



## MERCY ATHLETICS HANDBOOK 2023-2024

### **MISSION**

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School strives to further its mission by providing opportunities for its students to participate in athletics and seeks the overall development and growth of each student – spiritually, socially, intellectually, emotionally and physically.

Our Lady of Mercy Athletics are an essential element of the education of students because they foster the development of character, life skills, sportsmanship and teamwork. Our athletic programs strive to develop a positive self-image and encourage physical activity as a part of a healthy lifestyle.

Mercy athletics serve as a source of school pride and maintain positive relationships between our school and the community. While our school desires to compete at a very high level, winning does not supersede the educational goals of our athletic program.

### **ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT GOALS:**

- Offer students an enjoyable and life-giving experience.
- Cultivate character development and life skills.
- Promote personal improvement in skills, physical condition, knowledge of sport and sportsmanship.
- Promote programs of excellence that accomplish team goals and lead to success on and off the playing field.

## **OLOM ATHLETIC PROGRAMS**

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School provides a full range of athletic programs for all students, both team and individual.

### **FALL SPORTS:**

- Tackle Football: Grades 3rd – 8th
- Girls Basketball: Grades 3rd – 8th
- Cross Country: Grades 4th – 8th
- Cheerleading: Grades 4th – 8th
- Swimming: Grades 5th – 8th (Crawfish Aquatics)
- Tennis: Grades 6th – 8th (Bocage Racquet Club)

### **WINTER/SPRING SPORTS:**

- Boys Basketball: Grades 3rd – 8th
- Girls Volleyball: Grades 5th – 8th
- Track & Field: Grades 5th – 8th
- Intramural Basketball: Grades Pre-K – 2nd (Boys and Girls)
- Intramural Flag Football: Grades Pre-K – 2nd (Boys and Girls)
- Intramural Tball: Grades Pre-K – 2nd (Boys and Girls)

## **FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT**

Our Lady of Mercy is blessed to have wonderful facilities. All facilities and equipment utilized through participation in Mercy athletics should be treated with respect and are bound by the rules and agreements set forth by Mercy. It is our responsibility as Christians to be good stewards of the blessings God has bestowed upon us. Our expectation is that students, coaches, parents and spectators will treat all Mercy facilities and equipment with respect.

**\*\*The use of all facilities, including the new gym, old gym and football field must be approved by the Athletic Director. \*\***

## STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

### 1. *Academic*

The athletic programs at Mercy are extracurricular in nature, therefore they should not negatively impact academic progress. The Mercy handbook lays out the purpose and guidelines for participation in extracurricular activities as follows:

All students participating in extracurricular activities represent Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School on and off campus, and the school's expectations for appropriate behavior apply. A student must be present at least one-half of the school day in order to participate in an extracurricular activity on that day.

Students participating in extracurricular activities must maintain an overall "C" average in subjects to participate. Students that earn a conduct grade of 80 or below will be placed on probation from participating in school events. Terms of the probation will be determined by the school administration.

In consultation with parents and teachers, the administrator may determine that continued participation in an extracurricular activity may not be in the best interest of the student.

*Please note:* Students must meet eligibility requirements to participate in extracurriculars on the date tryouts begin in order to be eligible for that sport.

### 2. *Physical*

Parents must agree to and sign the Mercy Athletic Waiver and provide a current physical from a physician for their son or daughter to compete in athletic play.

### 3. *Age and Grade*

Mercy adheres to the age and grade regulations set forth by the respective leagues in which they compete. Any athlete not in adherence to these regulations will be deemed ineligible for play.

### 4. *School Attendance*

A student must attend at least a half day of school to practice or play in any athletic contest. Students who are absent the day of an athletic event will not be eligible to compete in that days' contest (any special circumstances may be approved by the Administration or Athletic Director)

-11:30 AM is considered Half-Day

-If Student is not in school a half-day on Friday, they will not be able to participate in activity over the weekend.

### **Practices and Games**

The respective coaches for each sport will communicate with the parents regarding practice times and locations. Practices should not be held on Sunday before 12pm to allow each family their respective spiritual time. Any practice held on a Sunday or during a holiday must be approved by the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director will distribute a game schedule to the coaches as well as placing it on the school website. If a student is attending a practice or game at Mercy and is in Extended Day, the student must be signed out by a coach and bring a note stating that he or she has permission from the parent to sign the student out.

### **Consequences**

Failure to abide by these rules and regulations or any other set forth by Our Lady of Mercy and the respective leagues in which the school completes is subject to consequences deemed appropriate by Administration.

### **Parent/Coach Communication**

Parenting and coaching are both extremely important and challenging vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide a greater formation to our children. As parents, when your child is involved in our program, you have the right to understand what expectations are placed on him/her. This begins with clear communication from the coach of the sport.

### **Communication coaches expect from athletes & parents:**

- Concerns expressed directly to the coach.
- Notification of any schedule conflicts in advance (24 hours min.)
- Notification of illness or injury as soon as possible

**Discussing concerns with coaches:**

As students become involved in programs at school, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when our students experience challenges and struggles. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged. It is the first and most integral step to cultivate understanding and to find a resolution.

**The following topics are appropriate for discussion:**

- The treatment of your child.
- Ways to help your child improve.
- Concerns about your child's behavior.

Parents care deeply about their children and want the best for them. Coaches also want the best for their players. They make decisions based on what they believe to be best for all student athletes involved in their sport. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can be and should be discussed with your child's coach.

**The three items listed below should be left to the discretion of the coach:**

- Playing time, positioning, and event entry.
- Team strategies, game tactics, play calling.
- Discussion about other student athletes.

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and player or coach and parent. It is important that all parties involved have a clear understanding of the other person's position. When a conference is necessary, the following procedure should be used to help resolve any concerns.

1. Parent / Coach Discussion
2. Parent / Athletic Director Discussion
3. Parent / Administration Discussion

Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach.

## PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As a parent of a Mercy athlete, you agree to and understand the following regulations:

**-Parent Pledge** – As a parent/guardian, I acknowledge that I am a role model. I will remember that school athletics is an extension of the classroom, offering learning experiences for the students. I must show respect for all players, coaches, spectators and support staff. I understand the spirit of fair play and good sportsmanship expected by our school and its leagues. I hereby accept my responsibility to be a model of good sportsmanship that comes with being the parent/guardian of a student athlete.

**-Volunteering** – I understand that it is required as a parent of a student athlete to help support the program by volunteering time to work gate and concessions at home sporting events. The Athletic Director will assign both game gate and concession parent volunteer schedules for each sport season. It will be the responsibility of the assigned parent to switch games with another parent if they cannot serve their scheduled games. Teenagers are NOT allowed to volunteer in place of parents. Each team will have one parent representative who will help manage the season volunteer schedule to ensure all games have both gate and concessions volunteers present.

**-Uniform Contract** – I understand that I am responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of my athlete's uniform. I agree to turn in the uniform items in the condition they were received or in an acceptable condition. Removal of tags, writing your athlete's name on the uniform and placing tape on or in the uniform is prohibited. I understand that failure to return equipment or the returning of equipment in a useable condition will result in paying for the replacement.

**-Return to Participation** – I understand that it is required that any athlete who has been removed from practice, by a coach or "self-imposed", for medical reasons must provide a doctor's note clearing them to practice again. If a note is not provided, the athlete in question will not be able to return to Mercy Athletics until clearance by a medical professional is given. This is in place for the safety of your child, other Mercy athletes, visiting school athletes and all faculty, staff, volunteers and coaches.

**-Communication** – I understand that it is the coach's responsibility to make decisions related to playing time, positions, strategy and overall team well-being. I pledge to have respectful communications related to the appropriate topics listed above.

## **SPORT SPECIFIC PROCEDURES**

Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball and Volleyball

### **TRYOUTS**

- Tryouts for the above sports will be scheduled for a date prior to the official season start date designated by the league and Athletic Director.
- Tryouts will be held over a 2-day period. Athletes must attend both days of tryouts to be considered for varsity team placement. The Athletic Director can grant exceptions to one day of tryouts for students who provide prior notice. Tryouts may be reduced to 1 day in cases where 20 or less students from a grade level are trying out.
- In cases where 30 or more students from a grade level are trying out, tryouts may be set for two non-consecutive days and not all students will be asked to return for day 2. This is an attempt to properly evaluate talent and group like skill level together.
- All evaluators at tryouts will be non-parents and parents are not allowed to attend tryouts. In cases where the Athletic Committee has knowledge of a non-volunteer coach providing outside training/lessons to participating Mercy students, those coaches will be removed from the selection process at tryouts. This is in attempt to maintain the integrity of the tryouts and provide a fair evaluation for all athletes participating.

### **FORMATION OF TEAMS**

- At the conclusion of tryouts, the Athletic Director, along with the evaluation team, will form all teams.
- All developmental teams (3rd – 5th Grade) will be formed with the intent of each team being equally competitive and with like talent levels.
- Middle School Varsity teams will be formed with the intent to place the top talent from that grade level on a team.
- Middle School Junior Varsity teams will be formed with the intent of each team being equally competitive and with like talent levels.

## **TOURNAMENTS**

- Our Lady of Mercy will host tournaments for Boys and Girls Varsity Basketball and Volleyball Division I.
- The Athletic Director will ask for volunteers to be part of the tournament committee to help run the tournament. The Athletic Director and Athletic Committee reserve the right to cancel a tournament should not enough volunteers sign up.
- It is the responsibility of the tournament committee to oversee and execute all tournament details related to decorations, concessions, music, awards, volunteers, etc. The Athletic director will oversee team registration, facility scheduling and officials.

## **COACHES**

- Where possible, it is the goal of the Athletic department to provide our Middle School teams with non-parent coaches.
- All coaches will be interviewed, vetted and selected by the Athletic Director.
- Non-parent coaches will be assigned to varsity teams first, then to Junior Varsity teams if available. Developmental teams will be coached by volunteer parents.

## **OUR LADY OF MERCY NAME AND LOGO USE**

- The use of Our Lady of Mercy School's logo and name requires the written permission of the Our Lady of Mercy School Administration.



## HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and agree to the handbook.

Print Student-Athlete Name:

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Student-Athlete Signature:

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Print Parent Name:

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Parent Signature:

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Date:

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