



# St. Thomas More

P r e p a r a t o r y   S c h o o l



STM Home of the Ravens!

# Parent-Student Athletic Handbook

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**THE SAINT THOMAS MORE  
PARENT-STUDENT ATHLETIC HANDBOOK  
EFFECTIVE: JULY 1, 2011**

**I: OVERVIEW**

1. **Preface.** The purpose of this Handbook is to assist you in the understanding and promotion of the mission of St. Thomas More (STM) athletics. This Handbook also describes the rules and regulations governing interscholastic sports at STM, as well as our expectations for student and parent conduct toward coaches, Athletic Department staff, and contest officials. For further clarification or for resolution of complicated issues, one should see the Athletic Director.
2. **Faith.** Jesus Christ is the center our life, most especially in the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. Understanding that Jesus Christ is our God and savior, we recognize that the life we have and the talents we have been given – like athletic ability – are gifts from God. In our Catholic faith we are called to know God, to love God and to serve God in this world, so as to be happy with him in the next. By using our God-given gifts in athletics and developing their potential, we serve God well; as recognizing and putting to use the blessings we have received.
3. **Prayer.** All teams are to begin their games with prayer. All events in the school's gymnasium are to begin with the STM Prayer for Athletes (see Appendix C) and the National Anthem. If appropriate, outside sporting events may begin in the same manner.
4. **Symbol.** The symbol of our school is our mascot the Raven. Our teams are to be known as the Saint Thomas More Ravens.
5. **Value of Athletics.** STM's Athletic Department and its coaches strive to bring out the best in our student-athletes and to assist them in reaching their full potential in mind, body, and spirit. STM believes that athletics are an integral dimension of a student-athletes life. Athletics in high school teach the values of teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship. It is to be clear that participation on an athletic team is not a right, but a privilege; membership on a team, most notably a varsity-level team, is to be based on skill and ability in that sport as determined by the coaching staff.
6. **Coaches are teachers:** Our coaches are teachers: they instruct, evaluate, promote sportsmanship and build up students as a team.
7. **Program Evaluation.** Each program will be evaluated by the athlete at the end of the season. Coaches will complete self-evaluations and are evaluated by the Athletic Director annually.
8. **Sports: Current and Future.** Sports in the Athletic Program of STM are a valuable part of the fabric of our school. The number of sports and type of sports we maintain reflect the size and the resources of the school at any given time. A listing of all of our sports, by season, can be found in Appendix B. Future additions of any sport to STM's Athletic

program must take into consideration the following points: the student population, space availability and resources of our school; the impact of a new sport on existing sports programs; the ability of the new sport to survive within the realities of our school budget, and the new sport must have the support of the Diocese of Wilmington Catholic Schools Office.

9. **Information.** Information about STM Sports can be found at our school website [www.saintmore.org](http://www.saintmore.org) or at [www.ravensports.com](http://www.ravensports.com).

## II: THE STUDENT ATHLETE

1. **Athlete Conduct.** Once a student enters STM, he is responsible for his actions both in and out of school.
  - a. Any serious violation of school policy or civic or moral laws could result in serious disciplinary action.
  - b. Coaches in consultation with the Athletic Director may invoke stronger sanctions; this is especially true in the cases where the good reputation of the school and surrounding community is placed in jeopardy by the actions of a student-athlete.
  - c. These guidelines apply to the student-athletes on and off the field.
2. **Academic Ineligibility.** In order to participate in any extracurricular activity including passive participation, a student must be in good academic and disciplinary standing as per the STM Student Handbook. NOTE: Eligibility standards at STM either meet or exceed the standards established by the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA). STM academic and disciplinary eligibility standards are as follows:
3. **Disciplinary Ineligibility.**
  - a. **Student on Suspension.** A student on suspension may not participate in athletics. A suspended student is not permitted to participate in or attend any activity until he returns to his classes.
  - b. **Student on Probation.** For a student on any kind of probation, that student may participate in a sport unless non-participation is explicitly part of the terms of probation.
  - c. **Late Arrival.** A student who is not present for school by 11:30am may not participate in any extracurricular activity that day.
4. **Health and Safety.** The health and safety of STM student-athletes is the first priority of all the Athletic Department staff.
  - a. **Injury.** While the risk of injury is inherently part of athletic competition – and an assumed risk for participants – all coaches should make sure that:
    - i. all equipment is in proper working order
    - ii. student-athletes are aware of safe techniques for practice and play
    - iii. adult supervision is provided at all times while student-athletes are involved in practice or a contest.

- b. **Return from Treated Injury.** STM does not employ physical therapy in the form of an athletic trainer for our athletic program. Thus, before resuming normal team status, athletes who sustain an injury need a written release from a treating physician if seen by one for that injury.
  - c. All student-athletes must have a DIAA approved physical annually before participating in a sport. Necessary forms are found online under athletics. Forms are to be submitted to the coach or to the school office.
5. **Sportsmanship Violations.** STM follows the formal procedures for sportsmanship violation set by DIAA in the official handbook.
- a. Following an incident where an STM athlete is involved the officials will notify the Athletic Director who will then inform the Principal.
  - b. The Athletic Director may make further recommendation for the types of punishment or reprimand that would be given to the team, player or coach.
  - c. The Athletic Director will make the ultimate decision of the seriousness of the offense and the direction in which the penalties need to go.
  - d. The Athletic Director is the main person responsible for handling and dealing with sportsmanship, ethics, and integrity.
6. **Attendance and Transport Expectations.**
- a. Student-Athletes are who come out for a team, and are accepted on that team are expected to be at all practices and games during that sport's season.
    - i. Conflicts and excused absences need to be worked out with the Coach of the team at the earliest possible time.
    - ii. The Coach retains the right to put a student off a team for unexcused absences or chronic lateness.
  - b. Student-Athletes on away games are expected to make sure they have a way home when the bus carrying their team arrives back at school. Likewise students For further information on this topic see Section 17, Transportation Issues.

### III. ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. **Pre-Season Parent Meeting.** It is a common practice that there is a parent meeting prior to the start of each sport team's season. It is expected that at least one parent of a student-athlete be in attendance. The purpose of the meeting is to instruct the parent(s), about policies and procedures, and to answer any questions that you may have about the team. An alternative to this would be an Athletic Department all-sport meeting at the beginning of season.
2. **Ethical Behavior.** Good sportsmanship and ethical behavior should be the foundation of an athletic program. The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) outlines the following philosophy of good sportsmanship:

*“Good sportsmanship is viewed by the NFHS as commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern of others. The ideals of sportsmanship apply equally to all activity disciplines. Individuals, regardless of their role in activities, are expected to be aware of their influences on the behavior of others and model good sportsmanship.”*

- a. **Responsibilities.** Everyone associated with high school sports has an obligation and a responsibility to promote good sportsmanship. Parents should work together with student-athletes, coaches, officials, and administrators to ensure compliance with expectations established for high school athletics.
  - b. **Expectations.** Expectations for high school athletics, as developed by the National Federation of State High School Associations:
    - i. Realize that a ticket is a privilege to observe a contest and support high school activities
    - ii. Respect decisions made by contest officials
    - iii. Be an exemplary role model by positively supporting teams in every manner possible, including content of cheers and signs
    - iv. Respect fans, coaches, directors and participants
3. **Infractions.** When infractions by students occur, coaches and officials should handle them appropriately.
- a. An official, the Athletic Director (or his designated alternate/assistant) or the Principal has the authority to require spectators to leave the sports area during a game, practice, or contest if they are not following the guidelines for behavior outlined in the Student Handbook or DIAA rules and expectations.
4. **Parent Concerns.** If a parent determines the need to meet about a problem:
- a. The parent should schedule such meetings directly with the coach.
  - b. The Athletic Director may make himself available to facilitate such meetings. However, he would remain available only if needed for a subsequent meeting.
  - c. All questions regarding this matter should be directed to the Athletic Director.
5. **Student-Athlete Relationship with Coaches.** The player-coach relationship is based on trust and respect. It is both educational and nurturing. It is the goal of the coach to develop athletic skill and leadership in his players, both individually and as a team. It is the further the role of the coach to express an assessment of a student’s skill/ability or lack of skill/ability for a specific sport.

6. **Parents Role in the Athletic Participation of their Child.**

- a. **Be Positive.** Parents should promote a positive experience for their child who is a student-athlete by expressing only positive opinions in front of him/her. Be positive and supportive of your child's participation in a sport(s).
- b. **Avoid Dissension.** When athletes experience dissension between their parents and coaches, it can adversely affect their progress and enjoyment of their sports.
- c. **Excessive Pressure.** Excessive parent pressure on a student-athlete can alter the most fundamental reason for playing: to enjoy and grow from the experience of the sport.
- d. **Be Supportive.** Parents must allow the coach to instruct and guide the team and each individual student-athlete.

7. **Communications from the Coach.** As a parent, your child's coach and/or the Athletic Office will avail you of what expectations are being placed on your child regarding their participation on an athletic team/sport:

- a. The coach's philosophy, values, and expectations of the athletes
- b. Locations and times of all practices and contests
- c. Requirements for equipment, off-season conditioning, and any special fees
- d. Procedures regarding injuries
- e. Conduct codes and discipline procedures
- f. Letter requirements

8. **Communications from the Parents.**

- a. Parents should notify a coach of any schedule conflicts as far in advance as possible.
- b. They should address with the coach specific concerns in regard to the coach's philosophy or expectations. Such concerns should be expressed directly to the coach first.
- c. Discussion with the coach should be with the intention of clarifying any concerns and avoiding any misunderstanding.

9. **Appropriate Relationship between Parent and Coach.** Coaches make their judgments based on what they believe to be the best for all involved. With this in mind:

- a. **Appropriate Topics.** It is appropriate to speak with the coach regarding the treatment of your child, ways to help him improve, and any concerns about your child's behavior.
- b. **Inappropriate Topics.** It is not appropriate to discuss playing time, team strategy, play calling or any matters concerning other student-athletes.
- c. **When to Meet with a Coach.** Do not approach the coach immediately at the conclusion of a contest. At that time coaches may well have other responsibilities and it may be an emotional time. Parents should call and set up an appointment.
- d. **Starting Point.** Parents should first address questions or concerns with the coach.
- e. **Additional Steps.** If no resolution occurs at step d. (above), the parent should contact the Athletic Director to discuss the situation. At this meeting, the appropriate next step can be determined.

10. **Officials.** Officials (e.g., referees, umpires) are assigned by the DIAA; neither team has control of which officials are assigned to particular contests. The assigned officials are in charge of the contest and have complete authority to remove unruly spectators. All involved are to respect the judgment and integrity of the officials.
11. **Spectators.** Spectators at an athletic event have an obligation to demonstrate good sportsmanship through their behavior. Thus, they are to:
  - a. Watch games from areas defined by each school.
  - b. Not engage in any activity that detracts from the ability of players, coaches, and officials
  - c. Violation of a. or b. is not acceptable and may result in ejection from the contest.
  - d. Visiting teams and their spectators should always be treated with courtesy.
12. **Equipment and Financial Responsibility.** Each team has different obligations, relative to the nature of its structure and operations.
  - a. Some simply must return all school issued equipment or pay for replacing it while others must purchase items through the department. If the latter is the case, then these financial obligations must be satisfied prior to the end of the season.
  - b. If financial obligations are not met, the matter is turned over to the Business Manager and the athlete will not be permitted to take part in the team banquet or receive any school awards.
13. **Fund Raising.** All team parent groups are allowed to raise funds for the purpose of giving back to their particular team, for example: defraying the cost of the team banquet or to pay for coach's gifts, senior gifts, or other types of team gifts.
  - a. The Athletic Director and the STM Fund Raising Committee Chairman must be kept informed of the plan for each group.
  - b. The Athletic Director and the STM Fund Raising Committee Chairman must approve of the Fund Raising plan for each group.
14. **Letters and Awards.**
  - a. Each student-athlete is awarded a letter based on:
    - i. the successful completion of the regular season
    - ii. the return of all school issued equipment
    - iii. the fulfillment of all financial obligations.
  - b. Teams are permitted to have individual awards, but they are to be granted in consultation with the Athletic Director.
15. **Team Banquets.**
  - a. Team banquets are encouraged
  - b. Team banquets are to be held within one (1) month of completion of the season.
  - c. In order to attend, the athlete must have completed the season and met all other team obligations.
  - d. The banquet is the responsibility of the parents and the Coach.
  - e. The date of the banquet must be approved by the Dean of Student Affairs and the Athletic Director.

16. **Championship Jackets (Varsity).** The Coach in consultation with the Athletic Director will handle the selection and ordering of the jackets. The school will provide a maximum of \$25.00 toward the cost of the jacket per student-athlete. The ordering of jackets will be done within three weeks of the championship and all financial obligations must be completed by that time.
17. **Transportation Issues.** STM shall provide transportation for all players, personnel and coaches of athletic teams in authorized vehicles when the contest has been scheduled away from the school. The Athletic Director shall be responsible for making transportation arrangements for all athletic teams. Authorized vehicles may include:
- a. Contracted school bus, driven by an employed bus driver
  - b. Licensed private carriers (chartered trip)
  - c. Private autos
  - d. In the event that the school van or private autos are used, the following stipulations shall apply:
    - i. The coach or an adult school employee shall drive the vehicle
    - ii. Team members are strictly prohibited from driving an auto to transport members of an athletic squad to a contest. Athletes driving their own cars to a contest must have received prior approval from their Head Coach
    - iii. Volunteer adults/parents may drive a private auto with prior approval
18. **Weather Related Items.**
- a. **Early Dismissal.** Whenever school is dismissed early due to inclement weather, all events and activities scheduled for that day are automatically postponed. This includes practices, meetings, or scheduled athletic events.
  - b. **Cancellation of School.** If school is canceled due to inclement weather, all activities scheduled for that day are automatically postponed.
  - c. **Rescheduling of Cancelled Events.** The Athletic Director will have the final say on when an event will be re-scheduled after consulting with the coach and the consideration of other factors (i.e. – availability of facilities, officials, transportation etc.)
  - d. **Exceptions.** The only exception to the above policy is a situation in which student are participating in State Tournaments.

## APPENDIX A

### INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY MRSA

In accordance with guidelines from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control, the Delaware Department of Public Health and the DIAA (Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association), STM has developed a policy for dealing with students who have a Staph Infection which may or may not be MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staph Infection).

Staph (*Staphylococcus aureus*) is a bacteria that is carried on the skin or in the nose of about 25 to 30% of healthy people. Staph is the most common bacteria to cause skin infections. Most of these infections are minor, such as pimples, boils and styes and heal without treatment, but they can occasionally cause more serious infections. MRSA is a staph infection that has become resistant to certain antibiotics (methicillin, penicillin, amoxicillin, etc.). Of the 25-30% of the population that has staph on their skin, 1% of this staph is MRSA.

Any skin infection that becomes red, swollen, and painful and/or has pus or other drainage should be evaluated by a health care provider as soon as possible. If there is drainage from a wound, it must be covered. The healthcare provider will in some cases drain an abscess or boil and antibiotics may not be necessary, but if antibiotics are prescribed, take all the doses unless discontinued by the doctor.

In order to prevent staph infections, practice good hygiene:

1. Wash your hand with soap and water or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
2. Keep open wounds clean and covered with a bandage.
3. Do not share personal items such as towels or razors.
4. Shower after athletic games and practices.
5. Wash clothing after games and practices.
6. Wipe surfaces of shared equipment with a disinfectant cleaner.

In outbreaks of MRSA, the environment has not played a significant role in the transmission of MRSA; it is most frequently transmitted by direct skin to skin contact.

In most cases, it is not necessary to close a school because of a MRSA infection because it is prevented by simple measures. It is primarily transmitted by direct skin to skin contact and therefore extraordinary measures do not need to be taken. Classrooms, locker rooms and other athletic areas such as the weight room and wrestling room and mats, and bathrooms are cleaned daily with EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) approved disinfectants.

It is also not necessary to inform the entire school community about a MRSA infection. The School Nurse and/or Athletic Trainer should determine if some or all of the school community should be notified in conjunction with the school administration and/or Athletic Director. Consultation may be made with the Delaware Department of Public Health.

Students with open wounds should be referred to the School Nurse or if an athlete, to the Athletic Trainer, if available. Students who have a staph infection, including MRSA, should not be excluded from attending school unless directed by a physician or the infected area cannot be covered and drainage cannot be contained.

The policy from DIAA more specifically covers skin infections in athletes and that policy is strictly followed by the STM Athletic Department.

## APPENDIX B

### SPORTS OFFERED 2011-12 SCHOOL YEAR

#### Fall Sports (August 15- December 1)

- Boys Soccer - Varsity, Junior Varsity
- Cross Country- All one team
- Field Hockey – Varsity, Junior Varsity
- Volleyball - Varsity, Junior Varsity

#### Winter Sports (Mid November- Mid March)

- Boys Basketball- Varsity, Junior Varsity
- Cheerleading – All one team
- Girls Basketball- Varsity, Junior Varsity
- Swimming- All one team
- Track (Indoor) - All one team
- Wrestling- Varsity, Junior Varsity

#### Spring Sports (March 1- June 1)

- Boys Baseball- Varsity
- Boys Lacrosse- Varsity, Junior Varsity
- Boys Tennis - All one team
- Girls Lacrosse- Varsity, Junior Varsity
- Girls Softball - Varsity
- Girls Tennis - All one team
- Golf - All one team
- Spring Track - All one team

**NOTE:** In several of the sports listed above there is always the possibility of a freshman team if abundant interest make that a reasonable course of action.

## APPENDIX C

### STM PRAYER BEFORE AN ATHLETIC EVENT

**Leader:** + In the Name of the Father and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit.

**Leader:** Blessed be the name of the Lord,

**All:** Now and forever.

**Leader:** Let us pray:

**All:** Strong and faithful God,  
as we come together for this athletic event  
we ask you to bless these, your faithful athletes,  
keep them safe from injury and harm,  
instill in them a respect for each other,  
and grant them the strength to persevere.

Father, lead them to seek and strive for victory,  
but should they fail,  
let them accept defeat with honor.

We ask all of this  
through our Lord, Jesus Christ, Your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit,  
one God forever and ever.  
Amen.

**Leader:** + In the Name of the Father and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit.

## **PARENT RELEASE STATEMENT**

We have read and understand the STM Parent/Student Athletic Handbook. I/We and our child agree to assume the responsibilities and obligations the handbook places upon us.

Participating in competitive athletics may result in severe injury, including paralysis or death. Changes in rules, improved conditioning programs, better medical coverage, and improvement in equipment have reduced these risks, but it is impossible to totally eliminate such occurrences from athletics.

Student-athletes can reduce the chance of injury by obeying all safety rules in their sport, by reporting all physical problems, and by inspecting their own equipment daily. Damaged equipment must be replaced immediately.

Even if all the requirements are met, and even if the student athlete is using excellent protective equipment, a serious accident may still occur. As a condition of participation in athletics at STM by (name of student athlete): \_\_\_\_\_, we acknowledge that we have read and understood this cautionary statement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(Signature of student-athlete)/date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(Signature of father/guardian)/date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(Signature of mother/guardian)/date**