



St. Bridget School

Athletic Handbook

**MISSION STATEMENT
OF
ST. BRIDGET CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

*At St. Bridget Catholic School,
we attend to our students' spiritual, intellectual,
social, emotional and physical needs within
a safe and nurturing environment.
Our values are Christ-centered
with a message to
"Love one another as I have loved you,"
and make a positive difference in the lives of others.*

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Guiding Principles

This document ensures that all coaches, parents, student athletes and spectators are aware of the real purpose of athletics in our school. Foremost on the list is that student-athletes participate to have fun, learn sportsmanship, practice teamwork and develop their God-given athletic ability at whatever level that might be. Winning is important but only within the context of these other priorities.

Saint Bridget School supports a philosophy of competition that is guided by the highest standards of good sportsmanship and fair play and our School's Mission Statement. To this end, all parties (coaches, student-athletes, parents and spectators) must recognize that our students' participation in sports and extracurricular activities is an "*Extension of the Learning Environment.*" Coaches, student-athletes and spectators have a duty to conduct themselves in a reasonable and acceptable manner and avoid all conduct and practices which are not in keeping with the school's mission statement or that is detrimental to the sport.

Principal's Message

Dear Parents and Guardians of SBS student-athletes,

Just as it is important to grow our hearts in faith and our minds in academics, it is important to grow our bodies in physical strength as well. One way to attend to this part of our mission is to offer a variety of sports to our students. We, at St. Bridget School, take great pride in our sports program, which provides an exceptional opportunity for personal growth and physical strength.

St. Bridget School student athletes will learn about motivation, self-discipline, self-confidence, loyalty, leadership, sacrifice, extra effort, the power of teamwork and positive attitude. Athletes also learn to accept personal responsibility for success or failure and to recognize both limitations and strengths. These lessons are crucial in today's world.

It is important that students and parents/guardians understand that participation in the St. Bridget School Athletic Program is not a right, but rather a privilege afforded to those who reflect Christ's teachings both on- and-off the court, field, or track. Athletes represent St. Bridget School students, the school, and our mission at all times and thus are held to a higher standard than non-athletes.

I urge the student athlete and his/her family to thoroughly read this handbook.

There are special standards and expectations in the areas of academics, citizenship, practices, and sportsmanship with which the athletes must understand and comply. Furthermore, as with all privileges, it is important to remember that the school reserves the right to revoke team participation from students who do not comply with the expectations or do not conduct themselves in an acceptable manner both in and out of school.

I wish you a safe and enjoyable sports season and remind the student-athlete to play as Jesus would want – with enthusiasm, good sportsmanship and a positive attitude!

Asking God's blessings upon you,



Dr. Nancy E. Testa

Current St. Bridget Teams

Eligible Athletes

Soccer:

- Made up of 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th graders
- Selected 4th graders only when needed to fill a team

Cheerleading

- 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade
- 4th grade only when needed to fill a team

Cross Country

- Varsity – 7th and 8th grade
- Junior Varsity – 4th, 5th, and 6th grade

Basketball Boys & Girls (JV & V)

- Varsity
 - Made up of 7th and 8th graders (depending on skill)
 - Selected 6th graders
- Junior Varsity: Developmental Team
 - Made up of 5th and 6th graders.
 - No cuts will be made
 - Depending on the numbers there will be a split squad, for JV

Softball (V)

- 6th, 7th, and 8th grade

Baseball V & JV- squads may be combined if needed

- JV 5th & 6th grades
- V 7th & 8th grades

Athletic Director

The Athletic Director (A.D.) is the Liaison between the school, coaches/teams, and the League Directors for the Archdiocese of Hartford.

The A.D. is responsible for overseeing the operation of the athletic teams and ensuring that the guidelines outlined in this handbook are met both in letter and in spirit.

The A.D. should not be a current coach in the school. This avoids a conflict of interest and allows complete transparency in the position.

A.D. Responsibilities:

- Establish and chair the committee responsible for coach recruiting, selection, and performing background checks on prospective coaches. The A.D. will make/forward coach recommendations to the Principal.
- Help to resolve conflicts that arise during a season that cannot be resolved at the coach's level.
- Explore new sports programs for the school to assure a wide variety of participation.
- Act as a reference and mentor for coaches by assisting them with administrative tasks, and develop them in Saint Bridget's philosophy of coaching
- Keep a copy of all practice and game schedules and be updated on all changes as they occur during the season/year.

Coaches

Parents who entrust their children to a St. Bridget School coach should feel confident that the standards employed and modeled reflect a Catholic Spirit of sportsmanship, respect, teamwork and inclusion and are consistent with the Mission Statement of the School.

Coach Responsibilities:

- Ensure that the health, well-being and development of athletes is valued over the win/loss record.

- Serve as a role model, and maintain congruency between their actions and words.
- Provide a physically and emotionally safe environment for practices and competitions.
- Exemplify honesty, integrity, fair play and sportsmanship regardless of the impact that might have on the outcome of the competition.
- Maintain and enhance the dignity and self-esteem of individuals by demonstrating respect for student-athletes, fellow coaches, officials and administrators.
- Ensure that each athlete is provided sufficient playing time, based on skill level, attendance, and needs for each particular game. In addition, they will allow every player to start in at least one regular season game regardless of talent.
- Avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts in assigning playing times or All-Star participation etc. to sons, daughters or other related players.
- Begin practices and games with a prayer.
- Find opportunities to bring their teams to church as a group in uniform to foster our faith.
- Ensure that all athletes and parents are aware of and understand the Athletic Handbook of St. Bridget School and all of its contents.
- Ensure that all safe environment guidelines are followed for themselves, Assistant Coaches, and all parent helpers.
- Ensure that all official roster forms are filled out correctly as outlined by the Archdiocesan Office and submitted to the appropriate league officer.
- Ensure that all fees are paid for referees, umpires, tournaments, etc., in a manner set forth by the administration of St. Bridget School. (download reimbursement form on website)
- Schedule referees and games and coordinate schedule through the school office.
- Ensure that practices and games do not conflict with special holy days of the church.
- Hand out uniforms to all players and will be responsible for collecting all uniforms at the end of the season in clean and good condition.
- Give a schedule of practices and games or any changes of practices and games to the principal, A.D. and office coordinator as soon as possible.

- For the developmental teams, coaches structure teams to make room for as many St. Bridget students that wish to participate. Cuts, if necessary, should be used only as a last resort and always handled with transparency, fairness and appropriate discretion after consultation with the school's administration.

Athletes

The student-athlete will represent our school with pride, spirit, and in a spirit of competition, ever mindful of the mission of our school to follow Jesus' example to "love one another as I have loved you."

Athlete Responsibilities:

- Develop skills to the best of their ability and give their best effort at all times.
- Follow the rules of the sport.
- Respect each individual (teammate, competitor, coaches, spectators, referees, umpires) at all times.
- Be a positive influence on others through their words and in actions.
- Maintain grades and behavior that reflect their best abilities.
- Follow the rules established by the coach.
- Players will be responsible for lost or damaged uniforms.

What The Student Athlete Can Expect

- Athletes should expect to play a reasonable amount of time in games each season, based on skill level, attendance, and needs for each particular game.
- Athletes should expect to start at least one game during the regular season.
- A student-athlete can expect to develop the skills of the game under the guidance of the coach/assistant coach.
- Athletes should expect to always be treated with respect.

Parents and Spectators

Parents

- Be supportive of coaches' decisions and discussions with players.
- Encourage student-athletes to be on time and do their best.
- Make sure students are on a healthy diet and getting proper rest.
- When contacting a coach, do so at a reasonable time and situation.
- Be willing to support the team with time and talent.
- Be supportive at games and let the coaches coach.
- Respect opponents and the officials who work the games.

What Parents should expect from our coaches:

- A schedule of practices and games will be issued by the coach as soon as possible at the beginning of the season, and updated as needed.
- Reinforce and support the values taught in the home and by St. Bridget School
- Emphasize the importance of academics.
- Treat players with respect.
- Keep in mind other activities when planning practices.
- Teach, enforce and model sportsmanship.
- Respond within 24 hours to all reasonable questions.
- Follow player playing time guidelines.

Parental Concerns:

Communication between parents/guardians and coaches is essential for athletes to have a positive educational experience through athletic participation. Parents/guardians need to be informed about details of each team, the expectations of the athletes, and the general philosophy of the team's coach.

Coaches need to be aware of any unusual circumstances that may affect the athlete's performance. Parents with specific concerns are to communicate with the coach first. The order of reference is: Coach, A.D., and Principal. However, serious circumstances warrant immediate consultation with the Principal.

Spectators

At St. Bridget School the following behaviors will not be tolerated:

- Disrespectful conduct, including profanity, obscene gestures or comments, and offensive remarks
- Throwing articles onto the contest area
- Entering the contest area in celebration or protest
- Physical confrontations
- Spectator interference
- Jumping up and down on the chairs or bleachers
- Use of artificial noisemakers
- Chants or cheers directed at the opponent's players, opponent's spectators, coaches, or officials.

For Athletic Participation

General Requirements

Students will be allowed to participate in the SBS Athletic Program provided they meet the eligibility requirements established by St. Bridget School and submit evidence of a yearly Physical Examination Form completed by their physician and returned to the school nurse prior to the start of the season's practice.

Eligibility

Eligibility status is determined by the Principal and A.D.

Students are **NOT** eligible if they receive below a **"C"** in a course.

For eligibility purposes, the end of the marking period shall be interpreted as the official date on which the school requires grades to be distributed.

In most cases, grades or incomplete grades must be made up within fifteen (15) school days following the end of the marking period as defined above. Special circumstances may warrant additional time as determined by the Principal. Incomplete grades are not to be considered passing grades.

Note: Marking period grades are to be used to determine scholastic eligibility to participate in athletics during any given marking period.

Any student whose academic standing drops below the acceptable level will be put on athletic probation. The student will not be allowed to participate in any part of the Athletic Sports Program, including but not limited to practices and games, until eligibility/academic standing has been re-established. This will be determined by the Principal.

The final academic grade average from the previous school year determines Fall Eligibility. This includes transfers/new students.

General Rules

In keeping with the philosophy and objectives of the Athletic Program, the student-athlete is expected to follow all school rules set forth in the Student Athlete Handbook and in the St. Bridget Student Handbook. Any major and/or repeated minor violations of the rules will be cause for a conference among the A.D., Coach and Principal and may result in a judgment of ineligibility by the Principal and A.D. The A.D., coach and Principal will meet with student-athlete and parent(s)/guardian(s) to share decision of ineligibility.

Changing Sports

An athlete who drops from one squad will not be allowed to join another squad during that season. Exceptions may be made with the permission of the A.D. and coaches.

Attendance

All student-athletes will adhere to the Attendance Policy established by St. Bridget as explained in the Student/Parent Handbook.

- Athletes are expected to attend scheduled meetings, practices and games punctually.
- Any athlete who must miss a practice or game will report it to the coach in person, or by phone, 24 hours before that practice or game.
- A student athlete will not normally be allowed to participate in a practice or contest the day they are absent from school. Should special circumstances prevail, exceptions may be made by the Principal. Examples: funeral, shadowing, representing the school (band, science fair, etc.).
- Other out-of-school activities are not valid reasons for missing meetings, practices, or games.
- Some practices and games will be held during school vacations.

If an athlete fails to comply with these attendance rules, the athlete may forfeit the right to participate in a future event or events of the team. Continued failure to comply will result in dismissal from the team. All of this will be determined by the Principal following consultation with the coach and A.D..

Equipment

All equipment and uniforms are on a loan basis and are to be worn only when authorized by the coach. Student-athletes are responsible for the equipment/uniforms issued to them. All equipment will be returned immediately at the end of the season or when an athlete leaves a team. The student will pay for any lost or stolen equipment/uniforms, or those which are damaged due to gross neglect or irresponsible use. This expense will be based on the replacement cost of the item. No grades or diplomas will be issued until a student-athlete has met this requirement.

Dress Code

As representatives of St. Bridget School, the student athlete will dress appropriately for all contests and wear the team uniform with pride and dignity.

Injury Policy

The health and safety of St. Bridget School athletes is extremely important to SBS. It is the obligation of athletes injured during the sports season to report the injury to their coach immediately, who will then report it to the A.D. and the Principal. The coach has the responsibility of initiating an accident report and sending it to the athlete's parents/guardians for their input. The parents/guardians must notify the School Nurse of any medical treatment immediately.

Note: A Notification of Injury Form must be filled out by the coach and given to the A.D. The A.D. will then provide a copy to both the Principal and the School Nurse.

Once athletes are treated by a physician, they must obtain the doctor's permission to return to activity (e.g.: practice and games).

Concussions: Please read and sign the "Student & Parent – Concussion Education Plan & Consent Form" at the back of this policy. Signed consent forms must be turned into the school nurse before a student will be allowed to participate in any sport.

Team Rules

A coach wishing to incorporate additional team rules not covered in this handbook shall have such rules approved by the A.D. and Principal. A copy of these rules will be given to each athlete and shall be filed with the A.D. and Principal.

Transportation / Rides

School policy ***prohibits*** our coaches from giving students rides to games and practices. Please make arrangements with other parents or set up an alternating carpool system.

Team Cuts

Because of the developmental nature of JV sports, cuts will not be made. Coaches are aware and sensitive to the disappointment experienced by the players cut. At the first practice session, the coach will fully explain the criteria for choosing players and the projected schedule of this selection process. Every effort will be made to allow enough time for each candidate to be observed and fairly evaluated. Reasons for non-selection include, but are not limited to, lack of skill,

speed, strength, lack of effort or motivation, lack of sportsmanship, lack of knowledge or understanding of the sport, grade level of the candidate.

Athletic Fees

To maintain a high quality Athletic Program, St. Bridget School charges a fee for participation. The fee is used to offset the cost of referees, equipment and miscellaneous league fees as well as the cost of purchasing and replacing uniforms, and replenishing medical kits. The fee must be paid for your child to participate on the team. If there are extenuating circumstances, parent(s)/guardian(s) are requested speak to the Principal.

Physical Examination

Each athlete must have a physical examination certificate dated after the completion of the previous school year on file with the school nurse prior to participating in any first practice, game or tournament.

Practice and Game Schedule

Generally, practice should not last more than 2 hours in length. Physical exercise such as running is encouraged for conditioning, however, coaches are prohibited from using excessive running as a discipline measure on players.

The total number of games and practices in one week should not exceed 3 per week. The only exception is due to rescheduling of games due to scheduling change.

Disciplinary Matters

Suspension and/or Dismissal

The coach shall first notify the Principal and the A.D. of his/her request to either suspend or dismiss an athlete from the team. Due process shall be followed in all cases. Appropriate notification will be given to all parties involved.

Due Process

- In disciplinary matters resulting in a suspension or dismissal, a student-athlete will be provided with the following rights:
 1. The student-athlete will be notified in writing by the A.D. of the reasons for the discipline.
 2. The student-athlete will have the opportunity to present his/her position on the matter to the A.D..
 3. The student-athlete will have the opportunity to demonstrate to the A.D. that the rules or regulations are being applied in an unreasonable, arbitrary, or discriminatory fashion.
 4. The student-athlete will have the right to appeal this decision.

Appeal Process

1. The student-athletes must make their request for an appeal in writing to the Principal within ten (10) days of the disciplinary action.
2. The appeal will be heard by the Principal within five (5) working days of the request.
3. The student-athlete will remain suspended from sports participation until the appeal is heard.
4. The decision of the Principal will be binding.

Detentions

Any student-athlete who receives a Detention will be suspended for the next scheduled game and any practices that precede it.

Tobacco Products, Alcohol and Drug Policy

Use of tobacco products is hazardous to a person's health and decreases an athlete's efficiency. Therefore, a student athlete who uses tobacco products will be banned from playing.

The possession and/or use of alcohol or any controlled substances (drugs, capsules, pills, etc.) other than those currently prescribed by a physician, is absolutely forbidden, and involvement with any of these may merit suspension or expulsion at the discretion of the Principal.

Theft or Malicious Damage to Property

Serious defacement of school property or private property of others demands repair and/or replacement, and those involved are financially responsible. Other more serious action may be taken by the administration depending on circumstances.

School and Community Citizenship

The student-athlete is expected to demonstrate proper school and community citizenship at all times. Failure to abide by school rules or laws of the community may result in the suspension or dismissal of the student-athlete. The extent of any disciplinary action will be determined by the Principal.

Player Ejection Rule

Any player who gets a technical foul or a yellow card will be benched for a period of time at the discretion of the coach.

Student-athletes who are ejected from any contest will not be allowed to participate in any other contest until they have been withheld from the next contest at the same level of play. The A.D. must be informed by the coach of all ejections within 24 hours.

Miscellaneous Information for Parents

Schedule Changes

The schedule for all games will be available in the Main Office and on the school website Sports and Activity Calendar. Any change in time or site of a game will be announced. Parents may secure this information by calling the Main Office.

Inclement Weather

If school is cancelled due to inclement weather, all contests will also be cancelled. If school is dismissed early due to inclement weather, all after school practices or contests will also be canceled.

Religious, State or National Holidays

No contests will be scheduled on the following religious holidays: Christmas Eve, Christmas, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday.

When there is no school due to state or national holidays, contests will be avoided but may be scheduled upon the approval of the Principal. Optional practices may be scheduled on these days only if the team has a scheduled game the following day.

Sundays will be respected as a family day. As such, practices will not be scheduled on Sunday mornings. The administration realizes that Catholic Holy Days and holidays do not always correspond with other schools' schedules, but every reasonable effort will be made to honor and respect all religious days.

Official games may be scheduled on Sunday afternoons.

St. Bridget School Administration reserves the right to make changes to this policy.

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

STUDENT (Please sign and return this sheet to your coach as soon as possible.)

I _____ have read and understand the Student-
(First and last name)

Athlete Handbook. I understand that it is expected that I will follow the rules in the Handbook and I understand what consequence(s) is (are) if I break the rules.

Student Name: _____

Signature: _____

Sport: _____

Date: _____

PARENT

I _____ have read and understand the Student-
(First and last name)

Athlete Handbook.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

COACH

Sign and return this sheet to the Main Office as soon as possible.

I _____ have read and understood the Student-Athlete Handbook. I agree that my coaching standards employed and modeled reflect a Catholic Spirit of sportsmanship, respect, teamwork and inclusion and are consistent with the Mission Statement of the School.

Coach Name: _____

Signature: _____

Sport: _____

Date: _____

Student & Parent Concussion Education Plan & Consent Form

This document must be read and signed-off by parent/guardian and athlete before the athlete participates in a St. Bridget Athletic Program

A concussion is the immediate and transient alteration of neurological function in the brain caused by mechanical acceleration and deceleration forces.

Part I – SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

A concussion should be suspected if any one or more of the following signs or symptoms are present, OR if the coach/evaluator is unsure.

1. Signs of a concussion may include (What the athlete looks like):

- Confusion/disorientation/irritability
- Trouble resting/getting comfortable
- Lack of concentration
- Slow response/drowsiness
- Incoherent/slurred speech
- Slow/clumsy movements
- Loss of consciousness
- Amnesia/memory problems
- Act silly/combatative/aggressive
- Repeatedly ask same questions
- Dazed appearance
- Restless/irritable
- Constant attempts to return to play
- Constant motion
- Disproportionate/inappropriate reactions

2. Symptoms of a concussion may include (what the athlete reports):

- Headache or dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Blurred or double vision
- Oversensitivity to sound/light/touch
- Ringing in ears
- Feeling foggy or groggy

Note: Public Act No. 14-66 requires that a coach MUST immediately remove a student-athlete from participating in any intramural or interscholastic athletic activity who (A) is observed to exhibit signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion following a suspected blow to the head or body, or (B) is diagnosed with a concussion, regardless of when such concussion or head injury may have occurred. Upon removal of the athlete a qualified school employee must notify the parent or legal guardian within 24 hours that the student athlete has exhibited the signs and symptoms of a concussion.

Part II – RETURN TO PARTICIPATION (RTP)

Currently, it is impossible to accurately predict how long concussions will last. There must be full recovery before someone is allowed to return to participation. Connecticut Law now requires that no athlete may resume participation until they have received written medical clearance from a licensed health care professional (Physician, Physician Assistant, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse, Athletic Trainer) trained in the evaluation and management of concussions.

Concussion management requirements:

1. No athlete shall return to participation (RTP) on the same day of concussion.
2. Any loss of consciousness, vomiting or seizures the athlete MUST be immediately transported to the hospital.
3. Close observation of an athlete MUST continue following a concussion. This should be monitored for an appropriate amount of time following the injury to ensure that there is no escalation of symptoms.
4. Any athlete with signs or symptoms related to a concussion Must be evaluated from a licensed health care professional (Physician, Physician Assistant, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse, Athletic Trainer) trained in the evaluation and management of concussions.

5. The athlete MUST obtain an initial written clearance from one of the licensed health care professionals mentioned above directing them into a well-defined RTP stepped protocol similar to one outlined below. If at any time signs or symptoms should return during the RTP progression the athlete should cease activity.
6. After the RTP protocol has been successfully administered (no longer exhibits any signs or symptoms or behaviors consistent with concussions), final written medical clearance is required by one of licensed health care professionals mentioned above for them to fully return to unrestricted participation in practices and competitions.

Medical Clearance RTP Protocol (Recommended one full day between steps)

Rehabilitation Stage	Functional exercise at each stage of rehabilitation	Objective of each stage
1. No activity	Complete physical and cognitive rest until asymptomatic. School may need to be modified	Recovery
2. Light aerobic activity	Walking, swimming or stationary cycling keeping intensity, 70% of maximal exertion; no resistance training	Increase Heart Rate
3. Sport Specific Exercise	Skating drills in ice hockey, running drills in soccer, no head impact activities	Add Movement
4. Non-contact Training drills	Progression to more complex training drills, i.e. Passing drills in football and ice hockey; may start progressive resistance training.	Exercise, coordination and cognitive load
5. Full Contact Practice	Following final medical clearance, participate in normal training activities	Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff

If at any time signs or symptoms should worsen during the RTP progression, the athlete should stop activity that day. If the athlete's symptoms are gone the next day, s/he may resume the RTP progression at the last step completed in which no symptoms were present. If symptoms return and don't resolve, the athlete should be referred back to their medical provider.

Part III – HEAD INJURIES

Injuries to the head includes:

- Concussions: (See above information). There are several head injuries associated with concussions which can be severe in nature including:
 - a. Second Impact Syndrome – Athletes who sustain a concussion, and return to play prior to being recovered from the concussion, are also at risk for Second Impact Syndrome (SIS), a rare but life-altering condition that can result in rapid brain swelling, permanent brain damage or death; and
 - b. Post-Concussion syndrome – A group of physical, cognitive, and emotional problems that can persist for weeks, months, or indefinitely after a concussion.
- Scalp Injury: Most head injuries only damage the scalp (a cut, scrape, bruise or swelling)...Big lumps (bruises) can occur with minor injuries because there is a large blood supply to the scalp. For the same reason, small cuts on the head may bleed a lot. Bruises on the forehead sometimes cause black eyes 1 to 3 days later because the blood spreads downward by gravity.
- Skull Fracture: Only 1% to 2% of children with head injuries will get a skull fracture. Usually there are no other symptoms except for a headache at the site where the head was hit. Most skull fractures occur without any injury to the brain and they heal easily.
- Brain Injuries are rare but are recognized by the presence of the following symptoms:
 - (1)difficult to awaken, or keep awake or (2) confused thinking and talking, or (3) slurred speech, or (4) weakness of arms or legs or (5)unsteady walking (American Academy of Pediatrics – Healthychildren, 2010)

I have read and understand this document the "Student/Parent – Concussion Education Plan & Consent Form" and understand the severities associated with concussions and the need for immediate treatment of such injuries.

Student' name: _____ Date: _____ Signature: _____
 Parent's/Guardian's name: _____ Date: _____ Signature: _____