

# Athletic Policies and Procedures



*Christ Lutheran School  
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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The athletic program at Christ Lutheran School is one of the means by which we attempt to accomplish our school's goals. Through athletics, we strive to help our young people accomplish the following specific goals:

1. to give witness to the glory of God in all that they do;
2. to strive for excellence in the development of the talents which God has given;
3. to prepare for a life of Christian service through the unique lessons learned in athletics; and
4. to develop an exposure to, and enjoyment in physical activity that will lead to lifetime involvement and maintenance of the physical temple God has given.

To this end, instruction and practice is the right of all students. Participation on a team of Christ Lutheran School, however, is a privilege. Along with this privilege comes certain responsibilities in the area of preparation, attitude, sportsmanship, and academics. It is the firm opinion of this school that these responsibilities exist both in and out of school, both in athletic and non-athletic settings. We recognize the need for God's strength and guidance in meeting these responsibilities.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Participation in athletic events is a part of the program offered at Christ Lutheran for its students. Our intention in offering athletics is to allow the student participants to grow in skills and in dealing with the many lessons that increasing competition can teach. Winning, losing, teamwork, sacrifice, perseverance, fairness and competitiveness are among the lessons available within the program.

Participation in any of the sports is a privilege. The staff works very hard to provide as much opportunity as possible for students to participate. This not only in many cases double the opportunity to participate but doubles the need for coaches, uniforms, equipment, etc. We often have volunteer coaches who donate their valuable time to work with the students. The Athletic Director has to recruit and supervise these coaches as well as schedule the extra practices and games. In addition, the other schools must approve or allow Christ to enter more than the customary one team per level of each sport.

This booklet was prepared so that the student participant and the parents would better understand the procedures and policies of the athletic program and how to effectively communicate with the coaches and others involved. We desire that the programs are a positive experience for everyone. We also solicit your input to make the programs better each year.

Finally, we ask you show your appreciation to the coaches, staff and volunteers that work diligently to make these programs a success. Without this sometimes massive effort, our ability to present an athletic program with the high level of participation and success that we have grown accustomed to might not be possible. Please give a hand when you are able and be supportive of coaches and staff. An encouraging word from a mom or dad goes a long way to help a good volunteer feel it is worth his or her time and effort to work with a team. Please also keep our students, volunteers, and staff in your continued prayers.

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## **CHRIST LUTHERAN SPORTS CODE**

*As a player, coach, cheerleader, fan, or official, I will...*

*Consider all opponents as friends and guests, and treat them with due courtesy;*

*Accept all decisions of the officials;*

*Never hiss or boo a player or official;*

*Never utter abusive or irritating remarks from the sidelines;*

*Applaud teammates and opponents who make good plays or who reflect good sportsmanship;*

*Never attempt to abusively rattle an opposing player;*

*Seek to play fairly according to the rules;*

*Respect the game for its own sake, and not for what it can do for me;*

*Do unto others as I would have them do unto me;*

*Win without boasting, and lose without excuse or complaint, celebrating the opportunity to participate and be active;*

*Recognize that the primary purpose of my participation is that God be glorified through the gifts, talents, and abilities He has graciously given me; and*

*Praise God for giving me the ability to contribute to that cause.*

## PLAYING TIME

Playing time is, without a doubt, the most debated and, at times, most painful aspect of an athletic program. Therefore, it seems appropriate to provide here some candid counsel and to articulate the policy of Christ Lutheran School.

To begin with, there is a distinction between the playing time provided at the A Level of competition from that of the B Level (or lower).

Students involved at B Level sports (generally 5-6th grades) or lower (at times we do provide some "C" Level experiences) are guaranteed an amount of playing time in each athletic event. This amount will vary from year to year depending on the size of the squad. This amount will be reviewed on a yearly basis by the Athletic Director.

Students involved at A Level sports (usually 7-8th graders) generally play according to their level of ability and as game situations dictate.

At all levels, it is our sincere desire to provide as much playing time to each individual as possible. Since the B and C Levels are at more of a developmental stage, it is deemed most appropriate to guarantee a certain minimum amount of time in each contest. While we may aspire to similar type goals for the amount of playing time at the A Level, playing time at this level will not carry the same guarantees and quite likely will not be spread out evenly during each game. For example, a student who is not a "starter" or whose skills rank them behind most of their teammates, may in some contests play more than the average amount of time while in other contests they may play less, considerably less or possibly not at all.

It can be difficult at times to see a player not getting as much playing time as others or as much time as they or their parent's desire. The flip side of this concern, however, is the player who excels but is not allowed to demonstrate or apply those skills because of limiting their amount of playing time in an effort to be equal to all members of the team. On the subject of playing time, please note that it is our position that equal is not always fair and being fair to everyone does not necessarily mean providing equal playing time in contests.

The issue of playing time further differs significantly from sport to sport. It is much easier, for example, to provide more playing time for everyone in a sport like soccer where squads are large than in a sport like basketball where only 5 players at a time participate.

Track is another sport which provides unique circumstances. For example, in track teams are very limited to the number of participant slots available at a given meet.

In events like Soccer and Basketball, it shall never be our practice to run up a score. Therefore, it is evident that in contests in which scores are rather lopsided in (whether in our favor or that of our opponent), that there should be more time available for the less skilled to play. Close contests obviously will present the greatest difficulty in playing all members of an A Level team.

Student attitude can at times have a bearing on playing time. Students who fail to give coaches the courtesy of letting them know they will be missing a practice or who, without valid excuses, absent themselves from practice jeopardize their share of playing time.

Further, a student's unwillingness to cooperate, to follow direction, to hustle, etc. also might jeopardize their share of playing time.

Students are also reminded that their participation in athletics is a team experience. As such, even when a student is not actually participating in a contest, their attention and support from the bench or sidelines is still expected and considered an important part of the team effort. Students should, even though they may not be involved in the contest, participate in team huddles during time outs and stay close to the bench area while the contest is in progress. Being near the coach, whether on the sidelines or the bench, provides the athlete and coach opportunity to interact; it provides opportunity to provide the student with instruction and preparation in anticipation for their entering the game.

Students should not leave the bench or sideline area during the contest. When this occurs, the student often forfeits an opportunity to play as the coach may be unable to find the student when the chance for a substitution arises.

Finally, students may not always be chosen by the coach to play at a position which they desire. A student who is sent in by the coach to play guard when they would rather be playing center should nonetheless enter the contest, do their best, and follow the coaches' instruction in an effort to be of the most assistance to the entire team. Students who refuse to play at a designated position cannot expect to play in other positions. The team will have one coach (or at times a shared responsibility by more than one coach) and that leadership must be respected and followed.

## **PRACTICES**

PARENTS will keep in mind that much of the benefit derived from being in a team sport involves the practice setting where skills are taught and strategies learned. While playing time may not exactly measure up to one's expectations, you are encouraged to remember the entire team experience, not only game situations.

STUDENTS will keep in mind that practices are important in several respects:

- 1) They offer opportunities to learn and develop new skills.
- 2) The practice time provides time for a coach to teach specific skills and strategies to his or her team.
- 3) The practice setting offers time to cultivate a team spirit and display a positive attitude toward the sport, your coach and your teammates.

COACHES should keep in mind that the practice session is for all players on the team. All are deserving of the coach's time and attention, and it is the coach's responsibility to challenge players and attempt to bring out and develop the very best in their athletic abilities.

PRACTICES ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE TEAM EXPERIENCE. FURTHERMORE, IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR ALL PLAYERS TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN OFFICIAL PRACTICES. WHILE EXCUSED ABSENCES ARE EXPECTED ON OCCASION, PLAYERS FAILING TO MAKE PRACTICES WITHOUT A LEGITIMATE EXCUSE AND PLAYERS WHO DO NOT FOLLOW THE COACH'S LEADERSHIP DURING PRACTICE OBVIOUSLY JEOPARDIZE THE AMOUNT OF PLAYING TIME THEY MIGHT EXPECT.

## **CUTS**

To date, it has been the practice at CLS not to cut individuals from squads. Instead, every effort has been made to provide more and more opportunities for all who are interested to participate on a team. This has even resulted in entering 2 of each squad into competition and participating in both Division I and Division II play of our league.

As our school population grows and, given the possibility that we may not always be allowed to enter 2 of each team into competition, it may become necessary for CLS to institute some sort of policy for cutting squads back to a more manageable size.

In the event two teams are allowed or that cuts are necessary, it will be the Athletic Director's decision as to how these are implemented. The choices are usually by grade or by ability. Due to the many variables involved, however, the policy that works well one year may be a disaster the next. Therefore, the Athletic Director is given considerable discretion to consider the welfare of the student athletes and the opportunities that are available each year in implementing these decisions.

## **PROCESS FOR HANDLING CONCERNS**

Everyone is entitled to a process for having their concerns handled.

Also, everyone is responsible for proceeding with their concerns in a God-pleasing and orderly manner. The purpose of the following is to lay out some guidelines for the proper handling of concerns and complaints.

The structure and authority for operating Christ Lutheran School flows in the following manner:

### **1) THE CONGREGATION**

### **2) THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

(the Congregation's duly elected representatives, charged with formulating policy)

### **3) THE PRINCIPAL**

(the Congregation's duly called executive to the Board charged with implementing Board policy)

### **4) THE DIRECTORS AND THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

(the Congregation's called teachers who are given certain duties to carry out under the direction of the Principal and Board of Education)

At all points in the process, we also must recall that the Congregation's Pastors have a shepherding role and responsibility. As such, they are often called upon to give Scriptural counsel and spiritual guidance as we prayerfully seek to understand and follow God's will.

From time to time, concerns may arise over certain policies and practices or even specific events connected with the Athletic program. In these instances, the following are examples of possible actions:

*Student concerns being shared with their parents.*

*Student concerns being shared with their coach.*

*Student concerns being shared with the Athletic Director.*

*Parent's concerns being shared with the Athletic Director.*

*Coach concerns being shared with the Athletic Director.*

*Principal concerns being shared with the Athletic Director.*

*Board concerns being shared with the Principal at a Board meeting.*

*Athletic Director concerns being shared with the Principal.*

*Athletic Director concerns being shared with the Board.*

*Coach concerns being shared with a student or their parents.*

*Athletic Director concerns being shared with students or parents.*

(This list is not exhaustive but is meant to give some common examples.)

Concerns, whether flowing up or down the lines of authority should not skip steps.

Where problems arise, it is usually made worse when parties involved fail to follow the proper steps of authority, attempt to skip steps, or attempt to bolster their point of view by enlisting others not directly in the line of authority.

For concerns, it shall be our policy that the party with the concern locate the first point in the line of authority (usually the Director) and address the issue there.

It shall further be our policy that no party above that initial point of contact shall deal with the concern until the proper steps are taken at previous levels.

For example:

*The Principal would re-direct any concerns to the Athletic Director in those cases where the party raising the concern has not fully tried to resolve the issue with the Athletic Director.*

*The Board of Christian Education would refrain from hearing issues which have not first been brought to the attention of the Athletic Director and subsequently the Principal. Furthermore, the Board of Christian Education will first consult with the Principal to determine if further hearings are warranted or if the matter in question is already covered by policy or has been recently addressed by the Board.*

It shall further be the policy of the Board, when hearing concerns, to generally make all policy changes or new policies operative no earlier than the following school year. Concerning issues of interpreting present policy, it would be at the Board's discretion to determine an implementation date.

It is recognized that at times it may be appropriate for a parent to take a concern directly to a coach - items not involving policy decisions or interpretation of policy.

Wherever policy is the concern, however, the parent must begin with the Director who has been placed in a position of implementing the Board's policies.

It is our sincere desire, since many coaches are volunteers, that they not be unduly burdened or pressured.

Therefore, it is the policy of the Board of Christian Education that parent concerns directed to individual coaches not be done:

- 1. At athletic contests, immediately prior to their start.**
- 2. During athletic contests (parents are not to approach the bench, coach or locker room etc.).**
- 3. At the conclusion of an athletic contest.**
- 4. At practices.**

For the sake of clarification, let it be known that the "concerns" being referred to here are those types of items which involve parental thoughts on playing time, coaching strategies, umpiring/referee decisions, etc. It is obvious that there may be times when parents wish to legitimately make known to a coach something regarding the physical condition of their child, the child's physical wellness (do they have the flu or an injury), etc. Certainly, a parent stopping by practice to inform a coach of a child missing an upcoming game or practice would be in order. A parent trying to let a coach know prior to or during a game that their child is ill is obviously a necessary contact. Please understand that the type of communication makes a difference in the appropriateness of the contact.

In situations where parents disagree with or have concerns about a coach's manner of coaching a game, there is required a 24 hour cooling off period before parents should make phone contact with the coach. Coaches should be allowed the after-game time to enjoy with the team at a local hamburger establishment or simply relax at home without handling fans concerns.

In most cases, it will be more appropriate for a concern to be directed to the Athletic Director. Upon the Director's review of the concern, they may deem it appropriate for the parent to contact the coach.

Students or parents circumventing the above procedures and guidelines run the risk of forfeiting their right to take their concern higher on the ladder of authority.