



ATHLETICS HANDBOOK

2023 - 2024

St Patrick Catholic School

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St Patrick School Athletics

Mission Statement of St Patrick School:

The Mission of Saint Patrick Catholic School, rooted in the richness of Catholic tradition, is to provide a Christ-centered learning environment, leading our students to do God’s will in this world. Recognizing that our students are unique creations of God that are blessed with special talents and gifts, we strive to empower them to become active and creative 21st century learners.

Mission of St Patrick School Athletics:

The St Patrick 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:

We recognize that the imperishable crown offered by Jesus Christ far exceeds any of the perishable crowns or trophies offered by this world. As a Catholic school, St Patrick upholds Christian values and principles. Though our athletic teams strive to win in the sense of having the best score, we recognize the real value of Catholic school athletics is realized only if it fosters the development of the human person—both in spirit and in body—by cultivating Christian character, strengthening personal integrity and responsibility, and promoting the pursuit of excellence in all endeavors.

Conference Affiliation:

St Patrick School participates in the Virginia Catholic Athletic Conference (VCAC), a conference comprised of local Catholic schools. St Patrick School plays under the Virginia High School League (VHSL) rules as amended by the bylaws of the VCAC. In addition to playing conference games, St Patrick teams often play other schools in the area. Thus, St Patrick athletes play students from diverse backgrounds and skill levels.

Athletic Teams at St Patrick

Competitive sports teams are intended for the middle school level (grades 6 – 8) Students in grade 5 are permitted to participate if and when we are unable to field a complete team, with substitutes, from the middle school population.

Fall	field hockey for girls (non-VCAC) soccer for boys (VCAC affiliated)
Winter	junior varsity and varsity basketball for both girls and boys (VCAC affiliated)
Spring	soccer for girls (VCAC affiliated)

Registration Information

Procedure for Registration

A student can become a full, participating member of a St Patrick athletic team once the following requirements are met:

1. Student and parent/guardian have completed and returned St Patrick Athletics Permission Form (see Appendix A)
2. Student and parent/guardian have read the St Patrick Athletics Handbook and signed the Athletics Contract (see Appendix B)
3. Student and parent/guardian have completed and returned Virginia High School League (VHSL) Physical form.
4. Student and parent/guardian have paid the \$35 athletics fee.

Athletics Permission Form

St Patrick students wishing to participate in a sport must fill out a St Patrick School Athletic Permission Form. This form is accessible at the end of this handbook (see Appendix A) and in the main office of the school. Permission forms must be completed and returned on or before the deadline set before the first tryout/practice date. *Without a permission form on file, a student will not be allowed to participate in any athletic activities.* Any student who decides to participate on a team after the deadline should see the Athletic Director before attending practice. Deadlines are not intended to prevent a student from participating on a sports team, but they are necessary to make sure that team sizes do not become too large to allow for proper instruction of participants. A permission form need only be completed one time during the school year. Please indicate in the spaces provided at the top of the form, which sports the student may be interested in playing.

Physical

St Patrick students wishing to participate in a sport must turn in a VHSL physical form completed by the student's primary care manager. *Without a physical on file with St Patrick School, a student may not participate in any athletic activities.*

Fees

All sports offered at St Patrick School have different costs required for operation. Student athletes and their families are required to pay a \$35 per athlete per sport fee that contributes to covering a *part* of the operating costs, uniforms cost, equipment costs, and tournament fees. Students and their families may be asked to provide their own personal equipment for certain sports.

Students will not be allowed to participate if their athletics fee has not been paid prior to the first game of the season.

Financial constraints should not inhibit any student from participating in student athletics. For financial assistance for St Patrick athletics, please contact the principal.

Student Expectations and Requirements

Students and parents should recognize that participation in the athletic program is not a right of all students, but rather a privilege to those selected individuals who possess the ability, attitude, disposition, cooperative spirit, and desire to represent the St Patrick community in a favorable way. By joining the school's athletic program, a student becomes a representative of his/her team and of St Patrick School.

Prior to a student's participation in any athletic activity, St Patrick School must have a permission form signed by the parent and a completed VHSL physical on file, as well as the student's athletic fee paid. Without any of these items, participation is not allowed for insurance and legal reasons.

Eligibility and Probation

We expect student-athletes to maintain academic and behavioral standards in keeping with the St Patrick School Parent-Student Handbook and the teachings of the Catholic Church. These regulations and procedures apply while on school premises, during practices and competitions, and in the public arena. A student will be considered *ELIGIBLE* to participate in interscholastic athletics at St Patrick School if his/her current report card or interim grades reflect a 70 or higher in each academic subject.

A student-athlete will be considered *ON PROBATION* should his/her most recent academic report card or interim report reflect a grade of 70 or lower in any academic subject.

A student-athlete will also be considered *ON PROBATION* should his/her behavior require disciplinary action such as removal from a classroom or after school detention.

Probation is a two (2)-week period during which a student-athlete works to improve his/her grades and/or conduct. During this two-week period, a student is still considered a full, participating member of the athletic team, but *time should be spent wisely in improving one's grades and conduct*. Student-athletes are encouraged to seek extra help from those teachers in courses where he/she is struggling either before school or after school. St Patrick School faculty and staff are always willing to assist students in their academic studies and personal growth as young adults.

Evaluating Probationary Improvement

A student-athlete remains a full, participating member of a team if his/her grades at the end of the probationary two-week period reflect a grade of 70 or higher in every class, and the student-athlete maintained conduct in keeping with the St Patrick Parent-Student Handbook and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Ineligibility

A student-athlete will be considered *INELIGIBLE* for interscholastic sports at St Patrick School should there be no improvement after the two-week probationary period. *Ineligibility* means that a student-athlete may NOT participate in interscholastic athletics at St Patrick for the remainder of the season. This will result in the removal of the student from the team's roster.

All student-athletes are allowed one (1) probationary period per Trimester. Should a student-athlete fail to meet the academic and behavior standards outlined above more than once during a Trimester, he/she will be considered ineligible and will no longer be permitted to participate in interscholastic sports at St Patrick School for the remainder of the Trimester.

Removal from Team – Parent Decision

The Principal, Athletic Director and Coaches will respect and support the decision of a parent to remove his or her child from a team for any reason. However, once the child is removed, he or she may not return to that team for the remainder of the sport season.

Attendance

All student-athletes must be marked as present in school on the day of practice or a game to participate. **Student-Athletes must be present in school for at least 3 hours of the school day in order to participate in a practice or game.**

All student-athletes must recognize the time commitment made to a team. One is expected to attend all practices and games. If one cannot attend a practice or game, please make sure the coach and/or athletic director has been notified *in advance*. Consequences for a missed practice or game will be informed by the team rules as outlined by the coach/team at the beginning of the season in addition to the natural consequences that result from missing practice instruction or game experience.

Dress Code/Uniforms

Student-Athletes are highly visible representatives of the school and, as such, are responsible for using good judgment in their overall appearance.

When early dismissal is necessary for games, athletes may wear the uniform to school provided the following is adhered to for the entire school day: Solid green or white T-shirts must be worn under a uniform tank. Uniform shorts or skirts that are form fitting or shorter than the PE shorts must be covered with PE sweatpants or PE shorts. If a student athlete chooses to wear a jacket it must be the PE track jacket or a school sweatshirt. Athletic shoes and socks that conform to the school uniform policy may be worn. Parents will be contacted to provide appropriate uniform clothing if the student does not adhere to the policy.

Uniforms must be returned to the athletic director within seven (7) days of the last game.

Progress reports and/or report cards may be withheld until the uniform is returned. If a uniform is not returned, parents are responsible for the cost of replacing the uniform.

Sportsmanship

Players

All student-athletes are expected to represent St Patrick School in an exemplary manner. This behavior is expected both on and off the court or field. Student-athletes are expected to display the best of Christian courtesy and manners to all officials, coaches, opposing coaches, players, and spectators. At all times good sportsmanship is the rule, not the exception. The penalty 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. 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.

Expectations of Parents

“It is incumbent upon parents to cooperate closely with the school teachers to whom they entrust their children to be educated; in fulfilling their duty teachers are to collaborate closely with parents who are willingly heard and for whom associations or meetings are to be inaugurated and held in great esteem.”
(Code of Canon Law, 796)

St Patrick School coaches and administrators respect the primacy of the parents as the first teachers of their student-athletes, and will partner with parents in the formation of student-athletes. 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 Patrick School permeates the athletics program.

Top Five Ways to Support your Student-Athlete

1. **Be present** – Show up to games, cheer, and support our teams!
2. **Be positive** – Children learn from modeling. When talking about the game, season, performances, and decision-making, please share the gift of a positive outlook on life! Make sure that your child knows that win or lose, he/she is loved and supported.
3. **Encourage independence** – Encourage student-athletes to be responsible for the care of their athletic gear and to be prepared for practices and games. In addition, student-athletes should speak directly with their coach about any questions and/or concerns.
4. **Observe the “24 Hour Cushion”** – As do all good educators, St Patrick coaches will naturally and deliberately reflect on game situations and decisions. Please allow coaches the time they need to process their decisions before approaching them with any questions or concerns. As stated above, coaches need not discuss playing time, coaching strategies and specific plays, or information pertaining to other athletes.

5. **Model St Patrick's behavior expectations for visiting spectators** – Take pride in our athletic program and model for visitors how we...
- i. cheer for our team rather than against our opponents.
 - ii. respect the integrity and authority of game officials.
 - iii. allow coaches to coach without criticism from the spectators.
 - iv. help clean up at the end of athletic events.

Parents of student athletes are expected to display the best of Christian courtesy and manners to all officials, coaches, opposing coaches, players, and spectators. At all times good sportsmanship is the rule, not the exception.

Transportation

Transportation to/from practices and games is the sole responsibility of the parents. Please ensure that your student-athlete is picked up promptly at the end of each practice/game.

In accordance with the policies of the Diocese of Arlington, St Patrick School does not provide any formal transportation to or from athletic events. All transportation is privately arranged by parents/guardians. However, in order to participate as a "driver" for an athletic team, St Patrick School must have a valid driver's license and proof of insurance on file. St Patrick and the Archdiocese of Arlington assume no liability for accidents that may occur en route to any sporting practice or activity.



**Athletics Permission Form
2022-2023**

Name of Athlete _____ Grade: _____

Sports: Basketball _____ Soccer _____ Field Hockey _____ Running Club _____ (no fee for running club)

Insurance

The following information must be completed and signed by the appropriate parent or guardian and turned in to the main office before participation in student athletic activities will be allowed. If the following information is not complete, this form will be returned to you.

Parent/Guardian : _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____ Cell/Emergency Phone Number: _____

Email address _____

All students participating in student athletic activities at St Patrick must have their own medical coverage. Students will not be allowed to participate in student athletic activities unless the following information is submitted and the form is signed by the parent or the guardian of the student.

Insurance Company: _____

Policy Holder: _____

Policy and Group Number: _____

Address or phone number of insurance company:

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____

Athletic Fee *(Please make payable to St Patrick School with specific sport in Memo Line)*

_____ \$50 for Soccer, Basketball, Field Hockey (no fee for Running Club)

Check # _____



Waiver of Liability

We, the undersigned, hereby certify that I (we) am (are) the parent or legal guardian of the student. I hereby give permission to the staff of St Patrick Catholic School to seek during the period of school athletic activities, appropriate medical attention and for the student to receive medical attention and treatment to be covered under the student's insurance policy detailed on page 1 of this form. I/We the undersigned, for ourselves, our heirs, our executor and administrator, waiver, release, and forever discharge St Patrick Catholic School and its staff, officers, agents, employees, representatives, successors and assigns from any and all liability claims, demands, actions, and causes of action whatsoever arising out of or related to any loss, personal injury or property damage that may be sustained or occur during participation in student athletic activities or while at school.

Signature of Parent or Guardian _____ Date: _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian _____ Date: _____



ATHLETICS CONTRACT

Please initial each statement below to acknowledge your agreement to this contract. Then, sign the form at the bottom and return to the Athletic Director to be eligible for participation.

As a St Patrick Student-Athlete...

___ I will strive to give my best to the team in every practice and every game.

___ I will be on time for all practices and games.

___ I will not miss a practice or game because of another outside sport or extra-curricular activity unless approved by the coach or athletic director.

___ This experience is an opportunity to learn not only _____ (sport), but also teamwork with all its responsibilities. There will be times when I will follow someone's lead and there will be times when I must assume that lead – I always have a contribution to make to my team.

___ I will take my coaches' directions and comments as constructive suggestions, which make me a better athlete and my team a successful unit.

___ Practice is where I learn the concepts of the game. How I apply those concepts in mind and body in practice will carry over into the game situation.

___ I will always play hard, but always will be a fair sport whether we are winning or losing the game, realizing that everyone on my team and my opponent's team is playing for fun and the competitive experience.

___ I will carry these principles to my schoolwork and my family life with the realization that these are of greatest importance and take precedence to any sport.

___ I will be an example of Christ in all my actions on and off the field/court of competition.

___ I have read the athletic handbook and agree to follow the policies and procedures as stated.

Player Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR