St. Matthew Catholic School

Athletic Handbook

2026-2027

July 9, 2026

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2026-2027

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SECTION 1
MISSION STATEMENT OF ST. MATTHEW CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Founded by the Sisters of the Holy Cross in 1931, St Matthew Catholic School exists to form and educate the minds, bodies and spirits of its students. Gospel values and Catholic traditions help guide the development of diverse programs that create individuals who will lead and serve as Jesus did.

SECTION 2
MISSION STATEMENT OF ST. MATTHEW CATHOLIC SCHOOL ATHLETICS

St. Matthew Catholic School dedicates itself to the pursuit of excellence in athletics within the framework of a Catholic community and in accordance with its primary role as an educator and spiritual guide. The St. Matthew Catholic School Athletics Program is committed to providing opportunities for each individual student-athlete to reach his/her highest potential while developing the qualities and spirit of a Catholic Christian.

SECTION 3
ATHLETIC PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

St. Matthew Athletic Board is composed of parent volunteers that, in collaboration with the Dean of Student Life, organizes, executes and supervises the St. Matthew Athletic Program in accordance with the Mission Statement. The Athletic Board believes that:

- the after school sports program enriches our students physically and socially through organized competition
- our inclusive approach encourages participation by all students who wish to involve themselves in sports
- parents of participants should also participate in the athletic program through coaching, supervising, planning, setting up, cleaning up etc. as our athletic program depends entirely upon volunteers
- registration fees to participate should be reasonable

SECTION 4
CONFERENCE AFFILIATION

St. Matthew participates in the **Peninsula Parishes/Schools Leagu**e, henceforth referred to as **PPSL.** This league operates under the auspices and control of The Catholic Archbishop of San Francisco, Corporation Sole (Archdiocesan Department of Catholic Schools). This league will operate all programs in accordance with Archdiocesan policies regarding the screening and training of Athletic Directors, Coaches and other adults with regular contact with children. The purpose of this organization shall be to foster a spirit of cooperation and friendly competition among the Catholic parishes/schools of San Mateo County. This program shall strive to enrich our students physically and socially by developing practices of good sportsmanship, encouraging participation, and building self-esteem in all participants.

SECTION 5
ST. MATTHEW CATHOLIC SCHOOL NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

St. Matthew Catholic School, mindful of its mission to be witness to the love of Christ for all, admits students of any race, color, and national and/or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded to or made available to students at this school. St. Matthew Catholic School does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and/or ethnic origin, age, gender, or disability in administration of educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

SECTION 6
REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Procedure of Registration – A student currently enrolled at St. Matthew's Catholic School can become a participating member of a specified sport once the following requirements are met prior to the Registration Deadline:

- Student and parent/guardian have completed the online St. Matthew Athletic Program Registration Form
- Student and parent/guardian have read and agreed to abide by the St. Matthew Athletic Handbook
- Athletic Registration fee has been paid

Registration Deadline – The St. Matthew Athletic Program Registration form and Registration Fee must be submitted not later than the advertised deadline for the specified sport without exception. Deadlines are not intended to prevent a student from participating on a sports team, but rather the deadlines are necessary to ensure the efficient organization of the evaluation, that team sizes are appropriate to allow for proper instruction of participants and playing time, and to ensure our ability to meet the PPSL's requirement to submit the team commitments by designated dates.

SECTION 7
REGISTRATION FEES

The Athletic Program is self-supported through registration fees collected. In situations where extraordinary financial obligations for the Athletic Program arise, funds may be acquired through fund raising or private donations. The objective of the Athletic Program is to keep the fees affordable. This fee is subject to change and will be communicated in advance of the start of a designated sport. Financial Aid for individual participants may be available and can be requested by contacting the Dean of Student Life. Please note that specific sports may require the purchase of additional sport specific gear.

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SECTION 8
AVAILABLE SPORTS AND LEVELS OF COMPETITION

St. Matthew Catholic School offers the following sports as recognized by PPSL to students in grades 4th-8th (unless otherwise noted):

- FALL: Baseball for boys and Volleyball for girls
- WINTER: Basketball for both boys and girls
- SPRING: Track for both boys and girls in 5th -8th grades

Baseball

- 4th grade is a **TRAINING** year
- 5th-8th grade is **DIVISIONAL** structure with D1 having the most competitive team, D2 having the next most competitive team, etc.

Volleyball

- 4th grade is a **TRAINING** year
- 5th grade may potentially be two (2) balanced "A" teams (Cubs) and then balanced skilled players on subsequent "B" teams (Lions)
- 6th-8th grade is **DIVISIONAL** structure with D1 having the most competitive team, D2 having the next most competitive team, etc.

Basketball

- 4th grade is a **TRAINING** year
- 5th-8th grade is **DIVISIONAL** structure with D1 having the most competitive team, D2 having the next most competitive team, etc.

Track

- 4th grade – not offered
- 5th grade is one girls team and one boys team
- 6th grade is one girls team and one boys team
- 7th grade is one girls team and one boys team
- 8th grade is one girls team and one boys team

SECTION 9
EVALUATION SESSIONS

Evaluation sessions will be conducted prior to each respective sport, with the exception of Track which does not have an Evaluation. Attendance is **mandatory** for each student-athlete to participate in that respective sport. The Evaluation Sessions are not tryouts but rather a structured amount of time allowing for the skill assessment of each student-athlete in order to place participants on the appropriate teams as outlined in Section 7. Below are the key points to the evaluation sessions:

- Evaluation sessions will be held at the dates and times communicated in the Friday Message Board (FMB).

- Evaluation sessions are **mandatory** for all participants. All student-athletes must attend an Evaluation Session in order to be placed on a team. Student-athletes who do not attend an Evaluation Session will not be assigned to a team.

- A student-athlete who has an injury that prevents him/her from participating in an Evaluation Session should check-in at the appropriate Evaluation Session. However, in order to place the injured student-athlete on a team, the following will be taken into consideration: past placement on a team, input from previous coach(es), and input from Athletic Board Members. This scenario will be managed at the discretion of the Athletic Board.

- Any student-athlete quitting/withdrawing from a sport, without due cause, after attending the Evaluation Session will not be allowed to participate in the next school sport as well as in the same sport the following school year.

- Every evaluation session will include an expert evaluator external to the St. Matthew community who is a coach/sport expert, along with two Athletic Board evaluators.

- Our expert evaluator may be compensated to facilitate the evaluation sessions and identify the team rosters. In other cases, Athletic Board members will serve as evaluators.

- As noted above two Athletic Board members will attend every session to evaluate; however, no Board member will attend a session where their child is being evaluated with the exception of the 4th Grade Training year when teams are evenly balanced.

- Each Evaluation Session has a skills assessment evaluation form to be completed by designated evaluators and all student-athletes are given a number that is pinned on their shirt so names are not a factor in the evaluation session.

- Upon the conclusion of the Evaluation Session, the evaluators will turn in their skills assessment evaluation form and team breakdown recommendations to the outside appointed evaluator.

- The outside evaluator will decide the final rosters for each team. Fairness and objectivity in the process is the priority in assigning teams.

- The recommendation of teams from the outside evaluator will be reviewed with the team of commissioners for that sport and compared to the evaluation forms to ensure accuracy.

- All rosters are subject to the approval of the Dean of Student Life.

- To ensure every student-athlete has an equal opportunity at the evaluations regardless of what team they played on in previous year(s), we do not identify coaches until after the evaluations sessions are completed. The philosophy is team selection first and then coaches are assigned.

- Once teams are created by the evaluator and approved by the Dean of Student Life, the Athletic Board will contact parents who have volunteered to be Head Coaches to confirm their role as Head Coach. These parent volunteers will only be informed of their child's team placement but will not be informed of the entire roster.

- Finally parents who have volunteered to be Assistant coaches will be contacted by the Athletic Board. Every effort will be made to ensure there is collaboration with the head coach regarding their assistant coaches.

- Once the team rosters have been finalized and approved by the Dean of Student Life, the Athletic Board will notify all players of their team placement via email so that all registrants are notified simultaneously.

SECTION 10
COACHING EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Coaching Expectations - Coaches are first and foremost educators, and must work in coordination with the parents who are the primary educators of children. St. Matthew Athletic Program has established and will adhere to the following Code of Conduct for coaches:

- Expectation to set a good example for participants and fans to follow, stressing the values derived from our Catholic Faith and playing the game fairly.
- Respect the judgment of officials and abide by the rules of the contest.
- Respect the opposing coaches, participants, and fans.
- Require good sportsmanship of participants in their charge.
- Coach in a positive manner, reflecting Christian values and emphasizing the proper ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fair play.
- Understand and accept the rules of the particular sport, the specific rules of the PPSL, the rules of St. Matthew School, and the school and league standards of eligibility.
- Encourage leadership, teamwork, and growth through positive coaching.
- Language should be appropriate and constructive at all times.
- Team First - neither coaches nor parents of student-athletes may purchase awards or trophies for teams or team members.

Coaching Requirements –The duties of the designated coach include but are not limited to:

- Plan practices
- Supervise athletes at all times until they are picked up from practices/games (two adults required per PPSL rules)
- Condition athletes properly
- Assess athletes' readiness for practice and competition
- Maintain safe playing conditions
- Communicate practice and game schedule to athletes and parents
- Complete the VIRTUS online training and be fingerprinted prior to the commencement of the first practice. No coach will be allowed to attend any practices/games without being certified.

Communication with Athletes and Parents - St. Matthew coaches should establish clear procedures and guidelines for communication with athletes and parents that align with the philosophy and mission of the school. E-mail should be used only to communicate basic information, such as time and location of games and practices. Discussions of concerns should always be done in person. If a face-to-face meeting is not possible, a phone call is acceptable. Coaches are not required to discuss playing time, coaching strategies and specific plays, or information pertaining to other athletes.

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SECTION 11
PARENT/STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS & REQUIREMENTS

Parents and Student-Athlete Expectations - Students and parents should recognize that participation in St. Matthew Athletic Program is not a right of all students, but rather a privilege to those selected individuals who possess the ability, attitude, disposition, cooperative spirit, attention to academics, and desire to represent the St. Matthew Catholic Community in a favorable way. By joining the St. Matthew Catholic School's athletic program, a student-athlete becomes a representative of his/her team and of St. Matthew Catholic School.

- Student comes first, Athlete second

- A parent and student-athlete's behavior is governed by the same rules, regulations, and procedures that apply to all students/parents as set forth in the St. Matthew Catholic School Parent-Student Handbook. Each student-athlete is expected to demonstrate and encourage in others behaviors that reflect good sportsmanship. If academic behavior infractions occur, parents and student-athletes may face both a school and an athletic participation consequence.

- All student-athletes must be marked as present in school on the day of practice or a game in order to participate. Please see the Student-Parent Handbook for what constitutes an absence.

- If a student cannot attend a practice or game, parents are responsible for clearly communicating the absence to the coach with reasonable notice in advance of the scheduled practice or game.

- ***Excused absences from practice/games:*** the only excused absences are those due to illness, injury, medical appointments, death in the family, or academic conflicts. In the event of a medical appointment we ask that every effort is made to schedule these appointments around team events and not in conflict with them. Injured student-athletes are strongly encouraged to attend practice to observe and participate in whatever way possible.

- ***Unexcused absences from practice/games:*** Following the second unexcused absence as defined above, the student-athlete may not participate in the upcoming game. Each additional unexcused absence will result in an additional game suspension and may result in the student-athlete's dismissal from the team. Under no circumstances is attending the practice or game of a non-St. Matthew team, which is directly or indirectly in conflict with the school team game or practice, considered an excused absence.

- No student should be involved in a conflicting activity when listed on the rosters as an active team member. Should a continuing conflict occur between an outside activity and a school team, membership on the school team must be the priority or team membership will be forfeited.

- Any student-athlete quitting/withdrawing from a sport, without due cause, after attending the Evaluation Session will not be allowed to participate in the next school sport as well as in the same sport the following school year.

- Practices are for coaches and athletes only. Please drop your child off and pick up at the door or field. Parents will not be permitted to stay and watch practice. This helps keep the athlete's attention on his/her coach. Please be always respectful of your child's coach's direction

- The use of illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco products will not be allowed on the benches, fields, courts, or in the stands at any PPSL event.

Uniforms

Student-athletes are highly visible representatives of the school and, as such, are responsible for using good judgment in their overall appearance. Athletes are to wear a school issued athletic uniform and treat their uniform with respect. All game shirts will be tucked-in in accordance with PPSL rules and no student-athlete may make modifications to his or her uniform. Uniforms must be returned to the head coach who will then return the entire teams' uniforms in one bag to the school office. If a uniform is not returned, parents are responsible for the cost of replacing the uniform.

Top Five Ways to Support your Student-Athlete

- **Be present** – Show up to games, cheer, and support our teams.
- **Be positive** – Children learn from modeling. When talking about the game, season, performance and decision-making, please share the gift of a positive outlook on life. Make sure that your child knows that win or lose, he/she is loved and supported.
- **Encourage independence** – Encourage student-athletes to be responsible for the care of their athletic gear and to be prepared for practices and games. In addition, student-athletes should speak directly and respectfully with their coach about any questions and/or concerns.
- **Observe the "24 Hour Cushion"** – As all good educators will do, St. Matthew coaches will naturally and deliberately reflect on game situations and decisions after the game concludes. Please allow coaches the time they need to process their decisions before approaching them with any questions. As stated, coaches are not required to discuss playing time beyond the required time by the PPSL, coaching strategies and specific plays, or information pertaining to other athletes.
- **Model St. Matthew's behavior expectations for visiting spectators** – Take pride in our athletic program and model for visitors how we….
    - cheer for our team, and never against our opponents
    - respect the integrity and authority of game officials
    - allow coaches to coach without criticism from the spectators
    - help clean up at the end of athletic events

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Student-Athlete Eligibility – The following will affect a student-athlete's eligibility to participate in St. Matthew Catholic School Athletics:

Probation

At St. Matthew Catholic School probation may be enacted if there is a serious offense, continual misconduct, or consistent lack of effort in learning skills and/or behavioral expectations. When a student has been placed on probation, the parents or guardians will be informed in writing. Probation may affect extracurricular eligibility.

Behavioral Probation

The faculty encourages growth in responsibility, respect, and concern for others. When a student fails in these regards an effort is made to help the student examine the behavior, make a value judgment, plan a better course of action, and recognize the consequences if improvement does not take place. Such a policy of encouraging self-discipline requires time, patience, and consistency on the part of teachers, students, administrators, and parents working cooperatively.

Students in grades K-8 may be placed on behavioral probation at progress report, report card or any point in the trimester for the following reasons:

- If they receive two or more 3's in behavioral expectations
- If they receive one or more 4's in behavioral expectations
- If they receive a combination of the above in behavioral expectations

As a result of concern with behavior, the students may be denied participation in extracurricular activities, student council, or any extra activity deemed appropriate by the administration.

Academic Probation

Students in grades 6-8 may be placed on academic probation at progress report, report card or any point in a trimester for the following reasons:

- If they have a grade point average of a 2.0 or below
- If they receive a grade of D or F
- If they receive two or more 3's in learning skills
- If they receive one or more 4's in learning skills

As a result of concern with academics, the student will be placed initially in Study Hall and may be suspended from extra-curricular activities until measurable improvement is seen.

Students in grades K-5 will be placed on academic probation if they receive a 3 or 4 in learning skills for two consecutive trimesters.

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SECTION 12
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

During the course of the athletic season, questions and concerns will naturally arise. The following is the order in which a concerned individual should seek satisfaction:

- Team Coach
- Individual Commissioner in charge of the sport/gender
- School Athletic Director
- Dean of Student Life
- Pastor

SECTION 13
REVISIONS/MODIFICATIONS TO HANDBOOK

The Athletic Board may make changes to any policy outlined in this handbook as needed, and the Dean of Student Life has the final decision with regards to any policy. Changes will be made public in the weekly Friday Message Board Newsletter and posted on the school website. The Dean of Student Life has the authority to remove a student or cancel a season if student-athletes or parents are not adhering to St. Matthew Catholic School and/or PPSL standards.