

St. John the Baptist Boosters Handbook

I. PLAYER REGISTRATION, FEES and REFUND POLICIES

- A) Registration fees will be set by the STJAB Board to provide sufficient funds for each team to adequately compete in their sport. The Coordinators for each sport may have input as well. Prior to the registration period for each season, the Board may request from each coordinator whose sport will be included in that season a budget to include, but not limited to:
- Projected number of registrants
 - Projected expenses (league fees, gym / field rentals, uniforms, equipment, referee / umpire costs, tournament costs etc.
 - Recommended fee structure for that season
- B) It is the aim of the STJAB to never deny a child the opportunity to play based on financial hardships. Parents may make a request to the Board Vice President who will determine, along with the Board, the best action to take.
- C) Each (calendar) year, each family will be required to pay the \$25 family fee. This is a (1) time per family per year charge that support the general fund of the organization for facility upkeep and the like. The fee amount is subject to change as dictated by economic conditions and will be communicated to the organization before changing.
- D) Registration will primarily take place on-line using the portal supported by the organization. In person registration may take place as well per the discretion of the Board and / or Coordinators per the need assessed; however, all registrations completed in person must be entered into the on-line portal.
- E) Payment is due at the time of registration, and no registration form will be complete without payment. A player will not be considered registered for a season or placed on a team until all fees have been paid including family fees if required and any past due fees. A \$50 fee will be assessed for any checks that do not clear etc.
- F) Participants will not be allowed to register if there are unresolved violations per the Code of Conduct against the player or the parent(s) or if uniforms / equipment from a previous season have not been submitted.
- G) Late registrations are discouraged due to the administrative challenges they present to the organization. In an effort to maximize player participation while minimizing administrative challenges, late registrations will be accepted under the following provisions:
- Late registrations will not be accepted after tryouts have taken place or team formation has been completed unless an exception is granted at the approval of the Coordinator and the Board.
 - Late registrations, if approved, will incur a late registration fee equal to 50% of the signup fee of the sport in question.
 - The Board reserves the right to approve or deny any late registration it receives on a case by case basis after consultation with the coordinator.

-Players who register late forfeit the seeding and placement privileges of normal registrants and can be changed from assigned teams or assigned to teams based on the needs of the organization, as determined by the Board.

-Exceptions will be if registration is reopened for a team / sport or at the discretion of the Board. In these instances a late registration fee will not be assessed nor will other parameters as outlined above.

H) Registration fees are non-refundable. Potential exceptions include:

- The player is unable to be placed on a team
- In the event the player sustains an injury prior to the roster being set or the first practice of the season
- The family moves and that precludes him (her) from playing the sport for the majority of the season.
- Other exceptions as approved by the Board

All refunds will be subject to Board approval. Any family who registers their son/daughter for a Boosters sport and then refuses to allow their child to participate after teams have been formed will not be permitted to register that child for any STJAB sport for one year. That player may; however, be eligible to register for that sport again in the following season, if the Board agrees to such reinstatement of the player's eligibility. Under the Board's discretion, exceptions may be made to this procedure.

II. ELIGIBILITY, OPEN GYMS/TRY OUTS, TEAM SELECTION PROCESS and PLAYING TIME

A. ELIGIBILITY

Participation in STJAB sports teams requires a minimum of one of the following:

1. The child's parents or legal guardian is/are an active member in one of the following Pastoral Area Parishes:
 - a. St. John the Baptist
 - b. St. John Neumann
 - c. Corpus Christi
2. The child attends St John the Baptist elementary school.
3. Special exceptions may be made by the Board and Coordinators based on the individual circumstances and the participating league's guidelines

A child may only participate in ONE school or parish sponsored team at a time. He/she may participate in more than one (but no more than 2) STJAB sponsored sports If the coaches of both sports are agreeable. If a child is

currently enrolled in another school/parish sponsored team, he/she is not eligible to join a STJAB sports team. He/she must complete that team/sports entire season. At that point the child would be eligible to enroll in a sport with the STJAB.

Every child must remain in good standing with their respective school/parish and/or religious education program, or would otherwise be subject to the rules written in our Code of Conduct.

B. TEAM SELECTION - Non-Competitive Teams: Grades 3, 4 and 5

Effort should be made to publish dates for open gym/try outs. Open gyms may be held prior to the completion of previous sport season.

1. The Coordinator and a Board Member will be present at all team selections.
2. When two or more teams are formed they are to be split evenly. Coaches will decide the order of the draft in zigzag fashion prior to selection process. If the order of the draw cannot be agreed upon then a number draw will occur. A zigzag draft will follow. Coaches are encouraged to consider the talents of his/her son/daughter and that of his/her assistant prior to team selections. All selections are final, NO trading of players.
3. Both coaches should have input in team selection.
4. If both coaches agree to a random lottery selection of players, then a lottery system can be used in place of a zigzag selection of players by each head coach.
5. In any given grade, the number of players per team differential should not be more than one. (I.e., No team has 2 more players more than any other team.)
6. The Coordinator and/or the President of the Board will resolve all conflicts, and make final decisions if necessary.

C. TEAM SELECTION - Competitive Teams: Grades 6, 7 and 8

Effort should be made to publish dates for open gym/try outs. Open gyms may be held prior to the completion of previous sport season.

The 6th, 7th and 8th grade try outs are closed. No parents are permitted in the gym during try outs.

1. The Coordinator and a Board Member will be present at all team selections.
2. Girls and Boys in the 6th, 7th and 8th grades will "try-out" for an "A" team if two or more teams are formed. There will be a "Selection Committee" formed for each grade. The Selection Committee will consist of a minimum of three (3) non-parent, impartial people. The Selection Committee will select all 6, 7 and 8 grade A teams. Everyone else will be placed on the B team. If there is enough for a C team as well, the B/C players can either be decided by the committee

or through a selection process involving the Coordinator (and/or Board member) and the 2 other coaches. The Coordinator will also be available to help the selection committee. The Coordinator and/or the President of the Board will resolve all conflicts, and make final decisions in the case of disputes.

3. A minimum of 2 tryouts should take place unless special situations exist and the Board approves a single tryout .
4. The Board, with a recommendation from the Coordinator, will determine the placement of players who cannot try out due to special situations, including injury.

D. Playing Time

Whatever the league, the level (Instructional, recreational or competitive), of the team, it's vital that all (i.e., children, parents, coaches, athletics leaders) are clear in advance on expectations regarding playing time, and how it will be monitored and maintained through the season. Even in leagues and on teams that are competitive, all children have a right to full team membership with roughly equivalent privileges and responsibilities, without nepotism or favoritism, including playing time.

For any sport within STJAB, roughly equal playing time is expected for all players on any team considered an instructional team for grades K through 5. Beginning in grade 6, tryouts are held to create one competitive team per grade. Any remaining teams, that are able to be formed in that grade, for that sport, will be considered instructional and fair playing time is expected. For the competitive teams, playing time will generally be determined by the coach. A minimum playing time is not guaranteed. Coaches may limit playing time as a disciplinary measure (for example, as a consequence for missing practices, consistent tardiness, or other infractions).

In neither an instructional/recreational nor a competitive team, will playing time be determined by ethnicity, nationality, gender or race.

III.CODE of CONDUCT and EXPECTATIONS

A. COACHES

Provisions for Coaches

All STJAB coaches should:

- (a) Abide by and uphold the STJAB Handbook and the mission, goals, principles, policies and procedures of the Charter, including the [Archdiocese of Cincinnati Decree on Child Protection](#), and the STJAB Code of Conduct.
- (b) Represent the team with a high level of sportsmanship, integrity and respect towards team, parents and opponents at all times (sidelines and practices included).

- (c) Support and assist in the spiritual, emotional, social and physical development of all players by providing opportunities for athletic skills training, character development, and spiritual growth.
- (d) Work with the athletic organization's Spiritual Liaison to ensure an environment conducive to growth in faith, character, and virtues. Reinforce with children and their families the importance of faith and religious practices including Sunday Mass, Holy Days of Obligation and regular, ongoing religious education.
- (e) Ensure that prayer happens at each practice and game.
- (f) Required to be VIRTUS trained and in good standing.
- (g) All STJAB head coaches are to ensure that assistant coaches are clear on the STJAB Code of Conduct and how they are expected to enforce it in practice. All coaches, including head coaches, are expected to sign and submit copies of the Code of Conduct affirming their commitment to it. These should be retained and kept on file at the parish and/or by the STJAB Board.

B. CODE of CONDUCT

ST. JOHN'S ATHLETIC BOOSTERS MISSION STATEMENT (taken from the Constitution & By-Laws)

The St. John's Athletic Boosters, under the direct authority of the Pastor, shall further the mission of the Catholic Church and the Parish by providing high quality athletics experiences for youth that are firmly rooted in the Catholic faith tradition, based on the goals of Catholic youth ministry, aligned with the evangelizing mission of the Catholic Church, and serve as an extension of the Parish's mission and youth ministry efforts. The three overarching "Goals" of the St. John's Athletic Boosters are:

Discipleship: To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.

Participation: To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community.

Growth: To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

To achieve the aforementioned Goals, the St. John's Athletic Boosters shall provide a Christian environment whereby youth are afforded an opportunity to participate in athletic activities led by qualified, competent and committed coaches and sport coordinators who shall also emphasize proper instruction, good sportsmanship, safe competition, leadership development, and team unity. Furthermore, the actions of the St. John's Athletic Boosters shall be aligned with the following Guiding Principles:

- (a) Discipleship, Faith and Family First;
- (b) Evangelizing Mission;
- (c) Responsible Participation in the Church;
- (d) Faith, Character and Virtue Development;
- (e) Trained and Competent Coaches and Athletic Leaders;
- (f) Safety and Well-being of Children; and
Good Stewardship and Accountability

There are four sections to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Youth Athletics Code of Conduct, as follows:

1. *Spirit of Catholic Youth Athletics.*

Treat everyone with respect and love according to the Great Commandments: “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.” Matt. 22:37-40

Demonstrate good sportsmanship, patience, manners and an attitude indicative of the spirit and mission of the Catholic Church.

2. *Adherence to Laws, Rules and Policies.*

Catholic canon law and Archdiocesan laws and policies including, but not limited to, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Decree on Child Protection.

3. *Federal, state, and local laws and ordinances.*

The mission, goals, principles, and policies of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Charter on Catholic Youth Athletics, and those of the Organizational Documents of participating athletics organizations and leagues.

4. *Specific Violations.*

Eligibility: Violation of the eligibility policies of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Youth Athletics Charter, including using an ineligible player.

Recruiting: No recruiting for athletic purposes or to enhance a team’s competitive advantage is permitted.

Leaving the field of play: No team, no player, and no coach may leave the field, floor, game or tournament because of dissatisfaction with the officials, or their decisions.

Losing control: Coaches are expected to control their own conduct and the conduct of their players and report to the league and Commission instances where opponents, officials, parents, or fans have failed to control their own conduct.

Running up the score: It is not permitted to humiliate an opposing team by playing in such a way so as to intentionally run up the score after the outcome of the game is no longer in question.

Inappropriate communication and behavior: The use of inappropriate, insulting, disrespectful, bullying and demeaning language or behavior before, during or after meetings, practices or games by players, coaches, officials, parents, fans, site personnel, volunteers, or others involved in any parish athletics program is prohibited. Also prohibited are physical intimidation and the use of profane, vulgar, abusive or sexually-oriented language, in oral, written or electronic forms of communication (such as texting or email), by players, coaches, officials, parents, site personnel, volunteers, or fans.

Escalating behaviors: Behaviors that incite others to act in ways that are in direct conflict with the spirit of Catholic Youth Athletics are prohibited.

The following actions are prohibited:

1. Drug or Alcohol Use: No alcohol, tobacco, or any illegal controlled substance is permitted at practices, league competitions, or tournaments where children are present (such as “tailgating” where alcohol is present).
2. Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages by adults at alcohol free events
3. The use of foul or inappropriate language
4. Vandalism and theft
5. Immoral Behavior
6. Fighting
7. The Use of Weapons
8. Abusive or Aggressive Behavior
9. Inappropriate Physical Contact
10. Possession of any item or material deemed harmful or hazardous to others
11. Unsportsmanlike conduct
12. Ejection or dismissal from a game, facility or field of play
13. Physical or verbal intimidation of any individual (includes other parents, referees, players, etc.)
14. Conduct inappropriate in comparison to normal behavior of a Catholic elementary student athlete
15. Failure to demonstrate respect and support for the coaching staff and other players
16. Violation of specific policies, regulations and/or procedures of the STJAB

Board

Implementing the Code of Conduct

- a. Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their players during practices, games, meetings, and tournaments.
- b. Parents are responsible for their own behavior, and the behavior of children in their care.
- c. The STJAB, Coaches and parents are partners in establishing and maintaining the Code of Conduct.

C. PROVISIONS for EJECTION and SUSPENSION

Ejection and Suspension: Sanctions for Non-Compliance with the Code of Conduct. Participation on a team and attendance at practices and games are privileges not rights for players, coaches, parents and fans. In the case of a violation of the Code of Conduct, a coach or other official or authorized leader may choose to deliver a warning, or if the violation warrants it the individual may be ejected and suspended, as follows:

Ejection: A coach, parent, or fan who is ejected for any reason must leave the premises (including the field of play, stands, and adjacent areas such as nearby parking lots) and shall be suspended for the next scheduled game. A player who is ejected from the game is not required to leave the premises. However, if a player (or child fan unaccompanied by an adult) is ejected and required to leave the premises, that child should be supervised by at least two adults until the child is directly under the supervision of a parent or guardian, in compliance with the Decree on Child Protection.

Suspension: An individual who is suspended shall be prohibited from attending the next game. Suspensions for egregious violations may include multiple games, practices, and other team activities at the discretion of athletics leaders.

Suspension shall follow ejection as a consequence of the violation. Any violation of the suspension or a subsequent violation shall trigger an escalating series of responses, as follows:

<u>Violation</u>	<u>When/Where Occurred</u>	<u>Sanction</u>
First	Before, during, or after a game or practice	Ejection for the rest of the game or practice; attendance at next game prohibited.
Second	Before, during, or after a game or practice	Ejection for the rest of game or practice; attendance at next two games prohibited.
Third	Before, during, or after a game or practice	Attendance at practices, games and any other team activities is prohibited for the rest of the season.

In accordance to the privacy rules of St. John the Baptist, this document gives permission for the school administration to communicate with the athletic board with respect to disciplinary action that involves St. John the Baptist student athletes.

If a student is suspended from school, the student will be suspended from two consecutive games for each day of suspension. The student will be required to attend the games during the suspension, but is not allowed to participate. Suspensions are extended for each game the child does not attend. It is the responsibility of the parent and student athlete to inform their coach and the Booster President of any school suspension. Any inappropriate delay in notifying the coach and Booster President may result in a longer athletic suspension as dictated by the STJAB Board.

Any disciplinary action will be discussed with the coach, Sport Coordinator, Booster President, and members of the STJAB Board. Upon approval of the discipline, the Sport Coordinator and Head coach will meet with the parents and player to discuss the indiscretion and subsequent punishment.

All other policies and procedures set by the school, STJAB, and all St. John the Baptist governing bodies remain in effect.

A. Grievance Committees and Grievance Due Processes.

The STJAB and St. John the Baptist school are committed to a safe and healthy environment for children, parents, coaches and spectators at all athletic events that take place in its name.

Grievance process: This is the step-by-step due process to be used in the event of problems or conflicts with coaches, parents or athletes within the organization. All grievances should be directed to the STJAB President who will submit the grievance to the STJAB Board. The STJAB Board will meet to review and come to a resolution concerning the Grievance. Final decisions will be characterized by a presumption of good faith, Christian charity, personal responsibility, adherence to the principles of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Charter on Catholic Youth Athletics, and a commitment to both the well-being of children and the common good of the faith community.

IV. TOURNAMENTS, EQUIPMENT and BUDGTARY RESPONSIBILITIES

A. League and Tournament Participation

Approved leagues and tournaments: Teams are expected to participate only in leagues approved by the STJAB. Tournament participation is limited to tournaments sponsored by leagues, or parishes or schools within the leagues.

Tournament fees: There shall be no financial or other obligation placed upon parents to participate in more tournaments than those for which the athletics organization has planned and paid.

Uniforms: Team uniforms are for parish- and/or school-sanctioned activities (e.g., games, tournaments, pep rallies, etc.). Teams are not to wear their uniforms outside parish- and/or school-sanctioned activities.

It is the goal of the STJAB that there is parity between boy and girls sports.

Tournament limits: STJAB will establish reasonable and not excessive tournament schedules to avoid undue burdens on families. There will be a reasonable number of tournaments that are appropriate to the sport and the grade level.

B. EQUIPMENT

All appropriate and fundamental equipment for each sport will be provided by the STJAB.

Equipment requests must be made to the Board prior to the season. Capital expenditures and long term projects will be assessed by the Board on an annual basis.

C. EXPENDITURES

All Coordinators and Coaches are entitled to make purchases for their league / team needs.

These expenses may not exceed \$300 in order to be assured reimbursement from the Board.

Expenses over \$300 require prior approval by the Board.

V. Safety and Well-Being of Children

[Archdiocese of Cincinnati Decree on Child Protection](#). The provisions of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati *Decree on Child Protection* must be followed by participating organizations, meaning that the Archdiocese of Cincinnati *Decree on Child Protection* and all related policies and recommendations are in full effect, *including the following sub-points of 4.3.1 which have been excerpted verbatim from the Decree* (visit the Archdiocesan website to review the *Decree* in its entirety):

(a) Regular and occasional volunteers: For purposes of the *Decree*, a “regular volunteer” is an adult who is not a cleric or employee (for example, a catechist, scout leader, coach, server coordinator, etc.) who functions in a regular relationship having contact with children. This includes interns, student teachers and others in similar capacities. For example, a regular volunteer is one who has contact with children on any

overnight event; on at least a monthly basis; or in a multi-day program (e.g. Vacation Bible School). A regular volunteer has contact with children at least once a month, or participates in any overnight event with children. It does not include the occasional volunteer such as a driver or chaperone whose contact with children is less than one hour per month for activities that are not overnight.

(b) VIRTUS®: (A.3 Policy) All candidates for ordination, clerics, regular volunteers and employees who have contact with children must attend a VIRTUS® Child Awareness Session on the *Decree* before they have contact with children. Responsible supervisors who hire personnel furnished by a third party contractor who have contact with children, or who utilize auxiliary services personnel, are to inform such personnel of the existence of the *Decree*, inform them of the requirements of the *Decree* which pertain to them (for example, the C.9 Policy), and give such personnel the option of attending a VIRTUS® Child Awareness Session on the *Decree*.

(A.9 Recommendation) All adult volunteers are encouraged to attend a VIRTUS® Child Awareness Session, including training on the provisions of the *Decree*, even if they are not regular volunteers as defined in the *Decree*.

(c) Fingerprinting and Background Check (B.1 Policy): Background checks through fingerprinting or otherwise in a manner approved by the Chancellor in accord with the current policies of the Archdiocese must be performed on adults as follows: candidates for ordination, clerics, regular volunteers (see definition above) and employees may not have contact with children until an acceptable background check through fingerprinting or otherwise in a manner approved by the Chancellor is completed in accord with the current policies of the Archdiocese.

(d) Recruiting Volunteers (B.3 Policy): Those persons who recruit volunteers to work regularly with children in the parishes, schools, agencies and institutions of the Archdiocese must exercise caution in selecting volunteers. No volunteer has the right to insist on a particular volunteer position. If there is any cause for concern in a particular case, the matter should be brought to the attention of the responsible supervisor for further review.

(e) Permission, Health Information and Release of Liability Forms (C.2 Policy): A child may participate in an organized program sponsored by a parish, school, agency or institution of the Archdiocese only with the written consent of the child's parent or guardian on a standard *Permission, Release and Medical Power of Attorney* form (available online at the Archdiocese website at www.catholiccincinnati.org). Such written consent is expected to provide for emergency care of the child, as warranted by the program or activity.

(f) Minimum of Two Adults, Gender Ratio, Etc. (C.3 Policy): For any activity sponsored by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, at least two adults, both of whom have successfully completed a VIRTUS® Child Awareness Session and background check through fingerprinting or otherwise in a manner approved by the Chancellor in accord with the current policies of the Archdiocese, and who are not related to each other, must be present for any activity, including but not limited to after school tutoring of any sort (whether the tutor is hired by the parents or not).

Moreover, the number and gender of the adults are to be in proportion to the age, number and gender of the participants, and the duration and difficulty of the activity. Prudence is required in applying this policy to different age groups, length of activity and the risk level of the activity.

(i) A ratio of 1:10 is recommended;

(ii) Whenever there is a mixed group of boys and girls it is preferred that one adult of each gender is present. The proportion of male / female chaperones should be similar to the proportion of the children;

(iii) Single sex athletics must have at least one adult of the same gender as the players (e.g., in case of injury or illness requiring attention in a rest room).

Whenever possible, one of the adults should be a parent or guardian of a participant.

Exceptions for this C.3 Policy are only allowed for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, regular day-school or religion classes conducted on the grounds of the parish, school, agency or institution, and if for unanticipated reasons, only one adult can actually be present for an activity which is not overnight.

For purposes of this C.3 Policy, “adult” excludes 18 and 19 year-olds not yet graduated from high school and others who have graduated from high school but who wish to attend activities with members of their high school class during the three months following their graduation with others who are less than 18 years of age.

(g) Discipline (C.4 Policy): No child may be disciplined corporally or corrected with abusive language.

(h) Reporting (Ohio Revised Code § 2151.421(A)(1)(a); § 2151.421(G)(1)(a)): Ohio law requires all persons acting in an official or professional capacity to immediately report any actual or suspected act of child abuse to the public children’s services agency or to a municipal or county peace officer in the county where the child resides or where the abuse or neglect is occurring. Failure to do so is a misdemeanor and can result in

prosecution. The Archdiocese encourages all persons to immediately report any actual or suspected acts of child abuse to Civil Authorities. In either case, a person reporting in good faith in making such a report is immune from both civil and criminal liability.

Concussions. Head injuries can happen in any sport. Catholic Youth Athletics should comply with state law (see [Ohio HB 143](#) for more details) as regards concussions, including:

Before practice or play begins for each sport or season, the parent or guardian of each participating child should review and sign the head injury information sheet required by Section 3707.52 of the Ohio Revised Code and available at www.healthyohiprogram.org/concussion.

Before beginning to coach or officiate, coaches and officials in Catholic Youth Athletics should receive training on concussions and the requirements of Ohio law.

If a player exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with having sustained a concussion or head injury while participating in practice or competition, the player shall be removed from the practice or competition by either of the following: (i) The individual who is serving as the student's coach during that practice or competition; or (ii) an individual who is serving as a referee or official during that practice or competition. Parents are expected to be notified of the injury as soon as possible.

If a player is removed from practice or competition as per Section [4.3.2\(c\)](#) above, under Ohio law the coach or referee who removed the player must not allow the player, on the same day the player is removed, to return to that practice or competition or to participate in any other practice or competition for which the coach or referee is responsible. Thereafter, under Ohio law the coach or referee shall not allow the player to return to that practice or competition or to participate in any other practice or competition for which the coach or referee is responsible until both of the following conditions are satisfied: (i) The student's condition is assessed by a physician or other authorized licensed health care provider; and (ii) the player receives written clearance that it is safe to return to practice or competition from a physician or other authorized licensed health care provider.

Heat, Inclement Weather, Lightning, Thunder and Thunderstorms.

Lightning, Thunder: When thunder is heard or a lightning bolt is seen at a practice or competition, teams will suspend play and take shelter immediately. Once play has been suspended, play or practice will not resume until approximately 30 minutes has passed since the last thunder was heard or lightning flash witnessed.

Heat: To prevent heat illness (i.e. heat cramps, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke), when there are high temperatures, leagues, athletics organizations, coaches and teams should exercise prudence (such as by monitoring athletes closely, limiting practice duration, allowing lighter clothing, providing frequent fluid breaks for rehydration, and/or providing for shade).

Best Practice – Inclement Weather: When at outdoor practices and competitions, coaches, athletes, game officials and administrators should be aware of potential inclement weather and the signs that indicate

thunderstorm development. It is advisable to monitor local weather forecasts the day before and morning of the practice or competition and by scanning the sky for signs of potential thunderstorm activity. Weather can also be monitored using small, portable weather radios from the National Weather Service (NWS). The NWS uses a system of severe storm watches and warnings. A watch indicates conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop in an area; a warning indicates severe weather has been reported in an area, and everyone should take proper precautions.

Best Practices – Safety of Parish or School Gymnasiums, Athletics Fields, Athletics Facilities. The maintenance, upkeep, and general condition of a Facility are the responsibility of the parish or non-parish school that owns the Facility.

Coaches and adult athletics leaders should take care to ensure that their children are using Facilities that are safe and secure, including:

Gymnasiums: Paying attention to any apparent damage to backboards, bleachers, and other seating that could render such items unsafe. Gymnasiums that lack sufficient space outside the boundaries of play can pose safety risks to larger players whose momentum could carry them into walls or chairs; accordingly, it is recommended that athletics events for larger children be scheduled in larger gymnasiums.

Athletics Fields: Before beginning practice or play, coaches or athletics leaders should inspect the field(s) for any unsafe conditions.

Postponing or Cancelling: If it is apparent that the condition of a Facility may pose a risk of injury, coaches and athletics leaders are expected to postpone or cancel events until a safe Facility is available, and any such postponement or cancellation will not incur a penalty.

Reporting: Any problems with a Facility should be reported to (i) the leaders of the parish, or non-parish school, responsible for the Facility, and (ii) the league leaders who schedule athletics events at the Facility. If the problems persist and as a result there are ongoing safety risks, the coaches, athletics leaders, league leaders or concerned parents should contact the Commission.

Best Practices – Age, Human Development and Health Considerations. To avoid injury and to enhance the health and well-being of children it is imperative that coaches and athletics leaders who work with younger children avoid putting demands on their bodies and emotions for which such children are not developmentally suited. Coaches and athletics leaders who work with younger children are expected to be especially attentive to asking too much of children at too early an age. Parents are expected to be vigilant in monitoring the development of their children and working with coaches and athletics leaders to do what is best for their children. The Commission should assist parents, athletics organizations and leagues in determining age-related health considerations regarding athletic activities.

Best Practice – Biennial Red Cross Certification. It is a Best Practice for athletics organizations to have a minimum of one coach or other adult with Red Cross Basic First Aid Certification present at practices and games. Athletics organizations are expected to maintain records of Red Cross Basic First Aid Certification of

participating coaches and volunteers. Red Cross Basic First Aid Certification should be renewed on at least a biennial basis.

Best Practice – Archdiocesan Role. The Commission should provide information on Red Cross Basic First Aid training to parishes, and non-parish schools, and their athletics organizations.

VI. Transportation

Transportation Laws and Policies. The same laws, policies and guidelines that govern other Archdiocesan programs, schools and ministries are in effect for athletics programs under Catholic parish or school auspices, as follows:

Laws:

In an automobile, all passengers must wear seat belts, with no more than one passenger per seat belt.

Schools must transport by bus (by mandate of the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Revised Code).

Policies:

If it becomes necessary for any priest, deacon, auxiliary services personnel, personnel furnished by a third party contractor, employee or volunteer to provide transportation for children, the following guidelines must be strictly observed:

Priests, deacons, auxiliary services personnel, personnel furnished by a third party contractor, employees or volunteers must never transport one child alone. There are expected to be at least two adults in every vehicle that transports children. In exceptional situations, it may be permitted for one adult to transport children in a vehicle, provided a caravan of vehicles goes directly from point A to point B, with no stops in between;

When traveling in a caravan there must be a minimum of one adult in every vehicle. If a vehicle is traveling alone, there must be at least two adults in the vehicle;

Children must be directly transported to their destination, or make only previously planned stops (e.g. stopping for food or gas on a long trip). If an emergency stop must be made, all reasonable efforts must be made to ensure that two adults are present (e.g. calling another car in the caravan to pull over as well);

Children must never be transported without written permission from the child's parent or guardian;

Clerics, auxiliary services personnel, personnel furnished by a third party contractor, employees or any volunteers must avoid unnecessary physical contact with children while in the vehicle.

15-passenger vans have been prohibited since May 2005 as per the recommendation of the General Secretary of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

Archdiocesan Recommendations and Clarifications.

For liability reasons, the Archdiocese prefers that buses rented from a third-party who supplies the driver are used for transportation.

When Church leaders are providing transportation for an event, a teen may drive him or herself (and siblings) only with written permission of the parent or guardian. They may not transport other passengers.

The driver's insurance is the primary insurance coverage, not the Archdiocese.

If an event begins and ends at the site of an activity, the Church leader does not need to organize the transportation.

Church leaders never organize transportation for parish or school events using drivers under the age of 21.