

## **Statement of Philosophy: Play Like a Champion St. Jude Catholic School**

The St. Jude Athletic Association and School Board and hereby adopt this mutual statement of support and endorsement of the *Play Like A Champion*® philosophy for school athletics. Namely, that the proper role of middle school athletics should be to promote the physical, mental, and spiritual nourishment of the whole person; that athletes shall engage in the discipline of practice and competition in order to build a positive personal image and individual character traits, to promote positive social interaction with peers, to learn more about the fundamental skills of their sport, and most of all, to enjoy the thrill of intense physical activity for its own sake. The competitive drive is a necessary and natural outcome of the process of physical and mental discipline. A winning attitude will result as the natural by-product of a developmental process that places the interest and well-being of the student-athlete first, and allows for a healthy competitive spirit to emerge from an approach in which all members of the team participate and learn together in a process of mutual support and trust.

To this end, we present the following expectations for all parties engaging in the process of athletics at St. Jude Catholic School. It is our understanding that all who choose to accept these roles will abide by the overarching guidelines stated herein:

### **Coaches**

*The fundamental role of the coach is that of minister and teacher. The coach recognizes every student as a child of God who is to be nurtured spiritual as well as physically. The coach shall make every effort to see that all members of the team are honored and respected as they engage in the process of competitive development. Specifically, coaches agree to...*

- Integrate prayer into practices and competitions as a way of focusing the endeavor on the spiritual nourishment and character development of the student athlete.
- Ensure that every member of the team receives equitable guidance and participation in team practices, meetings, activities, drills, and scrimmages.
- Ensure that every member of the team receives meaningful time in competition, in equal measure at the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade level, and at a specified minimum level in 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Will monitor the peer-level interactions of team members to ensure that students are conducting themselves in a respectful and supportive manner, and to intervene promptly if individual members engage in negative behaviors toward their peers.
- Will speak only positive and complimentary words about the team's competitors and will in no way or form speak in a disparaging manner about the opposing team or its members.
- Will, if necessary, make respectful appeals or request explanations from game officials to clarify decisions that are made in the course of competition; but will in no form speak disrespectfully to, about, or continue to question or criticize calls that are made by the officiating crew, either publicly or privately, once competition has resumed or come to an end.

### **Athletes**

- Will engage in athletic preparation and competition with the mindset that physical health is a gift from God and that one's physical talents, however great or modest, require a healthy attitude and respect and care for one's body as well as a constant positive effort.
- Will acknowledge the primary importance of their academic learning—agreeing to and taking responsibility for the school's policy on extracurricular participation.

- Will conduct themselves in a positive and respectful manner at all times toward their coach and teammates, even in the role of sideline observer. They will obey their coaches and give their best physical and mental effort in meetings, activities, drills, scrimmages, and games.
- Will abide by the rules of the school and at all times conduct themselves in a positive and supportive manner toward their teammates. They will not engage in behavior that belittles, criticizes, or undermines the efforts of their teammates.
- Will speak in a positive or complimentary manner toward their opponents in competition. They will not engage in disrespectful or distracting activities that would humiliate or unfairly disrupt the efforts of their opponents. They will not engage in any unsportsmanlike conduct toward their opponents. They will in no way or form speak disrespectfully toward game officials or question their judgments.

### **Parents**

- Will help communicate to student-athletes the proper role of athletic participation as the development of their spiritual, mental, and physical gifts from God.
- Will ensure that students arrive at practices and competitions on time and in fully healthy condition to perform. They will likewise be available to depart the activity promptly upon its timely conclusion.
- Will accept the coach's role as the temporary educator and minister to the child, and will not publicly question the techniques or decisions applied by the coach, so long as they appear safe and absent of physical or psychological harm to the child.
- Will redress concerns or problems through proper channels—the head coach first, then the coaches' president, the athletic director, the board, and if necessary, the principal. They agree that signs of physical or emotional abuse shall be reported directly to the principal.
- Will speak in a positive or complimentary manner toward their children's opponents in competition. They will not engage in disrespectful or distracting activities that would humiliate or unfairly disrupt the efforts of their opponents. They will in no way or form speak disrespectfully toward game officials or question their judgments.
- Will allow their children to offer their own personal evaluations of their competitive efforts as form of dialogue with the parent and coach; rather than criticizing particular points of perceived failure in competition as the result of lack of effort, ability, or character. They agree to allow the coach to be the primary evaluator of student technique and effort.

### **Athletic Board and School Administration**

- Will provide regular opportunities for the training of coaches, parents, and students about the *Play Like a Champion* program, especially for those at the 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade level who are new to St. Jude athletic programs and not yet fully oriented to its expectations.
- Will expect all coaches to sign-off on this statement and agree to its terms before being assigned a team. The principal will be given the opportunity to interview and/or comment on any coach prior to their assignment to a team, for each sport and level.
- Will establish a meaningful and consistent process by which to gather information about coaches' adherence to the expectations of the PLAC program, and provide structured post-season feedback as to how the coach will be expected to improve before taking on any future coaching assignment.
- Will directly address documented or suspected concerns about a coach's willingness to apply the PLAC and will inform a coach that he or she will not be welcomed back if it has been established that they refuse to meet the expectations of the program.

Name (sign): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_