Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic Schools
2026-2027 Student-Athlete
Parent/Student Handbook
St. Mark School Amendments and Athletics Code of Conduct

Mission Statement
At St. Mark School, athletics are an extension of our Catholic faith and academic mission. Through sports, we encourage students to develop their God-given talents, demonstrate good sportsmanship, and grow in character, teamwork, and faith. Every practice, game, and interaction is an opportunity to live out the Gospel message.

For Volunteer Coaches and Team Support

Model faith and integrity. Lead by example through patience, respect, and Catholic values.

Promote respect. Encourage student-athletes to honor God, the game, and everyone in attendance.

Foster teamwork and growth. Help every player improve in skill, confidence, and faith.

Pray together. Begin and end practices and games with prayer, giving thanks for the God-given abilities to play.

Focus on character over competition. Winning is important, but Christ-like conduct is essential.

Volunteer coaches and team support volunteers are first and foremost educators and must serve as role models for student-athletes to emulate. They must embody the Catholic characteristics prevalent at St. Mark School. All coaches must be VIRTUS compliant. Department of Children and Families (DCF) mandated reporter training for community providers is required every year. DCF completion certificates must be submitted to the principal.

Initials: _____ **Team Practice**
No coach may be alone. The Diocesan Code of Conduct and Office of Safe Environment Handbook including VIRTUS compliance and the "Rule of Two" must be always followed, at practices, team conferences, as well as at games. Coaches may not close practices to parents or guardians. However; parents and siblings should not interfere

with practices. Siblings and non-student athletes are not permitted to participate, interfere, or distract from the team practice.

Initials: _____ **Language**

Language should always be appropriate and constructive. Coaches are expected to not only monitor their own language, but they should also set and enforce standards of appropriate language for our student-athletes. This includes, but is not limited to swearing, harassment, exclusionary language, sexual innuendo, personal attacks, and unsportsmanlike gestures. Coaches are also responsible for the conduct of their fans throughout the game. Fans will be removed from the gym for repeated inappropriate conduct during the game. If such conduct continues for subsequent games, the Diocese will instruct the coach and the principal to prohibit the fan from attending any games.

Initials: _____ **Student-Athlete Playing Time**

The St. Mark School sports program reflects Catholic values of cooperation, community, and the mission of the Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic Schools. We believe all students should have the chance to participate in interscholastic athletics. While our teams strive to compete at their best, the focus remains on education, participation, and personal growth, not just winning. Our goal is to build self-esteem, confidence, teamwork, and sportsmanship in every athlete. All student-athletes in attendance will be given the opportunity to play in each game.

Initials: _____ **Treatment of Opponents**

Although opponents are not a part of our school community, they are members of the larger body of Christ and should be treated as such. Coaches are expected to model such respect for our student-athletes and instruct players on how to welcome their opponents and all visitors in a way that conveys a sense of hospitality and community.

Initials: _____ **Branding and Merchandising**

All school-related merchandise, apparel, uniforms, spirit wear, athletic gear, promotional items, and branded materials bearing St. Mark School's name, logo, mascot, colors, or other identifying marks must receive prior written approval from the school administration before design, production, ordering, or distribution. Parents, coaches, volunteers, student organizations, and other affiliated groups may not independently create or purchase such items without approval. All merchandise must align with the school's branding standards, policies, mission, and values. The administration reserves the right to deny approval for any item that does not meet these standards.

Initials: _____ **Coaching Requirements and Penalties**

Acceptance and a clear understanding of the school's mission and goals.
Ability to constructively teach all participants, regardless of skill level.
Ability to organize, run, and control practices.

Positive attitude and coaching style.
Good communication skills.
Adequate knowledge of the sport and the rules of play.
Ability to provide a safe environment for all.

Any coach whose behavior and demeanor are deemed unacceptable may be dismissed by the principal and/or the Diocese.

Behavior which is unacceptable includes:
Repeated screaming by a coach, assistant, or team manager.
Threats or unrealistic punishments.
Inconsistent adherence to rules.
Foul language.
Consistently running up the score against weaker opponents.

If either the Head Coach or Assistant Coach is ejected from a game, a minimum of a 2-game suspension will be enforced in the next two games. If warranted, the Diocese and/or St. Mark School reserves the right to replace the offending coach or coaches.

Initials: _____ **Team Support**

The purpose of the team manager role is to support the growth and development of a student-athlete throughout their St. Mark basketball experience. The team manager serves as a consistent, positive, and encouraging presence, helping the student-athlete build confidence, resilience, accountability, and a sense of belonging within the team. This includes offering encouragement during practices and games, reinforcing sportsmanship and teamwork, celebrating effort and improvement, and helping the player maintain perspective through both successes and setbacks. The role is intended to complement the coaching staff's work by providing individualized support, not to provide technical instruction or evaluate athletic performance.

The head coach and assistant coach retain full responsibility for all basketball instruction, practice and game management, coaching-related player supervision, team discipline, playing time, and player assignments. The team manager may not direct team activities, instruct other players, intervene in coaching decisions, or act on behalf of the coaching staff.

All team managers must be fully VIRTUS compliant and meet all required school and diocesan volunteer screening and child-safety requirements before participating in team activities or interacting with students in this capacity.

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Our Commitment

As members of the St. Mark School community, we pledge to uphold this Code of Conduct. Together, we will ensure that all athletic events reflect the mission of our school and the teachings of our Catholic faith.

"Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." – 1 Corinthians 10:31

Initial each section of the Code of Conduct.

I have read the 2026 -2027 Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic Schools Student-Athlete Parent/Student Handbook, St. Mark School Amendments, and Athletics Code of Conduct and agree to adhere to the code of conduct as stated.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Team: _____