



ST PAUL'S
SCHOOL FOR BOYS

2025-2026

CRUSADER ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

- ✓ Mission Driven and Education Based
- ✓ TEAM Oriented
- ✓ Promotes Lifelong Fitness
- ✓ Develops Competitive Athletes
- ✓ Fun



ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook provides key information about athletic participation at St. Paul's School for Boys. The most current version is available on the St. Paul's Online Parent Resource Center and may be updated throughout the school year.

While we've addressed many important topics, not every scenario can be covered. In cases not outlined here, decisions will be made at the discretion of the Athletic Director. Coaches may establish additional team-specific rules, which will be communicated clearly to athletes and parents.

For questions, contact the Director of Athletics.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CRUSADER

During the 2023–24 school year, our students defined what “Crusader” means as it represents St. Paul's School for Boys:

St. Paul's Crusaders:

- Embrace our school's mission: “Seek truth, knowledge, and excellence; live by faith, compassion, and integrity.”
- Are kind, honest, compassionate, faithful gentlemen
- Include everyone and do the right thing
- Stick with their brothers through thick and thin
- Never back down from a challenge
- Support this school with passion and spirit
- Sacrifice their time for the good of the school
- Make determined efforts to achieve something bigger than themselves

SPORTS OFFERED

Fall Sports

- Cross Country
- Football (flag football; 6th graders only)
- Soccer
- Volleyball (Upper School only)

Winter Sports

- Basketball
- Ice Hockey
- Indoor Track & Field
- Squash
- Wrestling

Spring Sports

- Baseball
- Golf
- Lacrosse
- Tennis (middle school clinic)
- Track & Field



SEASON INFORMATION & REQUIREMENTS

2025–2026 Start Dates (Tentative)

- **Fall:** Aug. 4 (Upper School football only); Aug. 12+ (all other Fall US sports); Sept. 8 (middle school)
- **Winter:** Nov. 3 (Upper School); Nov. 10 (middle school)
- **Spring:** Feb. 17 (Upper School), March 2 (middle school)

Physical Exam Requirements

- Athletic physical forms due by Aug. 1, 2025, via SPSB Magnus Health System
- Physical must be current for entire athletic year: Aug. 1, 2025, through June 1, 2026
- Plan appointments early to avoid missing practice opportunities
- Inexpensive options available at Patient First

Practice Frequency

- Varsity and JV teams: 5–6 days per week
- Middle School teams: 4–5 days per week
- Some teams may practice/compete during weekends or school breaks



STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS

THE CRUSADER TRADITION

Being a member of a St. Paul's athletic team is a privilege that comes with responsibility. As representatives of the SP community, student-athletes must uphold school policies, prioritize academic success, and make choices that support their health and team success.

CORE PRINCIPLES

Consistent Attendance

- Mandatory attendance at all practices and competitions
- Regular participation is the foundation of team commitment

Healthy Choices

- No tobacco, alcohol, or illegal substances
- Using these substances may lead to suspension or removal from school and team

Commitment & Time Management

- Significant time and energy required from athletes and families
- Must balance academic responsibilities with team obligations

Positive Attitude & Effort

- Bring energy, enthusiasm, and effort to every activity
- Consistent lack of effort may lead to disciplinary action

Exemplary Sportsmanship

- Represent the school with respect and integrity on and off the field
- Parents must model respectful behavior toward coaches, officials, and opponents

Locker Room Conduct

- Behavior in all locker rooms are to be respectful and appropriate
- Show respect for teammates, opponents, and school property
- Maintain a clean and orderly space
- Appropriate language will be always used
- Report any damage, misconduct, or safety concerns to a coach or athletic administrator immediately
- Horseplay, bullying, hazing, and inappropriate use of technology are strictly prohibited
- All personal items and valuables are to be locked securely in your lockers when leaving them in the locker room



PRACTICE & GAME DAY GUIDELINES

EQUIPMENT & ATTIRE

Not Permitted:

- Cell phones during practices/competitions
- Jewelry (for safety reasons)

Required:

- Appropriate sport-specific gear
- Proper footwear
- Personal water bottle

Dress Code:

- Neat hair compliant with school standards
- Weather-appropriate clothing

Uniforms:

- Only official team-issued uniforms for games
- Personal items (socks, compression gear) must be purchased individually

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Athletes must provide their own:

- Racquets (tennis, squash, badminton)
- Sticks (lacrosse, hockey)
- Clubs (golf)
- Mouthguards
- Cleats or spikes
- Compression gear
- Personal safety equipment

School-Provided and Sanctioned Uniform and Gear

- School provides uniforms and practice gear, including mandatory equipment (helmets, headgear, etc.)
- These items are expected and required for participation

Uniform Care

- School uniforms must be returned within one week of the season's end
- Unreturned items may result in disciplinary consequences or replacement charges



EVALUATION & TEAM SELECTION

Evaluation Criteria

- **Attitude:** Positive energy, full engagement, team support, good sportsmanship
- **Effort:** Best effort in practices/games, applies feedback, builds team spirit
- **Fitness:** High physical conditioning, intense execution of drills
- **Skill & Game IQ:** Individual skills, understanding of rules/strategy, mental toughness

Selection Process

- **No Guarantees:** Returning players and seniors are not guaranteed spots
- **Fresh Evaluation:** Every season begins with new assessment
- **Coach-Led:** Decisions made by coaching staff; questions addressed to head coach and/or Athletic Director
- **Commitment Required:** Once selected, athletes must honor full-season commitment

ATTENDANCE & COMMITMENT POLICIES

Unexcused Absences Include:

- Social events
- Routine medical appointments
- Non-emergency conflicts
- Attending school but skipping practice

Consequences:

- **First:** Loss of playing time or up to one-week suspension; captaincy may be revoked
- **Second:** Suspension pending meeting with coach and Athletic Director

Excused Absences Include:

- Illness/injury
- Family emergencies
- Religious observances
- School-sponsored trips

Special Considerations

- College visits and SAT/ACT prep must be communicated proactively with the head coach
- Student-athletes arriving after 9:15 a.m. may not participate that day unless pre-approved

From SP Upper School Handbook:

An unexcused lateness after 9:15 a.m. will prevent a student from participating in extracurricular activities that day, including athletic games.

- Missing more than four practices/competitions may jeopardize team eligibility

Travel/Club Sports Conflicts

- Missing SP activities for club teams may result in reduced playing time or jeopardize team status
- Exceptions considered case-by-case for national team selection or active college recruitment



PLAYING TIME GUIDELINES

Middle School

- Emphasis on learning skills, teamwork, sportsmanship, and discipline
- Playing time: Generally as equal as possible, though not always identical
- Attendance, behavior, and effort also factor into opportunities

Junior Varsity (JV)

- Focus on skill development, game experience, and preparing athletes for varsity
- Coaches strive to provide meaningful playing opportunities for all players
- Playing time is not guaranteed to be equal, but all athletes will contribute

Varsity

- Competitive level representing St. Paul's at the highest standard
 - Playing time is earned based on:
 - Skill and ability
 - Work ethic and attitude
 - Team needs and game situations
 - Coaches are not required to provide playing time for every athlete in every contest
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LEADERSHIP & TEAM CAPTAINS

Selection Process

- **Middle School:** Coach-assigned or rotated based on leadership qualities
- **JV:** Elected per season with coach/player input
- **Varsity:** Collaborative selection by coaches and players; leadership training provided

Expectations

Captains serve as role models, communicators, and liaisons. They must model respect, sportsmanship, and responsibility while upholding Crusader mission values.

Note: Captains may be removed if they fail to meet behavioral or commitment expectations.



COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

Constructive Communication Examples

- Athlete asking a coach how to improve or gain more playing time
- Athlete seeking clarification about feedback
- Parent encouraging their child to speak with the coach about goals or concerns

Unconstructive Communication Examples

- Athletes venting to teammates instead of coaches
- Parents confronting coaches immediately before, during, or after events
- Parents questioning coaching decisions regarding playing time or strategy

Veracross

Coaches and athletic administration use Veracross as the main mode of communication with student-athletes and families. Emails and in-person conversations are preferred for day-to-day communication between coaches, students, and families.

24-Hour Rule

Parents and athletes should avoid direct communication with coaches within 24 hours of competition.

Exception: Safety concerns override this rule.

Conflict Resolution Process

1. Athlete communicates directly with the head coach
2. If unresolved, athlete brings concern to the head varsity coach
3. If still unresolved, a joint meeting is scheduled with the athlete, coach, parent, and Athletic Director
4. Further issues may involve the Athletic Director and Division Head



FITNESS & CONDITIONING

Preseason Preparation

(6–8 weeks before tryouts)

- Running (sprints and endurance)
- Agility drills, strength training, core exercises
- Sport-specific conditioning as directed by coaches

Weight Room Access

- Available to athletes ages 14+ most days after dismissal
- Supervised by Coach Fitzhugh
- Team lifts may be scheduled for in-season and off-season training

Off-Season Training

(Encouraged)

- Strength and conditioning programs
- Camps and clinics
- Individual and team skill development
- Multi-sport participation
- SP coaches may offer up to three hours/week of off-season sessions

Access to Athletic Facilities

The St. Paul's Schools value student health, wellness, and access to athletics. However, unsupervised or informal use of school facilities presents a significant risk to student safety and the school community. Accidents or misuse of equipment can result in serious injury, damage to property, and liability for the school. In consultation with our insurance company and risk management advisors, The St. Paul's Schools are required to enforce the following guidelines. These are necessary for both student protection and to ensure conformance with insurance requirements for athletic programs and facilities.

Guidelines:

- **Outdoor facilities:** Running on fields and campus is permissible, students must have their school ID present if asked.
- **Indoor facilities:** Limited use only when a staff member, coach, or approved supervisor is present.
- **Supervision:** Students may only use facilities when a staff member, coach, or approved supervisor is present. Unsupervised use of facilities is prohibited, as it represents the highest risk of injury.
- **Hours of Access:** Facilities are open during designated hours with appropriate supervision only. Any use during or off season must be approved by the head varsity coach in consultation with the Athletic Director and security team.
- **Priority of Use:** Official school practices, games, and events only.
- **Equipment & Safety:** Proper attire is required. Food, gum, and drinks other than water are not permitted. All injuries and unsafe conditions must be reported immediately.
- **Behavior:** All conduct must align with school expectations. Students are expected to respect staff, peers, and facilities at all times.
- **Consequences:** Violation of this policy may result in loss of access privileges, disciplinary action, and/or financial responsibility for damages.



TRAVEL & TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

General Expectations

- All athletes must travel to and from away contests using school-provided transportation, unless excused in advance by the Athletic Director.
- Athletes must remain with the team until officially dismissed by the coach.
- Proper conduct and sportsmanship are expected on buses, vans, and at host schools.

Alternate Travel Requests

- Parents/guardians may request alternate travel arrangements by submitting a written note or email at least 24 hours in advance to the Athletic Director.
- Athletes may only ride with their own parent/guardian unless special permission is granted.
- Last-minute requests may not be approved.

Early Dismissals & Return Times

- Some contests require athletes to leave school early. Students are responsible for any missed classwork, homework, or tests.
- Coaches will communicate expected return times; parents are asked to pick up students promptly.

Overnight or Extended Travel

- Overnight or extended trips must be approved by the Athletic Director and Head of Upper School.
- Student-athletes must adhere to all school rules and team expectations throughout the trip.



HEALTH, SAFETY & INJURY MANAGEMENT

Injury Protocol

1. **Immediate Reporting:** Athletes must notify their coach and/or the certified athletic trainer as soon as an injury occurs.
2. **Initial Evaluation:** Certified athletic trainers will assess the injury and provide on-site care or referral.
3. **Parent Notification:** Parents will be contacted in the event of a significant injury or medical concern.
4. **Emergency Response:** Emergency services will be called immediately for serious injuries.

Return-to-Play Requirements

- Athletes may not return to play until cleared by:
 - A licensed medical physician (MD/DO), physician's assistant (PA), or nurse practitioner (NP).
 - The school's Certified Athletic Trainer, who has the final authority under the supervision of the school's team physician.
- Concussions require a formal, stepwise return-to-play protocol including both academic and athletic clearance.

Chain of Authority for Return-to-Play

1. Treating physician or medical specialist
2. School's supervising physician
3. Certified Athletic Trainer

Preventive Care & Conditioning

- Athletes are encouraged to maintain proper nutrition, hydration, and rest.
- Pre-season conditioning is strongly recommended to reduce injury risk.
- The strength and conditioning staff will provide guidance for safe training practices.

Emergency Information

- Every athlete must have an up-to-date emergency information form on file in the Health Office and Athletic Office.
- Parents are responsible for updating the school with new medical information (allergies, medications, surgeries, etc.).



PARENT EXPECTATIONS & INVOLVEMENT

Parent Responsibilities

- Help your son manage his commitments and respect attendance policies.
- Support coaches and team rules without intervening in coaching decisions.
- Model sportsmanship and respectful behavior at all events.
- Promote healthy habits, balanced priorities, and consistent communication.
- Address concerns constructively through the appropriate communication channels.

Required Meetings

- Seasonal meetings are conducted by head coaches at the start of each sport season (fall, winter, spring).
- Meetings cover:
 - Team expectations
 - Practice and game schedules
 - Parent involvement opportunities
- Team-specific expectations beyond St. Paul's Athletics will be communicated during these meetings.

Communication Tools

- Weekly team email announcements
- Athletics section of the school website (rosters, schedules, updates)
- Weekly e-bulletin emails
- Social media updates
- St. Paul's Sports Network (SPSN) on YouTube for live streaming of competitions

Coach Contact

- Coaches will provide preferred contact methods and response timelines.
- Parents and athletes are expected to respect boundaries and follow the 24-hour rule after competitions.



SCHEDULES & WEATHER POLICIES

Schedule Management

- Updated schedules are posted on the school website.
- Parents and athletes should check regularly for last-minute changes due to:
 - Weather
 - Facility conflicts
 - Transportation issues
- Game return times are approximate; plan accordingly.

Weather Cancellations

- On days when school is closed due to weather, all athletic events are canceled unless approved by the Athletic Director.
- Outdoor practice or game decisions will typically be made by 2 p.m.
- Heat, humidity, wind chill, and air quality are monitored closely.
- Athletic trainers will make safety recommendations following MIAA standards.

Extreme Conditions

- The Athletic Department prioritizes athlete safety during extreme weather events.
- The MIAA guidelines will be followed for heat, cold, and air quality.
- Decisions on practice or game modifications are made by athletic trainers in consultation with the Athletic Director.



GOVERNING BODIES & LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP

Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA)

- St. Paul's School for Boys is a founding member of the MIAA.
 - The MIAA is composed of independent schools across the region.
 - Emphasis is placed on:
 - Fair play
 - Sportsmanship
 - High standards of competition
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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS (NFHS)

St. Paul's School for Boys recognizes the National Federation of High School Sports (NFHS) as a key governing body in high school athletics.

The NFHS provides:

- Standardized rules for high school sports nationwide
- Guidelines for safety and fair play
- Educational resources for coaches, officials, and student-athletes
- Opportunities for leadership development and skill advancement
- The Athletic Department at St. Paul's aligns with NFHS principles to ensure that our student-athletes:
- Compete in a safe, fair, and consistent environment
- Receive coaching that emphasizes sportsmanship and skill development
- Are prepared for post-high school athletics with strong fundamentals and ethical conduct

Additional Resources

- MIAA Website: www.miaasports.net
- NFHS Website: www.nfhs.org



CLOSING STATEMENT & COMMUNITY VALUES

At St. Paul's School for Boys, Crusader Athletics is built on a foundation of education, sportsmanship, and personal growth. Our goal is to develop student-athletes who are:

- Disciplined and committed to their team and personal excellence
- Respectful and inclusive in all interactions
- Resilient and courageous in facing challenges
- Lifelong learners who balance academics, athletics, and character
- We thank parents, students, and coaches for supporting a positive, safe, and thriving athletic community. Together, we ensure that every student-athlete can grow, compete, and succeed—both on the field and beyond.

