

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

OUR LADY OF FATIMA **FALCONS**



ATHLETICS

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Welcome Letter

Dear Parents and Athletes,

Welcome to another great year of athletics at Our Lady of Fatima School! We are happy you have joined our team and hope this is an exciting and fun year for everyone. Our goal is to teach your child important skills that are needed to participate not only in athletics but to be successful in life. We want to help them improve their skill level in any given sport and teach them attributes as how to be more organized, manage time, become self-disciplined, be prepared, set goals, be a good teammate, practice good sportsmanship and learn to perform under pressure. We also want to teach them how to handle winning and losing gracefully. Of course, these are all handled differently at the various age levels.

A participant in extra-curricular activities is challenged to be the best person that he/she can become. When students are involved in our athletic program, they are representing Our Lady of Fatima (OLOF). Students who participate in the sports program are required to maintain acceptable academic levels and acceptable behavior. Proper behavior by students, coaches, and parents are expected at all times. It is extremely important that we are positive role models for the children. All parties involved must conform to Diocesan regulations and school policies.

First and foremost, in the mind and heart of all those involved in Catholic Schools, sports programs should be developed in the **best** interest for all young people. Every effort will be made to place competitive sports in a Christian perspective. The desire to win at all costs will be discouraged. Our emphasis will be on ensuring positive reinforcement, skill development, teamwork and good sportsmanship. When attending any sports program, please know that you are witnessing an exhibition of skills development by the students in an educational and Christian atmosphere. We ask you to give them your positive encouragement and support.

The Athletic Program at OLOF is an integral part of the total school program and is designed to help our students become better citizens. Our school mission states; the mission of OLOF is to develop the individual child spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, socially, and physically in a Faith environment rooted in Gospel values. The administration, faculty, staff, and parents dedicate their energies and talents to meeting these needs of the children in all facets of their education by incorporating Gospel values in everyday activities within the family, school, community, and the church: by teaching as Jesus taught, living Gospel values boldly by the example of our lives, building community, and by being of service to each other and the world around us.

While academics have always been the primary focus of our school, we believe that participation in athletics provides many opportunities, training, and experiences not available in the classroom. Participation in athletics is entirely voluntary. All students are encouraged to participate but no one is ever required to do so. Participation in our program is a privilege and our students, coaches and parents represent OLOF at all times when at a school event. Since participation is voluntary, any student who desires to participate must be prepared to follow all rules and regulations governing the athletic program. Those who do not comply risk the possibility of not being permitted to participate.

Sincerely,
Our Lady of Fatima Catholic School

GO FALCONS!



Mission Statement of Our Lady of Fatima Athletic Program:

Founded on our belief that athletics provide educational value for all students, the Mission of Our Lady of Fatima Athletic Program is to provide student athletes with the opportunity to enhance their overall educational experience through participation in athletics through a variety of opportunities.

The following pages are certain rules and procedures as well as standards of conduct and athletic achievement with which one should be familiar. Many of these rules and regulations have been set up by the Diocese of Pittsburgh. It is important that you are aware of the requirements. Please read them and share them with your child.

The Board will act as an advisory to the Pastor, Principal and Athletic Director. The Athletic Director oversees the entire athletic program. Topics, concerns, and athletic concerns will be brought to the board via the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director sits on the athletic board. He/she oversees the coaches and has responsibilities dedicated to make sure that:

- Registration is sent to all families
- Coaches follow school and diocesan procedures
- Scheduling is fair and consistent to all teams
- Inquiries about field permits
- Purchases any needed equipment for all teams
- Acts as a Liaison between the Principal and coaches/parents/students
- Communicates with all coaches and brings items for discussion to the Board

Mission Statement of Athletic Board:

The Mission of Our Lady of Fatima Athletic Board is to provide a leadership role, through guidance and mentoring, in assisting administration, coaches, and staff in providing a total learning experience for all athletes.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude for all you do to make the athletic program a success. It takes a great deal of teamwork to accomplish our goals. Together everyone achieves more. We urge you to continue to keep involved with every aspect of everything your child does. Thank you.

TRANSPORTATION:

Transportation to and from practices and events is the responsibility of the parents. Coaches are not encouraged to be responsible for transportation.

EQUIPMENT:

You are responsible for all uniforms and any equipment issued. You are expected to return all that has been assigned to you in acceptable condition at the end of the season. You are not to wear uniforms to gym class, dress down day or any other activity unless authorized by the school principal/school administration.

SCHOOL/PRACTICE ATTENDANCE:

A student must be in school by 11:00 A.M. on full days in order to participate in a contest or practice session. A student leaving school due to sickness is not permitted to attend the evening's practice/game. A student may not practice if he/she is absent from school the day of practice unless approved by the principal. Also, any student on suspension is not eligible to participate in practice or contests throughout the duration of the suspension. Frequent tardiness to school may result in cancellation of participation privileges.

Attendance at practices during the participation season is mandatory and under the discretion of the coach and athletic director. Failure to comply with the attendance policies of the coach will result in denial to participate.

DRESS CODE:

When traveling to different schools with an athletic team, you are representing the community of OLOF. The way you look and dress is a direct reflection of the school and your family. Coaches have the right to set specific standards for dress to away games.

BULLYING:

Bullying occurs when a child is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions such as nonverbal harassment in the form of stares and glares, cruel teasing, malicious gossip, sexual harassment, ethnic slurs, unreasonable territorial bans, destruction of property, extortion, and serious physical assault, by one or more other students. A single instance of more serious harassment can be regarded as bullying under certain (unspecified) circumstances. (Olweus 1993)

Bullying will NOT be tolerated. Students will be dealt with immediately and punishments will be given.

ATHLETIC FORMS:

All athletic forms must be handed in before your child can participate in the Athletic Program at OLOF.

- Registration Form submitted **WITH** Full Payment – ***completed and signed***
- Physical Release Form – ***completed with both doctor and parent/guardian signatures***
- Code of Conduct (Athlete) – ***signed by student***
- Parent Participation Pledge - ***signed by parent/guardian***

Your child is required to have a physical examination on file good for one (1) year from the original date. It is your responsibility to hand in an updated physical form when due.

PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION

Parent/Coach Relationship:

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide a greater benefit to children.

As parents, when your children become involved in our programs, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

Communication you should expect from your child's coach:

- Philosophy of the coach
- Expectations the coach has for your child, as well as all the players on the team
- Locations and times of all practices and games
- Team requirements
- Procedure should your child be injured during practice or games
- Discipline that results in the denial of your child to participate

The initial selection of coaches is vital if an athletic program is to reflect Christian values. Each coach is required to have an Act 33/34 Criminal Clearance, Child Abuse Clearance, and completion of Diocesan coach's accreditation, certificate of attendance to "Protecting God's Children", MRT (Child Abuse class) and signing of the Pastoral Code of Conduct.

Communication coaches expect from parents:

- Concerns expressed directly to coach or assistant coach
- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
- Specific concern with regard to a coach's expectation for your child

Parents attend a general athletic meeting during the month of Sept/Oct if their child will be participating in any sport during the school year. It is a requirement for parents to view the Diocesan video on "Sports, A Guide for Catholic School Parents" which can be viewed online at www.2badcats.com/videos.aspx

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:

- The treatment of your child, mentally or physically
- Ways to help your child improve
- Concerns about your child's behavior

Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches:

- Playing time
- Team strategy
- Play calling
- Other student-athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between a coach and the parent. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedures should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

- Call to set up an appointment with the coach
- If the coach cannot be reached, the athletic director will set up the meeting for you
- Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.

Research indicates a student involved in extra-curricular activities has a greater chance for success during adulthood. These athletic programs have been established for that reason. Many of the character traits required to be a successful participant are exactly those that will promote a successful life.

This handbook is intended to inform athletes and parents of rules and policies governing our athletic program. This handbook is not all-inclusive. Each coach has the right to make reasonable rules more stringent than those listed in this book.

A successful athletic program includes the cooperation of player, parent, coach, athletic director and principal. We, at Our Lady of Fatima, are concerned with the development of the whole child. To accomplish this, we believe that positive recognition is a powerful motivator and an integral part of a discipline plan. Following are expectations of all parties involved within our athletic program:

Our Athletes are expected to:

- Attend all practices and games
- Have a positive attitude
- Respect all coaching staff members, referees and opposing team players
- Attend school by 11:00 A.M. to be eligible to participate in the game for that particular day (students being sent home due to illness are not eligible)
- Maintain academic and behavior standards
- Know that consequences of being ejected from the game for unsportsmanlike conduct or a similar problem will result in a game suspension
- Exhibit Christian Morals at all times
- Have a signed Doctor's release form and parent verification on file
- Abide by team, athletic and school guidelines

Our Coaches are expected to:

- Receive Act 33/34 clearance
- Receive Child Abuse clearance
- Receive Protecting God's Children Certificate/MRT Certificate
- Receive Pastoral Code of Conduct Certificate
- Act professionally at all times
- Be a positive role model for our students
- Show respect towards opposing teams, referees, spectators
- Keep lines of communication open with parents
- Inform athletic director or principal of any problems
- Allocate playing time based on ability, attendance, enthusiasm and competitive spirit, physical conditioning (exception to this rule is the novice program)
- Exhibit Christian Morals at all times
- Attend the Diocesan "Play Like a Champion" Professional Development Day (strongly encouraged)
- Meet approval by the Principal or Pastor

We need the cooperation of our parents to:

- See that your child attends all practices
- Contact the coach if your child will not be attending a practice or game
- Discuss the importance of a positive attitude
- Be responsible for your child's transportation to and from practice and games
- Support and participate in fundraisers
- Exhibit Christian Morals at all times
- ***WORK THE CONCESSIONS WHEN ASSIGNED (via Sign Up Genius emails)***
- Oversee your child's responsibility in taking care of the uniforms
- Accept the decisions rendered by the coaches and referees
- Make sure all files are current with the school office especially physicals & parent verification of hospital insurance
- View the parent tape at the annual Athletic meeting

It is the responsibility of the Athletic Director and Principal to:

- Make sure all parties are following Diocesan and school guidelines
- Handle any discipline problems
- Set up schedules for practice and games
- Follow the Diocesan Sports Handbook which addresses the philosophy and policies regarding Catholic School Athletics

Athletics are extra-curricular activities at OLOF. It is important that all involved have the same vision – that we are involved for the betterment of our children.

Thank you for your support and cooperation.

Student Sport Participation Policy:

The overall objective of Catholic elementary school sports is to provide each student with a positive Christian athletic experience through instruction, practice, and game participation. Although a reasonable competitive approach is encouraged, a win-at-any-cost philosophy is not.

It is important that each school provide some way for every interested student to be able to participate. This can be done by having an additional team to serve students unable to make the more competitive team. This would eliminate any necessity to cut students out of a sports program.

A good coach is able to devise a strategy to ensure that every young person under his/her care gets an opportunity to play. It is our goal and our hope that every child is given the opportunity to participate in some portion of the competition.

Since every child develops differently, their ability to acquire the skills necessary to perform will vary. It is the coach's responsibility to make every effort keep their players interested, committed, and content.

Participation by Catholic elementary school students on other school teams while playing in that sport for their school is prohibited as per the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

The following guidelines are provided

1st thru 4th Grade: Introductory Level

- Playing time is to be equal for all participants.
- This age level is for instructional purpose. It is the time to build fundamental skill levels with players
- No scorekeeping during the season at this level

5th & 6th Grade: Junior Varsity Level

- Playing should be as equal as possible
- Teams may be formed on the basis of player proficiency, but every student should have a place to play and playing time should be as equal as possible

7th & 8th Grade: Varsity Level

- Varsity teams may be formed on the basis of player proficiency, allowing players to compete at a level appropriate to their development
- There is no guarantee of equal playing time, but every effort should be made to provide some opportunity for every player to participate

Player Movement: A player may be permitted to play up to a higher level, but should not play in front of grade level students unless for a rare incidence (that should be discussed with the Athletic Director)

Student Responsibility: It is the responsibility for each player to attend all practices and games, have a positive attitude, have a strong work ethic and have good behavior. These factors will allow for more participation during the competition.

Recruitment of coaches and advisors:

The following procedures will be in place for recruitment of coaches and advisors:

- Head Coach from a prior season that has remained in good standing will assume that role in future seasons until resignation is submitted, however a “Letter of Intent” must be submitted each year to confirm position.
- When a position becomes available, Letters of Intent with all appropriate clearances will be accepted until the date provided
- A committee consisting of the Principal, Athletic Director, Asst. Athletic Director and Coach Representative(s) will review the applications. If needed, interviews will be conducted.
- Head Coach will choose Assistant Coaches from applicants or personal contacts who will then be reviewed by the Principal:
 - Interested Assistant Coaches are to submit a “Letter of Intent” and provide all required clearances

Current Athletic Association Officers:

Principal – Mrs. Shirley Martin

Athletic Director – Jeremy Pascia

Asst. Athletic Director – Rich Rhodes

Treasurer – Chris Kovell

Secretary – Rose Tepsich

Concessions Coordinator – Melissa Catanzarite

Athletic Packet & Forms

Please see attached nine (9) pages of Athletic documents with forms requiring signatures from both parents and students.

Note – these documents are also available on the school website: <http://www.ourladyoffatimahopewell.org/athletics>