



**St. Michael's Episcopal Day School
2026-2027
Athletic Student-Parent Handbook**

**St. Michael's Episcopal Day School
2140 Mission Avenue • Carmichael, CA 95608 • www.smeds.net
Phone: 916-485-3418 • Fax: (916) 485-9084
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Introduction

The St. Michael's Episcopal Day School Athletic Parent-Student Handbook provides parents, guardians, student-athletes, and coaches with information about the policies, procedures, and expectations of the St. Michael's Athletic Program.

Participation in St. Michael's athletics is a privilege. Student-athletes, parents, spectators, and coaches are expected to represent St. Michael's with integrity and to uphold the school's Core Values of Compassion, Diligence, Integrity, Respect, and Responsibility.

St. Michael's is a member of the Parochial Athletic League, commonly referred to as PAL. St. Michael's has participated in PAL for more than 25 years and follows both school and PAL policies. PAL includes schools throughout the greater Sacramento area, most of which are affiliated with the Catholic Diocese of Sacramento. St. Michael's is one of a small number of non-Catholic schools invited to participate in the league.

Athletic Philosophy

The St. Michael's Athletic Program supports the school's mission by providing opportunities for students to develop athletic skills, confidence, character, and a sense of belonging.

Through athletics, students learn the importance of:

- Teamwork
- Sportsmanship
- Commitment
- Effort
- Respect
- Perseverance
- Integrity

Middle school athletics is competitive; however, winning is not the primary measure of success.

Demonstrating sportsmanship; respecting teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, and spectators; and responding to adversity with dignity are more important than the outcome of any contest.

Student-athletes develop at different rates and perform at different levels. Every student-athlete can contribute to a team through effort, dedication, positive conduct, and fair play.

Athletic Program Overview

St. Michael's offers athletic opportunities for students in first through eighth grade. The sports available, grade levels served, and number of teams may vary depending on student interest, coaching availability, facilities, and PAL scheduling.

The St. Michael's Athletic Program follows a No Cut, No Quit philosophy.

- Students who complete the tryout and registration process will be placed on a team.
- Tryouts may be used to determine team placement when participation numbers require multiple teams.
- Students are expected to honor their commitment to the team for the entire season.
- A student may not leave a team solely because they disagree with their team placement, role, or playing time.

Specific expectations related to team placement and leaving a team are explained later in this handbook.

Sports Offered by Season

Fall Season - Beginning in August

- Boys Flag Football, Grades 6–8
- Girls Varsity Volleyball, Grades 7–8
- Girls Junior Varsity Volleyball, Grades 5–6
- Coeducational Varsity Cross Country, Grades 7–8
- Coeducational Junior Varsity Cross Country, Grades 5–6

Winter Season - Beginning in November

- Boys Basketball, Grades 5–8
- Girls Basketball, Grades 5–8
- Little Dribblers Basketball, Grades 1–4

Spring Season - Beginning in March

- Girls Flag Football, Grades 6–8
- Boys Varsity Volleyball, Grades 6–8
- Coeducational Golf, Grades 5–8
- Coeducational Varsity Track and Field, Grades 7–8
- Coeducational Junior Varsity Track and Field, Grades 5–6

Sports, grade levels, and team configurations are subject to change based on enrollment, PAL requirements, and available staffing.

Registration and Participation Requirements

Before a student-athlete may participate in a practice, the St. Michael's Athletic Department must have all required forms and payments on file.

Required Registration Items:

- Medical Emergency Form
 - Must be completed through the St. Michael's Veracross platform.
 - Must be reviewed and updated for each athletic season.
- Athletic Handbook Acknowledgment
 - A parent or guardian and the student-athlete must acknowledge that they have read and understand this handbook.
 - The acknowledgment must be completed once during each athletic year.
- Health and Safety Acknowledgment Forms
 - Families must also complete the required acknowledgments related to:
 - AHA Patient Opioid
 - CDE Sudden Cardiac Arrest
 - CIF Concussion Acknowledgment

These forms are available on St. Michael's Veracross platform and must be completed once per athletic year.

Athletic Registration Fee

Payment is required for each sport and athletic season.

Payment may be submitted:

- Through FACTS
- By check placed in an envelope and submitted to the Athletics Box in the front office
- By check mailed to St. Michael's
- Through the designated St. Michael's Athletics Venmo account (@AdminStMike)

A registration refund may be requested only during the first two weeks of the athletic season. If registration payment has not been completed, the family's school account will be charged the applicable fee at the conclusion of the season.

Tryouts and Team Placement

Purpose of Tryouts

Tryouts may be held when the number of participants requires St. Michael's to create more than one team.

Tryouts may occur for:

- Boys and Girls Varsity Volleyball
- Girls Junior Varsity Volleyball
- Boys and Girls Varsity Basketball
- Boys and Girls Junior Varsity Basketball

Tryouts are not held for:

- Flag Football
- Cross Country
- Golf
- Track and Field

All students who complete the registration and tryout process will be placed on a team. St. Michael's does not use tryouts to eliminate students from the athletic program.

Tryout Procedures

- Tryouts generally consist of a two- or three-day evaluation period at the beginning of the season.
- Students are strongly encouraged to attend every day of tryouts.
- Sixth-grade students may try out for a varsity team when applicable.
- Tryouts are closed sessions. Parents and guardians may not attend.
- A student may choose not to participate in competitive-team tryouts and request placement on a recreational or noncompetitive team when such a team is available.

Coaches may consider the following when determining team placement:

- Athletic skills
- Effort
- Competitiveness
- Coachability
- Integrity
- Attitude
- Team needs

The Athletic Director will communicate team placements approximately two to three days after tryouts conclude.

Team configurations may change from year to year depending on the total number of participants and the grade levels of participating student-athletes.

No Cut, No Quit

St. Michael's Athletics maintains a No Cut, No Quit policy.

Students will not be cut from the athletic program following tryouts. In return, students are expected to accept their team placement and complete the season.

Disagreement with a team assignment, role, or expected playing time is not, by itself, an acceptable reason to leave a team.

Competitive and Recreational Teams

Competitive and recreational divisions may be offered for Boys and Girls Varsity and Junior Varsity Volleyball and Basketball.

Competitive Teams

Competitive teams place greater emphasis on competition while continuing to prioritize instruction, character, teamwork, and student development.

Competitive-team expectations include:

- Playing time is earned.
- Standings are maintained.
- Teams may participate in a playoff system.
- All eligible players must participate in each athletic contest in accordance with applicable PAL rules.
- Varsity competitive teams do not have a guaranteed minimum amount of playing time.
- Junior Varsity competitive teams follow the PAL All Play Rule.
- All competitive teams participate in the PAL Tournament of Champions.

The following are generally considered competitive PAL sports:

- Flag Football
- Cross Country
- Golf
- Track and Field
- Boys Varsity Volleyball

To be eligible for playoffs or championship competition, student-athletes must participate in at least half of the team's league games, matches, or meets.

Students who are members of a qualifying team are expected to participate in scheduled playoff and championship contests.

Recreational Teams

Recreational teams place greater emphasis on participation, skill development, and equitable playing opportunities.

Recreational-team expectations include:

- No league standings are maintained.
- Varsity and Junior Varsity recreational teams follow the PAL All Play Rule.
- Greater emphasis is placed on player development and equitable participation.
- Less emphasis is placed on the outcome of the contest.
- Recreational teams do not participate in the PAL Tournament of Champions.

Playing time may still be affected by attendance, eligibility, conduct, effort, safety, injury, or other circumstances determined by the coach and Athletic Director.

Student Athlete Expectations

Participation in St. Michael's Athletics provides students with opportunities, recognition, and responsibility. Student-athletes represent St. Michael's in the classroom, at practices and contests, and throughout the community.

All school behavior policies apply to student-athletes throughout the athletic season.

Conduct and Sportsmanship

Student-athletes are expected to:

- Follow all St. Michael's and PAL behavior policies.
- Demonstrate the St. Michael's Core Values.
- Treat teammates, opponents, officials, coaches, and spectators with respect.
- Demonstrate commitment, fair play, and good sportsmanship.
- Respond appropriately to coaching, disappointment, and adversity.
- Represent St. Michael's positively at all athletic events.

Abusive, vulgar, threatening, or derogatory language or behavior directed toward an official, coach, spectator, teammate, or opposing athlete is prohibited.

A student-athlete who violates an athletic behavior expectation may be required to meet with the Athletic Director and coach. The Athletic Director may also contact the student's parent or guardian and the school administration.

Behavior violations may result in disciplinary action, reduced participation, suspension from practices or contests, or removal from the team.

Cellphones and Electronic Devices

Student-athletes may not use cellphones or other personal electronic devices during practices, games, meets, matches, team meetings, or athletic ceremonies unless:

- There is an emergency, or
- The head coach has given permission.

School Discipline

A student who receives an out-of-school or in-school suspension may not participate in practices or athletic contests during the period of suspension.

A suspension is also considered an unexcused athletic absence.

After a suspension, continued eligibility will be determined by the Head of School or Director of Student Life and Activities in consultation with the Athletic Director.

After-school detention and other school disciplinary consequences may also affect athletic participation.

Awards Ceremony

Student-athletes are expected to attend the end-of-season Sports Awards Ceremony.

A student who is unable to attend must notify the Athletic Director before the ceremony. Failure to provide advance notice may affect eligibility to participate in a PAL sport during the following season.

The awards ceremony is considered an athletic event. Students must:

- Dress appropriately.
- Demonstrate respectful behavior.
- Refrain from using cellphones during the ceremony.

Special awards may consider factors such as sportsmanship, participation, effort, leadership, and contributions to the team.

Participation in Multiple Sports

St. Michael's welcomes student-athletes who participate in multiple sports.

A student who participates in more than one PAL sport during the same season must attend at least one full practice for each St. Michael's sport every week. The schedule must be arranged in advance with the coaches of both sports.

A student who participates in an outside club or athletic program during the St. Michael's season is also expected to attend at least one full St. Michael's practice each week.

St. Michael's playing time cannot be guaranteed when an outside athletic commitment prevents a student from fully participating in St. Michael's practices or contests.

Leaving a Team

A student wishing to leave a team after the first two weeks of the season must meet with the coach and the Athletic Director to explain the reason for the request. Parents or guardians are encouraged to attend.

A student who leaves a team before the season ends may not participate in another sport during the same season or the following athletic season unless the Athletic Director grants an exception. All uniforms and equipment must be returned immediately upon leaving the team.

Academic Eligibility

Athletic participation is an extension of the school program. Student-athletes are expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress.

To participate in after-school athletics or other extracurricular activities, a middle school student may not be earning a grade of D+ or below in any course.

Grade Checks

Eligibility is determined using the grades entered in the school's grading system at the time of the weekly eligibility check.

The Athletic Director will conduct grade checks according to the following schedule:

- Fall: Beginning two weeks after the start of the school year
- Winter: Beginning with first-semester final grades, regardless of the date league games begin
- Spring: Beginning two weeks after the first practice and completion of team selections

Eligibility is determined weekly and remains in effect from Monday through Sunday. Grades will not be reevaluated each day.

Ineligibility

A student-athlete earning a D+ or below in any course is ineligible to participate in games, matches, or meets until the grade has been raised to a C- or above.

An academically ineligible student is still expected to:

- Attend practices.
- Attend athletic contests.
- Sit with the team.
- Remain engaged as a team member.
- Refrain from dressing in the team uniform for competition.

The student-athlete is expected to meet with the teacher and parent or guardian to establish a plan for academic improvement.

The student is also responsible for communicating their eligibility status and any resulting absences from competition to the coach.

A student-athlete who remains academically ineligible for three consecutive weeks will be dismissed from the team for the remainder of the season.

Attendance and Team Commitment

Consistent attendance is essential to team development, safety, and fairness.

School-Day Attendance

A student-athlete must be present at school for the full school day to participate in a practice or athletic contest scheduled for that day.

A student who leaves school because of illness may not participate in a practice, game, match, or meet later that day.

Exceptions for prearranged appointments or other circumstances must be approved in advance by the Athletic Director or school administration.

Communication About Absences and Late Arrivals

Parents or guardians must notify the coach when a student-athlete will:

- Be absent from a practice or contest because of illness or an emergency
- Arrive late to a practice, game, match, or meet
- Miss a practice or contest because of a prearranged commitment

Failure to notify the coach or Athletic Director before an absence may result in the absence being classified as unexcused.

Game-Day Attendance

A student-athlete may not arrive late and suit up after missing part of a game, match, or meet unless the absence was prearranged and approved.

Excused Absences

An absence may be considered excused when it results from:

- Illness
- Family emergency
- A prearranged school commitment
- Another circumstance approved in advance by the coach or Athletic Director

Unexcused Absences

An absence may be considered unexcused when:

- The family fails to notify the coach or Athletic Director.
- The student misses a practice or contest without prior approval.
- The absence results from school suspension or disciplinary consequences.
- The student fails to meet a required team commitment without an approved reason.

Consequences for Unexcused Absences

Occurrence	Consequence
First unexcused absence	The student remains eligible but may not participate in the first quarter, period, or set of the next contest.
Second unexcused absence	The student must attend but may not participate in the next contest. A meeting with the student, parent or guardian, and Athletic Director will determine continued team participation.
Third unexcused absence	The student will be dismissed from the team for the remainder of the season. School administration, in consultation with the Athletic Director, will determine whether the student will also be suspended from participating in St. Michael's or PAL athletics during the following season.

For Cross Country, Track and Field, and Golf, a student receiving a participation consequence will not compete in the next meet or match but will still be expected to attend.

School administration and the Athletic Director may modify consequences when individual circumstances warrant.

Practices, Games, and Tournaments

Practice Schedules

St. Michael's makes every effort to maintain consistent practice schedules from year to year. Practice days will generally be communicated before the beginning of the season so that families can plan accordingly. Practice schedules may change after PAL game schedules are released. Practices may be scheduled during school breaks. Student-athletes are expected to make every reasonable effort to attend.

A coach may schedule an additional practice during the season with approval from the Athletic Director.

All student-athletes must attend at least one full practice during the week of a contest to be eligible to participate in that week's competition.

Game, Match, and Meet Schedules

PAL schedules are generally released a few weeks before the season begins. Scheduling depends on league divisions, facility availability, team requests, and the number of participating schools. Schedules are subject to change during the season.

The Athletic Director will communicate schedules and updates as soon as information becomes available.

St. Michael's will make reasonable efforts to request that games not be scheduled when a majority of the team is absent due to a school trip or a scheduled school break. Approval of these requests is determined by PAL and cannot be guaranteed.

If a team cannot meet the minimum number of required players, the Athletic Director may request that the contest be rescheduled. A rescheduling request may be denied and could result in a forfeit.

Tournaments

St. Michael's seeks to provide student-athletes with a complete athletic experience.

When scheduling and participation permit:

- Competitive teams may participate in at least two tournaments during the regular season.
- Recreational teams may participate in at least one tournament during the regular season.

As part of their commitment to the team, student-athletes are expected to participate in all scheduled tournaments.

Tournament participation may be offered in:

- Girls Varsity and Junior Varsity Volleyball
- Boys and Girls Varsity and Junior Varsity Basketball
- Boys Volleyball
- Golf
- Girls Flag Football

Tournament offerings may vary by season.

Uniforms, Equipment, and Personal Property

Athletic Uniforms and Equipment

St. Michael's will provide required uniforms and designated team equipment.

Families are generally responsible for supplying personal items such as:

- Athletic shoes
- Socks
- Undergarments
- Other sport-specific personal items communicated by the coach

Students are responsible for the proper care and return of school-issued uniforms and equipment. Uniforms must be returned no later than one week after the conclusion of the season.

A student will not be issued a uniform or equipment for a future sport until:

- All previously issued items have been returned, or
- Applicable replacement or damage charges have been paid.

Families may be charged for uniforms or equipment that is lost or damaged through negligence.

Charges will be based on the item's replacement cost.

Personal Property

Student-athletes should not bring valuable personal items to practices or athletic contests.

A student who brings a valuable item assumes responsibility for its safety and security.

St. Michael's Episcopal Day School and its coaches are not responsible for personal items that are lost, stolen, or damaged.

Parent and Spectator Expectations

Parents, guardians, family members, and other spectators play an important role in creating a positive athletic environment.

Everyone attending a St. Michael's athletic event is expected to demonstrate:

- Respect
- Sportsmanship
- Encouragement
- Appropriate communication
- Support for student-athletes, coaches, and officials

Spectators may not engage in abusive, threatening, vulgar, or derogatory conduct toward:

- Student-athletes
- Coaches
- Officials
- Opposing teams
- Other spectators

The St. Michael's Athletic Department reserves the right to remove a spectator from an athletic event or to revoke the spectator's privilege to attend future events when the spectator's conduct does not meet school expectations.

Parents and spectators should not coach from the sidelines, challenge officials, confront opposing teams, or publicly criticize student-athletes or coaches.

Coaches should be treated with the same respect that is afforded to all St. Michael's faculty and staff.

Communication and Conflict Resolution

St. Michael's encourages students to communicate appropriately with their coaches and to develop self-advocacy skills.

When developmentally appropriate, the student-athlete should first speak directly with the coach about any questions or concerns.

The 24-Hour Rule

A parent, spectator, or student-athlete may not confront or attempt to engage a coach in a substantive discussion immediately before, during, or after a contest.

Families must wait at least 24 hours after the contest before contacting the coach about concerns related to:

- Playing time
- Team placement
- Coaching decisions
- A student's role
- Conduct during the contest
- Other emotionally charged matters

Immediate safety concerns should be reported promptly to the coach or Athletic Director.

Communication Process

When a concern arises, families should use the following process:

Step 1: Meet With the Coach

- The student-athlete or parent should arrange an appropriate time to speak with the coach.
- Coaches may be unaware of a student's feelings or concerns and should be given an opportunity to respond.
- Coaches will respond to meeting requests within a reasonable timeframe.

Step 2: Meet With the Athletic Director

- If the issue remains unresolved, the parent or student-athlete may request a meeting with the Athletic Director.
- The Athletic Director will review the concern, gather relevant information, and respond in a timely manner.

Step 3: Meet With the Head of School or Designee

- If the issue remains unresolved after completing Steps 1 and 2, the family may request a meeting with the Head of School or the Head of School's designee.

Transportation and Pickup

Parents and guardians are responsible for arranging transportation to and from practices, games, matches, meets, and tournaments.

St. Michael's and its coaches are not required to provide transportation for student-athletes. Parents must pick up student-athletes promptly at the conclusion of each athletic activity.

When delayed, a parent or guardian must contact the coach by phone or text.

Coaches are required to remain with the team until all student-athletes have been picked up.

Early Dismissal

The Athletic Director may authorize early dismissal from class when necessary for an athletic contest.

Student-athletes may not leave class or campus before the designated dismissal time.

Students are responsible for communicating with teachers and completing any missed academic work.

Parent Volunteer Requirements

St. Michael's hosts PAL games throughout the school year, including events for teams such as:

- Girls Varsity Competitive Volleyball
- Boys Varsity Competitive Basketball
- Little Dribblers Basketball
- Boys Varsity Volleyball

Hosting these events requires support from St. Michael's families.

Each family with one or more student-athletes participating in a sport is required to complete a **minimum of two volunteer hours** during each athletic season in which the family has a participating student-athlete. The requirement is two hours per family per season, regardless of the number of children or teams the family participates in during that season.

Volunteer opportunities may include:

- Admissions
- Concessions
- Scorekeeping
- Clock operation
- Event setup
- Event cleanup
- Other duties assigned by the Athletic Department

A current St. Michael's student or alumnus may complete the volunteer hours on behalf of the family when approved by the Athletic Department.

A family may choose to buy out the volunteer requirement for \$40 at the beginning of the season.

Families that neither complete the volunteer requirement nor select the buyout option will be charged \$40 at the end of the season.

Coaching Standards

St. Michael's coaches are representatives of St. Michael's Episcopal Day School.

Coaches are expected to model the school's Core Values and maintain a safe, respectful, and developmentally appropriate environment for every student-athlete.

Coaching Expectations

Coaches are responsible for:

- Teaching teamwork, sportsmanship, commitment, respect, and integrity.
- Supporting the development of each student-athlete's character and athletic ability.
- Maintaining a physically and emotionally safe environment.
- Communicating practice, game, and schedule updates in a timely manner.
- Treating students, parents, officials, and opposing teams respectfully.
- Following all St. Michael's and PAL policies.
- Reporting injuries, safety concerns, or serious conduct concerns to the Athletic Director.

Each student-athlete should receive meaningful instruction and coaching appropriate to their developmental needs and team placement.

Coaching Requirements

Before coaching for St. Michael's, coaches must complete all required screening, certification, and training requirements, which may include:

- St. Michael's Episcopal Day School background check
- Sacramento Catholic Diocese background check
- National Federation of State High School Associations Concussion in Sports certification
- NFHS Sudden Cardiac Arrest certification
- Catholic Mutual Group Bloodborne Pathogens training
- Catholic Mutual Group Safe Environment certification
- PAL Play Like a Champion certification
- NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching, when accepted as a supplemental requirement
- Attendance at required PAL coaches' meetings

The Play Like a Champion seminar may be offered through Jesuit High School or another PAL-approved location.

Required certifications may not expire during the athletic season. The Athletic Director will review certification status before the season begins and notify coaches of missing or expired requirements.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of student-athletes is the first priority of the St. Michael's Athletic Department.

St. Michael's follows applicable health and safety procedures established by the California Interscholastic Federation and the Parochial Athletic League.

Health and safety topics include:

- Concussion recognition and response
- Sudden cardiac arrest
- Air quality and extreme weather
- Opioid awareness
- Emergency medical information
- Injury reporting
- Return-to-play requirements

Parents and guardians must ensure that all medical and emergency information is complete and current.

A student who experiences an injury, illness, or symptoms that may affect safe participation must notify the coach immediately.

Coaches may remove a student from participation when there is a concern about the student's health or safety.

Students may be required to provide written medical clearance before returning to participation following an injury or serious medical concern.

Additional health and safety information is available through the CIF Sports Medicine resources:

- [Concussions](#)
- [Sudden cardiac arrest](#)
- [Air quality](#)
- [Opioid education](#)

Current resources may be accessed through the St. Michael's Athletics webpage or the California Interscholastic Federation website.

Handbook Acknowledgment

By signing the St. Michael's Athletic Handbook Acknowledgment, the student-athlete and parent or guardian confirm that they have:

- Read the 2026–2027 Athletic Parent-Student Handbook.
- Reviewed the expectations for student-athletes and families.
- Understood the academic and attendance eligibility requirements.
- Understood the expectations related to behavior, sportsmanship, team commitment, uniforms, transportation, and volunteer service.
- Agreed to follow St. Michael's and PAL policies.
- Understood that failure to follow these expectations may affect athletic participation.

Questions about the Athletic Program or this handbook should be directed to the St. Michael's Athletic Director.