

Lake Michigan Catholic Middle/High School Athletic Handbook

Guidelines & Procedures

The purpose of the Athletic Handbook is to give Students & Parents information on our athletic program. This handbook covers information applicable to all teams at Lake Michigan Catholic. It is our goal that athletics be a positive growth experience for our Student Athletes, Parents, Coaches and Laker Community. It is our hope that this vital communication will allow everyone to have fun and enjoy success. Your input is welcome/needed to help our programs grow and will be reviewed annually. Good Luck!

Mission Statement

Nourishing the human spirit – mind, body, and soul – through Jesus Christ.

Athletic Goals & Philosophy

Corinthians 9:24-25

“Do you not know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? Run so as to win. Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one.”

At Lake Michigan Catholic we recognize that the imperishable crown offered by Jesus Christ far exceeds any of the perishable crowns or trophies offered by this world. In our athletic endeavors, though we strive to win in the sense of having the best score, we recognize that real winning has to do with how we play each game. The real value of Catholic school athletics is realized only if it fosters the discipline of Christian living.

Through athletics, we will strive to help our students accomplish the following goals in their quest of Christian living:

1. give thanks and appreciation to God in all that they do;
2. work to develop known talents and to discover the unknown talents, which God has bestowed upon each of us;
3. prepare for a life of Christian service and Christian living through the unique lessons learned in school athletics; and
4. develop an exposure to, and appreciation of physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices, that will lead to lifetime involvement in maintenance of the physical being that God has provided.

Participation on a team at Lake Michigan Catholic is a privilege. With this privilege come responsibilities in the areas of preparation, attitude, sportsmanship, and academics. It is the firm opinion of Lake Michigan Catholic 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 educational process offered at Lake Michigan Catholic Schools for its students. Our intention in offering athletics is to allow student participants to grow in skills and in dealing with the many lessons that competition can teach. Winning, losing, teamwork, sacrifice, perseverance, fairness and competitiveness are among the lessons available within the program.

Participation in athletics is a privilege. The school staff works very hard to provide as much opportunity as possible for students to participate. This in turn increases the need for coaches, uniforms, equipment, etc.

This booklet is prepared so that the student participant and the parents will better understand the guidelines and procedures 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 involved.

We also ask that you show your appreciation to the coaches, staff and volunteers that work diligently to make the athletic programs at Lake Michigan Catholic a success. Without this sometimes great effort, our ability to present an athletic program with the high level of participation and success that we have achieved might not be possible. Please keep our students, volunteers, and staff in your continued prayers.

Athletic Sports Code

Recognize that the primary purpose of my participation is to develop the discipline of Christian living, while striving to develop the skills, talents and abilities that have been bestowed upon me.

Give thanks to God for giving me the ability to contribute, while celebrating the opportunity to participate and be active.

Uphold the Honor Code of teamwork, sportsmanship, hard work and self discipline, so that others may see my commitment to Christian living.

(As a parent I will help in modeling Christian behavior by being respectful to officials, players, coaches, fans, and help to show not only my children, but all involved in the Laker Community that Catholic Schools do make a difference.)

Behavior Expectations for Athletes

1. Health

Lake Michigan Catholic athletes will keep their bodies and minds free of illegal and unhealthy substances. This includes drugs, alcohol, and any type of tobacco. Laker athletes should also maximize their body's potential by maintaining a nutritious and proper diet. Laker athletes are considered to be in training 12 months.

2. Behavior

Laker athletes will be outstanding role models for other students and young people, both in and out of school. They should always represent their church, school and family with pride.

3. Schoolwork

L.M.C. athletes will make the expected effort in all their classes. This includes turning in all homework on time. Players must be disciplined in the classroom if they expect to be disciplined on the playing field.

4. On-Court/Field Behavior

Our Lakers will be excellent role models when they are participating in sports, whether in games or in practice. Self-discipline is paramount.

Athletics is an arena where we represent our school in a very public light, so both participants and spectators are reminded to display positive behavior traits. This includes, but is not limited to: treating opponents, officials and spectators with respect, cheering for our team and not against our opponents, abiding by all rules and regulations. Improper or foul language can not be tolerated. Coaches will be responsible for their individual teams. School Discipline Responsibilities will apply for any athlete involved in a school sponsored event and may include loss of playing time for negative behavior.

Athletic Eligibility

All sports at the high school level must follow M.H.S.A.A. rules and requirements, with regards to athletic eligibility. This covers a wide range of areas including, but not limited to: age, academic credits accumulated, g.p.a., school transfer, and medical/physical requirements. Students should inquire of coaches or the Athletic Director if they have any eligibility questions, as violations can severely curtail one's eligibility and participation in athletics. The school athletic director is responsible for overseeing the conformation and adherence to all rules. Athletes will not be eligible to participate in a sport until a proper physical is turned into the athletic office (this rule includes practices).

Athletic Participation When Absent

Attendance – any student must be in attendance the entire school day to be eligible for activities, practice, or contests that day or evening unless otherwise determined by the Athletic Director or Principal. Failure of the student to properly pre-arrange an absence with the Athletic Director, Attendance Secretary, or Principal may result in the student not being permitted to participate. **Athletes should always check with school administration on questions of absence/participation.**

Student Handbook/Discipline

As specified in the student handbook, athletic privileges may be suspended, curtailed or revoked per our “discipline policies.” School administration has the sole responsibility of implementing and overseeing the behavioral modification program.

Middle & High School Academic Eligibility

Academic Ineligibility

It is an honor and privilege for students to represent Lake Michigan Catholic Schools in extra-curricular activities. Extra-curricular activities include club events, drama presentations and all athletic functions. Students' conduct must be consistent with the high standards of LMC Schools. Academic ineligibility affects all extra-curricular and athletic events.

Lake Michigan Catholic School belongs to the Michigan High School Athletic Association and subscribes to their eligibility rules. Those rules are posted in the MHSAA handbook which is available in the LMC Athletic Department. **IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES TO BE FAMILIAR WITH THEM AND TO FOLLOW THEM.** Students should inquire of coaches or the Athletic Director if they have any eligibility questions, a violation can severely curtail one's eligibility and participation in athletics.

Other eligibility rules for athletes and co-curricular students are as follows:

Academic eligibility for co-curricular students in grades 6-12 is determined by eligibility checks on week 3 and then weekly if necessary to the end of the marking period week 6.

1. A student with a failing grade at week 3, 6 or 9 of a marking period will be declared ineligible for at least one week. If the student is passing at the end of week 4 they will be eligible to participate at the beginning of week 5. If an error is made, the Athletic Director/Principal may correct the situation.
2. Grades will be determined on a cumulative basis, to date, for the entire quarter (9 week marking period). They are not to be based on an isolated week's work.
3. Students receiving two (2) or more Ds will be declared on probation, they will have one week to show improvement in those classes. If a student does not show improvement while on probation they will be deemed ineligible the following week.
4. Grades at the end of the 1st semester will determine a student's academic eligibility for the start of the 2nd semester. Likewise, grades at the end of the 2nd semester will determine a student's academic eligibility for the start of the next school year's first semester (except 9th grade students who will receive a clean slate from 8th grade). By MHSAA rules, a student that does not pass 66% of their class load will be ineligible for 60 school days.

During academic ineligibility, athletes/co-curricular students are expected to attend all practices and contests; however, they will not be eligible to compete or participate in schedule events.

At Risk List

The At-Risk list will be collected at the end of weeks 3, 6, and 9 of each semester. It will list all students who have a C- or lower. Letters will be sent home to parents to inform them of their child's C- or lower grades.

The teacher determines the grade based on the quality of the student's work. An “F” is when the student fails to meet the cumulative passing standard. An “I” or incomplete is a result of illness or excused absences from the

classroom, which has not allowed the student an opportunity to complete the necessary work for a passing grade. Coaches and club advisors should make an appointment to speak with the Athletic Director to determine if an individual student can participate in practices during the ineligibility period.

Individual Sport Requirements

Lake Michigan Catholic recognizes the uniqueness of each sport and the necessity for different sports and genders to institute appropriate “rules” and “regulations” (approved by the Athletic Director). An example of this would be that a softball team may wear their uniforms on the bus trip to a game, and the boy’s basketball team may be required to wear ties to board the bus. It is not practical or credible to force all sports into one set of “special” rules.

School Issued Equipment

Lake Michigan Catholic Schools in conjunction with the Blue Tide Athletic Boosters is able to provide a wide variety of equipment for use by Lake Michigan Catholic Athletes. All school issued equipment must be properly cared for while in the possession of an athlete. Any improper use of equipment that causes damage will cause the athlete to take financial responsibility for the item. For example, an athlete who throws a helmet may have to pay for the reconditioning or replacement for that helmet. Equipment that is issued to an athlete must be returned upon conclusion of the season. Items not returned upon conclusion of the season will keep the athlete from participating in the next season until the item is turned in. If the athlete is a senior in a spring season a bill will be issued to pay for the item and transcripts will not be distributed until the athlete is in good standing.

Playing Time

Playing time is, without a doubt, the most debated and, at times, most painful aspect of an athletic program. All playing time is subject to satisfactory academic & disciplinary standards. Please familiarize yourself with the following playing time guidelines.

There is a difference between playing time provided between Elementary athletics, Middle School athletics, and High School athletics.

Elementary (4th – 6th) Program:

Amount of playing time will vary year to year depending upon the sport and the size of the squad. Every effort is made to allow all participants time during competition.

Middle School (7th – 8th) Program:

Athletes will generally play according to their level of ability and as game situations dictate. Every attempt is made to allow each player some playing time each game. This may not always be the case, and if a player does not receive playing time one game he/she may receive more the next. In the case of large leads players generally rotate through on a fairly even basis.

High School (9th, J.V., Varsity) Program:

Athletes playing time is solely at the coaches discretion. The coach will decide which players at any given time will maximize the “teams” ability to compete in the games at the highest level.

It can be difficult 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.

Student attitude can at times have a bearing on playing time. Further, a student’s unwillingness to cooperate, to follow direction, to hustle, etc. also might jeopardize their share of playing time.

Tryouts & Cuts

Elementary (4th – 6th)

To date all interested athletes have been allowed to participate.

Middle School (7th – 8th)

At this time no cuts are made based upon skill level. (Athletes may forfeit the privilege to participate based upon academic or behavioral concerns.) As the school population grows and numbers increase or decrease in the program, other options may need to be instituted. Possibilities include have “A” & “B” teams per grade level or limiting the number of participants that may “dress” per contest. These would be reviewed yearly by the athletic department.

High School (9th, J.V., Varsity)

Tryouts are held each year on dates corresponding with M.H.S.A.A. rules to determine placement on these teams. Many years it has been in our best interest to include separate freshman/JV teams, others years it has been a hindrance. Some top athletes regardless of class may be placed on Varsity. (The following page contains a tryout/evaluation example.)

We have tried to keep as many athletes involved in the program as possible. Extra players are kept on the teams every year that are not highly skilled athletes.

The following is an example that has been used as a guideline for tryout evaluation.

(Example from 2004)

Lake Michigan Catholic High School
Girls Basketball Tryouts

Placing student athletes on teams at the high school level is a very serious, tedious and thorough process in the girl’s basketball program at Lake Michigan Catholic High School. The methods developed for our school system and program, reflect and correspond with Michigan High School Athletic Association rules, recommendations, and guidelines, along with the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan recommendations and guidelines.

An inclusive tryout program has been developed using sound educational practices and standards, giving all student athletes ample opportunity for growth, development, and observation. These were developed for the uniqueness of L.M.C., with input and information from the top high school programs in the state.

Areas or items that can be evaluated include, but are not limited to:

<u>A. Basketball Skills</u>	<u>B. Athletic Level</u>	<u>Intangibles</u>
Shooting Ability	Strength	Attitude
Dribbling Ability	Quickness	Coachability
Passing Ability	Speed	Competitiveness
Rebounding Ability	Jumping Ability	Loyalty to Program
Hands		Work Ethic
Low Post Moves		Academic Ability
Defensive Ability		Character

Athletic Registration Fee

In order to maintain the quality of our existing programs, the Athletic Department is assessing a **registration fee** for all students who take part in the athletic program. This \$40.00 fee must be paid prior to the first game of the sport season in which the student chooses to participate. Your son/daughter will not be able to participate in a game until this fee is paid.

Student athletes who are competing in more than one sport per season will only pay the \$40 registration fee one time per season.

This fee is non-refundable should your son/daughter quit the team. This fee does not guarantee any amount of playing time. This fee is used to defray the costs of contest entry fees and or costs of contest officials.

Initiations/Hazing

Lake Michigan Catholic Schools do not condone any type of inappropriate initiations or hazing. Student athletes involved in this type of activity could face severe penalties including dismissal from teams/school to legal action.

Process for Handling Concerns

Everyone is entitled to a process for having their concerns respectfully heard. 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.

Structure and Authority

For concerns, the party in question should locate the first point in the line of authority (usually the Coach) and address the issue there. While it may be convenient for you to make contact with an administrator at an after hours school function (game, concert, etc.), it is not an appropriate place or time for your valid concerns. Please contact administration during regular scheduled school days if at all possible (7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.).

Concerns, whether flowing up or down the line of authority should never skip steps.

No party above that initial point of contact shall deal with the concern until the proper steps are taken at previous levels.

Wherever policy is a concern, the parent must begin with the Athletic Director who has been placed in the position of implementing school policy.

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.

It is our desire, that coaches not be unduly burdened or pressured.

Therefore, it is recommended that parent concerns directed to individual coaches not be done:

1. At athletic contests, immediately prior to the 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, referee/umpire decisions, etc. Stopping by to let the coach know that their child is ill is obviously a necessary contact. Wishing the coach good luck, or that the coach is in their prayers before a game is obviously appreciated. 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 a required 24 hour cooling off period before parents should make phone contact with the coach.

In most cases, it will be more appropriate for a concern to be directed to the Athletic Director. If at all possible contact the athletic director during normal school hours (7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.). 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 concerns higher on the ladder of authority.

* Diocese of Kalamazoo
Pastors
Catholic Community Education Commission
Executive Director/Principal
Athletic Director
Coach
* (Diocese of Kalamazoo will not “hear” athletic concerns.)

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 in 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 her 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.

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 that they might expect or their position as team member.

A Letter to the Parents

(Taken from the Basketball Coaches Associating Membership)

Dear Parent:

I have been entrusted with your child for 2-4 hours each day for the next four months. During that time they will run, jump, shoot, dribble, sweat, laugh, cry, pout, push themselves to exhaustion, learn sportsmanship, learn rules of the game, learn something new about basketball or themselves each day, get angry with themselves, get angry with a teammate, get angry with a coach, learn to deal with emotions, learn teamwork and go home in a good mood or not so good mood each day.

As their coach, I will learn that my players are either in shape or out of shape, leaders or followers, good shooters or not so good shooters, good ball handlers or not so good ball handlers, aggressive or not very aggressive, able to follow directions or not able to follow directions, good sports or not so good sports, able to deal with disappointment or not able to deal with disappointment, quick learners or not so quick, able to accept their role on the team or not able to and I will go home each day in a good mood or not so good mood.

We are in this together. There will be extreme highs after big wins or outstanding individual performances. There will be extreme lows after heartbreaking losses or dreadful performances. I will have to deal with each player in a different way in all these situations since they are all different individuals. I have experience as a coach. I am not a psychologist although at times I must try to be one. I do not have all of the answers. I will not be able to push all of the right buttons at the right time. But I will make decisions based on what is best for the team. It might not be best for the individual, but since she is a part of the team, she must understand and accept it.

I will make my decisions based on hours of contact with your daughter. I see them in school. I see them in the gym. I see them in the locker room. I see them on the team bus. I get to know them very well. I know their strengths and their weaknesses when it comes to basketball. They will know their place on this team. They may not be happy with that place, but they have the opportunity every day in practice to bring about change.

It is in practice that you get to see how they really compare to other players and what type of effort that they bring forth.

Does this mean that I don't like your daughter if she does not start? No. Some of my favorite players have been players who haven't cracked the starting line-up. But they came to practice each day with a good attitude, they played hard, they gave their best effort but they just weren't as good as the other players. They may not have been as tall, as fast, as good of a shooter, as good as a rebounder, as good as a defender, as good of a ball handler, known the plays as well, been as athletic, or had as much anticipation for the game as some of their teammates. Sounds a little like life in the real world. But I have found that these players became successful in the future because they have a good attitude, because they work hard, because they gave their best effort. It is possible that they have been blessed by God in a different way than some of their teammates.

As I said earlier, "We are in this together". I would hope that you give your daughter all the encouragement that is needed. Give her a chance to vent when things go wrong, but don't jump to conclusions too quickly. I have found that players get over disappointments much quicker than the parents. Give her a chance to work things out. If not, encourage her to talk to me. Once I am made aware of the problem, I will try my best to work things out.

I look forward to the coming season. I look forward to the time together with your young scholar/athlete. I look forward to the challenges ahead.

Substance Abuse Policy for Athletes

Procedures and Consequences

Prohibited Substances: Any substance considered illegal by Michigan Statue, including but not limited to: tobacco, marijuana, cocaine, heroin and prescription drugs if used or possessed outside the dictates of a physician's prescription. This includes any over the counter substances not used for intended purposes.

Each violation or infraction of the code of conduct and or the athletic training rules is cumulative throughout grades 6-12 for any student athlete participating on an athletic team. The consequences, in **addition** to those of the school code of conduct are as follows:

*Athletes in Possession of drugs with the intent to sell will have a conference with the Discipline Review Board (Recommendation for Expulsion).

**Athletes who are in violation of this conduct may be subject to random drug testing

*****Self Referral:** Student who has voluntarily sought assistance for a substance abuse problem and has been admitted to a hospital-based substance abuse program; and has voluntarily notified the school of his or her admission to such a program prior to being charged with a violation of the athletic code, may be exempt from any penalty. A student may ask a school official for assistance in notifying his or her parent(s) and assisting them in helping find a substance abuse program without penalty as long as a violation has not occurred. (Any violation following the admission to a substance abuse program will result in an athletic penalty.)

First Offense

- Immediate parental notification
- Meeting with principal, coach, athletic director, student athlete and parent/guardian for the purpose of reviewing the incident

Principal and or Athletic Director will make a determination as follows:

- **Suspension of Contests-minimum 50% of original schedule**
- Possible suspension of practice
- Possible community service
- Possible drug and alcohol counseling
- Possible drug test-at parent's expense. Results released to principal and parents
- Student athlete may be subject to a more serious consequence as determined by an "Athletic Review Board" hearing

Athlete in question, athletic director, (parent of athlete in question may be included).

Athlete in question **may** decrease game suspensions by up to 50% for self-admission/referral for first and /or second offense.

Second Offense

- Immediate parental notification
- Meeting with principal, coach, athletic director, student athlete and parent/guardian for the purpose of reviewing the incident.

Principal and Athletic Director will make a determination as follows:

- **Suspension of remainder of team's season including post season**
- Unused days will carry over into student athlete's next season of participation
- Immediate drug test-at parent's expense. Results released to principal and parents
- Possible community service
- Possible drug and alcohol counseling

***Suspension of contest may be reduced by up to 50% upon student athlete's willingness and completion of an assessment and counseling.

The student athlete and parent(s)/guardian(s) must agree to have the student assessed for possible counseling. Additionally, the student athlete and parent/guardian must sign releases/waiver so that results of the assessment can be forwarded to the school for use by the Discipline Review Board. Assessment will be administered by an approved counselor or psychologist. The Discipline Review Board will review the assessment and the student athlete's willingness to follow the recommendation of the assessment. Dependent on the assessment and the student athlete's progress in rehabilitation, the suspension may be reduced up to 50% by the Athletic Review Board.

Third Offense

- Immediate parental notification
- Meeting with principal, athletic director, student athlete, parent/guardian for the purpose of reviewing the incident

The Principal and Athletic Director will make a determination as follows:

- **Suspension of eligibility for athletics for one year from date of violation**
- **Possible discipline action based on school discipline code**

Reinstatement for substance abuse offenses would be considered during the year of suspension after acknowledgement of successfully completing a state licensed, accredited counseling program (cost borne by parent). The Athletic Review Board would meet to review the assessment evaluation of the counseling program.

Fourth Offense

- Immediate parental notification
- Meeting with principal, athletic director, student athlete, and parent/guardian for the purpose of reviewing the incident

The Principal and Athletic Director would make the following recommendation:

- **Student athlete is ineligible for further participation in athletics while enrolled at Lake Michigan Catholic Schools**
- **Possible discipline action based on school discipline code (removal from school)**

Student participant & Parent commitment

I have read the Athletic Policies & Procedures booklet and agree to follow its directives and models to the best of my ability. I also agree to do my part to make athletic participation a positive experience for all (athletes, coaches, officials, fans), and to model my behavior consistent with Christian living. As a parent I will help in modeling Christian behavior by being respectful to officials, players, coaches, fans, and help to show not only my own children, but all involved in the Laker Community that Catholic Schools do make a difference!