



Athletics Handbook

Guiding Principles/Philosophy

We believe that athletics and other extra-curricular activities should be regarded as a vital part of the total educational offerings of our school and an extension of the classroom. We encourage student participation and would like to involve as many students as possible in this experience. All team members, regardless of ability, will be afforded opportunities to develop their work ethic, sense of commitment, and social, intellectual, and athletic skills.

The purpose of our athletic program is to provide our students with the opportunity to use their God-given abilities so that they can:

- Witness their walk with Christ as they experience enjoyment through competition.
- Develop good personal traits that include a strong work ethic, self-discipline, good sportsmanship, and positive self-esteem.
- Gain a healthy, competitive attitude and life skills such as teamwork, leadership, and good citizenship.
- Learn individual and team skill development and habits leading to good personal health and success at the high school level.

Messiah Lutheran School, home of the Lions, is a member of the Lutheran Conference for Greater St. Louis. The following sports are currently offered:

FALL

CO-ED Cross Country (K-8)

CO-ED Soccer (5-8)

Girls Volleyball (5-8)

WINTER I (NOV-FEB)

Boys Basketball (7-8)

Girls Basketball (7-8)

Girls Cheerleading (5-8)

WINTER II (JAN-MAR)

Boys Basketball (3-6)

Girls Basketball (3-6)

SPRING

CO-ED Track & Field (5-8)

Boys Volleyball (7-8)

Fees

Each sport has an associated athletic fee that helps cover costs such as uniforms, referees, and league and tournament fees. The 2019-2020 fees are listed below:

Sport	Athletic Fee
Cross Country	\$35
Volleyball	\$75
Soccer	\$75
Basketball	\$75
Cheerleading	\$75
Track	\$35

These fees must be collected before the first game. In addition to regular athletic fees, additional costs may be incurred during the season, such as transportation, meals, and lodging for out of town tournaments. These fees will be estimated and communicated to the parents at each team's parent meeting (held at the beginning of each season). Messiah does not want financial considerations to prevent any student athlete from participating. Please contact the athletic director to discuss options for financial aid for athletics.

Student-athletes are responsible for the uniforms issued to them and must pay for the uniform if it is not returned in good condition at the end the season.

Program Levels

Grades 3-4/Start Smart (Sunday Lutheran League) (Basketball Only)

This is an introductory level for our teams. At this level the athletes will begin to learn the fundamentals, rules, and how to be a good teammate. Coaches will divide playing and practice time equally for the players. If a team reaches a tournament, coaches will play everyone, but playing time may not be equal.

Grades 5-6/B2

This is an introductory level for our teams. At this level the athletes will begin to learn the fundamentals, rules, and how to be a good teammate. Coaches will divide playing and practice time equally for the players. If a team reaches a tournament, coaches will play everyone, but playing time may not be equal.

Grades 5-6/B1

This level will be more competitive than the B2 level. At this level a better understanding of fundamentals and rules of the game are taught. Game strategies begin to evolve. Playing and practice time are divided somewhat equally, but some players will see more game time than others.

Grades 7-8/A2

At this level, coaches continue to develop fundamentals, rules, knowledge, and strategies of the game. The setting is competitive at this level. Coaches are encouraged to prepare their teams to do their best and to share practice and game time within the team. Team members earn playing time at practice and with their skill level. Players will usually play in every game, but playing time will not be equal.

Grades 7-8/A1

Athletes desiring to participate at this level will go through a tryout process that measures skill level associated with the sport. A limited number of athletes will be selected for these teams. Coaches emphasize improving skills, strategies, and teamwork. Athletes and parents will notice that a higher emphasis is placed on winning at this level, however Messiah will never employ a “win at all costs” philosophy. Each athlete must earn playing time. Playing time will not be equal and there may be instances when an athlete does not have the opportunity to compete in a game.

Parent Involvement

Parental involvement is crucial to the success of our athletic program at Messiah. A mandatory parent meeting will take place at the beginning of each season. This will give parents a chance to meet their child’s coach, understand Messiah’s athletic philosophy and guidelines, and review the expectations of students, parents, and coaches. Schedules and fees will also be discussed at this meeting.

Perhaps the most important way that parents can support their children and the entire athletic program at Messiah is by setting an example of good sportsmanship while regularly attending games. Verbal harassment of coaches, officials, and athletes will not be tolerated. If a parent has an issue with a coach, that issue should not be addressed “in the heat of the moment” during or immediately after an athletic contest.

Playing time for students is determined solely by the head coach. Factors in this decision include attitude, attendance, sportsmanship, and skill level. As the competition levels increase in the upper grades, playing time for athletes may not be equitable. If your child is concerned about his or her lack of playing time, encourage him or her to talk to the coach first before becoming involved.

One thing to keep in mind is that the majority of athletes at this age don't even continue a sport into high school, much less into college, the Olympics, or the pros! Sure, we would all like to win every game (with our kid scoring the winning point!) but more importantly, athletic contests provide an excellent opportunity to demonstrate our Christian character and class.

Student Participation

Students may not participate in a sporting event if they are absent from school on the day of the event. If the absence occurs on a Friday, students will not be permitted to participate in sporting events occurring during the following weekend. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the school administration.

Student-athletes must maintain a C average and have no F's from the previous reporting period (including progress reports). Failure to maintain these guidelines will result in a 2-week suspension from all practices and games. At the conclusion of this suspension, grades will be determined to see if guidelines have been met. Failure to meet guidelines at this time will result in the student not participating until the next grading period. Circumstances that require special consideration in regards to student needs will be determined on an individual basis. All athletes must have an updated school physical on file before competing in any games.

Some games or tournaments may require an early dismissal from school. Student athletes are responsible for making up any missed work in the timeframe specified by their teachers.

Multi-Sport Athletes

Messiah realizes that many student athletes participate on other community or club teams during the school year. We encourage athletes to try a variety of sports at this age to support their physical, social and emotional development. However, it is also important that kids are not overscheduled to the point where academics and family life suffer. Although your child's "school team" may not be as competitive as a "club team," we still expect students to regularly attend practices and games as a Messiah team member. Please talk to the coach of your child's team before the season begins to work out an acceptable schedule.

Transportation

It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their children are transported to and from all practices, games, and tournaments. Coaches are not permitted to transport students (with the exception of their own children). Messiah encourages the use of carpools when appropriate. Please make every effort to pick up your child promptly. Directions to away games can be obtained in the school office.