



**DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT**  
**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

**STUDENT-ATHLETE**

**PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**2025-2026**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Diocese of Bridgeport welcomes your participation in our Athletics Program. Our coaching staff joins the school administration and school community in hoping the experience is both rewarding and enjoyable. We encourage our entire student body to try out for an athletic team, a safe and caring environment that reflects the love of Jesus Christ. As part of our Athletics Program, we encourage the development of self-esteem, moral character, love of learning, and a sense of social responsibility.

Since the coaches are often teachers of the boys and girls on their teams, Catholic values of cooperation and community are integrated into the sports program, as well as the mission statement of the Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic Schools.

The Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic School CYO Student-Athlete Sports Handbook is an informational guide for student-athletes who participate in the school's athletic programs. It is also a statement of requirements and procedures that are necessary for a well-organized program of competitive interscholastic athletics.

Being a student-athlete in the Diocese athletics programs is both a commitment and a privilege. It is our hope that students will learn that this commitment is to the team, to the school, and to the spirit of competition and sportsmanship.

It is important that student-athletes and their parents familiarize themselves with the contents of our Student-Athlete Handbook.

## **STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

It is our belief that as many students as possible should have the opportunity to experience interscholastic athletic competitions at the middle school level. The Diocese of Bridgeport CYO Athletic Program provides student-athletes with a selection of sports in the fall, winter and spring. Athletics play an important role in the school community. They fully complement the academic and religious life of our school. Student-athletes must maintain academic achievement, comply with school expectations, and exhibit good behavior on a consistent basis in order to participate on all athletic teams.

While our student-athletes and coaching staff will compete to the best of their abilities, the emphasis will be on education and participation. Winning is certainly important, but it will not be our only focus. We aim to foster self-esteem, self-confidence, teamwork skills, and sportsmanship ideals in our student-athletes, thereby providing a positive educational experience for all.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

1. Provide meaningful, purposeful experiences for every participating student regardless of ability, inability, or disability.
2. Improve health and lifelong wellness through exercise.
3. Foster character-building, self-esteem growth, and development.
4. Develop and promote motor skills that will be beneficial throughout life.
5. Foster sportsmanship and honesty regarding rules, officials, and opponents.
6. Have fun.

## **PROCEDURE FOR PARTICIPATION IN DOB CYO SCHOLASTIC SPORTS**

### **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

Any student will be allowed to participate in the CYO Athletic Programs provided he/she meets the eligibility requirements, submits evidence of a yearly physical examination, completes a "Student-Athlete Permission Form", and signs a "Code of Conduct".

Prospective student-athletes must sign up for their sport during the designated times. Announcements regarding each sport will be made at school and will also be posted online. Parents' home, work, and emergency contact numbers will need to be provided at this time.

### **PROGRAM OFFERINGS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL**

| <b>FALL</b>                                 | <b>WINTER</b>               | <b>SPRING</b>   |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Cross Country - Co-ed<br>Volleyball - Girls | Basketball – Girls and Boys | Track and Field |

## **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY**

At the start of each new sports season, the grades of each student-athlete selected for a team will be reviewed by the coach and school administration. If there is any indication a student-athlete is failing to work up to his/her potential, or if he/she has a poor grade or behavioral issue during the season, a two-week probationary period will be put into effect. The student athlete will be allowed to continue participating on the team during the probation period but must demonstrate improvement in the problem areas, or dismissal from the team may result.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF OUR STUDENT ATHLETES**

1. Student athletes should never lose sight of the fact that their primary obligation is to their academic studies. Our student athletes are expected to maintain the best academic standing that they are capable of attaining.
2. A student-athlete will not be allowed to attend or participate in a practice or contest the day he/she is absent from school unless he/she has received prior authorization from school administration.
3. Student athletes are expected to treat other members of our school community with proper respect and to take pride in maintaining the quality of the equipment and facilities available to them.
4. If school discipline is necessary, the discipline will take precedence over a practice or contest. Any student-athlete serving a suspension will not be able to participate with the team in any manner for the duration of the suspension.
5. The student athletes are responsible for the equipment issued to them.
  - a. Any lost or destroyed equipment will be paid for by the student athlete before participating in another athletic activity.
  - b. Care must be taken when uniforms are washed/dried to ensure longevity.
  - c. The student athlete is expected to return any equipment issued to them within one week of the conclusion of the season.
  - d. Personal use of school athletic equipment is not permitted.

Participation is a privilege for those student athletes who achieve academic eligibility and maintain behavioral expectations.

## **STUDENT-ATHLETE GUIDELINES**

All student athletes are expected to adhere to the following guidelines. A student will forfeit his/her right to participate in any sport activity or after-school program in the following ways:

1. The athlete is expected to attend all practices and games. Anyone unable to participate in a practice or game should contact the coach with a legitimate reason (sickness, injury, or family crisis). Missed practices and games may affect participation. We expect that scheduled practices and games for the school teams will take precedence over all other athletic participation. Three or more unexcused absences may warrant the athlete missing games or being removed from the team at the coach's and administration's discretion.
2. Whenever an injury prevents an athlete from participating, a doctor's release form must be sent to the nurse for clearance, prior to the athlete returning to participate.
3. Guidelines for team traveling to away games.
  - a. The athlete is required to travel to and from games under supervision of the team parent and coach.
  - b. School attendance is mandatory before competing or practicing with the team.

- c. Participation in P.E. during the date of a scheduled event is also required.
- 4 Coaches, students, and parents are to exercise the appropriate conduct on and off the field and with opposing team members. If a team member is not following the appropriate conduct, they will be benched immediately. If this behavior continues, a meeting with the parents will be scheduled to discuss the athlete's status for the remainder of the season. This could result in suspension or removal from the team. All parents and players should refrain from negative commenting regarding all players, coaches, and officials.
- 5 All athletes must wear their appropriate team uniform (or sanctioned CYO attire) to all practices and games.
  
6. A student will forfeit his/her right to participate in any sports activity or after-school program in the following ways:
  - a. A student who receives a report indicating an academic failure and/or behavior problem will be suspended from participation in games and practices for two weeks. Parents will be notified by the Athletic Director. If the student is maintaining passing grades after a two-week period, he/she will be allowed to rejoin the activity. An unsatisfactory evaluation will cause the student to be permanently removed from the activity until the next marking period.
  - b. Students are allowed to try out for a team but cannot participate in practices or games until the probationary or suspension period has been served. At any time, upon Administrative review, a student can be removed or suspended for breaking any school rule, for poor sportsmanship or for poor academic performance.
  - c. If any student receives a third After School Detention, he/she will be automatically suspended from participating in all After School activities for two weeks. A coach and administrative review will decide reinstatement of that student. If a student receives a fourth After School Detention, he/she will be suspended from that team/club for the remainder of its season.

### **SPECTATOR EXPECTATIONS**

Students are allowed to remain after school to view the sports activities under the following conditions:

1. All students attending after school sports must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.
2. Written parental notification that the child will be a spectator of an after-school activity and will not be going home by his/her normal transportation, must be submitted to the homeroom teacher in the morning. Children cannot meet their parents at the gym. The permission note must be sent in the morning to the main office.
3. Dogs are not allowed on the campus.
4. Any infraction of the above regulations will warrant Administrative review. A notification of a suspension of spectator privileges will be sent to the parent as warranted.

### **PROCEDURES FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Notifications of any cancellations will be provided via email no later than 1:00 p.m. the day of the event.

In the event of a cancellation, an alternative plan for pick-up at regular dismissal time must be in place by parents. The alternative dismissal plan should be discussed with your student athlete prior to leaving for school that morning.

### **PLAYER EVALUATION AND TEAM SELECTION**

1. A coach must explain to the prospective student athletes the criteria by which the athlete will be judged.
2. The selection of players and positions is based solely on how well the students perform during what will be known as the first practices or tryout session.

3. The DOB CYO supports the belief in giving everyone a chance or opportunity to play on a team. We will make every attempt to not eliminate or cut any athlete from a team.

4. In the case that the number of students trying out is greater than the number that could be handled, a second team may be formed to accommodate the excess students.

### **TEAM ELIGIBILITY RULE**

Members of all Catholic Elementary Schools teams must:

1. Be enrolled as a student in that Catholic School
2. Meet behavioral and academic eligibility requirements
3. Not have completed Grade Eight
4. Be under fifteen years of age before December 31<sup>st</sup> of the school year
5. Have a current medical release form on file

### **DIOCESAN POLICY FOR LEAGUE PARTICIPATION BY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

An elementary Catholic School basketball team can play in one league and participate in no more than three, (3), tournaments excluding league playoffs and the Diocesan and New England tournaments.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

In addition to this handbook, the DOB CYO provides the following:

1. A schedule of games for the season.
2. A weekly Athletics report will be published and posted on the DOB CYO website. This will give all updates, and other pertinent information related to athletics.
3. Any questions or concerns may be directed to the Commissioner at [dobathletics.org](http://dobathletics.org).

### **DOB STUDENT-ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Participation in the DOB sports programs is a privilege. Students must maintain academic achievement and demonstrate appropriate student behavior. The Administration reserves the right to remove a student at any time for not adhering to school policies and/or for poor academic and behavioral performance.

In addition, the student athletes agree to adhere to the following policies:

Each participant must demonstrate sportsmanship on and off the field and must adhere to all school and societal rules, laws and expectations that would be expected of a good Catholic citizen.

1. The athlete must act appropriately and understand that negative behavior may warrant suspension or removal from the team.
2. Inappropriate language should be avoided at all times.
3. The athlete will honor all team rules established by the coach.
4. Negative comments toward teammates, other competitors, coaches, and/or spectators are unacceptable.
5. Practices must be attended regularly, and members must be on time. 3 or more missed practices/games may warrant suspension and/or removal from the team.
6. Athletes are responsible for informing parents of their practice and game dates.
7. Athletes should be prepared for all practices and games with the appropriate uniform and equipment.

8. Academics requirements must be upheld:

Students who receive a failure warning will be put on probation for two weeks, or until the student is not in warning. If appropriate improvement is shown after the two-week period, the student will be allowed to resume his/her participation. If appropriate progress has not been made after a two-week period, then the student will be permanently removed from the team.

**The Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic Schools admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.**

**This book is subject to change. Parents will be given amendments.**