



SALEM LUTHERAN SCHOOL ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

MISSION STATEMENT

Bring every man up to his full potential in Jesus Christ. -- Colossians 1:28

Salem Lutheran School (SLS) is committed to be an advocate and resource for students and their families through Christian education through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the students will recognize, appreciate, and utilize their God-given potential and be brought to the saving knowledge of their Lord and Savior.

PHILOSOPHY

Salem Lutheran School's Interscholastic Athletic Program consists of competitive sports between schools as an after-school extra-curricular event. One of our major goals at Salem is to help students learn to apply Christian principles to their daily lives.

Jesus commands us: "*Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations...*" Matthew 28:19

As Christians, it is our responsibility to witness for Christ. Therefore, in Christian competition our actions should be a witness for Jesus our Savior, through actions and deeds, both on and off the athletic field. In order to accomplish this, the emphasis must be on team play and consideration for the welfare of others.

Regardless of the level of participation by a child, all programs focus on Christ as a model. As members of the body of Christ, we have the privilege to share His saving grace through our sportsmanship; before, during, and after a competition. Each sport takes special consideration to this point, and it is expressed to all athletes. Coaches in grades 5-6 will provide equitable playing time for all members who follow our athletic policy. Coaches in grades 7-8 are encouraged to produce the best possible team to participate for those who follow our policy. Depending on the number of athletes for a varsity sport, there could be a tryout. The athlete will be assigned to a team, which matches their athletic ability. If there are questions concerning coaches, officials, or players, please consult with the head coach first, then, if needed, please submit in writing to the Athletic Director comments and concerns, which you may have.

Salem Lutheran School is a member of the Houston Lutheran Athletic Conference. The schools that make up the league are: Abiding Word, Houston, Epiphany-Jersey Village, Lutheran South, (JV only), Memorial, Our Savior, Pilgrim, St. Mark, Trinity-Downtown Houston, Trinity-Klein-Spring, Salem of Tomball, and Westlake Prep, Richmond.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ATHLETICS AT SALEM

What is the role of Athletics at Salem?

The purpose of athletics at Salem is to further the overall mission of our school. Our goal is for each student, regardless of athletic ability or talent, to be enriched by his or her athletic experiences while at Salem. The athletic program encourages students to become well rounded, fit, and team oriented. As students gain an understanding of their abilities, we expect them to enhance their awareness of group dynamics, gain a deeper sense of self, and learn how to strive for personal excellence. Through a strong emphasis on sportsmanship, the school's commitment to Christian character education is also reinforced.

How does Salem school balance an emphasis toward participation with a desire to be competitive?

Success is measured externally, by comparison against others, is often outside of our control, and it is perishable." Salem athletics is focused on developing students of excellence. Success, as defined above, with its external measurements of winning records and championship trophies, will occur if we stick to the process of developing personal excellence. The middle school philosophy regarding athletics falls between a recreation program and a full-fledged competitive sports program. At the middle school level, it is vital to provide as much participation as feasible for team members while also striving for "successful" seasons. By allowing as many athletes as possible the opportunity to gain experience, hone skills, strengthen Christ-like character, and physically mature at the middle school level, we benefit by giving ourselves a greater chance of being successful at the next level, high school. Some sports may require tryouts. Currently, there are no tryouts for sports such as soccer, football, cross country, track, 5-6 volleyball, and softball. In basketball and 7-8 volleyball there are never final cuts; we always place everyone on a team. Becoming a part of any middle school team does not guarantee equal amounts of playing time; however coaches constantly try to reconcile individual participation and team success.

How is the Salem athletic department staffed?

The athletic department is staffed administratively with an Athletic Director and administrative assistant. Coaching staffs include full time school employees, experienced non-parent coaches who are employed elsewhere, and at times, by parents who have a son or daughter on the team or at school.

What is Salem's approach toward parent volunteers on coaching staffs?

Each head coach has the option to have volunteer parent coaches to help with practices, but generally we try to provide enough hired coaches to meet the teams' demands. Parent volunteers can be valuable resources and are expected to follow the guidelines laid out by the head coach and support the philosophy of the school and the athletic department.

How is the Salem Athletic Volunteerism structured?

Parent involvement is a crucial piece in providing a top-notch experience for our athletes. Each team has a team mom that coordinates the volunteers for the season. Activities such as scorekeeping, communication, gate, concessions, stats, and game management are all areas to be involved in.

When hiring coaches, what type of coaching philosophy and attributes does Salem expect?

Salem expects an individual's coaching philosophy to reflect the school's overall philosophy and that of the athletic department. Additionally, the school seeks to hire coaches who have coaching experience and are knowledgeable in the sport(s) they coach. Coaches are expected to be sportsmanlike, organized, professional, and to treat their players with respect. Coaches are expected to be firm, but fair.

Why are students only allowed to play on one interscholastic team per season?

In order to maintain the integrity of each team, students are allowed to play on only one team per season. It is not realistic to assume that an individual can commit to two teams with regard to practices and/or games. In many situations, there will be scheduling conflicts that cannot be reconciled and a choice will have to be made to attend one practice or game over the other. This creates inconsistency and unpredictability for the coach and, as importantly, other teammates. There is also an issue of fairness involved, Should a player who misses a practice in order to meet a commitment with another sport be allowed to start in the next game? Furthermore, when a player has tryouts and he or she is put on the B team, but is committed to only one team, is it fair that the player on the A team continues to play when missing practices or games. For these reasons, it is the school's policy that students participate on just one team per season. We have one exception to this rule and the sport is Cross Country; practices are in the morning and there are no conflicts between meets and other sporting events.

ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS FOR PARTICIPATING IN EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Salem students are encouraged to participate in appropriate extra-curricular activities. Salem provides the opportunity for students to promote school spirit and pride by representing the school on one of its athletic teams.

Girls in grades five through eight may participate in volleyball, soccer, basketball, softball, Blue Knight track & field or cheerleading.

Boys in grades five through eight may participate in soccer, basketball, baseball, or Blue Knight track & field. Boys in grades 6-8 may also participate in football with our own Salem program.

Participation in extra-curricular activities is entirely voluntary, but student participants must abide by the following eligibility standards as established by the Houston Lutheran Conference. No student may compete in extracurricular athletics that was fifteen years of age on or before the first day of September of the current school year. A student must have reached a minimum age of ten years on or before the first day of September of current school year, or officially in the fifth grade, in order to play varsity sports.

In Christian education, there are many opportunities to develop God-given talents and use them to His glory. One of these opportunities is in the area of athletics. However, when a student's involvement in activities and practice sessions interfere with academic progress, extracurricular involvement must be curtailed.

Extra-curricular eligibility will be reviewed three times every grading period. A student will be considered ineligible for extra-curricular involvement if he/she receives two or more failing grades on a progress report, or one or more failing grades on a nine-week report card. The student will remain ineligible for one week. If the student's grades show improvement by the next progress report or report card, they may again participate on the team. If not, the student will remain ineligible for two weeks. Once a failing grade appears on a report card, that grade must be above 70% on the next progress report. Otherwise that student will remain ineligible even if there is only one failing grade on the progress report.

Eligibility is based on all subjects.

Ineligible students are not permitted to attend practice or participate in any games or meetings or attend away games or participate in activities. If a student has for disciplinary reasons received an out of school suspension or has been sent home from school, he or she is not allowed to participate in activities until he or she is back in school for one full day.

The following information is taken from p. 17 of the Salem Lutheran School Family Handbook in regards to athletic eligibility:

1. The school day begins at 7:55 AM and ends at 3:15 PM for all grades. Students are strongly encouraged to be at school by 7:45 AM. Students will be allowed to enter the building at 7:30 AM in the Community Center Atrium.
2. Classrooms will be opened to the students by 7:40 AM.
3. Children arriving before 7:40 AM. must report to the Community Center Atrium.
4. Students arriving after 7:58 AM are considered tardy and must be signed in at the school office by their parent or driver. If there is any question that students may be late, parents/drivers are encouraged to park the vehicle, come inside and sign the student(s) in at the office window. Students arriving after 7:58 will not be permitted to enter their classrooms without a late pass. Your willing and friendly cooperation with this and all other policies is appreciated. Three tardies constitute an unexcused absence. Students arriving after 10:00 AM will be considered one-half day absent.
5. Students leaving school any time during the school day must be signed out upon their departure and signed back in upon their return. Students leaving school for more than two hours of any school day, will be credited as one-half day absent. Students may not be signed out of school on a regular basis as a convenience to scheduling personal after school activities. Your request for early release after 2:30 won't be honored unless it is an emergency.
6. Students not picked up by 3:30 PM will be checked into extended care. All students must be registered even if only for emergencies. Parents will be assessed day care charges after 3:30 PM. For the safety of the students your cooperation with this policy is appreciated. If you are present in the building after school for a conference, meeting, game, etc. please keep your children under your close and personal supervision. Children roaming the halls will be checked into extended care and parents charged accordingly. Under no circumstances are faculty or staff members permitted to provide child care services or favors to avoid attendance in the extended care program.
7. For reasons of safety and lack of appropriate supervision, the playground is off limits to students outside of school hours. Only students registered for extended care and under the direct supervision of extended care employees are allowed on the playground. Parents attending after school meetings, conferences, games, etc. are asked to keep their children with them or sign them in to extended care while they attend to business. For safety and liability reasons, only extended care patrons will be allowed the use of the playground during after school hours.
8. Student athletes should report to their supervising coach after school on the pavilion on game or practice days. Athletes must attend four complete periods of the school day to participate on game day.
9. Younger siblings of athletes whose parents are not accompanying them may not travel with teams to practices or games. Under no circumstance may coaches be asked to supervise non- team members.

PARENTS' CODE OF ETHICS

- I will model a Christ-like, Christ-centered life.
- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game and practice.
- I will require my child to treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect.
- I will place the emotional and physical well being of my child ahead of my personal desire to win.
- I will support coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- I promise to help my child enjoy the sport experience by doing whatever I can.

Ways to support, help, and encourage at home:

- Arrange practice opportunities outside of scheduled times so child can build skills.
- Arrange fitness routines for child such as running or exercising.
- Helping child to realize the importance of diet and rest.
- Help child learn a positive balance with schoolwork, sports, family, and other activities.

Ways to support, help, and encourage team:

- Help with transportation to and from games and practices. Carpooling works.
- Attend games and show your support.
- Help with score keeping, taking tickets and helping with concessions if needed at games.
- Help with tournaments and special events.

COACHES' CODE OF ETHICS

- I will model a Christ-like, Christ-centered life. I will be willing to uphold policies as established by Salem.
- I will respect each participant as a person, and hold high expectations for each student as a player.
- I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development within the same age group.
- I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
- I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play, sportsmanship, and Christian conduct to all of my players - both on and off the playing field.
- I will promise to review and practice basic first aid principles and CPR needed to treat injuries of my players, keeping appropriate first aid supplies in the first aid kit and replacing all materials used so the kit is always ready.
- I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging to my players. I will be knowledgeable in the rules of the sport and teach those rules to the players.
- I will use coaching techniques appropriate for each of the skills that teach.

PLAYERS' CODE OF ETHICS

- I will model a Christ-like, Christ-centered life.
- I will do my best in school.
- I will be on time to all practices and games.
- I will be positive about this experience and accept responsibility for my actions.
- I will treat coaches, other players, officials, and fans with respect. I also expect to be treated accordingly.
- I will attend every practice and game that I can and I will notify the coach by phone or speak to him/her directly if I cannot.
- I will encourage good sportsmanship from fellow players, coaches, officials, and parents at every game and practice by demonstrating good sportsmanship.
- I will do my very best to listen and learn from my coaches.
- I will encourage my parents to be involved with my team in some capacity, because it is important to me.
- I will remember that sports are an opportunity to learn and have fun. I will represent Salem, my coach and my parents to the best of my ability.

JOB DESCRIPTION COACH

1. Become familiar with all athletic equipment pertaining to sport, supplies and location.
2. If qualified, help officiate games when not coaching.
3. Help prepare practice schedule with athletic director.
4. Be knowledgeable in the rules of the sport, and teach those rules to the players.
5. Organize practices that are fun and challenging to my players.
6. Use coaching techniques appropriate for each of the skills that I teach.
7. Promise to review and practice basic first aid and CPR principles needed to treat injuries of my players, keeping appropriate first aid supplies in the first aid kit and replacing all materials used so the kit is always ready.
8. Secure transportation needs for all games and practices at least 48 hours before a game.
9. Playing time for league games should be as equitable as possible for all players on JV teams according to our philosophy. Coaches in grades 7-8 are encouraged to produce the best possible team to participate for those who follow our policy. Depending on the number of athletes for a varsity sport, there could be a tryout. The athlete will be assigned to a team which matches their ability.
10. Be familiar with eligibility rules for the student athletes.
11. Stay with the players at site until all players are picked up or secure another parent to stay with the player(s).
12. Remember to turn off all lights and put away all equipment.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, the Athletic Director will cancel events when necessary. If a cancellation is to take place, it will be done as early as possible to make sure other arrangements have been made. Every attempt will be made not to cancel, but the safety and welfare of all will take priority. In the event school is cancelled, all athletic events for that particular evening will be cancelled. Children and parents should have a backup plan in place for such occurrences, before the child goes to school.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

As humans we are bound by sin, and therefore we make mistakes. Many times, in frustration or anger, we act inappropriately. It is essential, that as parents and coaches, we model a Christ-like attitude for the children. This means paying extra attention to what is said around the children, and in what manner conversations take place. When dealing with a question or a concern, please keep the following "Chain of Command" in mind, and more importantly what our Savior says in Matthew 18.

1. A private discussion between the concerned parties. Anything discussed should be done in a Christ-like manner. Please wait for the following day after a game.
2. If an agreement or understanding cannot be reached in your conversation with the head coach, the athletic director is to be consulted as a mediator.
3. If the issue is still unable to be resolved, the athletic director will seek advisement from the assistant director. Any decision made at this level is final.

CHEERLEADING

Cheerleading is an extra-curricular activity offered to girls in grades 5-8. The cheerleading program follows the game rules and guidelines as mentioned for all sports, but includes the following information. The varsity squad will consist of 7th and 8th grade girls. The junior varsity squad consists of a 5th and 6th grade squad. Varsity cheerleaders are not allowed to play basketball because of the time commitment; unless there are not enough girls to have a basketball team. The time commitment for 5th and 6th is much less and the boys and girls' games are usually back-to-back at the same location. We do allow girls to both cheer and play basketball at the 5-6 grade level only. The girls must commit to cheering for the boys' game immediately following their own game.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Transportation needs to be arranged and verified between coaches, the athletic director, and drivers two (2) days before the event.
- Students/athletes need to find out in advance if their parents or other relative can help drive to upcoming events.
- If transportation is not arranged one-day prior, then events for that day will be cancelled with no intention of rescheduling. This rule is presented to eliminate last minute phone calls to parents during the school day.
- Coaches are not responsible for shuttling players to and from events.
- Parents driving privately owned vehicles provide transportation to away games.
- Parents who provided transportation for players other than their own children must provide the office with a completed Transportation Information Form for the vehicle to be used and proof of a valid driver's license.
- Additional forms may be obtained in the school office.
- Please let the coaches know if you can drive to away games.
- J.V. players will need to leave by 3:40 when they have a 5:30 game, otherwise 2:55 or earlier for the 4 PM games.

We also have directions with Map Quest, athletic updates, sports calendar schedules, and medical forms on the Salem Website.

- Players are an important part of the team.
- Regular attendance at practice is expected.
- An unexcused absence results in a one game suspension.
- Individuals who are late for practices will lose playing time. It is the responsibility of the players to notify the athletic director or coach of any absences.
- Excused Absences: Doctors' appointment; Dentist appointment, family crisis, church-sponsored activity.
- Unexcused absences: Detention, Hair/Tanning appointment, unavailable ride, birthday parties.
- Practice begins immediately after school and ends at 5:00 p.m.
- Watch for exact ending time in the monthly schedule calendar.
- Please have players picked up within 10 minutes of the ending practice time.
- Students are not allowed to use cell phones until 5:00 p.m.
- Any student absent from school because of illness will not be allowed to participate in practices or games scheduled for that day.

STUDENTS MUST COMPLETE AT LEAST 4 OF THE 8 CLASS PERIODS TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR ANY SPORT ACTIVITY.

At no time will soft drinks, candy, juice, etc. be allowed in the gym or on the playing field during practice or during the game. Individuals choosing not to follow this rule during practice and game times will be disciplined as follows:

- 1st offense ... one game suspension
- 2nd offense ... two game suspension
- 3rd offense ... three game suspension

The purpose of this rule is to keep the gyms and fields clean and looking respectable. Goodies after practice are fine as long as they are consumed and disposed of properly.

EQUIPMENT

- The school provides team and cheerleading uniforms.
- PLEASE, PLEASE wear uniforms for games only.
- Uniforms will not be worn for practices, during school, or after games.
- The uniforms will only be worn for the sport in which they were designed.
- Please follow the laundering instructions carefully.
- Wash inside out only in cold water; dry on low heat or air dry.
- All individuals assume responsibility for any damage outside normal wear and tear when they are worn for ANY purpose other than what they are designed for. At the end of the season the uniform is to be returned to the school.

Equipment needed for specific sports are as follows:

- Soccer -- Shin guards, cleats, and SLS shorts only
- Basketball -- Tennis shoes (JV and fifth grade SLS shorts only)
Volleyball -- Kneepads and tennis shoes
- Baseball/Softball -- Cleats and glove
- Football -- Cleats, mouth guard, & girdle

ATHLETIC FEE

- An athletic fee of \$150.00 per child, per sport, will be charged for students in grades 5-8 who participate in any SLS sports, except for Cross Country, which is \$100.
- Blue Knight Track fees vary.
- Football is \$250 .
- These fees are used for paying officials, coaches, equipment and the Houston Lutheran Athletic Conference fees.
- No student may participate in any sport if the activity and athletic fees are not paid.
- Payments must be made in full at the time uniforms are issued.
- No student may participate in competitive games until the proper emergency forms are completed.
- The physical form is good for one year.
- Fees will be charged to your TADS account.

ATHLETIC AWARDS

- Athletic emblems and pins are awarded by the school to deserving participants.
- All athletes who complete the season that have followed the guidelines will be awarded a team participation pin.
- The 8th grade athletes will be awarded a medal in the sport they excelled in the most.

QUESTIONS

Any questions regarding the preceding pages can be addressed directly to the Athletic Director, Bert Schaekel, at 281-351-8223 (office), bschaekel@salem4u.com or 281.732.7256 (cell).