

**OCMS Sports Handbook**  
2023 - 2024

## **Section 1. Catholic Identity**

The Owensboro Catholic Middle School (OCMS) sports program, like the school as a whole, is provided for the ultimate purpose of developing student athletes as young Christian men and women. Likewise, the school is governed by the guidelines of our Christian faith as imparted to us by the Catholic Church and the Diocese of Owensboro.

In view of this, the following guidelines apply to all OCMS sports programs:

- 1) The coaches are at all times to be examples of Christianity to the student athletes and must show this example to them.
- 2) There are to be no games or practices on Sundays before 12:00pm and all activities must be completed by 4:00pm. No Games or practices will be allowed on Holy Days of Obligation. Any exception to this rule must be requested of the principal of OCMS.
- 3) Coaches are to make prayer a priority and a Christian witness. Thus, the coaches are to pray with the students at all games and practices.
- 4) For all contests in any sport in which a public address system is available, the competition is to begin with a public prayer.

## **Section 2. Season Scheduling Limits**

The parameters for middle school sports seasons are to be as follows:

Fall Sports (Cross-Country, Football, Golf-OCHS, Soccer-OCHS, Volleyball)

- Beginning on July 15<sup>th</sup> and ending on October 15<sup>th</sup> (An exception is to be made in Cross-Country, allowing an extension until the Middle School state meet.)

Winter Sports (Boys & Girls Basketball, Swim-OCHS)

- Beginning on October 15<sup>th</sup> and ending on February 15<sup>th</sup>

Spring Sports (Baseball-OCHS, OCHS- Softball, Tennis-OCHS, Track)

- Beginning on February 15<sup>th</sup> and ending on May 15<sup>th</sup> ( Exceptions for baseball is to be made due to league tournament is set for first week of June.)

Combined Fall & Winter Sports (8th Grade Cheerleading) -

- Beginning May 1<sup>st</sup> and ending on February 15<sup>th</sup>

The Limit of seasons may not exceed the high school limit of seasons (KHSAA Bylaw 23) but is not required to use the same dates.

The seasons, within each school year, are not to extend beyond the boundaries outlined here. Coaches may offer for the student athletes, off-season clinics, tournaments, training, open-gyms, etc.; but any such activity must be strictly optional for the student. Any involvement in these off-season activities is to be the athlete's decision, and participation is not to have any bearing on the athlete's making the team the following season, playing time or any other aspect of involvement on the team.

The purpose of the previous paragraph is to allow the student athlete to freely compete in sports in any of the three sports seasons. A coach may not keep an athlete from freely competing in any sport in the off-season.

If there is any overlapping of sports seasons for any reason (such as fall cross-country or participation in high school sports), the precedence is to be given to the sport that is nearly ending. Athletes completing a sport's season are not to be required to attend practices for the new sport until the previous sport's season is completed. For those students trying out

for basketball, while still participating in a fall sport, arrangements are to be made individually with the student athlete and his/her parents to give them a fair chance of being chosen for the basketball team.

### **Section 3. Conference Participation**

The OCMS basketball, football, track and volleyball teams compete in the Midwest Kentucky Middle School Athletic Conference. These teams are bound by the parameters of this conference in all matters, so long as they do not conflict with the policies of OCMS athletics.

The OCMS Boy's soccer program participates in the Western Kentucky Middle School Soccer Conference and is likewise bound by the parameters of that body.

### **Section 4. Sports Physicals**

A student athlete is not to begin practice for a sport until he/she has turned in a KHSAA middle school physical form to the coach allowing participation in that sport. It is the coach's duty to see that this is enforced.

For sports programs that require tryouts, a student athlete must have a completed KHSAA middle school physical before athlete may tryout.

A physical form is good for one calendar year from the date in which the student athlete received the physical. Thus, an athlete who competed in a fall sport does not need a new physical for a winter or spring sport.

Sports physicals are required for any student participating in an intramural sport at Owensboro Catholic Middle School.

### **Section 5. Responsibilities of the Athletic Director (AD)**

Like the coaches and student athletes, the AD must exhibit Christian witness in dealing with coaches, officials, other Athletic Directors, student-athletes and parents.

It is the responsibility of the AD to deal with concerns addressed to him by parents. The AD and the principal are to hear any reasonable concerns expressed to them and to resolve them in an appropriate manner.

While scheduling of games may be done in conjunction with the coaches of individual sports, the responsibility of developing the final schedule belongs with the AD.

The AD, in conjunction with the principal of OCMS, is responsible for the enforcement of OCMS's academic policy as it relates to student athletes and as it is further discussed below in Section 8 (Academic Eligibility Policy).

Working with the principal of OCMS, the AD is to select and hire coaches who are knowledgeable in their particular sport, and who will act in accordance with the provisions of Section 1 (Catholic Identity).

### **Section 6. Responsibilities of the Coach**

Like the AD and student athletes, the coach must exhibit a Christian witness in dealing primarily with the student athletes but also with other participants in the middle school athletic program. Coaches are to live their role as an example of Christian living and are not to display

inappropriate actions, language or conduct in that role. Coaches are expected to follow the same code of Christian conduct in practices and contests.

To collect and turn in to the AD, as soon as practical after the beginning of practice completed physicals for all student athletes competing in that sport.

By the first scheduled contest of the season, the coach is to have insurance forms for all student athletes. Forms are to be kept in the coaches' possession at all competitions (home and away) and are also to be available at all practices in case of serious injury to a student athlete.

Before the beginning of the season's practice, all head and assistant coaches must have personally completed the required forms necessary. These include, but are not limited to:

- A) Employment application
- B) Physical
- C) Certificate of attendance at any Safe Environment Workshop as required by the Diocese of Owensboro for any adult working with youth.
- D) Criminal Records check
- E) Any other form(s) required by the Owensboro Catholic School System.
- F) All head coaches and or paid coaches must be at least 21 years of age.

All Head coaches of Owensboro Catholic Middle school sports programs are required to complete the KHSAA online sports safety course, and be certified CPR. If a coach is in need of CPR training the Athletic Director will set up a time and place in cooperation with Owensboro Catholic Schools Nurse.

Coaches at the middle school level shall adhere to all sports medicine policies in use at the middle school level that may be supplemented by the school, school district, conference, or association including:

1. Heat index and heat illness programs
2. Concussion and other head injury policies;

Coaches are to provide athletes with a practice and game atmosphere free of emotional and/or physical abuse.

At least one coach must remain after practices, after games and after returning from away games until all student athletes have been picked up. This is an important liability issue.

In sports where there are tryouts, it is important that student athletes (and their parents) be assured that all students have an equal opportunity to make the team. There can be no indication that any student's making or not making a team has been pre-determined prior to tryouts.

It is the head coach's responsibility to maintain discipline among the student athletes at practices, games or other team functions.

During all practices, games or travel as a team, a coach or faculty member must be

responsible for all student athletes. Responsibility cannot be delegated to a parent or other adult for the student athletes.

Coaches are also responsible for abiding by the guidelines enumerated below in Section 10 (i.e. Transportation Policies).

### **Section 7. Responsibilities of the Student Athlete**

Student Athletes are also expected to follow a code of conduct befitting the Christian attitude as it is taught in our Catholic schools.

Student athletes are to conduct themselves in a proper manner in school. The OCMS principal has the responsibility to suspend or otherwise discipline a student in regard to sports, due to the student's conduct in the classroom or at other school activities.

It is the responsibility of the student athlete to maintain grades at an acceptable level while participating in a sports program. More specific details are provided below in Section 8 below (Academic Eligibility).

Student Athletes are expected to treat their teammates in an appropriate civil manner. Athletes are to compete and practice in an atmosphere that is free from abuse from other teammates.

Student athletes are to remember that their actions are a reflection of their school, school system and Church, and must therefore conduct themselves accordingly at all team activities.

### **Section 8. Academic Eligibility Policy**

Student athletes' grades will be checked every Thursday after 8:15 during their sports season. If a student has two or more deficiencies (D or F), the student will be listed as ineligible.

The student will be notified of his/her ineligibility on Friday, and parents will also be sent notification of suspension by letter. The suspension will begin the following Monday and continue through Sunday.

If after grade check on Thursday of that week, the student has no more than one deficiency, he/she will be eligible again at the end of his/her suspension week.

If the student still has two or more deficiencies, the weekly suspension will continue until he/she has no more than one deficiency.

**Grade Check: Thursday after 8:15a.m.**

**Ineligibility Notice: Friday**

**Suspension days: Monday-Sunday**

Definition of Ineligibility:

- 1 - The ineligible student may not participate, or even be present at any practice during his/her suspension.

- 2 - The ineligible student may not be present at any game as a player. This includes such things as riding with the team on away trips, being present on the bench (either in uniform or in street clothes) or being in the locker room with the other athletes.
- 3 - During an athlete's suspension, the athlete is expected to attend study hall with the Dean of Students or other designated faculty in an effort to improve his/her grades.

Any reasonable effort to work with teachers, parents, coaches and administration by the student to improve the student's grades will be encouraged.

The student, parents of the suspended student and the coach will be informed as soon as possible of the suspension and of its ramifications.

The suspension policy is not meant to be punitive, but rather is meant to encourage the student to succeed academically by using participation in sports as a positive incentive.

The Athletic Director, under the guidance of the OCMS principal, is the primary enforcer of the academic eligibility policy.

This handbook pertains exclusively to competitive school teams and not to intramural sports.

## **Section 9. Non-Academic Eligibility Policies:**

### **SUSPENSION:**

Suspension is a disciplinary procedure by which a student is removed from the school for a specified period of time to give the student the opportunity to realize that certain aspects of his/her attitude and behavior are unacceptable to the school community. Students who receive a suspension will not be allowed on the campus during the time of their suspension. All work is unexcused and students will receive zero's for any and all assignments including tests, quizzes and projects while on suspension. Long-term assignments may be accepted for credit at the discretion of the administration.

Students will not be allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities during the dates of the suspension. Additional consequences may be imposed by the coach/sponsor of an extra-curricular activity. The principal will notify the parent of the suspension and a conference may be required for re-admittance to school. Reasons for the suspension and conditions to be met before the student can return to school will be detailed in the suspension letter. A copy of the suspension letter is sent to the student's parents.

### **Middle school students playing at the High School**

In some cases it may be appropriate and acceptable for a student athlete to move up to the high school level in a sport such as basketball, soccer or track even though the sport is available at the middle school. In such cases, the following guidelines will apply:

"Moving up" or "playing up" can only be done with the approval of the student's parents, and the principals from both schools and coaches. The refusal on the part of any one of the four will prevent "moving up".

Any sport that plays within the confines of the Midwest Kentucky Athletic Conference, an athlete may not play up to any high school level (freshman, JV, or Varsity) in any single game and play back down at the middle school level, as mandated by the Midwest Kentucky Athletic Conference.

**Exception** to this rule is middle school girl's basketball. The Midwest Kentucky Athletic Conference voted to allow middle school girl's basketball to play up to the freshman level only and then play back down to the middle school level.

Grade school students who move up to middle school sports are governed by the academic policies of the grade school program.

**Policies of the grade school program**

Any sixth grade student that is enrolled at the Owensboro Catholic 4-6 Center will be allowed to **tryout** for the following sports at the middle school. (Football, Soccer, volleyball, boys & girls basketball, track, cheerleading , middle school baseball.)

A student athlete may not participate in Middle School athletics if he or she has turned 15 years old before August 1<sup>st</sup> of a given school year.

**Section 10. Transportation Policy**

All student athletes must ride the team bus to any game outside of Daviess County. Student athletes must also ride the bus home from games unless riding home with their own parents (i.e. not grandparents, not brothers or sisters, not family friends and not other student athlete parents). Coaches are to record (sign out) student athletes when parents do take their own children home.