



MERCY ATHLETICS HANDBOOK 2025-2026

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 5th – 8th (Bocage Racquet Club)

WINTER/SPRING SPORTS:

- Boys Basketball: Grades 3rd – 8th
- Middle School Soccer: Grades 5th – 8th (Baton Rouge Soccer Club)
- 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:

“Extracurricular activities provide strong character building, leadership formation, and service opportunities. Information about specific clubs and sports is available on the school website. 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 to participate in an extracurricular activity on that day.”

Extracurricular Eligibility Policy (From Student Handbook)

Students must maintain an overall “C” average on subjects used to determine promotion (English, Reading, Math, Religion, Social Studies, and Science) to participate in extracurricular activities. Additionally, students that earn a conduct of **below 80** will be placed on probation from participating in school events. In consultation with parents and teachers, the administrators may determine that continued participation in an extracurricular activity may not be in the best interest of the student.

Please note: Students must be eligible to participate in extracurriculars on the date tryouts begin 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.

5. School Discipline

The administration may suspend a student athlete from participation in games or practice due to behavior issues that occur during the school day, extended day, or off-campus.

Students that are suspended from school are not allowed to participate in practices or games on the day(s) of suspension. If a student is suspended on a Friday, they may not participate in activities until the following Monday which ends the suspension, unless deemed otherwise by school administration.

Multiple suspensions may result in dismissal from the team.

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 – Parents are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship by modeling respectful, positive behavior toward all players, coaches, officials, and spectators—including those from opposing teams—at every athletic event.

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.

-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.

-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 volunteers in a way that is most conducive to allowing parents to volunteer while also watching their child compete.

-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.
- 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.
- The Athletic Director and evaluation team can form two Varsity teams in basketball or volleyball if warranted based on the overall number of students participating.
- Middle School Junior Varsity teams will be formed with the intent of each team being equally competitive and with like talent levels.
- Middle School Junior Varsity teams in Basketball and Volleyball may be subject to roster cuts depending on the overall number of students participating and coaches available.

TOURNAMENTS

Our Lady of Mercy will host tournaments for Boys and Girls Varsity Basketball and Volleyball Division 1. OLOM will host a tournament for Junior Varsity teams if the schedule allows.

- The Athletic Director will ask for volunteers to be part of the tournament committee to help run the tournament. The Athletic Director, along with the 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.
- All coaches will be required to undergo official child protection certification through the diocese.
- Non-parent coaches will be assigned to varsity teams first, then to Junior Varsity teams. Developmental teams will be coached by volunteer parents.

8TH GRADE TEAM BANNERS

Our Lady of Mercy will help facilitate the process of producing 8th Grade team banners for the gym sports: girls' basketball, boys' basketball and volleyball. Teams are responsible for payment through Blackbaud. Banners may not be created or purchased without permission from the Athletic Director.

HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

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

Print Student-Athlete Name:

Student-Athlete Signature:

Print Parent Name:

Parent Signature:

Date:
