department before the first day of official practices, or they will not be permitted to participate:

- Sports Physical Form (The current PIAA CIPPE Form is available on the school website on the athletics page)
- Participation Agreement (Last page of the Athletic Handbook)

The Athletic Department website is <https://saintjosephhs.com/athletics/>. All sports schedules are listed on the website. Please check the site frequently, as any schedule changes will be posted there.

Thank you for taking the time to read the athletic handbook. It will not only allow you to become familiar with our policies and procedures, it will also allow for a smooth transition for you as a new or continued member of the Saint Joseph High School Athletic Program. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

GO SPARTANS!

Sincerely,

Sally Ackerman
Athletic Director



Philosophy

The Athletic Department at Saint Joseph High School is an important part of our school's educational program. We want to ensure that each student-athlete reaches their maximum potential. It is our mission to develop the whole student, not just the athlete, in mind, body, and spirit. Athletic programs provide a vital element in a holistically integrated educational experience. Specifically, the Athletic Department seeks to provide interested students with the opportunity to participate in its program of interscholastic athletics and is committed to the following:

- To offer a well-balanced and varied program of interscholastic athletics (based on numbers and the best interest of our student-athletes)
- To teach the value of competition
- To foster the development of athletic skills
- To encourage the development of a strong work ethic, self-discipline, and self-sacrifice
- To teach the value of commitment, teamwork, and cooperation
- To encourage the development of judgment, character, and leadership
- To teach the value of ethical conduct, sportsmanship, and fair play
- To encourage the development of loyalty and pride in one's self, their team, and the school community

The Athletic Department expects the following of each participant in the school athletic program:

- To be a worthy representative of teammates, coaches, and the school community, abiding by school and community expectations
- To maintain health and fitness levels by following the training rules prescribed by the coach
- To reflect the knowledge that commitment to victory is nothing without commitment to hard work in practice
- To understand that athletics is just one part in the big picture with the cornerstone being that a Saint Joseph High School student strives to achieve excellence in all areas
- To learn to deal with adversity in an honorable way and to capitalize on growth opportunities
- To express feelings intelligently and appropriately
- To accept the responsibilities of team membership: support of teammates, cooperation, positive interaction, and mutual respect
- To help student-athletes learn how to balance a demanding academic schedule with an arduous athletic training schedule



Goals of the Athletic Department

Through participation in athletics, the student will:

- Develop and appreciate a healthy mind, body, and spirit
- Develop a positive self-image
- Develop his/her God-given physical and mental abilities in order to compete successfully
- Understand the need for cooperative effort to attain common goals
- Make responsible decisions in stressful situations while functioning within the framework of the school's philosophy and goals
- Accept and follow instructions
- Learn appropriate and courteous manners for sportsmanlike conduct
- Appreciate the diversity of talents and dedication in all individuals
- Develop an understanding that participation in athletics is a privilege that carries a certain number of responsibilities



Definition of Excellence

First let's define winning. Winning on the scoreboard is not always in our control. We cannot always control our level of talent. Certainly it is important that through a strong work ethic we maximize what we have, but everyone is born with a certain amount of God-given ability. Injuries can also play a major role in whether or not a team is successful on the scoreboard. If we base our criteria for success on "winning them all," we will be needlessly disappointed most of the time. Winning must be defined in such a way that we maintain a level of control. If success is not achieved, positive steps can be taken to assure positive results. There should never be a feeling of helplessness or despair, only a continual examination of attitudes and practices that brings about improvement. How is this to be done? Our criterion for success on the field or court is the achievement of excellence. Unlike victory over an opponent, we have control of our standards of excellence. What is excellence? Excellence is the ongoing process of becoming better than we once were, particularly in the below list areas.

Excellence:

- Superior Work Ethic
- Personal Humility
- Team Oriented
- Determination
- Mental Toughness
- Actions Deserving of Victory
- Loving One Another
- Belief, Faith and Trust
- Sacrifice

All of these areas must be present to achieve excellence. The success of our teams will be a reflection on the degree to which the individuals on our teams develop these areas as fundamental components of who we are as a team and as individuals.



Athletic Director Role

The Athletic Director is responsible for organizing and administering the Athletic Program at Saint Joseph High School. His/Her duties include but are not limited to: hiring and orienting coaches, scheduling games and coordinating practice schedules with head coach of each sport, approving and scheduling transportation and officials, planning tournaments, scheduling sports pictures, coordinating senior night, conflict resolution, ensuring compliance with conference and school policies, distributing and collecting uniforms and equipment, and overseeing all aspects of the Department of Athletics. He/She will advise the administration, staff, teams, coaches, and parents of any changes and communicate the needs of the Athletic Department to the administration.

The Athletic Director is expected to provide appropriate instruction and support to all part-time and full time coaches. He/She must also be a positive representative of Saint Joseph High School and the Athletic Department.



Coaches Role

The coach is responsible for creating a fun, safe, and challenging environment in which his/her student-athletes will receive a high level of instruction and competition. The coach must also ensure that student-athletes are exhibiting good behavior on and off the court.

The coach is expected to be a positive representative of Saint Joseph High School and the Athletic Department. This includes ensuring that the coach conducts himself/herself in a manner that will bring honor and respect to our teams and school. He/She is expected to make decisions based on the collective interest of the team, while also developing each student-athlete to his/her fullest potential. The coach must be clear in expectations and available to student-athletes for positive mentorship on and off the field/court. He/She is expected to maintain high personal standards, motivate the players, and promote sportsmanship at all times. Coaches are also responsible for contacting and communicating game results with the media.



Student-Athletes Role

The student-athlete is expected to be a positive addition to the Saint Joseph High School Athletic Department. Students participating in athletic events are expected to maintain all standards of behavior identified in the student handbook.

If a student-athlete must discuss an issue with the coach, he/she must communicate in a respectful manner to try and find a solution. If a situation cannot be resolved, the Athletic Administrator may assist.

Student-athletes will be representing Saint Joseph High School on and off the playing court/field and are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will reflect positively upon our program and school. Student-athletes are expected to treat opponents with respect, play hard within the rules, exercise self-control at all times, give coaches the fullest cooperation, exhibit good sportsmanship at all times, and accept the officials' decisions without argument or gestures. In addition, they must be respectful and exhibit good behavior in class, in practice, in games, and in the community, and most importantly, win with honor, lose without excuses, and never quit.

If a student-athlete fails to conduct himself/herself in a manner that will bring honor and respect to our teams and school, he/she may be subject to penalties which may include game suspensions, ineligibility, or dismissal from the team.

The opportunity for students to participate in athletics is a privilege, not a right. Therefore, students who choose to engage in sports must abide by certain rules. Students wishing to participate in sports must meet all requirements of the PIAA and Saint Joseph High School. Violation of the guidelines can result in disciplinary action.

In addition, please note:

- Students-athletes are asked not to bring valuables to practice or contests. These are public events and the school is not responsible for your property. Saint Joseph High School and coaches are not responsible for lost or stolen items (uniforms, equipment, school issued materials, or personal items) that are in the locker room or surrounding athletic facilities.
- Athletes are not to be in the gymnasium, fitness center, or locker rooms at any time without supervision.



Parents Role

Parents play a vital role in the Saint Joseph High School Athletic Program. Parents model attitudes and behavior for their children. We invite all parents to attend home and away games, support the team, and encourage their children to practice and play hard.

We are appreciative of the assistance parents provide for their children in their athletic endeavors, whether driving them to an athletic event, volunteering, or sacrificing family time to accommodate athletic schedules. We also appreciate the support parents provide our coaches in their efforts to create a valuable athletic experience for all participants. It is important for parents to be mindful of and respect what the coaches are trying to do by avoiding interference or public criticism, especially in front of their children, other teammates, or community members.

In regards to games, parents are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will bring honor and respect to our teams and school. At no time should a parent display inappropriate behavior toward an official, coach, administrator, or student-athlete.

Parents are instructed to contact the Athletic Director regarding any matter that involves the WPIAL or PIAA. All communication with the WPIAL or PIAA must go through Saint Joseph High School.

Any Spectator/Parent who acts in a disruptive manner will cause a game to be suspended until the situation is resolved or the spectator is removed.



Athletic Opportunities

The following is a list of the current interscholastic sports that are offered at Saint Joseph High School during the course of the school year:

FALL	WINTER	SPRING
Coed Golf	Bowling	Baseball
Soccer	Cheerleading	Softball
Women's Volleyball	Men's Basketball	Tennis
	Women's Basketball	Track
	Ultimate Frisbee	



Conference Affiliations

Saint Joseph High School is a member school of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) and abides by all policies and procedures set forth for high school athletics by the PIAA. Saint Joseph High School is located in District VII of the PIAA, the Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (WPIAL).

In the club sport of bowling, Saint Joseph High School belongs to the Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Bowling League (WPIBL) and follows all the policies and procedures set forth by this organization for the sport of bowling.



Volunteer Requirements

The athletic programs at Saint Joseph High School would not exist without volunteers to work at the admission table, concession stand, etc. during athletic events. In order for students to participate in the Saint Joseph High School athletics, parents/guardians are **required** to participate as a volunteer in a **minimum of three (3)** admission and/or concession stand shifts throughout the school's volleyball, basketball, and tournament seasons. We would not be successful without our parents and truly appreciate your support and enthusiasm!

All income generated at home athletic events including volleyball and basketball games, as well as, all athletic tournaments, through admission and concessions, is for the benefit of ALL students who attend Saint Joseph High School.



Contact Information

School Office

Telephone: (724) 224-5552

Fax: (724) 224-3205

Athletic Director: Sally Ackerman

Telephone: (724) 226-8044

Email: sackerman@SaintJosephHS.com



Playing Time

It is our goal to find opportunities not only for participation, but more importantly, for success. Placing each student-athlete at the level where he/she can contribute physically and gain positive feeling from his/her efforts is important to the coaching staff.

We believe in our coaches. Their job is to manage and direct a specific sport. Their responsibilities include evaluating student-athletes, as well as, determining the degree to which each student-athlete will participate and they do this with considerable thought and sensitivity. During this process, coaches will evaluate skill level, athleticism, physical conditioning, positional play, trainability, punctuality, and various other attributes.

We want our student-athletes to learn the value of being on a team and the contribution each must make. Team members have a responsibility to themselves, their teammates, and their coaches to learn and perform their role on the team. Teamwork requires the development of many interpersonal skills such as listening, following directions, accepting constructive criticism, being respectful, and supporting teammates and coaches.

Student-athletes have an obligation to participate in practice sessions and games with full commitment and enthusiasm. Saint Joseph High School Athletics believes that playing time in competition is earned in practice and is not an entitlement. Regardless of the subjective nature of the process and the potential for disagreement, the coach is the only one in a position to make team selections and decisions about playing time.

Coaches WILL NOT discuss playing time with parents. Also, members of a varsity team are not guaranteed playing time. Student-athletes should fully understand that by joining a team they are accepting the pleasures and benefits of participating, as well as, the responsibility and commitment to that team.



Eligibility

Participation in athletics is a privilege, NOT a right. Students can earn the privilege through hard work, dedication, desire, and self-discipline. All students that are currently enrolled in ninth through twelfth grade and attend Saint Joseph High School are eligible to participate in High School Sports. Students must meet all eligibility requirements of the PIAA and Saint Joseph High School.



Academic Eligibility

Student-athletes are expected to maintain passing grades in all classes. Scholastic eligibility is determined on Friday of each week. Students are ineligible to participate in any interscholastic games from Friday through Thursday of the following week if he/she has a failing grade, missing assignment, continued absenteeism, or consistent tardiness.



Conduct Eligibility

Student-athletes are expected to maintain satisfactory conduct in all classes. All students are expected to adhere to all school policies. Failure to do so may result in the athlete losing his/her privilege to participate in the school's athletic program.



Required Forms For Participation

Prior to the start of each season, all parents and student-athletes must complete the following forms:

- PIAA Sports Physical Form (The current PIAA CIPPE Form is available on the school website which can be viewed by visiting [https://saintjosephhs.com/athletics/.](https://saintjosephhs.com/athletics/))
 - Sections 1-6 of the CIPPE Form must be turned in to the Athletic Department before the first day of practice. Athletes who have not submitted their physical forms will not be permitted to practice or compete.
 - Section 7 of the CIPPE Form must be turned in to the Athletic Department before the first day of practice for any subsequent sport's season a student participates in.
 - Section 8 of the CIPPE Form must be submitted to the Athletic Department before a student will be permitted to return to play after an injury.
- Participation Agreement (Last page of the Athletic Handbook) Failure to complete all forms required for participation will result in the student-athlete being declared ineligible to participate.

Failure to complete all forms required for participation will result in the student-athlete being declared ineligible to participate.



Equipment And Uniforms

Athletes are expected to take excellent care of the equipment provided by Saint Joseph High School, which includes timely laundering of uniforms. If equipment is in need of repair during the season, the athlete should notify the coach as soon as possible. The original equipment and/or uniform issued must be returned by the athlete to the Athletic Director within one week of the last contest of the sport's season. The equipment must be cleaned and undamaged, allowing for its future use. An athlete who does not return equipment and/or uniforms in the condition it was issued will be charged for the replacement cost. Report cards, dance tickets, diplomas, transcripts, etc. will be held until all uniforms or replacement funding are received by the school office.

Athletes are responsible for the purchase of club sport uniforms, as well as, all 'disposable' equipment and/or uniform items. Disposable equipment is considered items that cannot be returned to the school at the end of the sports season. A few examples of disposable items include, but are not limited to, basketball warm-ups, golf balls, girls' volleyball shorts, swimsuits, swim caps, baseball hats, etc.



Attendance

Attendance at all games and practice sessions is mandatory for all team members. If a student-athlete will not be attending a practice, meeting, or athlete contest, the coach must be notified at least one day prior to the event being missed. Any student-athlete who has more than three absences (excused or unexcused) may result in limited playing time or removal from the team. Practice is held rain or shine unless otherwise noted by the coach. If a student-athlete is absent from school, he/she cannot practice or play in a game that day. If an athlete is absent from school or leaves school because of illness, the athlete may not participate in a practice or contest. Exceptions to this policy can only be made by the administration. During a school suspension or academic ineligibility, the athlete will not be allowed to participate in contests, practices, or any other school event. In addition, students are expected to be on time for school on the day following a game or match.

Any student-athlete who leaves an athletic event without the permission of the Head Coach will be subject to suspension from the team.



Transportation To Away Contests

Student-athletes are expected to travel with the team to and from all away contests on the school provided transportation. Parents and/or guardians who find it necessary to transport their son/daughter to or home from an athletic contest must notify the coach by submission of a Saint Joseph High School “Student Athlete Permission Slip for Game Transportation”. The approved parent/guardian permission slip is located in the appendix of the Athletic Handbook and on the school website at <https://saintjosephhs.com/athletics/>. In the event a parent needs their son or daughter to go home with another student or student’s parent(s), the school approved permission slip must indicate this information and be signed by the student-athlete’s parent or guardian. All permission forms must be turned into the coach prior to the athletic contest.



Dress Code

Athletes will travel to and from games in the appropriate school dress code. For some teams this means the school uniform, dress clothes, the sports uniform, or the team warm-ups. The basketball team members no longer need to wear dress clothes to and from their games. They may dress casually as long as they don't wear anything with inappropriate logos/language, sagging clothes or ripped clothes such as jeans with holes.



Inclement Weather Policies

When school is canceled due to inclement weather, all athletic practices and/or contests are also canceled for that day.



Insurance, Health, And Injuries

The school/diocese does not carry medical insurance for athletic injuries to students. Therefore, the cost for medical expenses incurred by a student as the result of an athletic injury will be the responsibility of the student's family and/or family insurance provider. In the case of an accident or injury, no matter how minor, the student has a responsibility to report the incident to a coach immediately.



Athletic Requests And Purchases

All requests for athletic supplies and related athletic items will be made through the office of the Athletic Administrator. No donations or gifts in kind are to be made or solicited without consultation with the Athletic Administrator and approval from the Principal. All fundraising plans need to be submitted by the Athletic Association according to the By-Laws and approved by the Athletic Director before they are executed.



Sundays And Holy Week

Except in unusual circumstances, Saint Joseph High School will not participate in scrimmages, games, or competitions on Sundays. When a Sunday contest is unavoidable, games will not be scheduled before 1:00 PM. In addition, Sunday practices will not be scheduled before 1:00 PM.

Practices and games are never scheduled during the Holy Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday).



Statement On Financial Assistance

Tuition assistance, scholarships, work study aid, or any other form of financial assistance provided by the school shall not be connected to a student's participation in the athletic program of the school. All forms of financial assistance shall be based on financial need as determined by the school's policies and procedures. No funds from outside sources may be used to finance athletes: all funds and distribution of funds must follow school, and the Diocese of Pittsburgh Department for Catholic School's guidelines as adopted.



Moving Players To Varsity

In sports that offer a ninth grade or JV program, athletes are not moved to a higher level. The only exception to this rule will be when the freshman or JV student athlete can make a significant impact on the varsity program. In reviewing a potential move from the ninth grade or JV program to a varsity program, the Athletic Department and coaches will review not only the team's needs and team chemistry, but more importantly all aspects of the student's growth and development including physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual. The student's school records including academic, discipline, attendance, etc. will be taken into consideration.



Offseason Participation

Participation of athletes in any off-season activity related in any way to the athletic programs at Saint Joseph High School is voluntary and completely at the discretion of the athlete and his/her parents. Athletes and parents are welcome to consult a coach for recommendations and advice concerning participation in these sports.

During the off-season, no athlete is to use or have school equipment pertaining to the out-of-season sport. Any exceptions must be cleared through the Athletic Department.



College Athletics

A student who wishes to practice and play his/her freshman year at an NCAA Division I or II college must satisfy certain NCAA requirements, as well as, be certified by the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse. The Athletic Administrator and School Counselor are available to assist any potential college athletes with the application process.



Substance Abuse

Any student-athlete found to be in violation of the school's substance abuse policy will automatically be suspended from all team activities including practice, games, tournaments, etc., while the reported offense is under review by the coach, Athletic Administrator, and school administration. Saint Joseph High School Athletic Department reserves the right to impose a disciplinary action or other condition which it considers in its discretion, appropriate to the circumstances of any violation. This may include suspension from the athletic team for the remainder of the season, as well as expulsion from the athletic program for the remainder of the school year.



Hazing

Saint Joseph High School forbids any form of hazing. Hazing is defined as any forced, required, intentional or negligent action, situation or activity which recklessly places any person at risk of physical injury, mental distress or personal indignity, or which encourages violation of any federal, state, local, or school law for the purpose of initiation into, or affiliation with, any organization affiliated with Saint Joseph High School. This applies regardless of the willingness of the participant. Hazing, with or without the consent of a student, is prohibited by Saint Joseph High School and a violation of that prohibition renders both the person inflicting the hazing and the person submitting to the hazing subject to discipline. The full diocesan policy on hazing can be found in the school handbook. Individuals or groups found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action that could include suspension or expulsion from Saint Joseph High School.



Sportsmanship

The Saint Joseph High School Athletic Department is committed to promoting the proper ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fair play. The Saint Joseph High School Athletic Department takes our definition of sportsmanship from the words of Jesus Christ:

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” – Luke 6:31

During competition this may be a hard concept to grasp as we strive for victory. We must remember that our opponents were made in the image and likeness of God and we must respect and dignify all God’s children. Practicing good sportsmanship is Christianity in action.



Parent/Coach Communication (Concerns Or Issues)

Step 1: One of the greatest opportunities for student-athletes is learning skills for effective conflict resolution. When there is a concern, student-athletes are encouraged to speak with their coach directly. It can be very satisfying for all parties involved when student-athletes and coaches are able to find mutually agreeable solutions for an issue that they are preempting to resolve.

Step 2: If the coach and student-athlete are unable to resolve the issue together, then parents may contact the coach. If a parent has a concern to discuss with the coach, the parent should contact the coach at an appropriate time for both parties. An upset parent should wait at least 24 hours before approaching a coach or parent after an athletic event. Under no circumstances should a parent approach a coach or another parent in a harsh manner immediately before, during, or immediately after a practice or a game. Taking this time to reflect on the situation, as well as, honest and respectful communication should allow for more effective dialogue ensuring a more successful experience for everyone.

It is not appropriate for a parent to request feedback from the coach about team strategy (including playing time), play calling, or other student-athletes. It is appropriate for a parent to contact the coach with concerns about their son/daughter's behavior, their skill development, and for physical treatment advice.

Step 3: If the discussion with the coach does not resolve the issue, parents and coaches may contact the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.

Step 4: If the Athletic Director is unable to provide a satisfactory resolution, the parent may contact the appropriate administrator.



Athletic Website

All athletic information will be posted on the athletic page of Saint Joseph High School's website at <http://saintjosephhs.com/athletics/>. The information found on the website will include: sports schedules, athletic forms, coaches' information, and other information pertinent to athletics at Saint Joseph High School.



Student-Athlete/Parent Contract For Participation

We have read and agreed to fully abide by the terms of Saint Joseph High School Athletics Handbook. Failure to comply with the policies set forth in the handbook may result in my suspension and/or dismissal from a sports team and, potentially, my dismissal from the sport program for the current school year.

We understand that we must sign this document and turn it into the Athletic Director to be included on a team roster.

Date	Print Name	Student-Athlete Signature
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Date	Print Name	Parent/Guardian Signature
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Date	Print Name	Parent/Guardian Signature
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Student-Athlete Permission Slip For Game Transportation

Student athletes are expected to travel with the team to a contest and return with the team on the team bus. The coach may require student athletes to ride together on the team bus as part of the athletic program.

Exception: Students must have the prior approval of the coach if they are not riding the bus to or from an athletic event. The coach must personally release the student to the parent or parent designee after the game. With the coach's approval, a student may travel with his/her parents, a teammate, or the parent of a teammate if there is advance consent provided, in writing, prior to the trip. Student athletes will not be released to another student for transportation without parent's written consent.

Student athletes traveling in a private vehicle are not covered by Saint Joseph High School's transportation insurance policy.

_____ has permission to ride with
(Print Name of Student-Athlete)

_____ for travel to/from
(Print Name of Parent/Parent Designee/Student) (circle one)

to the Athletic Event to be held on _____
(Date)

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Parent Contact Information:
Parent Email Address:

Parent Cell Phone Number:

My signature indicates that I have read the transportation policy for athletes printed at the top of this page.



Appendix

Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. - Philippians 3:12-14

All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified. -1 Corinthians 9:25-27

Sports are not merely the exercise of muscles, but the school of moral values and of training in courage, in perseverance, and in overcoming laziness and carelessness. There is no doubt that these values are of greatest interest for the formation of a personality which considers sports not an end in itself, but as a means to total and harmonious physical, moral, and social development.” – Pope John Paul II