St. George Catholic School

Athletic Handbook 2026-2027

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Mission and Philosophy

Mission Statement of St. George School:

St. George Catholic School is a Christ-centered, family-oriented community, with a history and tradition of excellence. Gospel values are integrated with academics within a progressive curriculum, promoting faith development through liturgy, prayer and service.

Mission of St. George School Athletics:

The St. George School Athletic Program dedicates itself to the pursuit of excellence in athletics within the framework of a Catholic community and in accordance with its primary role as an educator and spiritual guide. The athletics program is committed to providing opportunities for each individual student-athlete to reach his/her highest potential while developing the qualities and spirit of a Catholic Christian.

Philosophy:

As a Catholic school, St. George upholds Gospel values and the dignity of every person. While our teams compete to win by seeking the best possible performance and score, we believe the true purpose of Catholic school athletics is deeper: to form the whole person, mind, body, and spirit. Through sport, we strive to cultivate Christian character, strengthen integrity and personal responsibility, and encourage the pursuit of excellence in all endeavors.

Participation on an athletic team is a privilege and with that privilege comes the responsibility to prepare well, maintain a positive attitude, practice good sportsmanship, and meet academic expectations. These responsibilities apply at all times, on and off campus, in athletic and non-athletic settings. In all we do, we rely on God's grace and guidance as we represent St. George with pride and humility.

Nondiscriminatory Policy:

St. George Athletics admits any students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its participatory policies, admissions policies, or athletic programs.

Athletic Programs

St. George Catholic School offers a variety of athletic opportunities for both boys and girls through team and individual sports programs. Interscholastic athletics are available to students enrolled in grades 3–8, while intramural programs, those played within St. George School are offered for boys and girls in Pre-kindergarten through 2nd grade.

St. George Catholic School is a member of the Catholic Schools Athletic Association (CSAA) of the Diocese of Baton Rouge. The CSAA provides an organized framework for interscholastic competition in boys' and girls' basketball, football, and volleyball. The CSAA establishes the rules, eligibility requirements, and game schedules for these sports, and all St. George teams are expected to comply with CSAA policies and procedures.

In addition to CSAA-sponsored interscholastic sports, St. George Catholic School offers other interscholastic opportunities in cross country, swimming, track and field, cheerleading, and dance. The Athletic Director works collaboratively with participating schools and coaches to coordinate schedules, rules, and competition guidelines for these programs.

Below is a list of athletic programs offered:

FALL SPORTS: August-October

- Tackle Football- Boys, Grades 4th-8th
- Girls Basketball- Girls, Grades 3rd-8th
- Cross Country- Boys and Girls, Grades 4th-8th
- Swim- Boys and Girls, Grades 5th-8th

WINTER SPORTS: November-March

- Boys Basketball- Boys, Grades 3rd-8th

SPRING SPORTS: February-May

- Girls Volleyball- Girls, Grades 4th-8th
- Track and Field- Boys and Girls, Grades 5th-8th

CHEER AND DANCE: August-March, Mandatory Summer Camp

- Cheer- Girls, Grades 6th-8th
- Dance- Girls, Grades 6th-8th

INTRAMURALS:

- Soccer- Boys and Girls, Grades Pre-k - 2nd
- Girls Flag Football- Girls, Grades 3rd-8th

Communication

Before each sport season begins, the Athletic Director will send an email to all parents of eligible student-athletes with introductory information about the sport, along with an interest sign-up form that must be completed by a parent or guardian.

Once the season is underway, sport-specific updates, practice schedules, and game information will be communicated by the head coach and Athletic Director to the email addresses provided on the interest sign-up form. Individual teams may also use the **SportsYou** app for real-time team communication throughout the season.

All important information, including weekly schedules, will be posted in **Dragon Tales** each week. A full description of all sports offered at St. George can be found on the school website.

Student Athlete Expectations

Students and parents should recognize that participation in the athletic program is a privilege not a right. By joining the school's athletic program, a student becomes a representative of his/her team and of St. George School. Student-athletes are expected to uphold the academic

and behavioral standards outlined in the St. George School Student-Parent Handbook and to act in a manner consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church. These expectations apply at all times, on campus, at practices and competitions, and in the community whenever a student is identified with St. George or its athletic program. Participation in any event that represents St. George Athletics must be approved by the school Administration and Athletic Director.

Expectations and Sportsmanship:

Student-athletes are held to the same rules, regulations, and procedures that apply to all students, as outlined in the St. George Parent-Student Handbook. In addition, each student-athlete is expected to:

- Model and promote good sportsmanship, encouraging respectful, positive conduct in themselves and others.
- Represent St. George in an exemplary manner on and off the court/field.
- Demonstrate Christian courtesy and good manners toward officials, coaches, opposing coaches, players, and spectators at all times.

Consequences for unsportsmanlike behavior during a practice or game will be left to the discretion of the coaches for each sport along with input from the Athletic Director, Principal or school disciplinarian. This can range from sitting out at practice to a one-game suspension. In extreme cases when an athlete has been ejected from a game, multi-game suspensions and dismissal from the team may be appropriate. The Athletic Director and Principal will make the final decision following a meeting with the athlete, coach, and parent.

CSAA rules state that all student athletes must pledge to uphold a Code of Conduct and agree to:

- Follow the regulation set up by the CSAA, the school, and the church parish.
- Respect the judgement of officials and abide by the rules of the contest. Technical fouls, unsportsmanlike conduct penalties, and ejections are never acceptable.
- Treat opposing players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect.
- Conduct themselves in a positive manner, reflecting Catholic Christian values.
- Adhere to the decisions of the league manager, school principal, and pastor of the parish.

  Violations of this CSAA Code of Conduct may result in players suspended from participation in CSAA activities or additional penalties as explained under the Sanctions section of the CSAA Handbook (available upon request).

Academic Eligibility

A student will be considered ELIGIBLE to participate in interscholastic athletics at St. George if their most recent academic report reflects:

1. A passing grade in each subject
2. A Satisfactory grade or better in all special subjects
3. A Satisfactory grade or better in conduct for all subjects

A student-athlete will be considered ON PROBATION should his/her most recent academic report reflect any one or a combination of the following academic grades or conduct:

1. One failing grade in any subject
2. A standard based grade of 1 in any special subject
3. Below a 2 in conduct in any subject

Probation is a three-week period during which a student-athlete works to improve his/her grades and/or conduct. During this three-week period, a student is still considered a full member of the athletic team, but time should be spent wisely in improving one's grades and conduct.

A student-athlete remains a full, participating member of a team if his/her grades at the end of the probationary three-week period reflect a passing average or better in every class, and the student-athlete maintains conduct in keeping with the St. George Student-Parent Handbook and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

A student-athlete will be considered INELIGIBLE for interscholastic sports at St. George School should there be no improvement after the three-week probationary period. Ineligibility means that a student-athlete may NOT participate in interscholastic athletics at St. George for the remainder of the season.

Student-athletes who are absent for all or part of a school day due to an excused absence may not participate in extracurricular activities occurring that day without approval from administration. Unexcused absent students may not participate in extracurricular activities occurring on that day.

Parent Expectations

Parents and other members of the community play a vital role in the holistic education of children including students' participation in school-sponsored athletics. Together, all stakeholders should actively work to ensure that the Catholic mission and identity of St. George School permeates the athletics program.

<u>All parents/guardians are expected to:</u>

- Support the mission of St. George School and uphold the ideals and philosophy of the Athletic Program.
- Complete and submit all required documentation in a timely manner, including (but not limited to) registration forms, league/CSAA Code of Conduct forms, and updated parent/guardian and emergency contact information.
- Fulfill volunteer duties: Parents/guardians are expected to work assigned gate and concession shifts for home athletic events. If you are unable to work an assigned shift, it is your responsibility to arrange an approved substitute in advance, following Athletic Department procedures.
- Attend one athletic department parent orientation in the fall or spring, as well as all team parent meetings at the beginning of each sport season.

- Support academic and discipline expectations by reinforcing school policies and helping student-athletes maintain strong classroom performance and appropriate conduct.
- Follow all safety guidelines set by St. George School.
- Model good sportsmanship at all times by showing respect to coaches, student-athletes, opponents, officials, and school administrators.
- Support team commitments by helping student-athletes meet obligations for practices, games, transportation, and communication.
- Properly maintain and return all uniforms and equipment provided by the school.
- Use social media responsibly- see *Social Media* section below.
- Communicate openly and respectfully with coaches and administrators, seeking solutions that serve the student-athlete and the team.

Parent Communication Guidelines ("24-Hour Rule")

To promote respectful and productive communication, St. George follows a "24-Hour Rule." Parents/guardians should not approach a coach immediately after a game or practice. Instead, please allow at least 24 hours before initiating contact, so that concerns can be addressed calmly, respectfully, and constructively.

Concern Resolution Process

If a parent/guardian has a concern, it should be addressed in the following order:

1. Head Coach (first point of contact)
2. Athletic Director (if the concern is not resolved)
3. Principal (if the concern remains unresolved after step 2)

This process helps ensure clear communication, appropriate follow-through, and the best possible outcome for students, families, and coaches.

Social Media Responsibility

Parents/guardians are expected to conduct themselves online in a manner consistent with the mission and values of St. George Catholic School. This includes all posts, comments, shares, and reactions on any platform. The following are not acceptable:

- Criticizing, mocking, or making negative comments about student-athletes, coaches, officials, opposing teams, or other parents — whether named or clearly identifiable
- Posting or sharing photos or videos of student-athletes without the consent of their parent or guardian
- Creating or participating in online group discussions intended to organize complaints or criticism directed at coaches, staff, or school administration

Positive coverage of games, celebrations of student achievement, and general school spirit posts are encouraged. Parents/guardians who witness concerning social media activity are encouraged to report it to the Athletic Director rather than engaging publicly.

Violations of this policy may be addressed by the Athletic Department and school administration, and could result in restricted access to school athletic events.

Fees

Athletic participation fees help offset the costs associated with operating and maintaining a quality athletic program at St. George. These fees contribute to expenses such as uniforms, league team and player registration fees, officials/referees, equipment, gym and field maintenance, and other program-related costs. Fees are due prior to the start of each season unless other arrangements have been approved by the Athletic Department.

Costs per Sport:

- Football, Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball, and Volleyball — $135 per sport
- Cross Country, Track & Field, and Swim — $90 per sport
- Cheer and Dance — $250–$400 depending on camp participation and related expenses
- Intramural Sports — $40 per participant.

Scholarships:

Financial circumstances should never prevent a student-athlete from participating in St. George athletics. Financial assistance is available for families who may need support with athletic fees. Any family seeking assistance is encouraged to contact the Athletic Director or Principal. All requests will be handled confidentially.

Uniforms

St. George will provide uniforms for the following sports programs:

- Football and Volleyball: jersey only. Student-athletes are responsible for providing all other required equipment and apparel.
- Basketball (boys and girls), Cross Country, and Track: jersey and shorts.

Student-athletes participating in swim, cheer, and dance are responsible for purchasing their own uniforms and any required accessories.

Uniforms will be distributed prior to the first athletic contest of each season. Student-athletes and parents are responsible for the proper care and maintenance of all issued uniforms throughout the season. All uniforms must be returned promptly at the conclusion of the season in good condition. Any lost, damaged, or excessively worn uniforms may result in a replacement fee being assessed to the student-athlete's family.

Transportation Policy

In accordance with the policies of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, St. George Catholic School does not provide transportation to or from athletic practices, games, or events. Transportation arrangements are the sole responsibility of parents or guardians.

Parents/guardians assume full responsibility for transporting their student-athletes to and from all athletic activities. St. George Catholic School and the Diocese of Baton Rouge are not liable for any accidents, injuries, or incidents that may occur while traveling to or from athletic events or practices.

Spectator Expectations

St. George Catholic School expects all spectators, parents/guardians, family members and guests, to represent our school with class and to support the Catholic mission of our community. Fan conduct must be appropriate, respectful, and sportsmanlike at all times, whether at home or away events.

Expectations for all parents/guardians and any other spectators at all contests:

- Cheer positively and encourage all athletes. Applaud effort and good sportsmanship, and feel free to recognize a good play by either team.
- Be supportive and respectful. Treat players, coaches, officials, opposing teams, and other spectators with courtesy and dignity.
- Avoid negative comments or actions. Criticizing, taunting, booing, arguing with officials, or making disparaging remarks is not acceptable.
- Allow coaches to coach. Parents and spectators may not shout instructions, strategies, or criticisms from the stands. Coaching from the sideline undermines team unity, creates confusion for athletes, and is not permitted.
- Follow all facility and event rules. Spectators must comply with directions from school staff, administrators, athletic personnel, and game officials.

Consequences

Spectators who do not meet these expectations may be asked to correct their behavior, relocate, or leave the event. Continued or serious misconduct may result in further restrictions, including removal from future contests, at the discretion of the Athletic Director and school administration.

In addition, CSAA rules state that all spectators must pledge to uphold a Code of Conduct and agree to:

- Respect decisions made by contest officials and never publicly criticize their work.
- Be a role model for our youth by positively supporting teams and not shouting instructions or criticism to the players or coaches.
- Remember that the players are children and are playing for their enjoyment, not the spectators.
- Not make derogatory comments or gestures to players, coaches, spectators of the opposing team, officials, or game administrators.
- Be drug-, alcohol-, and tobacco-free at all CSAA games.
- Ensure that their behavior and actions are always representative of a commitment to the mission and philosophy of the CSAA.
- Adhere to the decisions of the league manager, school Principal, and pastor of the parish.

  Violations of this CSAA Code of Conduct may result in spectators suspended from participation in CSAA activities or additional penalties as explained under the Sanctions section of the CSAA Handbook (available upon request).

Coaches Expectations

Coaches are first and foremost educators, and must work in coordination with the parents who are the primary educators of children. At all times, coaches must be examples of Christ who serve as role models for student-athletes to emulate. They must be messengers of the school mission and ensure that athletic programs embody the Catholic characteristics prevalent at St. George School.

Minimum Requirements: All head coaches must be at least 18 years of age and complete the required Diocesan certification process. Assistant coaches must be high school students or older and must complete the required Diocesan certification process.

All coaches are expected to:

- Support the mission of St. George School and uphold the ideals and philosophy of the Athletic Program.
- Treat all student-athletes fairly and with dignity and respect.
- Attend required coaches' meetings conducted by the Athletic Director and the CSAA.
- Understand and follow all applicable rules, regulations, and safety procedures established by the Athletic Department, school administration, and the CSAA.
- Communicate consistently and professionally with the Athletic Director and parents/guardians.
- Promote high expectations for academics, behavior, and sportsmanship.
- Provide a safe, positive environment for all students during practices and contests.
- Follow grade/division playing-time guidelines established by the Athletic Department.
- Use the approved methods of communication.
- Use social media responsibly, see *Social Media* section below.
- Respect student privacy: Coaches may only take photos/videos in public settings and must never take photos/videos in private or non-public areas (including, but not limited to, locker rooms, restrooms, or changing areas).

Social Media Responsibility

Coaches may not post, share, comment, or react on any social media platform in a way that could reasonably be viewed as negative, disparaging, or unprofessional toward any student-athlete, parent, official, opposing team, school, or spectator — regardless of whether the school is tagged or mentioned. This applies to personal accounts as well as any team or sport-related accounts. Specifically, coaches may not:

- Post or share photos or videos of student-athletes without prior written consent from a parent or guardian
- Communicate privately with student-athletes through personal social media accounts or direct messages; all digital communication with students must include a parent/guardian or another adult

- Make any public comment about playing time, team selection, or disciplinary matters involving individual students

Coaches are encouraged to celebrate team achievements and promote school spirit through positive, school-approved content. Any questions about appropriate social media use should be directed to the Athletic Director.

In addition, CSAA rules state that all coaches must pledge to uphold a Code of Conduct and agree to:

- Follow the regulations set up by the CSAA, the school, and the church parish.
- Respect the judgement of officials and abide by the rules of the contests. Arguing with officials, technical fouls, unsportsmanlike conduct penalties, and ejections are never acceptable.
- Set a good example for players and fans to follow, exemplifying the highest moral and ethical behavior.
- Treat opposing players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect.
- Instruct players in proper sportsmanship and demand that they behave accordingly.
- Coach in a positive manner, encouraging players through positive reinforcement.
- Be drug-, alcohol-, and tobacco-free at all CSAA practices and games.
- Ensure that their behavior and actions are always representative of the moral community that he/she is charged with building.
- Adhere to the decisions of the league manager, school Principal, and pastor of the parish.

  Violations of this CSAA Code of Conduct may result in coaches suspended from participation in CSAA activities or additional penalties as explained under the Sanctions section of the CSAA Handbook (available upon request).

Student Athlete Placement

<u>CSAA Sports</u>

1. Football- Teams will be divided by grade. If participation numbers allow, St. George will field one 4th grade team, one 5th grade team, one 6th grade team and one combined 7th and 8th grade team. If participation numbers are low grades may be combined.

2. Basketball (boys and girls) and Volleyball- Basketball teams will be formed to play in the Developmental League for 3rd-5th grades, or Division 1 and Division 2 Leagues for 6th-8th grades. Volleyball teams will be formed in the same manner to play in the Developmental League for 5th grade, or Division 1 and Division 2 leagues for 6th-8th grades.

   Developmental teams will be formed with a focus on balanced competition and player growth. Teams will be divided as evenly as possible based on talent and skill level, as determined by the Athletic Director in collaboration with outside evaluators who are not involved in coaching any developmental team.

Division 1 and Division 2 teams will be formed after a 2 day tryout process held by the Division 1 coaches under the direction of the Athletic Director. The Division 1 coaches will choose the student athletes they feel have demonstrated at tryouts that they can compete at a higher level of competition. The student athletes not placed on the Division 1 team will be divided into teams as evenly as possible based on talent and skill level, as determined by the Athletic Director in collaboration with outside evaluators.

If participation numbers and talent level allows St. George may form two Division 1 teams to compete in the league. During the tryout process the Athletic Director in collaboration with the Division 1 coaches and outside evaluators will determine if two Division 1 teams is appropriate.

Non CSAA Sports

1. Cross Country- One team formed for all eligible 4th-8th grade boys and girls who wish to participate.
2. Swimming- One team formed for all eligible 5th-8th grade boys and girls who wish to participate and are able to meet the minimum requirements for safe competition. The swim team will compete in the Crawfish Aquatics Middle School League.
3. Track and Field- One team formed for all eligible 5th-8th grade boys and girls who wish to participate.
4. Cheer- One 6th grade team, one 7th grade team and one 8th grade team will be formed based on a clinic/tryout process facilitated by the Athletic Director and school moderator(s). Girls wishing to be considered for a cheer team will be judged on UCA appropriate grade level skills by outside evaluators.
5. Dance- One combined 6th-8th grade team formed after a clinic/tryout process facilitated by the Athletic Director and school moderator(s). Girls wishing to be considered for the dance team will be judged on UDA appropriate dance skills by outside evaluators.

Intramurals

The primary goal of the intramural program is to provide a fun, positive, and developmentally appropriate environment where students can build friendships, enjoy physical activity, and develop fundamental athletic skills. Participation is encouraged for all St. George students, regardless of experience or skill level, as the program is designed to foster inclusion, sportsmanship, and community among students and families.

Season-long teams will not be formed for intramural sports. Participants will take part in group skill development activities at the beginning of the season and/or each session. During the intramural season, teams for modified games and competitions will be created in a balanced and equitable manner to encourage participation, learning, and enjoyment for all students at each session games are played.

Playing Time

Playing time expectations and guidelines vary by sport, division, and grade level. Rules and expectations will be discussed for each at the parent meeting in the beginning of each season.

Coaches Placement

With the Principal's approval, the Athletic Director appoints head coaches. Assistant coaches are recommended by the head coach and must be approved by the Athletic Director and/or the Principal. All coaches must complete the Child Protection certification process as mandated by the Diocese.

Coaches are selected based on the following primary factors:

- Demonstrated Christian values
- Strong character and appropriate temperament
- Commitment to the mission of St. George and a clear understanding of the philosophy of the Athletic Program
- Effective communication with the Athletic Director, Principal, parents/guardians, and student-athletes
- Commitment to teaching fundamentals and developing each athlete's skills appropriately
- Availability and reliability to fulfill the time requirements for practices and contests

Health and Wellness

Physical Forms

Before participating in any St. George Catholic School interscholastic athletic program each student-athlete must have a current Louisiana High School Athletic Association (LHSAA) Pre-Participation Medical Evaluation on file with the Athletic Director. The LHSAA physical examination form must be completed and signed by a licensed physician. The required form is available on the St. George School website under the Athletics tab. Once completed, the form must be submitted by uploading it through the Athletics section of the school website.

LHSAA physicals are valid for 13 months from the date of the examination. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that the student-athlete's physical remains current throughout the athletic year. Student-athletes with an expired physical will not be permitted to participate in practices, games, workouts, or any other athletic activities until a new physical has been submitted and approved by the Athletic Director.

Wellness

If a student-athlete has any special medical needs, including but not limited to asthma, allergies, or other medical conditions, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the coaching staff and Athletic Director prior to participation. Parents/guardians must provide any necessary information, instructions, and required medical documentation to ensure appropriate care and support during athletic activities.

Any medication stored with the St. George School nurse will not be accessible to coaches or student-athletes during practices, games, or athletic events. Parents/guardians are responsible for making appropriate arrangements for any medications or medical supplies that may be needed while participating in athletics.

Orthopedic Policy

To ensure the safety of all participants, student-athletes may NOT participate in practices or games while wearing an orthopedic brace, cast, splint, or other medical device that contains any hard or rigid components.

A student athlete may participate in games and practices while wearing a soft brace, provided that a signed parent or guardian note, or a physician's note clearing the athlete to participate is submitted to the athletic office prior to participation. Any documentation submitted must be on file before the student athlete will be allowed to take part in any athletic activity. School Administration, the Athletic Director and coaching staff reserves the right to remove a student athlete from participation if there is any concern that a brace or device, regardless of type, poses a safety risk to the athlete or other participants.

St. George Athletic Association

The St. George Athletic Association (SGAA) serves as an advisory committee that supports and promotes the mission of the St. George athletic program. The committee is composed of parent representatives from a variety of grade levels and sports to ensure broad communication, collaboration, and support across all athletic programs.

The SGAA meets every other month throughout the school year to discuss current and upcoming sports seasons, program needs, event planning, and ways to enhance the student-athlete experience. The committee works closely with the Athletic Director and Principal to provide feedback, assist with organization and communication, and help ensure the continued success of St. George athletics.

In addition to serving in an advisory role, SGAA members assist in the operation and facilitation of home athletic events, events at the fair sponsored by the athletic department and on Spirit Day.. Responsibilities may include helping with admissions, concessions, scorekeeping, hospitality, setup and cleanup, and other event-related needs.

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