



THE ACADEMY

at ST. JOAN OF ARC

The Academy at St. Joan of Arc Athletics Handbook

Prepared September 2022 (rev 3.14.23)

by the 2022-2023 Athletics Committee

Athletes, coaches, and parents should read this Handbook in its entirety, discuss the material, and sign and return the specific acknowledgements provided in the appendices. Athletes will not be eligible for practice or play until the athletic director receives the signed forms.

2022-2023

Athletic Director: Carolyn Schufreider

Head of School: Kristina Reyes

Athletic Committee: Benjamin Dooley (Chair), Anje Cluxton,
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I. Introduction

This Handbook is being provided for you because (i) your son or daughter has indicated a desire to participate in an athletics program offered by The Academy at St. Joan of Arc (“ASJA”), and you have expressed your willingness to permit him/her to compete; and/or (ii) you have agreed to serve as a coach or coach’s assistant for an ASJA athletic program.

We believe that participation in sports provides a wealth of opportunities and experiences which will assist student-athletes in personal growth and development. A student who participates in athletics through ASJA is making a choice to participate fully and cooperatively with the school. Failure to comply with the rules set forth in this Handbook may lead to suspension or expulsion from the team. Likewise, an adult who agrees to participate in ASJA athletics, whether as a parent or coach, is making a choice to participate fully and cooperatively with the school. A parent’s or coach’s failure to comply with the rules set forth in this Handbook may lead to the parent or coach being asked not to attend athletic programs.

II. Mission, Vision, and Purpose of ASJA Athletics Programs

ASJA is committed to excellence in athletics while supporting the faith-based educational mission of the school. We meet student athletes at their individual skill level and provide a challenging environment for skill development in team sports.

We seek to connect to the whole student: academically, socially, emotionally, and physically through intentional preparation and planning throughout the season. We want all student athletes to develop skills through individual instruction, peer interaction, and competition. Although winning is not an end in itself, we believe the efforts of each participant to be their best will lead them to succeed.

Our mission is that all individuals associated with ASJA Athletics will value character traits developed through athletic competition. We expect all participants to respect themselves and others, demonstrate loyalty, be good teammates, put the team before themselves, handle failure like they handle success, display school pride, have a strong work ethic, show up consistently and be prepared.

We believe vigorous physical activity to be essential to a fulfilling life, and that among its purest expressions is athletic competition in which fair play is prioritized. Our core mission is thus to impart to all of our student athletes a lifelong love for healthy, vigorous physical activity and an appreciation for fair and spirited competition among participants who share a culture of respect.

As essential role models, our coaches are expected to practice the values expressed above at every moment. They have a special responsibility to uphold and foster these values, and to let them inform every interaction they have with our student athletes.

III. CII-3A League Rules and Information

ASJA athletics programs are part of the CII-3A Athletic League (the “League”). In addition to ASJA, the following schools participate in the League: Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Pope John XXIII, Sacred Heart, Saints Faith, Hope & Charity, St. Athanasius, St. Catherine Laboure, St. Francis Xavier, School of St. Mary, and St. Norbert. ASJA also recently joined the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA) (<https://www.iesa.org/>) to participate in cross country and track and field. (the “Runners League”).

The League and the Runners League each establish specific rules and guidelines for its sports, sometimes rules and guidelines differ within a sport for different grade levels, and from time to time, the League and the Runners League update their various rules. Those rules can be found on the League page <https://www.c23athletics.org/home> and on the Runners League page <https://www.iesa.org/documents/>. Prior to the start of each season, the Athletic Director will share the pertinent, foregoing rules for a sport with the parents, coaches, and athletes participating in said sport.

IV. Rules for Athletes and Parents of Athletes for a Student’s Athletic Participation

1. **School Admission:** Students must be enrolled at ASJA to participate in ASJA athletics programs. At present, there is one exception to this rule: participation in Saturday Morning Basketball is open to all children of parishioners of the combined ASJA/St. Athanasius parish and those students need not be enrolled at ASJA.

2. **Academic Eligibility.** The most important aspect of a student’s involvement in school is his/her academic achievement. Participation in athletics is therefore contingent upon academic eligibility. Students must maintain a minimal grade average of a C to participate in ASJA athletics. Should a student’s grade in any class fall below that minimum, the school will notify the coach and parents that the student is on academic suspension, and s/he will not be allowed to participate until her/his grades once again are at or above a C. If a student-athlete is academically ineligible three times in a season, s/he is removed from the team for the duration of that season.

3. **School Attendance.** For athletics practices or games taking place on an in-session school day, students must be in attendance that day to be eligible to participate in the practice or game. Excused absences for less than that full day, due to, for example, a medical appointment, do not remove eligibility for that day’s practice/game. If a student misses classes on a Friday, they will be eligible to participate in Saturday or Sunday athletic events as deemed appropriate by the coach.

4. **Athletics Attendance.** It is important for parents/guardians to understand that participation in an interscholastic athletic program is a significant commitment. This commitment includes adhering to all school and league policies, attending practices and attending games at all locations at which a team is scheduled to play, driving student athletes to “away games” or tournaments that may be a distance from the school, and occasionally participating in tournaments during the holidays. Athletes are expected to be present and on time for all practices and games. Not attending practices affects the entire team, creates challenges for the coach, and detracts from the sense of teamwork that the coaches are striving to achieve. That said, ASJA recognizes that often students commit to join a school team before schedules are released and students may have external commitments that occasionally conflict with school athletic schedules. If an athlete must miss a practice or a game, the athlete and/or the parent(s) of the athlete must let the coach know as soon as possible in advance. Communication is critical and respects the coach’s and other

player's time and commitment. The consequences of excessive absences will be less or no playing time, or expulsion from the team.

5. **Physical Examination.** A yearly physical examination is required for each participant in an athletic program at ASJA. The physical exam form must be completed by a physician and submitted to the Athletic Director prior to participation in the season. The examination will be valid for a period of one year from the date it was first obtained. The form will be kept on file at the school.

6. **Concussions.** A concussion is a complex injury that causes a disturbance in brain function. It usually starts with a blow to the head, face or neck. Concussion symptoms may be mild, moderate or severe. The most common symptoms associated with a concussion are: passing out, not being able to remember what happened after the injury, acting confused, slurring words or not being able to concentrate, feeling lightheaded, blurry vision, feeling nauseous or vomiting and not being able to stand or walk. No players with even the MILDEST concussion symptoms should return to a game or practice. They should be assessed by a physician immediately. If symptoms do not appear until several hours after the game, the child should still seek medical assessment. Parents and student athletes must complete the concussion form acknowledging that they have been provided information regarding concussion.

7. **Injuries.** Athletes must report all athletic injuries to their coach. If the injury requires medical attention, the athlete should promptly schedule an appointment with a physician. Once seen by a physician, the athlete must obtain the doctor's permission to return to activity and present the permission form to the coach, Athletic Director, or school office.

8. **Equipment.** Athletes are responsible for all equipment issued to them and are to pay for equipment damaged or lost due to negligence. Coaches are to inform the Athletic Director of any equipment lost or damaged by athletes. A refundable \$40 uniform fee may be charged at the start of each season when uniforms are handed out and be refunded when the uniform is returned at the close of the season.

9. **Tryouts.** Generally, ASJA athletics programs do not use tryouts and all students in the appropriate grade and meeting the academic eligibility requirements are encouraged and welcome to participate. However, tryouts may be held for any sport when participation exceeds the available number of player's slots available. In the event a roster spot becomes available after the season has begun, and at the coach's and Athletic Director's discretion, a student may be asked to join the team based on the tryout evaluation.

10. **Sportsmanship and Behavior.** Our society is very competitive. We do not always win, but we succeed when we continually put forth an effort to win. We expect each ASJA athlete to accept defeats and successes with sportsmanship. Arguing with referees, coaches, teammates, opponents, or fans is not permitted. Profanity is not permitted. Athletes are to remember they represent ASJA when they wear an ASJA uniform and to conduct themselves accordingly, setting a positive example to others. In addition, parents/guardians are expected to support and encourage their child's efforts. All comments from the stands should be supportive of the team's efforts. No negative comments and criticisms should ever be directed towards athletes. In addition, public criticisms directed towards the coaches, the game officials, the athletic director, and the school administration are absolutely unacceptable. In addition, it is expected that parents/guardians act as role models for their children by putting wins and losses in their proper perspective. Do not complain when the coach plays everybody and even goes with different starters every

game, right down to the child who has the least amount of athletic ability on the team. We are committed to developing each athlete.

11. Playing Time. Playing time is governed by League rules. Not every sport or every grade has equal playing time. Students who miss practices and/or display a lack of effort at practices may receive no or less playing time at the coach's discretion.

12. Conflicts. Athletics can be an emotional endeavor and conflicts and disagreements may arise. Should parents or athletes take issue with a coaching decision, including but not limited to playing time or tryout results, please wait 24-hours before communicating your concerns to the coach, Athletic Director, and/or Athletic Committee. Taking time to "cool off" should remove heightened emotion from the discussion so issues can be calmly and fairly addressed.

13. Codes of Conduct. Athletes must read and sign the athlete code of conduct attached as Appendix A to this Handbook. Parents of athletes must read and sign the parent code of conduct attached as Appendix B to this Handbook.

14. Fees. Fees may be associated with the athletics programs offered by ASJA. Those fees are determined on a team-by-team basis and charged to parents of athletes and due at the start of each sport's season.

15. Seasons and Sports Offered. There are three seasons of ASJA athletics and various athletics programs offered in each season. The fall season of athletics offers football (5th-8th grade with Pope John XXIII and St. Athanasius), cheerleading (7th-8th grade with Pope John XIII and St. Athanasius), girls' volleyball (5th-8th grade), and co-ed cross country (5th-8th grade). The winter season of athletics offers girls' basketball (5th-8th grade), boys' basketball 5th-8th grade), and Saturday Morning Basketball (co-ed K-3rd grade). The spring season of athletics offers co-ed track and field (5th-8th grade), and boys' volleyball (5th-8th grade). Additional athletics programs, such as golf, may be included from time to time.

V. Rules for Coaches

1. Complete Virtus Training. Each adult coaching or assisting a coach is required to have completed the Virtus Training offered by the Archdiocese of Chicago.

2. Complete child Abuse and Neglect Tracking Form (CANTS). Each adult coaching or assisting a coach is expected to complete the CANTS form which will be sent to DCFS and a copy will be filed in the school office.

3. Complete Heads Up Concussion Training. All coaches must complete the Heads Up Concussion training and submit proof of completion to the athletic director before the first practice.

4. Understanding of the Rules. The League puts out rules for each sport and often times specific rules for grade levels within a sport. Each coach is responsible for reading, understanding, and adhering to the League Rules. Knowing the rules is critical.

5. Pre-Season Meeting. You have only one chance to make a first impression. This becomes particularly important when you are working with young children and their parents. As soon as possible after the selection/signup of your team, a mandatory meeting should be planned for all team members and

their parents. The Athletic Director will assist with this scheduling. The key to a successful season is to open the lines of communication between the head coach, assistant coaches, players, and parents. The team meeting is the time to express and explain several key points (including any ground rules the coach wants to establish) and inform all as to what you as a coaching staff plan to do throughout the season. This meeting can be done either in person or, in this age of technology, over zoom.

6. **Communications.** The Athletic Director will provide practice and game schedules to the coaches. Each coach is responsible for relaying practice and game schedules to athletes and parents in a timely fashion each week. Coaches should not communicate directly via phone, email, or text with their players. Coaches should communicate directly with parents.

7. **Transportation.** Coaches should not transport students to events unless they have the prior consent of parents.

8. **Effort not Outcome.** Coaches should strive to praise/reward athletes more for their effort than for their actual success. Coaches are encouraged to actively reward/praise players' hustle and development during the season.

9. **Positive Role Modeling.** Coaches have the greatest responsibility as well as the greatest opportunity to guide and influence his or her student athletes. Coaches assume the role of teacher and mentor to the athletes in their charge. A coach's attitude and spirituality are critical to modeling positive faith-based sportsmanship, both in word and deed. The emotional highs and lows that occur on the playing field are precisely what makes sports so interesting. The opportunity to learn to handle them with grace is perhaps the greatest benefit participation in them affords. The coach sets the tone, and is expected to: (a) expect both triumph and challenge and (b) keep a level head each time one is encountered. If you are ever expressing anger to an official, a student athlete, or any personnel from the opposing team, you are doing it wrong. Period.

10. **Respectful Demeanor.** The ASJA athletic department considers imperfect officiating to be a permanent and unalterable feature of the landscape. Therefore, we don't argue with officials. While having disagreements is inevitable, officials should always be treated respectfully by coaches and, especially, by our athletes. The coaches' attitude, that the kids will see and emulate, should ALWAYS be that the officials are NOT the problem. In short, coaches must maintain a professional demeanor in their relationships with officials, colleagues, administrators and the public and treat them with respect and dignity

11. **Every Athlete is Capable of being Coached.** It is a root belief at ASJA that all students are capable of learning. An ancillary to that belief is that all athletes are capable of being coached. Our program exists for the benefit of ALL participants. Some players will be better than others, but the program aims to instill both school spirit and a love of sports in every athlete, and the program firmly believes that, regardless of natural ability, every child can make a meaningful contribution to the team. Making sure that happens is among a coach's most important responsibilities.

12. **Supervision.** Rarely, if ever, should athletes be left unsupervised. In the event of a serious emergency, the coach should attempt to locate another adult to supervise the team. If this is not possible, athletes may have to be left alone for a reasonable period of time, providing that the athletes have been instructed on what to do in the coach's absence. Clear expectations of behavior in emergency situations

should be reviewed with the athletes. In addition, coaches must be physically and mentally present when supervising athletes. Being preoccupied, completing unrelated tasks, using cell phones, texting, or engaging in conversation with others does not allow adequate supervision.

13. Athlete Conduct. The coach is responsible for his or her athletes' conduct and behavior during practices and games. Under no circumstances should coaches tolerate words that demean other players (name-calling, taunting, etc.). Likewise, any action that is physically dangerous, for example deliberately trying to injure an opponent during a game, is absolutely prohibited. Coaches must strive to be fair and unbiased in their relationships with athletes and their parents.

14. Playing Time. Playing time is a frequent source of misunderstanding and conflict among coaches, students, and parents. The rules for playing time are set forth in the League rules for specific sports and coaches are expected to follow those rules. That said, in general, for athletics in grades 5 and 6, all players are expected to be given equal playing time. The focus at this level is on development, and every player at the 5th and 6th Grade level must get an equal opportunity to play. In grades 7 and 8, playing time should be a reflection of ability, effort, attendance at practices, and commitment to the team, subject to the League Rules. Coaches at the 7th and 8th grade level should work collaboratively with parents in helping athletes understand that not everyone who is on the team will play equal amounts.

15. Code of Conduct. Each Coach (whether head coach or assistant, paid or volunteer) must read and sign the parent code of conduct attached as Appendix C to this Handbook.

VI. ASJA Athletic Program Social Media Policy

This policy shall apply to all coaches, players, parents, guardians or other persons associated with the ASJA Athletic Program regarding use of social media. This policy applies to the above participants on and off of the court. The goal of ASJA Athletic Program is to ensure that its participants coaches, players, parents, guardians, fans, etc. maintain the highest standard of sportsmanship and ethical behavior at all times. Adherence to this policy shall be a condition for continued participation in the ASJA Athletic Program.

We take seriously and will address all inappropriate use of social media.

"Social Media" is defined to include: Web sites, Web logs (blogs), wikis, social networks (e.g., Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, Facebook, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, SnapChat, etc.), online forums, virtual worlds, text messages, email and any other social media generally available to the public.

"Inappropriate Communication" is defined to include: any statement, comment, assertion, posting, photo, video, communication or message of any type that serves to harass, threaten, bully, denigrate, defame, disparage, belittle or impugn the character of any players, parents, guardians, coaches, referees, volunteers, board members associated with the ASJA Athletic Program or any players, parents, guardians, coaches, volunteers, or board members associated with any school in the league or against whom an ASJA team plays.

REQUIREMENTS

All ASJA Athletic Program participants are expected to serve as positive ambassadors of our school.

1. Use of any Social Media must comply with all state and federal laws, any ASJA Athletic Program policies and the ASJA Athletic Program Codes of Conduct for Players, Parents and Coaches.

2. Participants must be respectful and professional in all communications (by word, image or other means) via Social Media. In keeping with these basic expectations, participants in ASJA Athletic Program must refrain at all times from (i) engaging in any Inappropriate Communication via Social Media; (ii) using obscene, profane or vulgar language via Social Media; or (iii) promoting unlawful activity, including unlawful acts relating to alcohol, controlled substances or sexual or other physical misconduct.

3. An ASJA Athletic Program participant who is responsible for any social Media posting that fails to comply with the rules set forth in this policy may be subject to discipline including, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion from the ASJA Athletic Program.

4. Students/Parents/Coaches are not to create or use a Social Media account and represent it in any manner to be an official ASJA team account.

Appendix A: Student-Athlete Code of Conduct

The purpose of the following ASJA Student-Athlete Code of Conduct is to help define appropriate actions and behaviors that support the mission of the ASJA athletic program. All participating athletes should read, understand, and sign this form prior to participation. Any athlete who does not follow the guidelines below may be suspended or expelled from the athletic program.

As a student-athlete, I understand that it is my responsibility to:

1. Read the Handbook, follow its rules, and ask questions if I do not understand.
2. Place academic achievement as my highest priority.
3. Show respect for teammates, opponents, officials, and coaches.
4. Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials.
5. Exhibit fair play, sportsmanship, and proper conduct on and off the playing field. I know that I represent ASJA and know that I must be on my best behavior always, but especially when I wear an ASJA uniform.
6. Refrain from the use of profanity, vulgarity and other offensive language and gestures.
7. Adhere to the established rules and standards of the game to be played.
8. Respect all equipment and use it safely and appropriately.
9. Win with character, lose with dignity, and know that any demonstration of unsportsmanlike conduct could result in being suspended and/or removed from the team.
10. Give my best efforts at practices and games.
11. Players are always expected to participate in the post-game nice game/good game exchange (shake hands or high-five and say good game or nice game only to all players and coaches on the opposing team in the line).

Printed Athlete's Name

Signature

Date

Appendix B: Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct

The purpose of the Handbook and the following Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct is to help define appropriate parental/guardian actions that support the mission of the athletic program. Parents/guardians should read, understand, and sign this form prior to their child's participation in ASJA athletics. Any parent/guardian who does not follow the Handbook or code of conduct below will be asked to leave the sports facility and be suspended from the privilege of attending games. As a parent/guardian, I therefore agree to the following:

1. I will not force my child to participate in sports.
2. I will remember that the game is for youth, not adults.
3. I commit to making sure my child arrives to games and practices on time.
4. I will be sure that my child is properly equipped (i.e. uniform, water bottle, etc.) for all practices and games.
5. I (and my guests) will be a positive role model for my child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy towards all players, coaches, officials, and spectators at all games and practices.
6. I (and my guests) will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct (booing, taunting, etc.) or any other form of harassment towards any official, coach, player, or parent. I (and my guests) will not use any profane language or gestures.
7. I will not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the well-being of the athletes;
8. I will demand that my child treat other players, coaches, officials, and spectators with respect. I will teach my child the importance of hustle, playing fairly, and doing one's best.
9. I will never ridicule or yell at my child or other participants for making a mistake or losing a competition. I will emphasize the importance of skill development over winning and losing.
10. I will respect the officials and their authority during games.
11. I will respect the coaches and I will never publicly confront or criticize them.
12. I will refrain from coaching my child or other players during games and practices, unless I am one of the official coaches for the team.
13. If there are items such as lineup or playing time to discuss with the coach, I will schedule a time with the coach to calmly and constructively discuss rather than during, immediately before or after a practice or game.

Printed Parent Name

Signature Date

Date

Name of Student Athlete(s)

Appendix C: Coach Code of Conduct

The purpose of the Handbook and the following Coach Code of Conduct is to help define appropriate actions that support the mission of the athletic program. Coaches should read, understand, and sign this form prior to participation. Any coach who does not follow the Handbook or the code of conduct below will be asked to leave the sports facility and be suspended from the privilege of attending games. **As a coach, I therefore agree to the following:**

1. Read the Handbook, follow its rules, and ask questions if I do not understand.
2. Know and follow all League rules.
3. Arrive to games and practices on time.
4. Be responsible to teach participants the importance of developing a competitive spirit and an understanding of sportsmanship.
5. Emphasize that good athletes are good students, and both are physically and mentally alert.
6. Emphasize that winning a game or competition is the result of teamwork and reward effort.
7. Fairly evaluate and play all the participants through the course of a practice or game, and subject to specific program rules.
8. Not show favoritism towards a family member and/or a participant, nor will the coach have an alternate agenda when evaluating, playing, or instructing a participant.
9. Not confront or criticize the officials, the opposing team, the coaches, fans, or parents, through language or gesture.
10. Accept the decisions of officials.
11. Not use abusive or profane language during practices or games.
12. Treat each player, opposing coach, parent, and administrator with respect and dignity.
13. Learn the strengths and weakness of each participant so he or she might be placed into situations where h/she will have a maximum opportunity to achieve success.
14. Abstain from possession and drinking of alcoholic beverages or any illegal substance at practice and game fields, and at competitions.
15. Not smoke or use any form of tobacco while on the field of play during games, practices, or other competitions.
16. Coaches are always expected to participate in the post-game nice game/good game exchange (shake hands or high-five and say good game or nice game only to all players and coaches on the opposing team in the line).

Printed Name

Signature

Date