

**Sioux Falls
Christian Schools
Junior High (Middle School)
Athletic Handbook**



Sioux Falls Christian Schools
6120 S. Charger Ave.
Sioux Falls, SD
57108

Introduction

Welcome to the 2010-2011 Junior High athletic season at Sioux Falls Christian Schools. Your participation in Junior High athletics at our school is a privilege that must be earned. By participating you are agreeing to commit yourself to being the best possible student/athlete that you can be. With this privilege come responsibilities. These responsibilities include good sportsmanship, maintaining academic excellence, competing within the rules and regulations adopted by our school, and most importantly – representing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in an honorable and exemplary way. It is important that everyone – players, parents, and coaches - understand the message we send to our opponents, referees, visiting fans... Our actions often speak much louder than words. Please keep this in mind as we go through each particular athletic season.

This handbook is given to you so you may have in writing the basic ingredients of our athletic program. In it, we have tried to explain our philosophy of athletics in Junior High. This information is necessary to maintain a well-organized and successful athletic program. Be sure you take the time to read this information. It is prepared so you will be well informed **and** we ask that you live by it as well!

PHILOSOPHY OF JUNIOR HIGH ATHLETICS

We believe interscholastic athletics at Sioux Falls Christian School is an integral part of the total curriculum and that athletics are to occupy a position in the curriculum comparable to that of other activities and to promote good school morale. The mission statement says: "With God's Word as our foundation, Sioux Falls Christian Schools will provide a Christ-centered, excellent education, partnering with the church and home to equip students for Him." Sioux Falls Christian is dedicated to providing a Christ-Centered education, so our athletes must pursue the goal of excellence with character. Participation in competitive athletics influences character, physical development, and good sportsmanship.

Our teams must compete in such a way that we honor our God, our team, our school, and the community. The ideals of sportsmanship, fair play, teamwork, and dedication should be exemplified by our teams, and will hopefully be carried on throughout the life of the participants. The athlete at Sioux Falls Christian Junior High must be one who plays fairly, observes regulations and policies, treats others with courtesy, and who takes adversity without complaining. It is our expectation that our parents, athletes, and coaches will demonstrate respect and courtesy toward teammates, opponents, and officials **at all times**.

Sioux Falls Christian is committed to athletics which develop a perspective on both winning and losing which is consistent with the will of God. We need athletes who will dedicate themselves to this challenge. The challenge is very great in a sports world that all too often emphasizes winning at all costs. Winning should be one of our goals, but losing can many times present a beneficial learning situation. Successful Christian education results in the development of a balanced lifestyle in the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of our total being.

Junior High athletics is a unique stage in the development of a young person. Our Junior High athletic program is meant to be a development program. With this understanding of a development program, Sioux Falls Christian will follow the following guidelines for participation in Junior High athletics:

- Our coaches are instructed to emphasize the teaching of basic fundamentals of each individual sport. Practice time is viewed as more important than games played.
- We will not cut anyone who tries out for a sport. Participation is encouraged by as many students as possible.
- We will assure every player will play in each contest. Most contests allow for "A" and "B" games to be played. The coach will decide on the makeup of these two teams and play everyone in the game they are participating in.

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for man."

Colossians 3:23

Role of Coaches

Coaches are employed by Sioux Falls Christian with the expectation to develop every individual to be the best they can be in the sport being played. Coaches are expected to treat each individual with respect and dignity, being careful to motivate and encourage team play. Sioux Falls Christian Junior High coaches must view each child as an image bearer of Jesus Christ and therefore treat them fairly and with love. The following guidelines are to be followed:

1. Proper sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fair play must be modeled by each coach.
2. Emphasis given on the teaching of fundamental skills for each individual sport.
3. Display courtesy to visiting teams, officials, and participants.
4. Respect the integrity and judgment of officials.
5. A professional understanding and enforcement of the rules of the game.
6. Mentor and lead his/her team in Christian values which are taught in their particular sport.
7. Communicate with the students and parents. Keep everyone informed of practice and game schedules as well as upcoming events.

Role of Parents

Parents are a very special part of the education process at Sioux Falls Christian Schools. Our mission statement says: "With God's Word as our foundation, Sioux Falls Christian Schools will provide a Christ-centered, excellent education, partnering with the church and home to equip students for Him." This statement is best carried out when the home, school, and church work together for the development of your children.

Being a parent is often challenging – this effort and responsibility is frequently compounded by being a parent of an athlete. The athletic program exists for the students, but parents are an indispensable and necessary component of the athlete's life. Parents provide the support and encouragement for the contestants and coaches. Parents and coaches need to work as a team to provide an educational arena which develops self-confidence and a feeling of well being for their sons and daughters through sports.

General Guidelines for Parents

The athletic program at Sioux Falls Christian Junior High is committed to helping parents in their Christian responsibility for raising healthy and strong young men and women. Working as a team, Sioux Falls Christian Junior High and parents should abide by the following guidelines:

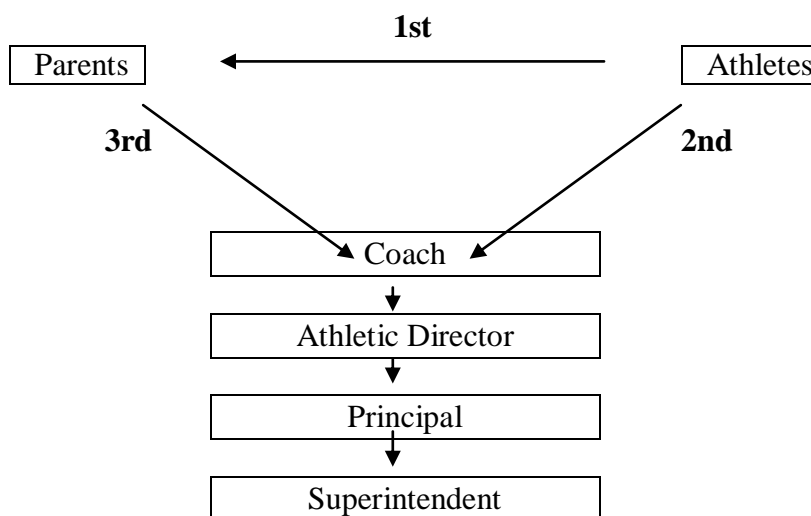
1. The participants in our programs are first and foremost your children and then athletes – we believe that God and family come first. Followed by academics and then athletics. At no time should athletics become the main focus in a student or parent's lives.
2. The coach has been given the responsibility to decide on strategy, playing time, team philosophy ... We ask that you help your child understand that being a team member does not guarantee any of the above. You may not agree with some decisions that are made, but we ask that you support the coach and be an advocate at all times.
3. Athletes must know that their worth as persons is not dependent on winning. Remind them that "It's OK to lose as long as you did your best and played fair."
4. Parents must not blame officials for losing or openly criticize bad calls. You must realize that officiating is a part of the game and we must demonstrate integrity in all situations.
5. It is important that your child see you attend their athletic events. Your attendance tells them you care and you want to share in their joys and frustrations, which are part of the competition. It also gives you an opportunity to develop a bond with your child, other parents, and to observe the progress made.

6. Parents should be interested observers at a distance. Your athlete needs room to perform on their own, to keep their focus on the contest and not on the stands. Do not yell instructions from the stands – cheer them on! Don't yell at them.
7. Help your child conquer the fear of failure. People only improve by reaching for higher goals - by taking a risk - and sometimes failing to reach it. A healthy attitude toward competition is developed by nurturing the athlete to a realization that they are loved and respected for who they are, not for what they've accomplished, or failed to accomplish.
8. Promote values and sportsmanship! We want everyone to have respect for rules and authority, to have consideration for others, and live for God. We must teach our athletes that opponents are NOT enemies – they compete with them, not against them. That's why we end each contest with a handshake.
9. Most young people participate in sports for the following reason – TO HAVE FUN!!
10. Finally, you only pass this way once; it passes all too quickly – Enjoy, and let your kids enjoy it. May we as parents and coaches be role models for our young people, it is an awesome responsibility.

PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION

Communication is a critical ingredient towards the success of a good athletic program or a unified team. People work together better if they are informed and have an opportunity to express their feelings. On our teams we believe that all athletes and their parents should communicate with coaches, and that all should be working together as a family.

At times athletes may struggle with their role on the team, want more playing time, have jealousies, etc. Parents may perceive that their child is being treated unfairly, or that the coaching is inadequate, but they only hear the player's side. When athletes and parents fraternize on these concerns, the team suffers and respect for the coach is lost. Therefore, we ask that all parties follow the proper channels as outlined below. To encourage responsible, mature actions, it *is* important that the athlete and parent(s) communicate first; if the issue cannot be resolved between athlete and parent, the athlete is encouraged to speak with the coach individually - *before* the parent becomes involved.



Please follow this communication ladder – each rung on the ladder is there so we can climb successfully. If attitudes are kept positive, we can maintain a healthy climate in our athletic program.

COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES

What parents should expect from coaches:

- Treat each child with respect and dignity.
- Modeling the Christian life in words and deeds.
- Develop each child's skill level and gain an appreciation for team play.
- Locations and times for practices and contests.
- Expectations for the injured athlete.
- Organized practice time and a professional attitude toward the program.

What the coach expects from players:

- Hard work and effort at practice and during contests.
- Attention to coaching – listen and try to understand the differences between criticism and coaching.
- Communication about coaching instruction, about his/her role, about problems with teammates, or other problems which effect attitude/performance.
- Notification of schedule conflicts well in advance.
- Notification of injury or illness.

What the coach and athletic department expects from parents:

- See General Guidelines for Parents
- *Whenever coach/parent discussions become necessary, please wait at least 24 hours after the latest contest to schedule an appointment. Never approach a coach about concerns during the contest or immediately following the contest.*
- Follow the guidelines below:
 - Appropriate Concerns for Parent/Coach Discussions
 - ❖ How your child fits in the coach's philosophy
 - ❖ Any observed behavioral changes in your child
 - ❖ Strategies to help your child improve as an athlete
- Examples of issues which are NOT appropriate for athlete/parent/coach discussions:
 - Any other players/teammates
 - The level of competition at which your child plays – (Eg.-“A” team or “B” team)
 - Playing time
 - Team strategy

What the students expect from coaches and parents:

- Opportunities to develop athletic skills, learn team concepts, attain high level of fitness, promote friendships, and practice good sportsmanship.
- Leadership and modeling of good sportsmanship and Christian conduct.
- Necessary equipment and facilities.
- Positive encouragement, support, and safety in the program they are participating in.

Whenever issues cannot be resolved, follow the communication ladder to the next step and set up a meeting with the Athletic Director. Remember, athletic participation is a proven positive influence on a child's self-esteem, grade point average, graduation rate, and success as an adult. It is the participation and not the playing time or “starring role”. Your child is in training and so are you, there are tough adjustments for everyone. Keep communicating and we will all be better for it. We hope these guidelines will make the experience more enjoyable and less stressful for all.

General Information on JH Athletics at SFCS

Sports Offered

Girls

Cross Country (Fall)
Soccer – 8th only (Fall)
Volleyball (Fall)
Cheerleading (Winter)
Basketball (Winter)
Track (Spring)
Golf (Spring)

Boys

Cross Country (Fall)
Soccer – 8th only (Fall)
Football (Fall)
Golf (Fall)
Basketball (Winter)
Track (Spring)

Conference Membership

Sioux Falls Christian belongs to the Big Sioux Conference. Members of this conference are: Beresford, Canton, Dakota Valley, Dell Rapids, Elk Point/Jefferson, SFC, Tea Area and Tri-Valley.

Practice Schedule

The Athletic Director will meet with the coaches concerning their upcoming season. The A.D. and coaches will arrange a practice schedule together. A master practice calendar will be formulated and given to each coach and the school office. Coaches are responsible to inform their team and parents regarding the practice schedule.

Start-Up dates

The A.D. will inform each coach of these start dates. No organized practices will be allowed before the published start-up date.

Schedules

The A.D. arranges all athletic contests (with the exception of soccer).

Requirement of Participation

Every athlete must have on file at the school a copy of an annual athletic physical. No athlete will be allowed to practice on the first day unless the physical is on file. The school will hold an annual Athletic Physicals Night during the spring of each school year; all athletes are recommended to use this night as a way of fulfilling the need for an Athletic Physical for the following school year.

Student attendance on Game Days

Students must be in school the **last** four periods of the school day in order to participate in activities after school (games or practices). If the event begins before the end of the school day, students are required to be in attendance from the start of the school day in order to participate.

Training Rules (Code of Conduct)

It is a privilege to represent Sioux Falls Christian School as a member of one of our athletic teams. With this privilege comes certain requirements and standards which the athlete is expected to abide by. SFC expects all students to exhibit Christian behavior during the school day and during non-school hours, twelve months a year. The policy is in effect from sixth grade registration through graduation. We are responsible to all parts of the body of Christ at all times. SFC is a member of the South Dakota High School Activities Association. All SDHSAA eligibility rules apply.

Substance Abuse Policy (Year-Round Policy)

Penalties for possession and use of mood altering substances, alcohol, and tobacco:

- First Offense – Lose eligibility for ¼ of the games or meets. Student must also seek guidance from a counselor. Student must attend practices during the ineligibility period.
- Second Offense – Lose eligibility for one (1) semester. Student must also seek guidance from a counselor.
- Third Offense – Student will be declared ineligible from extra-curricular activities for the remainder of their high school career.
- If a violation occurs at the end of the year, the suspension will be carried over to the next school year.

Academic Eligibility

- The student must maintain a 2.0 GPA.
- The student may not earn an “F” in any subject at any two week reporting period. The student will remain ineligible until the next two week grading period.
- The student must continue to practice but will not be allowed to suit up, play, or ride the team bus.

Coaches team rules

Coaches are allowed to add their own team rules to the existing Athletic Code. If there is a violation of a team rule, the coach will enforce the rule and notify the A.D. and Principal. These rules must be explained thoroughly to the players and parents at the start of the season.

Pre-Game Devotions

A major aspect of athletics at SFCS is developing the spiritual maturity of all students. Coaches are expected to lead their team by example and deed in a life worthy of Christ. Before every game, the coach or teammate must lead the team in devotions. At the end of every game, the coach or teammate must close in prayer. Remember to bear the name “Christian” with pride.

Wednesday Night Practices

Wednesday nights have been designated as “church/family night”. All practices will be finished by 6:00pm to allow students to attend these activities.

Dual Sport Policy

A new policy was adopted by the school board in 2007 which allows students to participate in two team sports during the same season. If a student desires to participate in two sports, the student-athlete must do the following:

- Obtain permission from his/her parents to compete in two same-season sports
- Request permission from the coaches of the two sports he/she desires to play
- If permission is granted from the parents and coaches, the student and his/her parents must complete the “Dual Sport Participation Contract”. As a part of the contract, the student will be asked to declare their priority sport in the case of a schedule conflict.

Dual sporting may not be the best situation for all students, therefore, communication between all parties involved is vitally important.

JH Participation at the high school level

The SDHSAA allows, but does not guarantee, JH students to compete at the varsity level. Some JH students may be moved to a higher skill level only if coaches, Athletic Director, and Middle School principal agree. The coach must inform all students of the opportunity to try-out for the high school teams. Students are given an equal chance to try-out and compete for a high school spot(s) on the roster. The JH student must show evidence of maturity and be able to “fit in” with the team. The parents of the JH student(s) must give permission for their child to be moved up. If a JH student is moved up to the varsity level then he/she cannot participate on the 7th and 8th grade team.

Transportation

The A.D. will arrange for all transportation to and from games. A schedule of departure times will be given to each coach and player.

It is the responsibility of the school to provide safe and reliable transportation to all away games. All team members must ride the team bus to and from the athletic contest, unless the coach has been notified by the parent or guardian of the player. The coach is responsible for the behavior of the team while traveling to and from a contest. The team is expected to display behavior consistent with the philosophy of SFCS. Poor behavior on the road trip will result in team discipline and even suspension.

School Closing

On days when school is cancelled due to dangerous weather conditions, there will be no practice for any lower level teams. This includes middle school, C, and JV teams. Practice for varsity teams is strongly discouraged and will only be allowed with permission from the athletic director or high school principal. We want to make every effort to keep our students safe during these conditions.