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I. Introduction

Athletics at the elementary and middle school level can play an exciting part in a child's overall development. It is important, however, that both parents and participants understand and appreciate the necessity of relevant controls, policies, and attitudes that coincide with a successful athletic program. It is equally important that the administrators of this program communicate these elements in a cohesive and comprehensive fashion. The St. Pius X Athletic Handbook attempts to define and explain the various aspects of the program so that there is a better understanding by both parents and students.

II. Mission Statement

Our mission at St. Pius X Catholic School is to provide an athletic program that promotes participation, fun, and fitness while teaching the valuable skills of leadership, sportsmanship, and teamwork in a Christian environment.

III. Philosophy

The philosophy of St. Pius X Catholic School emphasizes that meeting each student's individual needs is an integral part of the total educational program. The goal of the athletic program is to support this philosophy by providing opportunities for positive, supportive athletic experiences for as many children as possible. This environment will enable each child to achieve a positive self-image through success in a learning experience. The athletic program places primary emphasis on each child's development and growth, and is viewed as an extension of St. Pius X Catholic School's ministry.

IV. PECSAA League

The Piedmont Elementary Catholic Schools Athletic Association (PECSAA) is the governing body of our Catholic league. It consists of 6 athletic directors (AD), one from each school, with one AD acting also as League Director. Each school in the league assumes the post of League Director every six years. School principals play an active part in establishing and revising league policies. School policies may differ from school to school (i.e. discipline or participation policies).

PECSAA League Schools

St. Pius X (SPX)	Greensboro
Our Lady of Grace (OLG)	Greensboro
Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM)	High Point
Our Lady of Mercy (OLM)	Winston-Salem
St. Leo (SLS)	Winston-Salem
Blessed Sacrament (BSS)	Burlington

V. Policies

i. Eligibility and requirements

All student athletes must receive an annual physical examination before they are allowed to participate in any practice or game. This physical will cover the athlete for an entire calendar year from the date of the physical. All student athletes are also required to fill out and return a completed waiver/release form for each sport they participate in. Any athlete who has not filled out and returned the required paperwork or who does not have a current, completed physical form on file at St. Pius X Catholic School will be withheld from all athletic activities until all forms are submitted. Forms are given out at the first sign-up before each sport begins. Likewise, every student athlete must be covered by student accident insurance. Coverage can be either through a family plan or the plan offered by the diocese. A copy of proof of this coverage must be on file along with the physical and waiver forms.

ii. Tryouts

In order to keep team size to a manageable number and to abide by the PECSSA policy regarding the limit of players, tryouts must be held to determine team membership. Each team has a maximum number of player slots available. This number may vary by sport. The tryout format will vary depending on the sport and will also vary within a sport from coach to coach. Each head coach will be required to submit a tryout plan to the AD for approval. The head coach may solicit help in the evaluation of the players from internal sources (other St. Pius X head or assistant coaches), or external sources. While athletic ability plays an important role in the tryout process, character, heart, and enthusiasm are heavily weighted as well when evaluating a student for team membership. The AD has the final say in the selection of the team.

If a student is unable to participate in the tryout period due to an illness or temporary medical condition, a separate tryout may be given for those students if the coach has been notified prior to the beginning of tryouts.

iii. Activity Fees

A modest activity fee will be required for each sport that a student participates in at St. Pius X. These fees are used to offset operating expenses of the programs. Fees will vary by sport.

iv. Absence from school and injuries

If a student does not attend school the day of a practice or game, that student will not be allowed to participate in a practice or game that same day. This same rule applies if a student is dismissed from school early due to an illness or injury on the day of a practice or game. If a student does not attend school on a Friday, they will still be allowed to

participate in a Saturday game or practice as long as their health permits. Students who are absent from school to attend a family funeral on the day of a practice or game will still be allowed to participate in the practice or game if they choose.

If a student suffers an injury that is a direct result of participating in a St. Pius X sporting event or practice, and that injury requires medical attention from a physician, a note of clearance from the physician must be presented to the coach and AD prior to the student resuming participation in a St Pius X athletic practice or sporting event.

v. Holiday practices

No practices or “open gym” times will be scheduled during any holiday period unless it has been authorized by the school principal and the AD is notified.

vi. Inclement weather

On days when weather does not allow St. Pius X to open school, there will be no practices or games unless there is a special clearance from the principal. Rainy weather can be a factor for teams whose sport is performed outdoors. In case of thunder and/or lightening, all teams should be removed from the field immediately and a waiting period will follow before the teams will be allowed to continue.

The AD has the final decision on whether a contest will be cancelled or postponed due to weather. The AD also has the final decision on canceling practices due to weather. This decision will be made as early as possible to allow for communication to parents. Every effort will be made to ensure that practices or games will be held as scheduled. At no time will St. Pius X Catholic School allow practice or games to be held if the weather or field conditions create a danger to the students.

vii. Uniforms

The AD will issue uniforms to all members of each team. These uniforms are to be cared for during the season by each athlete and returned in good condition at the end of the season. Parents of athletes who do not return uniforms will be billed for the cost of replacing these uniforms. Also, report cards will not be issued to students who have outstanding uniforms.

St. Pius X athletes are required to wear uniforms issued to them for interscholastic competition. Teams and team members will not be allowed to independently purchase additional or different items to be worn as part of the team uniform unless approved by the AD.

Uniforms are not to be worn except at games, or as approved by the AD.

VI. Guidelines

The Athletic Program at St. Pius X Catholic School stresses participation, individual growth, and teamwork. Coaches and volunteers will make the student athlete their primary concern and place their needs and welfare ahead of other concerns.

i. Academics

Students must maintain an overall “C” average and have no “Fs” in any subject to participate in athletics. Should a student not maintain this level of academic progress at the end of a reporting period (mid-quarter Progress Report or end of quarter report card), he/she will be placed on academic probation. Ten or more demerits will also put a student on probation. During this probationary period, students will not be permitted to practice with their teams, participate in games or competition, nor participate in activities until they have improved their grades/behavior to the level mentioned above. A student will remain on academic probation until the next reporting period (mid-quarter Progress Report or end of quarter report card). At this time, a student may or may not be readmitted to participation status based on the above academic criteria. **During this period of academic probation, the student is responsible for obtaining weekly grades from each teacher for submission to coaches and activity leaders.**

ii. Team Practice

Athletic teams practice twice weekly for a two hour period. All team members are required to attend and participate in every practice unless prior notice is given to the coach and the coach has given consent.

iii. Disciplinary Action

Each student that participates in school athletic programs is not only responsible for maintaining academic standards, but is equally responsible for their personal conduct at school, games, and while at practices. Consequences for inappropriate behavior will be enforced. The principal and AD will have final say in all discipline issues.

iv. Expectations of athletes

In order for students to participate in interscholastic athletics there are certain rules and regulations that must be followed. Expectations may vary from coach to coach or sport to sport, but St. Pius X Catholic School has general expectations for all athletes. ST. Pius X expects the following from all team members:

1. Punctuality and preparedness for all practices and games.
2. Ongoing responsibility for academic work as stated in Section VI (i) Academics.
3. Dedication to their team and teammates.
4. A desire to improve skills and knowledge of their sport.

5. Self-discipline. Athletes will have to sacrifice time and energy for team goals.
6. A willingness to work hard and be attentive in practices.
7. On-going responsibility to represent St. Pius X Catholic School at all times in a dignified and positive way.
8. In the event that a student is participating on a St. Pius X team and an out-of-school team concurrently, the St. Pius X team is to take priority if there is a conflict.
9. Sportsmanship comes before, during and after games: Win with class; lose with class.

v. Sportsmanship

Promoting and encouraging good sportsmanship by coaches, athletes, fans, and parents is very important to the St. Pius X Athletic Program. We believe, as a Christian school, we must hold ourselves to the highest level of sportsmanship and behavior both on and off the playing field. The school's administration, athletic department, and coaching staff are committed to encourage an environment of enthusiasm and school spirit consistent with high standards of sportsmanship and respect for opposing teams and game officials. Taunting, negative cheering, or any verbal abuse by fans, directed toward opponents or officials, is incompatible with good sportsmanship and will not be tolerated.

St. Pius X Catholic School athletic events should be fun and positively supported. The school and the athletic teams are best served by fan support that is directed enthusiastically toward all athletes. Listed here are the responsibilities of all who are involved:

- 1. The Athletes**
 - a. Play hard within the rules of the game.
 - b. Win with humility, lose graciously, and congratulate opposing players and coaches.
 - c. Respect officials and accept their decisions.
 - d. Never attempt to injure an opponent.
 - e. Remember that you represent your school, your coach, and your family, as well as yourself.
 - f. Remain positive toward your coaches and teammates.
 - g. Respect the property and facilities of your opponents.
- 2. The Coaches**
 - a. Serve as a positive role model for your players.
 - b. Inspire in your players a love for the game and the desire to win.
 - c. Show restraint and respect when dealing with officials.
 - d. Reinforce respect and good sportsmanship in practice and game situations, and hold your players accountable for unsportsmanlike behavior.
 - e. Sign a one-year letter of appointment as a volunteer coach.
 - f. Follow specific team rules that have been pre-approved by the principal and the AD.

- g. Abide by all policies set forth by the principal, the league and the AD.
- 3. The Spectators/Parents**
 - a. Treat officials, opposing players, coaches, and fans with respect and courtesy.
 - b. Support all athletes in a positive manner.
 - c. Respect all coaches' decisions.

4. The Schools

PECSAA member schools have a responsibility to treat officials, opposing teams, their coaches, and their spectators as guests. Schools should educate their supporters to cheer their own teams and never behave in ways that are disrespectful toward opposing players, coaches, or spectators.

VII St. Pius X Sports

i. Volleyball

Volleyball at St. Pius X is a co-ed sport. The team roster is limited to 18 players. Each on-court team consists of at least three girls and no more than three boys. Players are rotated into the game at the coach's discretion and there is no league rule requiring participation. Games are played on Saturdays, except for one weeknight game and occasional exceptions. The volleyball tournament is a single elimination format. Participation is limited to grades 5-8. Grades 5 and 6 make up the junior varsity team, while grades 7 and 8 make up the varsity team.

ii. Basketball

The basketball program is composed of four separate teams. The junior varsity program has one boy team and one girl team for grades 5 and 6. The varsity program has the same arrangement for grades 7 and 8. Practice begins mid-October and ends with a league tournament in February. This tournament involves all PECSAA league teams.

Only 4.5 hours of practice are allowed per week. League games are played primarily on Saturdays while non-league games may be played during the week.

iii. Cheerleading

Grades 5-8 are involved in the cheerleading program. Students from grades 5 and 6 make up the junior varsity squad, while grades 7 and 8 cheer on the varsity squad. The junior varsity and varsity squads normally cheer for their respective teams. Cheerleading is only done during the basketball season.

iv. Softball

Softball is a co-ed sport that begins in mid-March. Three weekend double-headers and a double elimination tournament comprise the entire season. This sport is usually an upper middle school program (grades 7 and 8), but can draw from the grade 6 if necessary. Girls and boys are rotated in the batting order and in the field positions.

v. Track

Track is the sport St. Pius X opens up to participation by all students in grades Kindergarten through grade 8. The PECSAA track meet is held in mid-May. St. Pius X “mini-meets” may be held before the main event to allow for practice and further participation. Coaches may schedule other meets if necessary. Although every participant is placed in the main event, the structure of the meet only permits a limited number of competitive slots. If there are an excessive number of children, there will have to be a limit to the number of participants for the main PECSAA track meet.

vi. Golf

St. Pius X added a golf team in Spring 2005. Golf is a spring sport that runs from March through May. There is a try-out process that may require more than one try-out session. The team may be co-ed, depending on interest. There will be a maximum of twelve (12) players on the team. Try-outs will be open to grades 6 through 8. If the need arises, try-outs may be opened up to grade 5, as well. The golf team will compete with other PECSAA teams, as well as some other private and public schools in the area. Practices vary due to weather and site availability.

VII. Activities

i. Athletic Banquet

The Athletic Banquet is held near the end of the school year and honors all student participants and coaches of all St. Pius X sports programs. At this time, all participants receive a certificate representing each team for which they were member. All grade 8 varsity participants receive a St. Pius X Varsity letter. The “Student Athlete of the Year” is also presented the “Sturm Award.”

A volunteer parent coordinates this event and is assisted by a committee of parents selected for this purpose.

ii. Intramurals

The St. Pius X Athletic Panel will annually evaluate student interest in the intramural program. This program relies heavily on parent volunteers as well as the availability of the facility resources.

X. Volunteers

Volunteers are an integral part of the implementation of athletic events at St. Pius X Catholic School. Without the support and dedication of these individuals, the athletic department would not be able to provide quality programs to the students. Some of the volunteer positions are, but not limited to:

- *coaching
- *game time-keeper
- *game stat/bookkeeper
- *concession sales
- *linesman (volleyball)
- *Athletic Banquet

All volunteers are required by the Diocese of Charlotte to complete the **“Protecting God’s Children” workshop**. The workshop is offered periodically throughout the calendar year, including summers. The workshop must only be attended once. However, a “certificate of completion” and background check (“Notification and Release” form) must be provided to the school office **prior to volunteering**. Also, regular monthly bulletins must be completed via the Internet at the website www.Virtus.org. These are to insure updated and on-going training for volunteers to help keep children safe. Anyone who wishes to volunteer, but has not completed this training, must register for the workshop on-line at the above-listed website as soon as possible.