

St. Helen Catholic School Athletic Policy

I. Philosophy and Mission

St. Helen Catholic School athletics are an extension of our Catholic mission to form the whole child—mind, body, and spirit. Athletic participation is a privilege that supports character formation, teamwork, discipline, perseverance, respect, and Christian sportsmanship. All athletic programs are conducted in alignment with the teachings of the Catholic Church, the policies of the Diocese, and the rules and regulations of the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA), to which St. Helen Catholic School is affiliated.

II. Governing Authority

The St. Helen Catholic School Athletic Program operates under:

- The policies of St. Helen Catholic School
- The Diocese of Palm Beach
- The Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA)
- Individual league and conference rules

In the event of a conflict, FHSAA rules and diocesan policies will take precedence.

III. Eligibility Requirements

To participate in interscholastic athletics, a student must meet all of the following requirements:

A. Academic Eligibility

- Student-athletes must maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined by school policy.
- Students must be passing, A's, B's, or C's, all core academic subjects.
- Academic eligibility will be reviewed weekly
- Students placed on academic probation may be restricted from participation until improvement is demonstrated.

B. Behavioral and Conduct Eligibility

- Student-athletes are expected to model Catholic virtues at all times, on and off campus.

- Repeated disciplinary infractions may result in suspension or removal from the athletic program.
- Serious violations (bullying, harassment, substance use, dishonesty, disrespect toward authority) may result in immediate ineligibility.

C. Attendance

- Students must attend school on the day of a practice or competition unless excused by administration.
- Excessive absences or tardiness may affect eligibility.

D. FHSAA Eligibility Standards

Student-athletes must meet all FHSAA requirements, including but not limited to:

- Age limits
- Amateur status
- Bona fide student status
- Residency and enrollment requirements
- Transfer rules

The school will follow FHSAA eligibility determinations as final.

IV. Required Forms and Documentation

The following documents must be completed and submitted annually prior to participation in any athletic activity, including tryouts:

- 1. FHSAA Preparticipation Physical Evaluation (EL2 Form)**
 - Completed and signed by a licensed medical professional
 - Valid for the current school year
- 2. FHSAA Consent and Release from Liability Certificate (EL3 Form)**
 - Signed by both parent/guardian and student-athlete
- 3. FHSAA Concussion Consent and Release (EL3CH)**
 - Acknowledgment of concussion information and protocols

4. Student-Athlete Contract – St. Helen Catholic School

- Signed by student and parent/guardian

5. Emergency Contact Information

6. Insurance Acknowledgment

- Proof of primary medical insurance or acknowledgment of responsibility

7. Code of Conduct and Sportsmanship Agreement

Students will not be permitted to participate in practices, games, or conditioning until all required forms are on file.

V. Health, Safety, and Wellness

A. Physical Examinations

- A completed FHSAA physical examination is required annually.
- The school reserves the right to require additional medical clearance if deemed necessary.

B. Concussion Protocol

- St. Helen Catholic School follows all FHSAA concussion management policies.
- Any athlete suspected of a concussion will be removed from play immediately.
- Return to play requires written medical clearance from an approved healthcare provider.

C. Injury Reporting

- All injuries must be reported promptly to the coach and athletic director.
- Parents will be notified of significant injuries.

D. Heat and Hydration

- FHSAA heat acclimatization and hydration guidelines will be followed.
- Student-athletes are encouraged to bring water and practice proper hydration.

VI. Code of Conduct and Sportsmanship

A. Student-Athletes

Student-athletes are expected to:

- Demonstrate respect toward teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, and spectators
- Follow all team and school rules
- Refrain from profanity, taunting, or unsportsmanlike behavior
- Represent St. Helen Catholic School with integrity and humility

B. Parents and Spectators

Parents and spectators are expected to:

- Support positive sportsmanship
- Refrain from coaching from the sidelines
- Respect officials and coaches
- Address concerns through proper channels, not during competitions

Failure to adhere to sportsmanship expectations may result in removal from events or further disciplinary action.

VII. Playing Time and Team Selection

- Participation on a team does not guarantee playing time.
- Coaches will make decisions regarding playing time and team selection based on skill, effort, attitude, and team needs.
- Coaches' decisions are final.

VIII. Practices, Games, and Transportation

A. Attendance

- Regular attendance at practices and games is required.
- Absences must be communicated in advance to the coach.

B. Transportation

- Team transportation policies will follow school guidelines.
- Students may only be released to their parent/guardian unless prior written permission is provided.

IX. Athletic Fees and Equipment

- Athletic fees must be paid prior to participation.
- Student-athletes are responsible for school-issued uniforms and equipment.
- Lost or damaged equipment will result in financial responsibility.

X. Communication and Conflict Resolution

A. Chain of Communication

Concerns should be addressed in the following order:

1. Coach (after a 24-hour cooling-off period)
2. Athletic Director
3. School Administration

B. Appropriate Concerns

Appropriate topics include:

- Student-athlete well-being
- Academic or behavioral impact
- Safety concerns

Inappropriate topics include:

- Playing time
- Team strategy
- Other students

XI. Discipline and Consequences

Violations of this policy or the Student-Athlete Contract may result in:

- Verbal or written warning
- Suspension from practices or games
- Probation
- Removal from the team

Serious or repeated violations may result in permanent removal from the athletic program.

XIII. Diocese of Palm Beach

St. Helen Catholic School operates under the authority of the Diocese of Palm Beach, whose pastoral offices are located in West Palm Beach, Florida. All athletic programs are conducted in accordance with diocesan policies and expectations for Catholic schools.

A. Catholic Identity and Witness

- Athletics are considered a ministry of the school and a public witness to the Catholic faith.
- Student-athletes, coaches, and families are expected to uphold Catholic moral teaching and Gospel values.
- Conduct that publicly contradicts the teachings of the Catholic Church may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or removal from athletic participation.

B. Authority of School Administration

- The Principal and/or Athletic Director, acting under diocesan authority, reserve the right to determine eligibility, impose discipline, and interpret policy.
- Decisions made by school administration in matters of discipline and eligibility are final.

C. Safe Environment Compliance

- All coaches, volunteers, and chaperones must comply with Diocese of Palm Beach Safe Environment requirements, including background screening and training, prior to working with student-athletes.

D. Respect for Human Dignity

- Consistent with diocesan policy, harassment, bullying, hazing, or discrimination of any kind is strictly prohibited.
- Athletics must foster an environment that respects the dignity of every student as a child of God.

E. Alignment with Diocesan and FHSAA Policies

- In cases where school, league, or team rules differ, Diocese of Palm Beach policies and FHSAA regulations shall take precedence.

XIV. Acknowledgment and Agreement

Participation in athletics at St. Helen Catholic School signifies acknowledgment and acceptance of this Athletic Policy, the Student-Athlete Sports Contract, all Diocese of Palm Beach policies, and all applicable FHSAA rules.

This policy is reviewed annually and subject to revision.