



***Trinity Lutheran Church and School
Panther Athletics Handbook
Revised February 2023***

Introduction

Participation in athletic events is a part of the educational process offered at Trinity Lutheran Church and School (TLCS) 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.

The school staff works very hard to provide as many opportunities as possible for students to participate, while making every effort that a safe environment, both physically and emotionally, is achieved. This in turn increases the need for coaches, uniforms, equipment, etc. TLCS is a member of the Mid-Michigan Saints League (MMSL).

Guidelines & Procedures

The purpose of the Athletics Handbook is to give students, parents, and coaches information on our athletic program. This handbook covers information applicable to all teams at TLCS. It is our goal that athletics be a positive growth experience for our student athletes, parents, spectators and coaches. It is our hope that this vital communication will allow everyone to have fun and enjoy success.

Mission Statement

The purpose of the TLCS athletic program is to assist students in developing their God-given athletic abilities while teaching life skills to encourage the mind, body, and soul through Jesus Christ. Students will learn and demonstrate teamwork, are challenged to develop new skills, and to learn how to compete in a God-honoring way. They also learn the importance of hard work and perseverance. In the end, we play to the best of our ability and give God the glory in all that we do.

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.”

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 TLCS is a privilege. With this privilege come responsibilities in the areas of preparation, attitude, sportsmanship, and academics. It is the firm opinion of TLCS 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.

Athletic Events

It is the intent of the Athletic Program to provide opportunities for athletes and teams to participate and demonstrate their athletic abilities to glorify God and to develop an attitude and mentality of camaraderie and teamwork. Scheduling the appropriate quantity of Athletic Events to achieve these goals is the task of the Athletic Director who will also work in coordination with the appropriate school administrators, coaches, and league officials.

- An Athletic Event is defined as any game, practice, open gym, tournament, or any activity or event connected with a sports program sponsored by TLCS.
 - An open gym event is defined as only voluntary and athletes are not required to attend. Athletes should not feel like they will be negatively punished if they do not attend.

It is important for the Athletic Director, school administration, and coaches to keep in mind student health and family time dedication when creating schedules of Athletic Events. A physical break in the schedule should be taken into account due to the age of our student-athletes and their responsibilities as students first, athletes second, Christians foremost. These breaks help to reduce pressure on families to be involved every day of the week.

With these factors in mind, scheduling of Athletic Events will be as follows:

1. There will be no more than four (4) Athletic Events per school week. Special exceptions to this will be made solely by the Athletic Director and Principal.
2. Athletic Events will not be scheduled on days where a worship service is already scheduled.
3. Every effort will be made to schedule Athletic Events at times that do not conflict with a previously scheduled school and/or church event.
4. Athletic Events scheduled on days where a regularly scheduled school day, half-day or whole day, has been canceled for any reason will be determined by the Athletic Director and school administration.
5. Athletic Events outside of regularly scheduled school days (e.g. holiday breaks) will be considered open gym only.
6. All scheduling of Athletic Events will be the responsibility of the Athletic Director who will work in coordination with school administration and coaches.

Athletic Sports Code

We recognize that the primary purpose of participating is to develop the discipline of Christian living, while striving to develop the skills, talents, and abilities that have been bestowed upon us. We give thanks to God for giving us the ability to contribute, while celebrating the opportunity to participate and be active.

We will uphold the Honor Code of teamwork, sportsmanship, hard work, and self-discipline, so that others may see our commitment to Christian living.

Behavior Expectations for Athletes

1. Health

Panther athletes will keep their bodies and minds free of illegal and unhealthy substances. This includes drugs, alcohol, and any type of tobacco. Panther athletes should also maximize their body's potential by maintaining a nutritious and proper diet and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

2. Behavior

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

3. Schoolwork

Panther athletes will make the expected effort in all their classes. This includes turning in all homework on time and giving forth maximum effort to pass all required academic requirements. Players must practice discipline in the classroom if they expect to have discipline on the playing field or court.

4. On-Court/Field Behavior

Our Panther athletes 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, coaches, and spectators are reminded to display Christian 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 cannot be tolerated.

Athletic Eligibility

Students should inquire of coaches or the Athletic Director if they have any eligibility questions, as violations can curtail one's eligibility and participation in athletics. The school Athletic Director is responsible for overseeing the conformation and adherence to all rules. In order for Student Athletes to remain eligible for athletics, they are required to maintain a minimum GPA of 1.5 and cannot be failing any subject. A failing grade is defined as any overall grade less than a D-. If a student is failing a particular subject(s), they will be suspended from all athletic events until the grade can be raised to an acceptable level. Effort given forth by the student can be used in determining their eligibility, but will be completely at the Athletic Director's discretion per conversations with the coordinating coach, teacher, and parents.

Detention Guidelines Pertaining to Athletic Events

The purpose of detention is to encourage students to achieve their best through completion of schoolwork. Athletic Events, which are practices, games, or other team related activities, are considered extra-curricular activities and should not take precedence over academic responsibilities. In the event of an athlete that is required to serve a detention, the following guidelines are in effect:

1. The student-athlete will serve the detention as ordered unless special circumstances arise
2. The student-athlete will miss practice if a detention needs to be served. Detentions will be served even on the days that are scheduled with games in the evening.

Athletic Participation When Absent

Attendance – any student must be in attendance the entire school day to be eligible for any Athletic Event 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, Secretary, or Principal may result in the student not being permitted to participate. Special

circumstances involving doctor's appointments and/or family emergencies will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Athletes should always check with school administration on questions of absence/participation.

Student Handbook/Behavioral Modification

As specified in the student handbook, athletic privileges may be suspended, curtailed, or revoked from actions deeming such a result. School administration has the sole responsibility of implementing and overseeing such situations.

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.

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.

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 for their position as a team member.

Playing Time

Playing time is an opportunity for athletes to put into play the skills and knowledge they have acquired during practices. Parents and spectators should respect the rules that have been put in place by coaches and the MMSL, which give opportunities for athletes to compete in game situations. Playing time in game scenarios is regulated by two entities, the coach and the MMSL. The league rules guarantee a player a specified minimum amount of playing time during every contest. This can be overruled by a coach or Athletic Director, while that decision is within the rules and regulations of the MMSL and/or have the general consensus of the MMSL administrators prior to the contest, and that coaches and officials have been notified.

Parent Participation

In order for any athletic program to succeed, it is crucial for parents to be involved. Parents of student athletes will be expected to fulfill responsibilities throughout the season. These responsibilities include working at concessions, admissions, clock operation, line judges, set-up, take down and transportation when needed. Parent volunteers are critical for the operation and success of home athletic events to run smoothly.

Team Designation

It is the intent of TLCS athletics to provide as many opportunities for student-athletes to participate in the appropriate, age-level coordinating sports. The designation for sports offered to specific grade levels is based upon skill level, age, physical development, and fair play. With these factors in mind, the following designations will be practiced:

- A Level - 7-8th grades
- B Level - 5-6th grades

While this is the intent, special situations will arise requiring rearranging of student-athletes regardless of the factors listed above. It should not be assumed that one particular level of a sport takes precedence over the other and that accommodations should be geared to fulfill one particular level. School administration will make every effort to create opportunities for student-athletes to participate, which may include any the following:

1. Participation from 4th grade students
2. Participation from homeschooled students
3. Coordinating with other league schools
4. Coordinating with schools outside of our league