



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS ***WILDCATS***

HANDBOOK FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES, PARENTS AND COACHES

INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS PROGRAMS AND POLICIES; & SPORTS COMMITTEE BYLAWS

August 2019

This handbook is intended to help the student-athletes, parents and coaches in understanding the interscholastic sports programs of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School, and their responsibilities. Included within are the programs, rules, policies and practices specific to St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School interscholastic sports programs, as defined by the Principal and the Sports Committee.

The policies within are intended to be followed without deviation unless otherwise directed by the Sports Committee in consultation with the School Principal.

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MISSION

The St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School provides students with opportunities to participate in sports activities which are conducted in the context of the values of Catholic education. All participants (students, coaches, faculty and parents) are expected to support the efforts of the school to reinforce good sportsmanship, school spirit, fairness, and a healthy sense of competition.

The interscholastic sports programs are managed and governed by the Sports Committee (sportscommittee@stasonline.net) under the direction of the School Principal. The St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School teams are part of the Metropolitan Bridgeport Catholic School Conference.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Learning: To provide a positive environment to enable student-athletes to continue to improve in their selected sports, and to learn to work together in a team environment.

Respect: To teach student-athletes to respect everyone they encounter in their athletic endeavors: coaches, teammates, opponents, referees and fans, and to live the Christian values they learn in school.

Sportsmanship: To impress upon student-athletes what “sportsmanship” involves: ethical, appropriate, polite and fair behavior, playing by the rules, gracious in winning and in losing.

Participation: To provide an opportunity for any student to participate in a sports activity, so long as that student adheres to all policies as set forth in this handbook. There is a “no cut” policy for sports participation at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School.

Success: To help student-athletes understand that success has many definitions. Winning is an important measure of success, but it is not the only one. Personal improvement and achieving shared team goals are equally important.

All student-athletes, coaches and fans at athletic events are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with these guiding principles.

Our guiding principles are consistent with the athletic guidelines set forth by Diocese of Bridgeport:

“The primary goal of the various Diocesan athletic programs is to provide a positive, safe environment for all student athletes; to compete and grow as athletes and to be respectful young persons in the image of Christ. All coaches and personnel affiliated with an athletic program must promote good sportsmanship and work together with parents to ensure an enjoyable atmosphere for these athletes. All athletes, coaches, and parents must abide by the rules set forth below and by the various rules set by the school and the league.”

THE SPORTS COMMITTEE

All interscholastic sports programs in which St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School participates are overseen and administered by the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Sports Committee, reporting to the principal. The Committee consists of a minimum of 10 and no more than 15 volunteer parents. Volunteers may serve for a term of three years.

Committee Membership

- Each Spring (after the conclusion of the last scheduled sport activity), the Sports Committee will make best efforts to let the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School community know that it is looking for new volunteers for the Sports Committee, based on expiring terms/resignations of Committee members. Notification will include a notice on the “News” section of the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School website and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School newsletter. Additional information on the functions of the Sports Committee will be posted on the Committee’s website. The notification will give a deadline of at least 30 days from when the notice is first published. Nominations received after the deadline will be considered by the Committee if there remains a need to add members.
- Parents may self-nominate themselves by emailing the Sports Committee (sportscommittee@stasonline.net). Each nominee shall include a paragraph or two as what makes him/her qualified to be on the Committee.
- Any parent of a student enrolled in the school may volunteer for the Sports Committee, regardless of the grade of the parent’s child/children, or whether the student is involved in a sports program.
- If more parents are interested in participating on the Committee than open positions, the Committee will vote on the nominations. All final decisions on Sports Committee membership are subject to review and approval of the Principal.
- Sports Committee members shall serve a maximum of three (3) years for any given term. (After being off the Committee for at least a year, a parent may seek another term, so long as he/she meets all other requirements. However, if that individual served in a chair or co-chair role, he/she may not serve again in that capacity for at least one year.)
- Roles on the Sports Committee include (members can hold multiple roles/assignments):
 - a. Chairperson
 - b. Vice-chair

(The Committee – with the approval of the Principal – may consider instead two or three (but not more than three) co-chairpersons. In the case where there are two co-chairs, disputes between the two on any given issue will go to full committee for resolution by vote. In the case where there are three co-chairpersons, disputes on any given issue will be decided by a vote of the three.)

- c. Treasurer
- d. Athletic Director
- e. Tournament Director

- f. Secretary & Communications Coordinator (responsible for recording all meeting minutes, developing content for the website, and managing survey function)
 - g. Volunteer Coordinator
 - h. Cross Country Program Coordinator
 - i. Golf Program Coordinator
 - j. Tennis Program Coordinator
 - k. Uniform/Equipment Coordinator
 - l. Other functions under the basketball program include facilities manager (securing practice gym availability) and other roles as determined by the Committee.
- Committee membership terms run from July 1- June 30.
 - Selection of the chair and vice chair (or co-chairs) for the upcoming school year will be subject to a vote of committee members of the current school year.
 - The Committee may also choose to solicit volunteers to assist with various functions (e.g., helping with the basketball tournament).

Committee Functions

1. Administer each sports program
 - a. For Basketball, this includes:
 - i. Administer the basketball registration process;
 - ii. Conduct player evaluations (as necessary) and assign coaches;
 - iii. Arrange gym availability and times for practices;
 - iv. Ensure appropriate uniforms and equipment. (All equipment, uniforms, warm-up clothing, etc. shall be solely provided by the Sports Committee. This prohibits teams from obtaining their own uniforms, warm-up clothing, and equipment.);
 - v. Interface with league administrators, register teams for leagues and tournaments, and arrange schedules;
 - vi. Conduct the Annual St. Thomas tournament Basketball Tournament;
 - vii. Organize special events (e.g., pep rally) and promotions (Sports Spirit Wear sales, etc.)
 - viii. Manager player and coach surveys.
 - b. For Cross Country, this includes:
 - i. Administer the Cross Country registration process;
 - ii. Ensure appropriate uniforms and equipment. (All equipment, uniforms, warm-up clothing, etc. shall be solely provided by the Sports Committee. This prohibits teams from obtaining their own uniforms, warm-up clothing, and equipment.);
 - iii. Interface with administrators, register teams for meets and arrange schedules.
 - c. For Golf, this includes promoting the program, managing registration, scheduling practices and matches, setting fees (subject to approval of the Sports Committee) and communicating with parents and players.
 - d. For Tennis, this includes promoting the program, managing registration, scheduling practices and matches, setting fees (subject to approval of the Sports Committee) and communicating with parents and players.
2. Fundraising for the sports programs;
3. Manage the funds for use by the Committee;
4. Communicate with the St. Thomas Aquinas School community, including responding to parent questions, suggestions and concerns;

5. Conduct survey(s) (see below) to seek continuous improvement in the programs;
6. Sponsor a post season "Sports Event" honoring the student-athletes and coaches.
7. Select male and female 8th grade student-athletes for Sportsmanship Scholarship (historically \$250 per student). Coaches input will be solicited.
8. Manage the sports website.
9. Meet on a regular basis to conduct Committee business (and keep the school principal apprised of all key matters); and,
10. Consider other programs and initiatives that complement the Mission.
11. All decisions that relate to setting fees, adding or eliminating sports programs, committee membership and leadership selection, selection of coaches, final composition of basketball teams and changes to the bylaws must go to the full committee for a vote. (The Sports Committee has the discretion to offer discounted registration fees to families needing financial assistance. In such instances the Sports Committee should notify the office of the Principal to seek any necessary guidance.)
12. All other decisions are at the discretion of the chair/vice chair (or co-chairs), under consultation with the committee, and subject to review by the Principal, unless otherwise addressed in this handbook.

Surveys

1. Within 30 days of the conclusion of each sports season, the Sports Committee will solicit parent input via a program survey, covering such topics as quality of coaches, quality of program, etc. The anonymous feedback from this survey will be used to seek improvement in the following year athletic programs. (Parents are always encouraged to offer feedback to the committee over the course of the school year.)

RULES GOVERNING STUDENT-ATHLETE PARTICIPATION

Appropriate student conduct and academic effort take precedence over sports activities. The expected behavior of each student in dealing with the entire school community is of a higher priority than participation in sports programs.

As part of the on-line sports registration process, parents and student-athletes will be provided with a copy of the Code of Conduct, and asked to acknowledge their understanding of it and agreement to abide by it. Coaches will also be required to review the Code of Conduct and the rules below at the first practice of the season. This Code of Conduct is consistent with the guidelines published by the Dioceses of Bridgeport.

1. A student-athlete is ineligible to participate in any school- or conference-sponsored activity including practice sessions on a day in which he or she is absent from school for any reason.
2. Any student-athlete receiving a grade below a "C-" in any subject at progress report time or report card time will be declared ineligible to participate in any St. Thomas Aquinas or Diocesan sports activity (including team practices) until the next report card or progress report shows the student to be eligible. At the discretion of the Principal, an alternative action plan can be developed between the Principal and the student's parents/guardians to allow for reinstatement. Students with special needs and/or extenuating circumstances will be considered eligible at the discretion of the Principal.
3. Any student-athlete participating in any school-sponsored sports activity who fails to complete homework and/or project assignments may be declared ineligible until such assignments are made up. These assignments shall be reviewed by the Principal. All eligibility in this instance is at the sole and absolute discretion of the Principal.
4. Any Student-athlete who receives a four (4) on a report card for any class will be declared ineligible to participate in any Conference-sponsored activity until reinstated by the Principal.
5. If a player is ejected from a game, meet or match, he/she will sit out the next school-sponsored tournament or league game. Similarly, in a basketball game, if a player receives two technical fouls in a game, that player is prohibited from playing in the next scheduled game. Two technical fouls by the same player in a subsequent game after the first suspension will result in the player's removal from the team.
6. Fighting is not allowed in any aspect of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School athletic programs. This includes practices, games, and any activity related to St. Thomas Aquinas sports activities (e.g. traveling to a game, team gathering, etc.).
7. Any student who is suspended from school will be automatically removed from any sports activities, games and practices for the duration of the season or not less than one month, at the discretion of the Principal.
8. Any student who receives a significant number of detentions in one academic quarter can be removed from the team/participation in sports, at the determination of the Principal.
9. A student's conduct at any other school-sponsored function (e.g., school play, extracurricular events., etc.) and on school or parish property, is also a contributing factor to that student's eligibility, and the Principal has discretion to suspend a player from a team for such inappropriate conduct.
10. Any student-athlete whose conduct on the team (at games, practices or other team-related activities) is disruptive or otherwise inconsistent with the guiding principles as stated above may be subject to temporary or indefinite suspension from sports activities. Coaches are required to notify

the Sports Committee of such conduct. At that stage, the Sports Committee will notify the Principal who will review the matter and take any action necessary.

11. It is the role of the Principal or his/her designee to advise parents, the student-athlete and the Sports Committee of the eligibility status of a student-athlete. The Sports Committee will in turn advise the respective coach.
12. When a student is suspended from a team or barred from sports activities, he/she may not attend practices or games without the prior consent of the Principal. This suspension applies to all tournament games as well.
13. Notification of reinstatement will be given to the parent from the Principal. Coaches should not allow a player to participate until notified directly from the Principal or the Sports Committee. Notification from the student or from the parents is not valid. A student that receives more than one removal from a team during a season risks being suspended from the team for the remainder of the season. It is the responsibility of a student-athlete's parents to appeal to the Principal to develop a plan for reinstatement.
14. Students who are suspended from school may not attend practices, games or tournaments in which St. Thomas Aquinas students are involved, for the duration of the suspension or without the prior consent of the Principal.

COACHING POLICIES

1. Coaches are approved by the Principal and are expected to be Christian models for the students and school community.
2. Coaches for all sports teams must meet the following qualifications:
 - a. Acceptance, integration, implementation, and a clear understanding of the school's mission and goals as set forth herein;
 - b. Ability to constructively teach all participants, regardless of skill level;
 - c. Ability to organize, run, and control practices;
 - d. Positive attitude and coaching style;
 - e. Good communication skills;
 - f. Coaching ability to effectively teach the sport;
 - g. Adequate knowledge of the sport; and,
 - h. Ability to provide a safe and physical environment for all.
3. No coach may coach alone. The Diocesan Code of Conduct including the "Rule of Two" must be followed at all times.
4. **All coaches and assistant coaches must be Virtus trained** prior to the start of the season (including practice).
5. Any coach or assistant coach whose behavior and demeanor is not acceptable and such behavior does not enhance the School or Conference goals may be dismissed or ruled ineligible to coach by the Principal, based on a recommendation from the Committee.
6. The Sports Committee will notify any coach of a determination of his/her ineligibility, based on guidance from the Principal. That notification will be made in writing (or email), with a copy to the Principal. (The coach can seek an appeal of such a decision, subject to the final decision of the Principal.) The Committee will maintain a list of ineligible coaches.
7. Coaches are responsible for reporting any player discipline issues to the Sports Committee. If the Committee receives a complaint about player behavior, it will investigate that with the coach and make a recommendation on disciplinary action. This includes complaints from referees, opposing coaches, parents, league end tournament officials.
8. Coaches must adhere to the player discipline policies outlined in this handbook.
9. Coaching Behaviors which are not conducive to good discipline include:
 - a. Repeated screaming and/or use of foul language by a coach or assistant. This is professionally unacceptable;
 - b. Threats of unrealistic punishments;
 - c. Repeated warnings with no follow up;
 - d. Inconsistent adherence to rules both on and off the court; and,
 - e. Speaking to players of an opposing team in any manner that is deemed to be critical, rude or otherwise contrary to these guidelines.
 - f. Any coach who allows a suspended player to participate in a game, match, meet or practice without the prior consent of the Principal and Sports Committee may be removed from the coaching role permanently or for a defined period, as determined by the Principal with the input of the Sports Committee.
10. It is the coach's responsibility to have a first aid kit at all sports practices and games. The Sports Committee will provide coaches with first aid kits at the start of the season.
11. An individual need not have a child on a team to serve as a coach.

THE BASKETBALL PROGRAM

The basketball season runs from October (team selections and initial practices) through March.

Player Eligibility Rules

According to Diocesan rules, students wishing to participate in the basketball program:

1. Must be a full time student at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic school;
2. Must not have completed eighth grade;
3. Must be under fifteen (15) years of age before September first (1st) of the school year;
4. Cannot play for a parish team while a member of the school team.
5. Cannot play for an independent team (i.e., PAL) while a member of the school team when the independent team is participating in the same league as the school team;
6. Must have personal health insurance coverage;
7. Must have a completed and current health form in file with the school;
8. Must have a signed permission from a parent or guardian on file; and
9. Must adhere to the Code of Conduct, signed by both student-athlete and parent/guardian.

Team Rules and Guidelines

1. For Junior Varsity and Varsity teams, coaches are expected to insure the participation of all team members in all sports games for a minimum of three (3) minutes. This includes all leagues and tournaments except the Diocesan Tournament and regional CYO Tournament. This policy is consistent with diocesan guidelines.
2. For Junior-Junior Varsity (JJV) basketball, this level is a non-competitive situation and playing time shall therefore be equal among the players.
3. Excluding the St. Thomas Basketball Tournament, each team may participate in up to three (3) additional basketball tournaments at Committee expense. League playoffs, Diocesan and New England regional CYO Tournament games are not considered to be part of the tournaments (3) that a team may enter.
4. A coach may request permission to participate in additional tournaments, and the Committee may consider such a request, if resources are available.
5. A Catholic school basketball team can play in only one league.
6. Without exception, no league games will be held before 12:00 noon on Sundays. School night games (including Sunday night games) may not be scheduled to begin after 7:30 PM. This includes tournaments within the Bridgeport Diocese.
7. Team placement in leagues will be determined by the Committee to ensure a competitive environment for the team. Priority should be given to placing teams in Catholic School leagues.
8. Under no circumstances should a coach register a team in any league or tournament without the prior approval of the Committee.
9. Under no circumstances should coaches solicit additional funds from team parents to pay for additional leagues, tournaments, practice times, equipment or uniforms, or ask parents to pay for anything beyond the registration fee, even if on a voluntary basis.

Coaching Selection Process

1. At or before the beginning of the school year, the Sports Committee will solicit parent interest in coaching.
2. Parents who wish to be a head coach must indicate their interest in coaching by notifying the committee in writing and describing their basketball and coaching experience.
3. If there continues to be any gaps in coaching following parent solicitations, outside coaches can be nominated by anyone in the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School community by notifying the Sports Committee (sportscommittee@stasonline.net).
4. The Sports Committee will review the prospective coach's experience/resume and any past coaching assessments to determine what, if any, head coaching position the coach will have.
5. If there are no coaching volunteers for a given team, the Sports Committee Chair will solicit and get volunteers to be a head coach of the team. As a last resort only, the Sports Committee can move a player up or down on a team (at the parent coach's approval) to fill a head coaching position.
6. The Sports Committee – with the consent of the Principal – has the sole authority for assigning coaches to teams. While the prior-year coach will be given first consideration to continue with that team, the Committee will consider parent feedback and the best interests of the players in making a final decision on coach assignments.
7. If the Committee decides not to invite a coach back to coach that team for the upcoming year, representatives of the Committee will meet with that coach in person to explain the committee's reasoning, and advise that coach in writing (or email, but not text).
8. Coaches who have not been invited back to coach a team may request a reconsideration of that decision (and provide a rationale for a reconsideration); and the final decision will be made by the Committee with the input of the Principal.
9. Head coaches may select their own assistant coaches, a maximum of two (2) assistants per team. (Leagues and tournaments require two coaches to be present and on the bench for each game, and the Committee requires two coaches in attendance at each practice.) The Sports Committee will give the head coach a list of parents who expressed interest in coaching for that team.
10. Spouses may not coach together.
11. A parent may be head coach of only one team, but is permitted to be an assistant coach on another team. (This rule can be waived if there are no other parent volunteers to coach a given team.)

Team Selection Process

The number of teams the Sports Committee can support is a function of enrollment numbers, available leagues, appropriate gym time for practices, and available coaches.

The Sports Committee is committed to assembling varsity, junior varsity and junior-junior varsity teams for each gender; the number of teams being determined by the number of students who register.

1. Ideally, teams will have no fewer than 8 players and no more than 12. The number of players on team is ultimately at the discretion of the principal, based on a recommendation of the Sports Committee.
2. Player Registration will be held during the first two weeks of school. The Sports Committee will provide sufficient advance notice of the registration period. The Sports Committee has the

discretion to consider late registrations, including but not limited to student transfers. Committee will make every effort to place a late-registered student on a team, but will not guarantee a late registrant will be placed on a team. Criteria for such decisions will include the timing of the request, and the size of team rosters.

3. Varsity and Junior Varsity Team Formation: The Sports Committee will make every effort to keep children from the same grade together except and only in those situations where participation numbers dictate the need to combine grades (i.e., One grade does not have enough players to create a team, or too many players for one team but not enough for two).
4. If the number of players dictates combining grades, at least two players from one grade must remain together.
5. Under no circumstance can mixed-grade teams be arranged simply to make a team more competitive. (For instance, moving some 8th graders “down” to a B-level team while simultaneously moving 7th graders “up” to the A-level team.)
6. The Sports Committee may determine that, as an alternative to “blending” teams with players from two grades, it is preferable to “double-roster” teams as a means of ensuring an adequate number of players for each team. This will only be done when leagues permit it, and it is determined that this is a more appropriate means of assembling a team with a sufficient number of players, vs. a mixed team. (Double-rostering allows a coach to select a small number of players from the other same-grade team if the number of players for a given game is insufficient.) Double-rostering is not permitted solely for the purpose of making one team more competitive.
7. At the varsity and junior varsity levels, If the number of registered players in a given grade is sufficient to form only a single team, then no player evaluations will be held for that grade.
8. At the varsity and junior varsity levels, when there are enough registered players in a given class to form two or more teams, evaluations will be scheduled for the purpose of assembling teams comprised of players with similar skills levels. Hence, one team may be comprised of players with advanced skills, while the second team may be comprised of players with developing skills. (See “Evaluations Process,” below.)

Evaluation Process

The following evaluation process will be applied, as necessary, for both Varsity and Junior Varsity level teams.

1. Evaluations shall be held typically in the second or third full week of September so that team selections can be made in time to meet the various league registration deadlines.
2. Participation in evaluations is mandatory for every student who registers to play when the Sports Committee determines evaluations are necessary based on the number of students registered. The Committee will consider extenuating circumstances (e.g., medical absence, family conflict, etc.) before granting any request of a waiver of this rule. A conflicting sports commitment (e.g., football practice) is not considered an extenuating circumstance. The ultimate decision is at the discretion of the Principal. If a student is not able to attend an evaluation, he/she will be assigned to a team based on numerical need.
3. Two one-hour evaluations sessions will be held for each gender, based on a schedule determined by the Committee. The Sports Committee will give as much advance notice as possible so that parents can make arrangements for their child to participate. (Student-athletes will be encouraged to attend both evaluation sessions, but only one is required. If a student-athlete participates in both evaluation sessions, his/her final evaluation score will be based on the highest of the two scores.)

4. *“Facilitators”* and *“Evaluators”* will be selected by the Sports Committee to manage the evaluation process in a fair, unbiased and transparent process.
5. The Sports Committee will make its best effort to select Facilitators and Evaluators with basketball knowledge and experience, and no ties or relationship to the group of players being evaluated. (A coach or prospective coach cannot be a facilitator or evaluator.)
6. A **Facilitator** (typically a member of the Sports Committee, unless an alternate is named) will ensure that the evaluations are run according to the spirit and practice of the aforementioned policy. The facilitator will supervise the facilities, organize drills and scrimmages to give the evaluators the best possible visibility to the players for evaluation purposes. The facilitators will have no/nominal ties to the group being evaluated. Facilitators will not have children being evaluated in the group, and will not be involved in the team selection process. When necessary, there will be two facilitators on-hand for each evaluation session.
7. **Evaluators** will assess, score, and rank all students based purely on basketball decisions (skills, size, speed, etc.), and provide those assessments to the Sports Committee.
8. Parents and guardians are not permitted in the gym during the evaluation process.
9. The Sports Committee will accept the assessments of the evaluators and make a set of recommendations on team composition to present to the Principal, who has final decision authority on this matter.

Junior-Junior Varsity Team Formation

There are no evaluations for the Junior-Junior Varsity (JJV) girls or boys (3rd and 4th grade). The following guidelines will be used in determining the number of teams needed by gender.

1. If the number of registered players is between 8 -12 one team will be formed.
2. If the number of registered players is between 13-15, one team will be formed and the coaches will determine a rotating system for the players for games so that the number of players on the bench is approximately 5. The goal is to ensure equal playing time for all students.
3. If the number of registered players is 16 or more, the coaches will divide the team into two teams, divided alphabetically by last name (exceptions can be made to accommodate coaching needs).

General Rules

1. The Sports Committee finalizes teams based on the criteria described in the previous sections.
2. In considering how to assemble a JV or varsity team, the committee will primarily base its recommendations on the evaluations, but may seek coaches’ input. However, coaches do not have final decision authority on team selection.
3. Any Sports Committee member will be recused from team selections involving his/her child.
4. The Principal must approve all team rosters in order for the teams to be finalized.
5. Final Team Selections: The last step in the final team selection is the approval by the Sports Committee and Principal.
6. The Sports Committee shall notify all the parents of their child’s team placement via an email.
7. Appeals regarding assignments to teams must be made directly to the Sports Committee. The Committee will meet with the Principal to make a final determination.

CROSS COUNTRY PROGRAM

The cross country program runs from September through early November.

Students in grades 6-8 are eligible to participate, and are required to adhere to the student-athlete requirements detailed in this document. The Sports Committee can consider 5th grade participation, if there is a 5th grade parent wishing to assist with coaching.

Parents wishing to coach should register their interest with the Sports Committee, or directly with a prior year coach, who in turn can advise the Sports Committee.

The coaches determine the training/practice schedule.

Typically, the team will participate in three local meets: two at Ludlow Middle/High School, and one "home" meeting on the trails behind the Fairfield Senior Center on Mona Terrace.

The team also participates in the Bigelow 5k as a team in September.

At the end of the season students who are interested in running in the state championship may do so at Wickham State Park, with the coordination and guidance of the Cross Country Program coach or coordinator.

The team trains twice a week running to local parks and trails, under the supervision of the coaches and volunteer parents.

Registration fee includes uniforms, and is set by the Sports Committee.

GOLF PROGRAM

The golf program runs from September through October.

- The golf program will be managed by a golf committee of members of the school community, with one member of the committee serving as a member of the Sports Committee.
- Golf is open for boys and girls grades 6-8. 5th graders will be considered if space available and they can meet all other criteria. Players will be asked to submit four 9-hole scores (par 3 executive courses are OK) for consideration. And for 5th graders, a letter or email from a golf pro recommending them. Players must also demonstrate a basic understanding of the rules.
- The Golf Committee should include no less than three (3) and no more than five (5) members of the St. Thomas Aquinas Community (faculty, parents, alumni).
- Golf Committee members will drawn from those parents who who have children in the program and wish to assist in managing the program.
- Golf Committee has full discretion in selecting the team but will take into consideration only the golf experience of the applicant.
- Team size each year will be determined by the Golf Committee.
- Golfers Etiquette
 - Golfers are expected to be courteous to other players, professionals and staff on the course at all times.
 - Golfers are expected to keep an adequate pace of play (1.5hours at the Par 3; 4.5 hours for regulation 18 hole courses) and be constantly be aware of their surroundings and other golfers.
 - Yelling and screaming is not permitted during golf practices or play.
 - Student golfers will maintain acceptable appearance at all times. Failure to follow the appropriate dress code will result in suspension of play for such golfer. Dress code guidelines are as follows:
 - Colored shirts (St. Thomas Aquinas summer uniform acceptable); sweater or jackets over are acceptable; shirts must be tucked in.
 - Appropriate length shorts, skirts or pants (St. Thomas summer uniform acceptable).
 - Wear appropriate footwear which includes spike-less golf shoes, or sneakers; flip flops or other footwear is unacceptable.
 - If wearing a hat, it must be forward facing at all times.
- Golfers Responsibility
 - Golfers are responsible for assuming appropriate behavior on the course at all times; and taking appropriate care of the courses that we have the privilege of playing.
 - Student golfers will review annually the USGA golf rules and be prepared to take an online quiz prior to the start of the season; a pass is required to participate.
 - Golfers are expected to know the rules of play or if there are any questions seek out an official or adult at the appropriate time.
 - Golfers are expected to record their own score accurately, sign and turn in their score card at the end of every round.
 - Golfers are expected to arrange their own transportation to the practices and competitions and arrive in a timely manner.

- Golfers will carry their own clubs at all times (including to and from the car) and take care and manage their own equipment (insuring they have balls, clubs and any other necessities).

TENNIS PROGRAM

The tennis program runs from March to early June.

- The tennis program will be managed by a tennis committee of members of the school community, with one member of the committee serving as a member of the Sports Committee.
- Team will be open to students in the 6th, 7th and 8th grade at St. Thomas
 - Tennis Committee has full discretion in selecting the team but will take into consideration only the tennis experience of the applicant
 - Team size each year will be determined by the Tennis Committee
 - To remain on the team, student must be in good academic standing (C average or better) and can be removed from the team only by the Principal of St. Thomas Aquinas for poor behavior in school or out of school after consultation with the Tennis Committee
 - Cost to be a member of the St. Thomas Aquinas Tennis Team will be set by the Tennis Committee annually but should remain affordable; aid will be considered for any students who are unable to afford the fee
- Team Schedule
 - The Tennis Team's season will commence immediately following Spring Break and end by the later of June 1st or the 8th grade graduation of every year; exact start and end date to be determined by the Tennis Committee annually
 - During the Tennis season, each team player will attend at least a one hour practice session and one intra-team match per week; additional sessions permitted and encouraged.
 - In case where matches are limiting the number of players, the top tennis players as determined by the Tennis Committee (in consultation with advising tennis professionals) will be selected and ranked accordingly
 - It is expected that matches will be scheduled with local schools including potential outings with area high-schools
 - Fall tournaments also may be entered at the discretion of the Tennis Committee
- Tennis Etiquette and Responsibility
 - Tennis players are expected to be courteous to other players, professionals and staff at all times
 - Tennis players are expected to understand the rules of scoring and play; and maintain integrity and honesty when reporting and recording their scores
 - Yelling and screaming is not permitted during tennis practices or matches
 - Tennis players will maintain acceptable appearance at all times. Failure to follow the appropriate dress code will result in suspension of play for such player. Dress code guidelines are as follows:
 - Collared shirts (St. Thomas summer uniform acceptable); sweater or jackets over are acceptable; shirts must be tucked in
 - Appropriate tennis shorts or skirts
 - Wear appropriate tennis shoes; flip flops or other footwear is unacceptable

- If wearing a hat, it must be forward facing at all times
- Tennis players are expected to arrange their own transportation to the practices and matches, and arrive in a timely manner
- Tennis players will carry their own equipment at all times (including to and from the car) and take care and manage their own equipment (insuring they have balls and any other necessities)

SPORTSMANSHIP AWARDS

Each year, the Sports Committee presents sportsmanship scholarship awards to those 8th grade student-athletes who best exemplify our school's values, and demonstrate behavior on the team that is reflective of our guiding principles and code of conduct. This is NOT to be considered a "MVP" award that recognizes a player's skill or athletic performance.

An award is presented to one 8th grade boy and girl from each sport. If there are two varsity teams for a given gender, the Committee may choose to present awards to two student-athletes.

The Committee will solicit nominations from the respective coaches, requesting a supporting explanation to justify the award. The Committee will make a decision and advise the to the Principal for his/her consent.

A student-athlete's high school selection must not be considered in determining who receives an award. (In other words, a student-athlete may receive an award regardless of whether he/she is attending a private high school, Catholic high school or public high school.

If the office of the Principal advises the Committee of any outstanding school disciplinary issues involving a nominated student-athlete, the Committee can consider that a disqualifying matter.

The awards can range from \$100-\$250 per student-athlete, depending upon the Committee's financial resources. In any given year, all awards must be of the same amount (in other words, in a given year the Committee cannot award one student-athlete \$100 and another \$250).

A student-athlete can be selected to receive recognition for two sports (although that is not preferable). However, that student-athlete would only receive one financial reward of the same amount as the other recipients for that given year.

Checks are made out to the student.

The awards are presented at the 8th grade graduation mass. Neither parents nor student-athletes are advised in advance.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Saint Thomas Aquinas School Student-Athlete Code of Conduct

The St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Student-Athlete Code of Conduct is designed to guide student-athletes, parents and coaches in the pursuit of good and fair sportsmanship. All people associated with the game are always expected to act with sportsmanship, dignity and respect for all. This includes coaches, parents, players and referees.

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School asks that every student-athlete affirm the following:

As a student athlete representing St. Thomas Aquinas School, I pledge the following:

- *I realize that being part of a team is a privilege and not a right and will treat it as such.*
- *I will actively participate in all team activities (practices, games, meets, matches) to the best of my ability.*
- *I will be respectful in public and display good character as a student-athlete.*
- *I will treat my teammates, coaches, opponents, referees and spectators with respect at all times.*

Poor sportsmanship includes but is not limited to:

- *Arguing with coaches, officials, teammates, opponents or spectators.*
- *Using threatening or profane language.*
- *Baiting or taunting coaches, officials, teammates, opponents or spectators.*
- *Fighting, Unsafe play or acting in a manner that is intended to deliberately harm someone (including throwing balls or other equipment in anger).*
- *Disruptive, dangerous or uncontrolled behavior at practices, games, meets and all other school-related activities (sports and non-sports).*
- *Causing damage to facilities.*

Poor sportsmanship and disrespectful behavior will carry, at a minimum, the following consequences:

- *First Offense: Verbal warning.*
- *Second Offense: Dismissal from the game/match/meet/practice.*
- *Third Offense: Suspension from the team for a period as determined by the Principal. (With return at the discretion of the Principal).*
- *Fourth Offense: Dismissal from the team.*

All other rules as stipulated in the Student-Athlete Handbook apply.

Acknowledgement and Agreement:

We, parent(s) and player, have discussed the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Student-Athlete Code of Conduct and agree to abide by it. We understand that there is no refund or recourse for dismissal from our program as a consequence of violating this Code of Conduct.

Student-Athlete Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____