John Paul II CATHOLIC SCHOOL

2026-2027

Student-Athlete Handbook

Athletic Department Mission

The mission of John Paul II Catholic School Athletics is to develop student-athletes spiritually, academically, physically, and socially through participation in interscholastic athletics. Athletics are an extension of the educational mission of the school and should reflect the values of faith, integrity, discipline, servant leadership, and sportsmanship.

Participation in athletics is a privilege, not a right. Student-athletes are expected to represent JPII with pride and distinction both on and off the field of play.

SHIELD Values

All student-athletes are expected to live the SHIELD values each day:

Service

Putting others before self and serving teammates, school, and community.

Holiness

Growing in faith and striving to live according to Catholic values.

Integrity

Doing what is right even when no one is watching.

Excellence

Giving your best effort in the classroom, competition, and daily life.

Leadership

Leading through actions, attitude, and accountability.

Discipleship

Using talents and gifts to glorify God and positively influence others.

Participation as a Privilege

Participation in athletics is a privilege extended to students who:

- Meet academic expectations.
- Follow school rules.
- Demonstrate good citizenship.
- Uphold the values of JPII.
- Respect coaches, teammates, officials, and opponents.

Athletic participation may be restricted or revoked due to academic, behavioral, disciplinary, or attendance concerns.

Athletic Team Selection, Cuts, and Playing Time Policy

Participation Philosophy

Athletics at JPII provide student-athletes with opportunities to grow in faith, character, leadership, teamwork, and athletic skill. While the Athletic Department seeks to provide participation opportunities for as many students as possible, team roster sizes may be limited by factors such as safety, facility capacity, coaching staff, equipment availability, and competitive needs.

Participation on an athletic team is a privilege, not a right.

Team Selection and Cuts

Certain athletic programs may require team selections (cuts) when the number of students trying out exceeds the number of available roster spots.

The decision to reduce a roster is never easy and is made with careful consideration by the coaching staff.

Team Selection Criteria

Coaches may consider factors including:

- Athletic ability
- Skill level
- Effort and work ethic
- Coachability

- Attendance during tryouts
- Attitude and sportsmanship
- Team needs
- Position requirements
- Commitment to the program

Team selection decisions are made in the best interest of the team and athletic program.

Coach Authority

The Head Coach has the authority to determine final roster decisions.

Team selection decisions are based on the professional judgment of the coaching staff and are final.

While parents and student-athletes may seek feedback regarding areas for improvement, roster decisions themselves are not subject to appeal.

Communication Following Team Selection

Student-athletes who are not selected for a team are encouraged to:

- Continue developing their skills.
- Participate in another sport or activity.
- Seek constructive feedback from the coaching staff.
- Return for future opportunities.

Being cut from a team should not be viewed as a permanent judgment of a student's athletic potential.

Playing Time Philosophy

Participation on a team does not guarantee equal playing time.

At the middle school, junior varsity, and varsity levels, playing time is earned and determined by the coaching staff based upon what is believed to be in the best interest of the team.

The primary responsibility of the coaching staff is to develop student-athletes while also fielding the most competitive team possible.

Factors Affecting Playing Time

Playing time decisions may be based upon:

- Attendance at practices
- Effort and work ethic
- Attitude and sportsmanship
- Knowledge of team systems
- Skill development
- Physical readiness
- Team strategy
- Opponent matchups
- Position needs
- Commitment to team expectations

Playing time may fluctuate throughout the season based upon these factors.

Parent and Student Expectations

Student-athletes are encouraged to communicate directly with their coach if they have questions regarding their role on the team or areas for improvement.

Parents are encouraged to support their child and allow them to develop self-advocacy skills.

Appropriate Questions

Student-athletes and parents may discuss:

- Ways to improve performance.
- Areas of growth and development.
- Team expectations.
- Practice habits and preparation.

Inappropriate Topics

The following topics are not appropriate for discussion:

- Demands for increased playing time.
- Comparisons to other athletes.
- Team strategy decisions.
- Coaching decisions made during competition.

The 24-Hour Rule

Parents may not approach coaches regarding playing time, roster decisions, or coaching decisions immediately before, during, or after contests.

Parents who wish to discuss concerns must wait at least 24 hours following a contest before contacting the coach.

If concerns remain unresolved:

1. Student-athlete speaks with the coach.
2. Parent meets with the coach.
3. Parent meets with the Athletic Director if necessary.

Commitment to Development

At JPII, coaches are committed to helping every student-athlete improve regardless of role, position, or playing time.

Every athlete contributes to the success of a team through:

- Practice effort
- Leadership
- Positive attitude
- Team culture
- Support of teammates
- Commitment to excellence

A player's value to a team is not determined solely by minutes played or innings competed, but by the impact they have on the program as a whole.

Student-athletes are encouraged to focus on growth, preparation, and team success while trusting the coaching staff to make decisions that are in the best interest of the team and athletic program.

Academic Expectations

Student-athletes are students first.

Athletes are expected to:

- Attend all classes.
- Complete assignments on time.
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress.
- Seek assistance when needed.
- Communicate with teachers regarding missed work.

Failure to meet academic expectations may result in athletic consequences, including suspension from practices or contests.

Attendance Expectations

Student-athletes are expected to attend school regularly.

To participate in a practice, game, or team activity, a student must be present at school unless excused by administration.

Excessive absences, tardiness, or early dismissals may impact athletic eligibility.

Sportsmanship

JPII expects exemplary sportsmanship from all student-athletes.

Athletes shall:

- Respect officials.
- Respect opponents.
- Respect teammates.
- Respect coaches.
- Demonstrate self-control.
- Compete with humility and integrity.

Unsportsmanlike conduct may result in disciplinary action by the coach, Athletic Director, or administration.

Conduct Expectations

Student-athletes represent JPII at all times.

This includes:

- On campus
- During practices
- During games
- During team travel
- On social media
- In the community

Athletes are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on themselves, their families, their team, and JPII.

Substance Abuse Policy

The use, possession, sale, distribution, or being under the influence of any of the following is prohibited:

- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Marijuana
- Tobacco products
- Vaping devices
- Nicotine products
- Controlled substances used improperly

Violations may result in:

- Suspension from athletics
- Removal from team activities
- Disciplinary action

- Loss of athletic privileges

The administration reserves the right to determine appropriate consequences based upon the circumstances.

Weapons Policy

Student-athletes may not possess, carry, display, or store any weapon at school, athletic events, team functions, or school-sponsored activities.

This includes:

- Firearms
- Knives
- Explosive devices
- Tasers
- Pepper spray
- BB guns
- Airsoft guns
- Any object used as a weapon

Violations may result in immediate disciplinary action and removal from athletic participation.

Social Media Policy

Purpose

Social media has become an important part of communication and personal expression; however, student-athletes at JPII must understand that their actions online have a direct impact on themselves, their teammates, their coaches, and the reputation of the school.

Participation in athletics carries additional responsibilities. Student-athletes are highly visible representatives of JPII and are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the values of the school both in person and online.

Social media activity is considered an extension of a student's conduct and may be subject to school and athletic department review when it impacts the school community, athletic program, students, faculty, staff, or the reputation of JPII.

Expectations for Student-Athletes

Student-athletes are expected to use social media responsibly and demonstrate the SHIELD values of Service, Holiness, Integrity, Excellence, Leadership, and Discipleship in all online interactions.

Student-athletes should:

- Represent JPII positively.
- Demonstrate good character online.
- Support teammates and coaches.
- Use respectful and appropriate language.
- Promote sportsmanship and school pride.
- Think before posting, sharing, commenting, or reposting content.
- Respect the dignity and privacy of others.

Student-athletes should remember that deleted posts, messages, photos, and videos often remain accessible and may be permanently recoverable.

Prohibited Social Media Conduct

The following conduct is prohibited and may result in athletic and school disciplinary action:

Disrespect Toward Others

- Bullying or cyberbullying.
- Harassing students, teachers, coaches, officials, or parents.
- Publicly criticizing teammates, coaches, opponents, or school personnel.
- Posting content intended to embarrass, intimidate, or humiliate others.

Inappropriate Content

- Profanity or vulgar language.
- Sexually explicit or suggestive content.
- Inappropriate images or videos.
- Content promoting illegal or dangerous behavior.

- Content inconsistent with Catholic values.

Team and School Conduct

- Negative comments regarding coaches, teammates, playing time, team decisions, or athletic department policies.
- Sharing confidential team information.
- Posting content that creates division within a team.
- Impersonating coaches, teammates, or school personnel.

Substance-Related Content

- Images, videos, or posts involving alcohol, vaping, tobacco, illegal drugs, or controlled substances.
- Content that promotes or glorifies substance use.
- Participation in social media trends involving illegal or dangerous behavior.

School Reputation

- Any post, comment, image, video, or message that brings discredit upon John Paul II Catholic School.
- Content that reflects poorly on the school's mission, values, or Catholic identity.
- Conduct that negatively impacts team culture or the school community.

Recruiting and College Athletics

Student-athletes should understand that college coaches, admissions offices, scholarship committees, and employers routinely review social media accounts.

Inappropriate online behavior can:

- Impact college admissions.
- Affect scholarship opportunities.
- Influence recruiting decisions.
- Damage future educational and professional opportunities.

Student-athletes are encouraged to use social media as a tool to showcase their accomplishments, character, leadership, service, and academic success.

Reporting and Investigation

The Athletic Department reserves the right to review social media activity when concerns arise regarding:

- Student safety.
- Team culture.
- School reputation.
- Violations of school policies.
- Athletic Department expectations.

Reports may originate from students, parents, faculty, staff, coaches, community members, or publicly available content.

Consequences for Social Media Violations

The Athletic Director and school administration reserve the right to determine appropriate consequences based on the severity, frequency, and impact of the violation.

First Offense

- Meeting with the Head Coach and Athletic Director.
- Parent notification.
- Removal of inappropriate content.
- Written warning placed on file.

Second Offense

- Parent meeting with the student-athlete, coach, and Athletic Director.
- Suspension from one or more athletic contests or team activities.
- Additional disciplinary action as determined by administration.

Third Offense

- Extended suspension from athletic participation.
- Loss of leadership positions, captaincy, or team privileges.
- Probationary status within the athletic program.

Fourth Offense

- Removal from the athletic team.
- Loss of athletic privileges for a period determined by administration.
- Additional school disciplinary consequences as applicable.

Severe Violations

Certain social media violations may result in immediate disciplinary action without following the progressive discipline process.

Examples include:

- Threats of violence.
- Harassment or bullying.
- Hate speech or discriminatory conduct.
- Sexual harassment.
- Criminal activity.
- Substance abuse violations.
- Posts that significantly damage the reputation of JPII or endanger the safety of others.

In these situations, consequences may include immediate suspension or removal from athletic participation.

Think Before You Post

Before posting online, student-athletes should ask themselves:

- Does this reflect the SHIELD values?
- Would I be comfortable showing this to my parents, coach, principal, or future college coach?
- Does this represent JPII in a positive manner?
- Would I want this associated with my name five years from now?

If the answer is no, it should not be posted.

As representatives of JPII, student-athletes are expected to use social media in a manner that reflects strong character, responsible decision-making, and the values of our Catholic faith.

Uniform and Equipment Responsibilities

All uniforms and equipment issued by JPII remain school property.

Student-athletes are responsible for:

- Proper care of uniforms.
- Proper care of equipment.
- Returning items on designated collection dates.
- Reporting lost or damaged items.

Students may be financially responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged equipment.

Locker Room Expectations

Locker rooms are extensions of the school environment.

Student-athletes shall:

- Keep locker rooms clean.
- Respect school property.
- Respect teammates.
- Avoid horseplay and inappropriate behavior.
- Follow coach instructions.

Bullying, hazing, or inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated.

Team Travel

Student-athletes are expected to:

- Follow all school rules.
- Respect transportation providers.
- Follow coach instructions.
- Represent JPII positively.

Behavior during travel is subject to school discipline policies.

Athletes should first communicate with the coach before contacting the Athletic Director.

Athletic Awards and Recognition

Athletes must be in good standing academically, behaviorally, and financially to receive awards, letters, team recognition, and postseason honors.

All uniforms and equipment must be returned before awards are distributed.

JPII Team Commitment and Outside Team Participation Policy

Commitment to JPII Athletics

Student-athletes who choose to participate in a JPII athletic program are expected to place their school team as their primary athletic commitment during the official season of that sport.

Athletics are an extension of the educational mission of JPII, and participation on a school team carries responsibilities that extend beyond competition. Student-athletes are expected to demonstrate loyalty, accountability, and commitment to their teammates and coaches.

Priority of JPII Athletics

During the official athletic season, JPII practices, contests, team meetings, workouts, team travel, and other school-sponsored athletic activities shall take priority over outside athletic commitments.

This includes:

- Travel teams
- Club teams
- AAU teams
- Showcase teams
- Private training sessions
- Recreational leagues
- Independent athletic events

Student-athletes are expected to be present and fully committed to their JPII team activities.

Attendance Expectations

Student-athletes are expected to attend:

- Practices
- Games and competitions
- Team meetings
- Conditioning sessions
- Team functions
- Other activities designated by the coaching staff

Repeated absences due to outside athletic commitments may negatively impact a student's standing within the program.

Conflict Resolution

The Athletic Department understands that conflicts may occasionally arise. In these situations, student-athletes and families are expected to communicate with the Head Coach as early as possible.

Approval for an absence due to an outside athletic commitment is at the discretion of the Head Coach and Athletic Director.

Approval should not be assumed.

Team Responsibilities

When a student-athlete commits to a JPII team, they are making a commitment to:

- Their teammates.
- Their coaches.
- Their school.
- Their athletic program.

Athletes who miss team activities for outside athletic commitments place additional burdens on teammates and may affect team preparation, chemistry, and performance.

Student-athletes are expected to honor their commitments and prioritize the success of the team over individual opportunities during the school season.

Consequences for Non-Compliance

Failure to prioritize JPII athletic commitments may result in consequences determined by the coaching staff and Athletic Department, including:

- Reduced playing time.
- Suspension from contests.
- Removal from leadership positions or captaincy roles.
- Team disciplinary action.
- Removal from the athletic program in severe or repeated cases.

The Head Coach and Athletic Director reserve the right to determine appropriate consequences based on the circumstances and impact on the team.

Loyalty to Team

At JPII, we believe that one of the most important lessons athletics teaches is commitment. Teammates should be able to depend on one another, and coaches should be able to rely on the athletes entrusted to their program.

Student-athletes are encouraged to pursue athletic opportunities outside of school; however, during the official season of a JPII sport, the school team must remain the athlete's primary commitment.

When a student-athlete chooses to wear a JPII uniform, they are choosing to represent their teammates, coaches, school, and community. That commitment should always come first.

Student-Athlete Commitment

As a student-athlete at JPII, I understand that participation in athletics is a privilege. I commit to:

- Living the SHIELD values.
- Representing JPII with pride.
- Respecting coaches, teammates, officials, and opponents.
- Giving my best effort in academics and athletics.
- Growing in faith, character, and leadership.
- Being a positive ambassador for JPII Athletics.

Student-Athlete Acknowledgment

Student Name (Printed): _____

Sport(s): _____

Grade: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment

I have reviewed the John Paul II Catholic School Student-Athlete Handbook with my child and understand the expectations outlined within this document.

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

JPII Athletics

Service • Holiness • Integrity • Excellence • Leadership • Discipleship

"Whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God."
1 Corinthians 10:31