



Student Athlete & Parent Handbook

St. Francis Xavier Athletics

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ST. FRANCIS XAVIER ATHLETICS MISSION STATEMENT & PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The St. Francis Xavier Team Sports Program provides both an instructional and competitive program as an extension of the St. Francis Xavier school academic program. In addition to the fundamentals of each sport, it is the goal of the SFX Athletic program to teach athletes a sense of sportsmanship, teamwork, and fair play and for SFX sports to be a positive experience for all. Sportsmanship includes showing respect towards coaches, opponents, officials, teammates and one's self. While during team play, the athlete is expected to conduct himself/herself in a way that brings honor to their school and to their teammates.

SFX ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATION

The SFX Athletics Program is administered by volunteer committee members under the direction of the SFX Athletic Director and Principal. All final decisions regarding the SFX Athletics Program are subject to the approval of the Athletic Director and School Principal. Duties of the Athletic Director are outlined in the Chicago Diocese Guidelines for Interscholastic Sports.

SFX ATHLETICS SPORTS BY SEASON

SFX Athletics offers a no-cut program for all students currently enrolled at SFX in grades 5 through 8. Parish and RE students are not eligible to compete on SFX sports teams (Exception for football).

Fall:

Football, Cross Country, Cheerleading, Girls' Volleyball

Winter:

Girls'/Boys' Basketball

Spring:

Track & field, Boys' Volleyball

LEAGUE AFFILIATION/RULES OF PLAY

Leagues:

The SFX Athletics Program is a member of multiple conferences of Catholic grade schools.

Boys' / Girls' Basketball and Girls Volleyball:

Suburban Parochial League West (SPL) www.splw.8to18.com

Football:

Southside Catholic Conference (SCC) <https://southsidecatholic.org/>

Cross Country / Track & Field:

Suburban Parochial League (SPL) www.s-p-l.org

Boys Volleyball

Classic League

Rules of Play:

League rules are based on the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) rules of play but modified as needed by the League Athletic Directors and Commissioners to align to the Chicago and Joliet Archdiocese Guidelines for interscholastic sports. All league rules are provided to coaches prior to each season.

PLAYER EVALUATIONS; TEAM LEVELS (A & B); NUMBER & SIZES OF TEAMS

Player Evaluations

Girls/Boys Volleyball & Basketball

Evaluations will be held before the start of the season. Athletes participating in sports requiring pre-season evaluations are expected to attend all scheduled evaluation dates. Missing evaluation dates may adversely affect an athlete's placement and therefore ultimately team divisions. As 'make-up' evaluation dates are not often feasible, in the event a player cannot participate in evaluations due to injury or other significant event, team placement will be determined by the Sport Coordinator and the Athletic Director. In addition to overall demonstrated skill, attitude, effort, and commitment to SFX athletics will be considered in the evaluation process.

Football

All players are assigned to their team based on grade level - 5th/6th Junior Varsity and 7th/8th Varsity. Playing time is based on evaluations throughout the season. Demonstrated skills, effort, commitment and player safety will be considered in the evaluation process.

Football, Cross Country; Track and Field; Cheerleading

All players are assigned to their teams based on grade level - 5th/6th Junior Varsity and 7th/8th Varsity, therefore preseason evaluations are not required.

Team Levels

Girls Volleyball & Boys & Girls Basketball

For 6th-8th grade Girls' Volleyball, Boys' Basketball and Girls' Basketball, teams are divided into one A team and B level teams based on participation numbers and their performance during the evaluations. 5th grade is considered instructional; therefore there are no A or B level teams, and players will be distributed evenly by skill level across teams.

Boys Volleyball

Depending on participation numbers, teams may be divided by grade or level. 5th/6th graders may be combined into JV team(s) and 7th/8th graders may be combined into Varsity team(s). Generally boys volleyball teams are split evenly as they play against each other, but the Athletic Director and Athletic Committee may decide to compete as 'A' level and 'B' level teams in any given year.

Football

All players are assigned to their team based on grade level - 5th/6th Junior Varsity and 7th/8th Varsity. Playing time is based on evaluations throughout the season. Demonstrated skills, effort, commitment and player safety will be considered in the evaluation process.

Cross Country/ Track and Field

Teams will be divided by grade level (5th/6th Junior Varsity and 7th/8th Varsity) and gender.

Cheerleading

Depending on participation numbers, squads may be divided by grade or level. 5th/6th graders may be combined into a JV squad and 7th/8th graders may be combined into a Varsity squad.

Number and Sizes of Teams

Girls' Volleyball & Boys'/Girls' Basketball

For 6th-8th grade, teams will be divided into one A team and as many B teams as necessary to keep team sizes manageable. In general, team sizes will be between 8-11 players. There may be instances where team numbers are higher due to commitment of players to SFX Athletics and/or additional students from transfers, etc.

Boys' Volleyball

Teams will either be divided by grade or by level (JV/ Varsity) depending on participation numbers. In general, team sizes will be between 8-11 players. There may be instances where team numbers are higher due to commitment of players to SFX Athletics.

Football/Cheerleading/Cross Country/Track & Field

Team sizes will be determined by number of registrants per grade.

STUDENT ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS & REGULATIONS

Participation in the SFX Athletic Program is a privilege, not a right. Athletes will be held to personal, academic and disciplinary standards. Additionally, enrollment in the SFX Athletics program is a commitment to play according to all the rules. Full participation in all aspects of the program, including, off site locations for games, practices and tournaments should be expected. *Please consider all other commitments before registering for sports, and communicate player conflicts prior to evaluations so they can be considered in evaluations.*

Academic Eligibility

Students are expected to perform in the classroom to the best of their abilities. When academic performance is not commensurate with a student's abilities and/or a pattern of incomplete or missing assignments develops, the Principal will notify the parents and Athletic Director that the student has been placed on academic suspension. The duration of the suspension is determined by the Principal. If a student is placed on academic suspension three times during a season, the Principal will make a decision as to the eligibility of that student to remain in that sport for the remainder of the season and possible ineligibility for the subsequent season as well.

Disciplinary Eligibility

Students are expected to follow the Responsive Classroom and SFX code of conduct. Violations of the Responsive Classroom program and code of conduct may result in a suspension from athletics. When athletic suspensions are warranted, the Principal will notify the athlete's parents and the Athletic Director. The duration of the suspension is determined by the Principal. If disciplinary issues persist, the Principal will make a decision regarding further athletic eligibility of the student.

Health Eligibility

1) School Absences

An athlete who is absent from school due to illness on the day of a competition or practice may not attend the activity. Absence from school on a Friday does not affect weekend participation if the athlete has recovered sufficiently to participate.

2) Injuries

Any athlete that is unable to participate in gym class due to an injury is also ineligible to participate in athletics. If a student has sustained an injury or is returning from an injury and a coach or other representative of the SFX athletics program has concerns regarding the ability of the athlete to safely compete, they may request a note from the athlete's parent/guardian or a medical practitioner stating that the athlete has permission and is capable of participating in the sports program.

2a) Concussion

CDC concussion protocol is required.

https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/concussion_symptoms.html

Return to play forms must be completed and signed off on by the Concussion Oversight Committee before returning to sport.

3) Yearly Physical Exam Requirements

The Archdiocese of Chicago requires that all students participating in a school sponsored athletic program have a yearly sports physical on file. Sports physical forms are valid for 395 days. For students entering 6th grade, a copy of the state mandated physical is sufficient, as long as the doctor approves physical activity.

Registration Forms and Fees

Eligibility to participate in the sports program is dependent on having completed the

registration materials and submitting payment for activity fees via FACTS. Forms to be completed include:

- Parent and Athlete Pledge/Waiver and Release Form (including Student-Athlete and Parent Acknowledgment)
- Signed concussion information sheet
- Completed yearly sports physical form.

Failure to have any of these forms on file with the Athletic Department will prevent the athlete from participating in any aspects (evaluations, games, or practices) of the sports program.

League Rules of Eligibility

All Student Athletes are bound by league rules regarding age and weight.

SPORTSMANSHIP

Athlete's Code of Conduct

Students who choose to participate in the SFX Athletic Program are representing our school and parish at all times. Student-Athletes must act in a manner that reflects favorably upon the school and on themselves. This expectation should be evident at the school, in the community, and at other schools, as well as before, during and after the games.

STUDENT ATHLETES:

- Are expected to adhere to the St. Francis Xavier School Parent-Student Handbook; including the School Discipline Code and Technology--Acceptable Use Policy
- Are expected to play by the rules and show good sportsmanship
- Are expected to demonstrate respect for coaches, officials, teammates and opponents
- Should never use foul language
- Should not argue an official's call or coach's decision
- Are expected to put team goals before individual goals
- Are expected to win or lose with honor knowing that the true nature of competition is evaluated by effort and teamwork.

Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in disciplinary action which may include reduced playing time or suspension.

Parent/Guardian/Spectator Code of Conduct

Parents play an important role in the success of the student-athlete and also in the success of the team. Positive cheering sets a great example to our student-athletes. Parents should support and encourage their child's efforts. Spectators are always reminded to act in a responsible manner and show good Christian sportsmanship. Spectators understand that their conduct at games is a reflection of our school and its values.

SPECTATORS:

- Should be a fan of everyone on the team
- Should respect other fans, players, and the decisions of the officials and coaches

- Should not attempt to direct the play of the team or an athlete
- Should not criticize the playing efforts of the team or an individual
- Should not criticize or berate the officials, coaches or any other gym personnel

Parents & spectators should realize that they can and may be asked to leave a game or tournament if they are not able to maintain a standard of acceptable behavior. Anyone asked to leave a contest will serve a one-game suspension.

GRIEVANCE & DECORUM POLICY

Grievance

If a situation arises that needs to be addressed between an athlete and coach, it is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. Understand and follow this sequence in resolving player/parent/staff issues:

- First: Player with Coach
- Second: Parents with Coach
- Third: Parents with Coordinator
- Fourth: Parents with Athletic Director
- Fifth: Parents with Principal or Pastor

When a conference between coach and parent is necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution of the issue:

WAIT 24 HOURS. Please do not attempt to approach a coach before or after a game or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. After 24 hours have passed, call or email the coach to set up a meeting. If the meeting with the coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution, contact the Sport Coordinator to discuss the situation.

Decorum

Disruptive or inappropriate behavior at practice will be handled as follows:

- 1st offense – Warning from one of the coaches
- 2nd offense – Participant will be held out of practice while parent is called
- 3rd offense – Participant will be suspended for one game
- 4th offense – Dismissal from the team

Any coach or player who is disqualified from an athletic contest will serve a one game suspension. The suspension will be served in that team's next game. Any coach, player, or spectator ejected from a game for unsportsmanlike* conduct, the following shall occur:

- 1st ejection – one game suspension
- 2nd ejection – two game suspension with a hearing

*Any type of physical contact involving parents, coaches and/or referees before, during, or after a contest or practice shall result in an immediate suspension of indefinite length until a hearing can take place.

PRACTICES/GAMES

Schedules

All games (conference and non-conference), scrimmages and practice schedules are completed and approved by the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director must approve any additionally proposed contests or gatherings that are not part of the original game/practice schedule. Any changes to the schedule will be forwarded to coaches and families ASAP.

Cancellations/Forfeits/Reschedule

In the event that school is closed for inclement weather or due to some other problem, all home contests and practices will be canceled for the day. In the event of a forfeited game during a season, if the schedule allows, every effort will be made to reschedule the contest.

Parent Volunteer Assignments

A volunteer program is dependent upon everyone's help and support to maintain a high level of quality and success. Parents should expect to be assigned to volunteer at the admissions table or concession stand during games/meets hosted by SFX. (You may be scheduled during contests in which SFX teams are not playing.) Schedules will be distributed via email as well as posted on the door to the concession stand. Parents may also be scheduled to serve as a 'backup' parent at practices to ensure that two non-related adults are present for the duration of all practices. Parents should also be prepared to be head coach. According to Chicago Archdiocesan policy, all head coaches must be at least 21 years of age and ALL coaches must have completed the Protecting God's Children program and state mandated concussion training course. All teams must meet these coaching requirements or the team will not be allowed into the league.

Trading Players

SFX coaches are not allowed to 'trade players' from one team to another. This includes trading players from an 'A' team to a 'B' team and vice versa or trading 'B' players from one 'B' team to another. Special circumstances such as not having enough players to field a team may necessitate the movement of players and must be done by the Athletic Director in accordance with league rules.

Number of Weekly Gatherings

The maximum number of gatherings per week for any team should be no more than 5 times per week. A gathering is defined as a game, practice or team meeting. Exceptions are allowed for tournament play, rescheduled games, or due to gym availability.

Length of Practices and End Times

Practices should be no more than two hours in duration. All sport gatherings for 7th/8th grade should end no later than 9:30pm on school nights and 10:00pm on nights when there is no school the next day. Gatherings for 5th/6th graders should end by 8:30pm on school night and 9:00pm when there is no school the next day.

Practice Attire

Dress for practice should be comfortable gym style clothes. Students may be asked to leave practice if they are not properly attired.

Absences

Athletes are expected to be present and on time for all games and practices. Not attending practices and games affects the entire team and detracts from the sense of teamwork that the coaches are striving to achieve. Playing time will reflect practice and game attendance.

1) Excused Absences

Absences from school due to illness are considered an excused absence from a practice or game. Only illness, schoolwork or a significant event will be accepted as an excused absence from practice or game. The player or a family member must contact the coach prior to the game/practice to inform them of the absence.

2) Unexcused Absences

Any other reasons for absence than those outlined above may be considered an unexcused absence and may affect playing time.

Student Drop Off/Pick Up

Parents should not drop off their child for practice any earlier than ten minutes prior to the scheduled practice time and must pick them up no more than five minutes after practice time is over. Practices should be finished no more than five minutes after the scheduled ending time. SFX is not responsible for student athletes before or after practices. If your child arrives early to a practice, they may be unsupervised until the start of the practice and/or until a coach arrives. Coaches may be required to leave immediately after a practice; therefore if your child is being picked up, please be on time.

Younger Siblings at Games

When younger siblings are brought to athletic contests, the parents/guardians are expected to supervise their behavior and keep them off the fields/courts at all times. Younger siblings should observe the games from the bleachers/stands.

UNIFORMS

Care of Uniforms

All equipment and uniforms that are property of the SFX sports program and lent to St. Francis Xavier students must be cared for and kept clean. Please line dry (preferred) uniforms or dry on low heat as high temperatures damage uniform appliqués.

Uniform Return

All items issued to the student athlete must be returned on the date and location specified by the Sport Coordinator. Uniforms should be cleaned and then placed in a Ziploc bag. The bag should be labeled with the following information: athlete's name, grade, team color and uniform size. (EX. John Smith, 5th grade Gold, #44YL)

Lost or Damaged Uniforms

Parents are responsible for the loss or damage of uniforms/equipment beyond the normal expected wear. A charge will be assessed to replace any items that are lost, damaged or not returned.

Jewelry Prohibited

The wearing of any jewelry, including earrings and hard barrettes is prohibited during games and practices. If you are considering ear piercing, please realize that the earrings must be removed before playing: Taping the ears is not allowed. Exception: Medical alert necklaces and bracelets. These must be taped to the athlete to prevent injuries.

Logos

The Athletic Director and/or Principal must approve all logos used to represent SFX on all uniforms and Spirit Wear items.

FACILITIES

SFX coaches and parents are responsible for student athlete behavior at gym and field locations for both home and away games and practices. All water bottles should be removed from the gym after games/practices—all facilities should be left clean.

Any use of outside facilities must be coordinated and approved by the Athletic Director; as always, coaches and staff will take all due care. Parents/guardians are giving SFX implicit permission by allowing athletes to play/practice at away locations; therefore in the event of injury, SFX assumes no liability.

FALCON PASS

The SFX Athletic Department offers three types of Falcon Passes. Gym Pass allows your immediate family unlimited admission to all home Basketball and Volleyball games. Football Pass allows your immediate family unlimited admission to all home Football games. Combination Pass allows immediate family unlimited admission to all home Basketball and Volleyball games as well as all home football games. Admission fees are collected at volleyball, basketball, & football games (no admission for cross country, track & field events). A pass may be purchased at time of registration or may also be purchased at any time during the school year by contacting the Athletic Director. Charges will be applied to your FACTS account. *No actual pass is issued to families—a list of Falcon Pass families is kept at the door.*

SFX ATHLETIC COMMITTEE

The SFX Athletic Committee is headed by the Athletic Director and includes Sport Coordinators for each sport offering as well as other roles as needed. The Committee aids the Athletic Director by making recommendations concerning all activities, as well as the future direction of the Program. The Athletic Director appoints the Committee positions. Any parish member may apply for any vacant Committee position.

SFX ATHLETIC COMMITTEE POSITIONS (And members as of 3/16/2024)

Athletic Director—Pat McMahon (sfxad@sfxlg.org)

Assistant Athletic Director—Melissa Burns

Boys' Basketball Coordinator—Jay Widuch

Girls' Basketball Coordinator—Mike Mullen (Amy Burgland Shadowing)

Girls' Volleyball Coordinator—Becca Merchant (Heather Connors Shadowing)

Boys' Volleyball Coordinator—Katie Stritch

Football Coordinator—Steve Janiszewski

Cheerleading Coordinator—Theresa Wood (OPEN in 2024/2025)

Cross Country—John Mulholland (Jason Wagner Shadowing)

Track & Field Coordinator—Jeremey Strayer

Treasurer—Nic Michaels

Secretary—Eleanor O'Reilly

ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEER POSITIONS SUPPORTING ATHLETICS OUTSIDE THE COMMITTEE

Special Events Coordinator

Spirit Wear Coordinator

Football Concessions Coordinator(s)

Indoor Concessions Coordinator (s)

Picture Coordinator

Homecoming Coordinator (s)

Tournament Coordinators (6th Boys/8th Girls)

Athletic Committee meetings are held at least quarterly and more often as required during the school year.

SFX ATHLETIC PARENT PLEDGE

1. **I pledge to "Honor the Game."** I understand the importance of setting a good example for my child. No matter what others may do, I will show respect for all involved in the game including coaches, players, opponents, opposing fans, and officials. I understand that officials make mistakes. If the official makes a call against my team that I don't agree with, I will Honor the Game and be silent!
2. **One Voice (the Coach's): I pledge to refrain from calling out instructions to my child.** I understand that this is the coach's job. I understand that games are chaotic times for children trying to deal with fast-paced action and respond to opponents, teammates and coaches. I will limit my comments during the game to encouraging my child and other players for both teams.
3. **I pledge to reinforce the ELM Tree of Mastery with my child (E for Effort, L for Learning and M for bouncing back from Mistakes).** Winners are people who make maximum effort, continue to learn and improve, and do not let mistakes, or fear of making mistakes, stop them. I understand that mistakes are an inevitable part of any game and that people learn from their mistakes. I understand that children are born with different abilities and that the true measure is not how my child compares to others but how he/she is doing in comparison to his/her best self.
4. **I pledge to use positive encouragement** because athletes do their best with positive reinforcement. I understand that fewer than 1% of youth sports participants receive college scholarships and that the top three reasons kids play sports are a) to have fun, b) to make new friends, and c) to learn new skills. I understand that the game is for the players, and I will keep sports in the proper perspective.
5. **I pledge to get my child to practice and games on time.** I understand that it can be embarrassing for my child to be late and that I may be putting him/her at risk by not providing adequate time for warm up. I will be on time to pick up my child from all games and practices. This shows respect for the coach, and it tells my child that he or she is my top priority.
6. **I pledge to refrain from making negative comments about my child's coach in my child's presence.** I understand that this plants a negative seed in my child's head that can negatively influence my child's motivation and overall experience.

I will honor the SFX Athletic Parent Pledge in my words and actions.