



**ATHLETIC
HANDBOOK
2011-2012**

A LETTER FROM THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

Dear Parents,

Welcome to 2011-2012 athletics at St. Mark Lutheran School. The athletic department is looking forward to your support for the upcoming year. Coaches, teachers, students and parents will all play a vital role in making this year a success.

Through athletics we hope to develop student athletes in the following ways. **Physically:** athletics will help improve skills, and promote a healthy lifestyle. **Mentally:** we will encourage social skills, positive self-esteem, and also teach accountability to others. The most important area we will deal with is the student's **spiritual growth**. In every practice and in every game we will be giving glory to GOD.

We wish to accomplish three goals this year - W. I. N.!!!

1. W - ORSHIP the Lord in everything that you do and say.
2. I – NSPIRE others to do the same by example.
3. N – EVER quit. Always strive to do your best in all situations.

We are looking forward to a new and exciting year of Cougar athletics! There are many challenges before our teams and many goals, which we must strive to reach. We ask for your support and patience in this upcoming year. Enclosed you find the guidelines which we feel may help you and your student – athlete.

Thank you for your help and cooperation! See you at the games and let's fill the stands with all the Cougar teams this year!

Remember HE IS THE REASON FOR ALL THE SEASONS!

Dale Quickel
Athletic Director

HOUSTON LUTHERAN CONFERENCE ASSOCIATION

MEMORIAL
OUR SAVIOR
PILGRIM
SALEM

ST. MARK
TRINITY-DOWNTOWN
TRINITY-KLEIN

PHILOSOPHY OF ST. MARK ATHLETIC PROGRAM

It is the aim of St. Mark's athletic program to facilitate the mission of St. Mark Ministries through sporting activities. The student's participation in interscholastic sports will help to develop the student spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically and socially. Students will be encouraged to be the best they can be by doing the best they can do to the glory of God.

The interscholastic athletic program at St. Mark refers to the competitive sports between schools as an after school co-curricular event. One of the major goals of this program is to help students learn to apply Christian principles to their lives. Our interscholastic program is for students who demonstrate an emotional and mental readiness for competition and who possess a satisfactory level of physical and academic competence.

St. Mark's athletic program stresses the following points: technically correct physical skills, physical conditioning, commitment in team participation and team building, self-discipline, priority setting, the encouragement of others, perseverance, and respect for those in authority.

To maintain these values, we recruit teachers from our staff along with adults who have a commitment to the student, family, sport and mostly, to the ministry of our Lord. They are to keep the sport in perspective as part of the total educational process of the student. It is vital they understand each student as an individual as they relate to team oriented activities.

TEAM PARTICIPATION AND EXPECTATIONS

FALL: CROSS –COUNTRY (*coed*)
SOCCER (*coed*)
VOLLEYBALL (*girls*)

WINTER: BASKETBALL (*boys and girls*)
SWIMMING (*boys and girls*)
CHEERLEADING (*coed*)

SPRING: SOFTBALL (*girls*)
BASEBALL (*boys*)
TRACK & FIELD (*boys & girls*)

CHEERLEADING POLICY

The primary purpose of cheerleading at St. Mark is to promote school spirit and unity. Cheerleaders will encourage positive support of St. Mark athletic teams during games and pep rallies by leading spectators with organized cheers and choreographed routines. Cheerleaders should encourage crowd involvement and promote good sportsmanship.

CODE OF CONDUCT

All St. Mark student athletes, coaches, and parents must abide by a Code of Conduct emphasizing good sportsmanship in a Christian atmosphere. Attitude, behavior, and language should be God-pleasing at all times.

DRESS CODE

All participants and support staff should dress in a manner, which will reflect a proper light on St. Mark Ministries and the Athletic Department. Coaches should require high standards for the students when not in uniform and representing St. Mark.

ELIGIBILITY POLICY

St. Mark student-athletes must be in good academic and disciplinary standing to compete in school-sponsored events. Student-athletes will be evaluated every interim and report card grading periods. A student athlete will be considered ineligible for athletic involvement if he/she receives **TWO** or more failing grades (F's) in subjects on an interim report, or if he/she receives **ONE** or more failing grade (F) on a report card. The ineligibility/eligibility begins the day the interim/report card is issued and will re-evaluate after two weeks. The student will remain ineligible until the next bi-weekly evaluation determines the eligibility status.

Ineligible student-athletes are REQUIRED to practice with their respective team unless determined otherwise by the athletic director and school principal, but will not be permitted to participate in games. Ineligible student-athletes are NOT to leave school early to attend games.

Additionally, the athletic director or school principal may declare a student-athlete ineligible at any time for a specified period of time for disciplinary reasons. A student serving a school suspension is not in good disciplinary standing.

Age Requirements:

1. No student may compete in athletics that is 15 years of age on or before the first day of September of the current school year.
2. No student may compete in a Junior Varsity team who is 13 years of age on or before the first day of September of the current school year or in seventh grade.

GAMES/PRACTICES

We expect all players and support staff to be at the games. Each player should be at the facility at the time directed by the coaching staff. Late attendance or no attendance will result in loss of playing time.

Every participant is expected to be at every practice. Practices are designed to prepare the athlete for the next competition. This is vital for the student and his/her teammates. Students are required to wear their **P.E. uniform** to all practices. Excused absences include sickness, family emergency and appointments (PLEASE do not schedule appointments on practice / game days). In case of an emergency, a note will be required for the coaching staff.

St Mark athletic activities should be placed as first priority. Other outside activities such as club practice/games, rehearsals, campouts, vacations etc... which do NOT involve St Mark will count as UNEXCUSED ABSENCES. Each player is allowed ONE unexcused absence per season. Second miss will result in loss of ONE GAME.

Three unexcused absences may result in the student being removed from the team. Any exceptions to the missed practice/game guidelines will be made as joint decisions between the coach, athletic director and principal.

NOTE: IF A TEAM MEMBER DOES NOT PARTICIPATE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION, ALTHOUGH HE/SHE IS IN ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL, HE/SHE WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DAY'S PRACTICE OR GAME. ALSO, THE STUDENT MUST HAVE BEEN PRESENT AT LEAST ONE-HALF OF THE SCHOOL DAY TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY SCHOOL EVENT.

PRACTICES OR GAME CANCELLATIONS

In the event that a practice or game is cancelled, students will be given permission to use the phone as soon as possible after the cancellation is announced. Athletes who remain will be supervised by their coach until they are picked up or sent to extended care.

TEAM ATHLETICS

Students in 5th through 8th grade may participate in a variety of team athletic programs at St. Mark. Students in K through 4th grade may participate in a variety of programs with the West Houston Christian League who use our facilities for games and practices. In the West Houston league emphasis is placed on sportsmanship, the development of fundamental skills, mental discipline, and teamwork. Student athletes are expected to come fully prepared to participate each day with the appropriate clothing and necessary equipment.

Note: **All students participating in a team sport (including cheerleading) must have a physical exam each school year. The physician's form must be turned in to the school office prior to any practices or games.** Forms and registration information are available online, (www.stmarkhouston.org) at Back to School Night or through the athletic office.

TRANSPORTATION

The coaches will need parental assistance in this area. We have many athletes to transport to various events with inadequate transportation available with the number of students participating.

UNIFORMS

St. Mark Athletic Department will supply uniforms for each participant. Supplementary items may be required which the student will purchase. Be sure that the uniforms are properly cleaned and student appears as a proper representative of St. Mark. Damaged or lost uniforms will be replaced at the student's expense.

Uniforms will be returned clean and in good condition at the end of the season. Report cards will be held until uniforms are turned in. Future sport uniforms will not be issued until past sport uniforms are returned.

TEAM SELECTION

Team selection may be limited based on coaching personnel and available facilities. While St. Mark strives for maximum student participation, equal playing time is not guaranteed. The team selection process and decisions concerning playing time will be at the sole discretion of the coaches and the athletic director. If the number of student – athletes reaches at point where there are enough for multiple teams, they will be divided into an A and a B team.

Junior Varsity consists of 5th and 6th grade student- athletes. Varsity is made up of 7th and 8th grade student - athletes. Should the number of 7th and 8th grade student - athletes be insufficient to form a team at the varsity level, 6th grade students would be allowed to try out for the varsity team.

ATHLETIC BANQUET

A recognition sport banquet will be held for all students that participated in athletics. This sports banquet is usually held in May at the end of all the sports seasons.

The following Athletic Awards will be given (if criteria are met):

St Mark Athletics "All Cougar Team"

This award is presented to Junior High Varsity athletes who have met the following criteria:

- Must have **excelled** in at least two varsity sports
- Must display good Christian character on and off the playing field.
- Must be a true contributor to the team.
- Must exhibit a good attitude, be cooperative and coachable.
- Must be respectful at all times to teammates, coaches, officials and opponents.
- Must remain in good academic and conduct standing throughout the season.

Each athlete is given a ranking between 1 & 10, 10 being the highest by the coach.

St Mark Athletics "Cougar Pride Award"

Criteria:

This award is presented to an 8th grade athlete(s) who has shown personal dedication, school spirit, displays good Christian behavior, has a positive attitude, and respectful at all times. They also must be coachable, cooperative and the ultimate team player. Selection for this award is based on nominations by the coaches.

St Mark Athletics Outstanding Cougar Athlete Award

This award is presented to 8th grade athlete(s) who has shown incredible dedication and uses their exceptional God given talent to the best of their ability. Selection for this award is based on nominations by the coaches. The following criteria, is used in the selection process:

- Must have excelled in at least 2 varsity sports
- Must display good Christian character on and off the field of play
- Must be an exceptional contributor to his/her team
- Must exhibit an exceptional attitude, be cooperative and coachable
- Must be respectful at all times to teammates, coaches, officials and opponents
- Must remain in good academic standing throughout the season

St Mark Christian Athlete Award

This is the highest athletic award given annually at St Mark. This award is presented to an 8th grade athlete(s) who has demonstrated discipleship and sportsmanship when participating in the varsity sports program. Selection for this award is based on nominations by the coaches. The following criteria, is used in the selection process:

- The athlete demonstrates true sportsmanship at all times
- The athlete is cooperative, coachable and respectful to coaches
- The athlete is respectful to officials and opposing teams at all times
- The athlete gives 100% in practice and games and never gives up
- The athlete demonstrates school pride in appearance and actions
- The athlete gives credit to God for his/her abilities and is modest in victory and gracious in defeat.

PARENTAL VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

In an effort to help offset the enormous expense of running a comprehensive athletic program, parents are required to assist in game management functions such as sale of concessions,

gate, scorekeeping, etc. We do not require an athletic fee to participate in athletics at St Mark. In order to run a successful athletic program we do need your help. Specific details and actual assignments will be communicated prior to the start of the respective sport season by the sport coordinator.

CODE OF ETHIC: STUDENTS, PARENTS AND COACHES

I hereby pledge to provide support, care and encouragement to my child participating in the St. Mark Sports Ministry by following this code of ethics.

- I will remember that the game is for the children and not for adults.
- I will place the spiritual, emotional, and physical well being of my child ahead of any personal desire to win.
- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches and officials at every practice and game.
- I will do my part to ensure that my child plays in a safe and healthy environment.
- I will support the coaches and officials in an effort to provide a positive experience for all.
- I will uphold a drug, alcohol, and tobacco-free sports environment for my child and agree to refrain from their use at all games and practices.
- I will treat players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect, regardless of religion, race, sex, creed, or ability.
- I will encourage my child to treat other players, coaches, fans and officials with respect, regardless of religion, race, sex, creed or ability.

The Parental Role in the Development of the Student Athlete

The parents of a student are usually the determining factor in their child's becoming an athletic participant. The parents have an important, if not vital role in the student's co-curricular life. A portion of the responsibilities and roles are listed below:

1. Teach by example a Christian attitude towards all. All members of St. Mark Ministries will encourage and help, but it is the parent who must be the main director.
2. Assist the student to establish proper priorities with respect to church, family peers, studies and play.
3. Encourage and participate in the development of the student's athletic abilities.
4. Teach the student and be a role model for the student in dealing with coaches and peers.
5. Support the student's commitment to teams. Make a commitment to attending games, driving for the team, helping in supporting roles such as the concession stand and fundraisers, assisting in set up and clean up, being active in the student's activities and being a positive public relations avenue.
6. Develop within the athlete, foresight that enables him/her to accept responsibility for both individual and group actions.
7. Instill in the athlete, good health habits regarding, food, sleep, exercise and spiritual life.
8. Enthusiastically support teams at athletic events with support for all players, coaches, and officials.

In general, the student is an extension of his/her role models, the parents.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND GRIEVANCES

Students, parents, teachers, and administrators at St. Mark are encouraged to work in partnership toward the common goal of excellence in Christian education. When questions or conflicts arise, they should be addressed courteously and directly with the coach involved. If issues are not satisfactorily resolved, please discuss the matter with the athletic director.

The Biblical directive for conflict resolution at St. Mark Lutheran School is found in Matthew 18:15-17.

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or tax collector.

PRAYER FROM THE SIDELINES

God, help me keep a cool head.

Help me remember it's my child's game, not mine.

Help me see the joy in the game:
the nobility of trying your best,
and the satisfaction that comes with playing your heart out.

Help me keep my eye on the fun and off the scoreboard.

Let me cheer for *all* the children
and keep my comments about the referees to myself.

Help me to realize that the opposing coach is a child of God,
and their best player is still a child,
with feelings that hurt and a heart that can break.

Let me be a big enough sport to let my child
make blunders without my harassment.

And may I model sportsmanship and honor,
no matter what the others may say or do.

Amen.