

MONTANA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

*Diocese of
Helena*



*Diocese of
Great Falls-
Billings*

Policy Manual

SECTION 5000: STUDENT ACTIVITIES & ATHLETICS HANDBOOK

2015-2016



Table of Contents

5000	Student Activities and Athletics.....	3
5100	Intent of Catholic Schools Athletics / Activities	3
5200	Dean of Activities / Activities Director	3
5300	Coaches / Sponsors	4
5300	High School Activities / Athletics	5
5400	Grade School Activities / Athletics	8
5500	Travel and Lodging	12

5000 Student Activities and Athletics

- Catholic Schools will provide co-curricular, curricular, and/or club activities as an extension of the Catholic school environment for a complete educational experience, for its students throughout the academic year.

5100 Intent of Catholic Schools Athletics / Activities

- The Catholic school athletic and activities programs offer an opportunity for young people to associate with dedicated adults who not only foster the development of athletic skills but also serve as role models of Christian living.

The Catholic Schools' activities exist to provide opportunities outside the classroom in which students may develop spiritually, physically, mentally, and socially.

The Catholic Schools' athletics / activities programs will support individual skill development, academic progress, and teamwork.

The Catholic Schools will sponsor and/or support activities only when there is an availability of adequate funds, coaches/sponsors, and facilities to provide a positive, safe, and successful activity.

- The true goals of competition are sportsmanship, leadership, and team play which develop physical skills.

It is a privilege, not a right for Catholic Schools' students to participate in a school-sponsored athletic or activity program.

The focus of school-related activity programs, elementary and secondary, is the individual student, his/her growth and self-esteem, and participation in a worthwhile learning experience.

Students enrolled in a Catholic School shall have the opportunity for participation in all activities.

- Students enrolled in elementary schools shall have the opportunity for participation without regard to skill level.
- Catholic schools shall work diligently to protect the youth and young adults against exploitation by overzealous adults who wish to transform activities of enjoyment into areas of "professionalism."

By their very nature, student participants and adult sponsors / coaches are a visible representative of the Catholic Community and are therefore held to the highest standard of the Student Discipline and Conduct Code.

The "win at all cost" philosophy will not be tolerated.

- Regularly, the school administration will conduct a survey assessing the viability and purpose of the school's athletic / activity program provided for student participation.

The results of the survey(s) shall be reported to the school's governing body and the Superintendent.

5200 Dean of Activities / Activities Director

5210 Dean of Activities

The Dean of Activities will be considered a faculty position in the Catholic School

The Dean(s) of Activities is responsible to administer Catholic school program activities

The Dean of Activities may evaluate, in consultation with the school administration, each activity, sponsor, coach, and facility.

- The School Administration is responsible for hiring, evaluating, or terminating all personnel related to the school activities, including a sponsor, director, or coach

- The School Administration may establish or terminate extracurricular, co-curricular, curricular, or club athletics / activities

5220 Activities Director

The Activities Director will be considered an administrative position in the Catholic School and a member of the School Administration

The Activities Director is responsible to administer Catholic school program activities

The Activities Director will annually evaluate each activity, sponsor, coach, and facility, as well as resources, impacts, and funding

- Prior to employing or terminating a sponsor, director, or coach, the Activities Director will inform the School Administration

The Activities Director, in consultation with the School Administration and School Governing Body, may establish or terminate extracurricular, co-curricular, curricular, or club athletics/activities

5300 Coaches / Sponsors

- When possible, the Catholic School will retain coaches / sponsors / directors who are currently employed in the Catholic Schools.
- When a coach / sponsor position is available and a Catholic Schools employee is not available for the position, the school administration will attempt to retain a member of the Catholic community before advertising the position to the general public.
 - Coaches / sponsors are expected to teach developmental skills and instill Catholic Christian values and behavior to promote sportsmanship through their own actions, appearance, and words.
 - All coaches / sponsors / directors will be under the supervision of the Activities Dean / Director.
 - Coaches shall conduct themselves as a positive role model and Christian at all times. They may not interfere or impede with the school's educational program but instead, fully cooperate with the school administration and its responsibility to provide a quality Catholic school environment.
- Imprudent actions on the part of the coaches are subject to disciplinary action by the Administration and the league in which the team participates.
 - All coaches, whether volunteer or paid, or any adult actively involved in working with the Catholic school students shall be approved by the Administration as well as have the necessary and required documentation on file with the school's human resources office prior to the start of the season and/or first practice.
- All coaches shall participate and be in full compliance with the Diocesan Safe Environment Program, per Diocesan policy.

5300 High School Activities / Athletics

5305 Events

Catholic high schools shall not host or participate in any school-sponsored activity or athletic event (including practice) on Wednesday past 7PM or on Sunday.

Catholic high schools shall not provide an environment where the presence and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages are allowed at its school sponsored events where the focus is student participation and/or competition.

- The Montana High School Association forbids spectators to enter an event if they are observed in the possession of alcohol or other mood altering substances or if they are believed to be under the influence of these substances.

The behavior of all spectators at Catholic high school events shall reflect positively on the Catholic high school, at all times. This includes:

- Good sportsmanship
- Positive cheering – Cheering for a team rather than against a team
- Respect the official and their calls
- No use of profanity
- No heckling players or participants
- Remaining in the seat or areas set aside for spectators

5310 Student Participation

The Catholic high school will provide competitive interscholastic programs for registered Catholic school students in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12.

The Catholic school administration shall ensure that all students in grades 9–12 are provided the opportunity to participate in the school's athletic program.

- Student participants must remain eligible for continued participation.

A student who has participated on a previous team during a prior season will not automatically be eligible for the upcoming season. A player must annually renew his/her eligibility.

5311 Academic Eligibility

All Catholic high school students participating in school-sponsored activities are expected to maintain passing grades throughout the entire "season" of the activity. To ensure consistent academic grading assessment for student participation, it is recommended that biweekly grade checks be conducted by the school administration.

- If at any biweekly grade check, a student fails to earn passing academic scores and/or the student's cumulative academic scores do not meet the school's minimum expectations for participation in school-sponsored activities, the student and his/her parents will be formally notified of the academic deficiencies.
- If at the next biweekly grade check, the student fails to earn passing academic scores and/or the student's cumulative academic scores do not meet the schools minimum expectations for participation in school-sponsored activities, the student will be declared ineligible to participate in school-sponsored activities until the next biweekly academic grade check.
 - The student may be required to practice with his/her team but may not compete in any games.

- If at the next biweekly grade check, the student fails to earn passing academic scores and/or the student's cumulative academic scores do not meet the schools minimum expectations for participation in school-sponsored activities, the student will be permanently removed from the activity in order to focus on academics.

Regardless of academic eligibility standing, a Catholic school student will never be denied participation in liturgies, retreats, or any religious / spiritual development event sponsored by the school.

5312 Practices / Games

Neither practice nor competition will take place without the adult supervision, as assigned by the school administration.

- The adult supervisor shall be a person who is 21 years of age and is formally listed as a coach, director, etc. of the team.
- It is highly recommended that there be at least two adults present in a supervisory role at all times.

5314 Participation Fee

Participants in co-curricular activities may be assessed a participation fee per activity, defraying the expenditures for each activity.

- Participation fees will be based on a fair and consistent process for all participants.
- The Catholic School will make financial arrangements for a fee assistance for those students whose families are unable to financially afford to pay a participation fee.
- As part of the annual budgeting process, the Administration and Finance Committee / school governance will determine the participation fee.

When an event and/or practice is on the same days as an instructional day, student participants shall be in attendance at school for the entire day.

- Unless pre-arranged and approved by the Administration, a student who is absent for any portion of the day will be ineligible to practice or participate in the activity for that day.

5316 Physical Examination

All students participating in a school-sponsored athletic program will submit to a physical examination and return to the Dean / Director of Activities a statement of good health signed by the student's physician.

All students must have parents sign a waiver stating that the child is in good health and has permission to be participating in an athletic program.

All documentation of physical exams and/or parental permission must be complete and on file before a student may begin participating in the activity.

- Physicals will be held on file for one calendar year.

5318 Student Accident Insurance

- The Catholic school is required to obtain Student Accident Insurance for all registered and admitted students in the school that will medically insure the student(s) in the event they are injured while participating in a school-sponsored function.
- The insurance will be a supplemental insurance policy for students with medical insurance and the primary health insurance for students without health insurance coverage.

5320 Extra-Curricular Activities

- The Catholic high school extra-curricular activities program shall include interscholastic competitive activities sanctioned by the Montana High School Association (MHSA).
- The Catholic high school will meet all minimum standards, guidelines, rules, regulations, and expectations of each activity, as outlined and referenced by the MHSA rules and policies.
 - In consultation with the Governance Body, the school administration will determine which programs will be sponsored under the extra-curricular activities program.
 - All extra-curricular athletics / activities require that participants not only develop competitive and sportsman like attitudes but that they acquire the skills necessary to compete effectively at the interscholastic level.
 - Christian values of fairness, honesty, effort, self-discipline and cooperation are an integral part of the participation of students, coaches, parents and fans.
 - Students involved in extra-curricular athletics / activities fall under the policies and procedures of the Catholic schools.
 - The development of sportsmanship, a competitive spirit, and winning teams are all goals of all interscholastic extra-curricular activities.

5330 Co-Curricular Activities

- The co-curricular activities program shall include interscholastic competitive activities, of the academic nature, such as Model United Nations, Close Up, Science Fair, and Science Olympiad.
- The Dean / Director of Activities, in consultation with the administration will determine which programs will be supported and/or sponsored under the co-curricular activities program.
- The Catholic school will provide facilities and instructional materials for each co-curricular activity.
- All co-curricular activities will be an extension of the classroom, curriculum, and course work for all participants.
- Students involved in co-curricular activities fall under the policies and procedures of the Catholic schools.

5340 Club Activities

- Club activities include interscholastic competitive activities, of the academic and/or athletic nature, such as the ski club, environmental club, soccer club, and Key Club, which are not sanctioned by the MHSA or other competitive organizations to which the school belongs.
 - The Dean / Director of Activities, in consultation with the administration will determine which programs the Catholic school will support and/or sponsor.
 - The Catholic school will not be responsible for any financial expenditures of a club activity.
- The Catholic school may provide facilities for a club activity at a reasonable rate of rent.
 - Any fundraising for the club activity supported by the Catholic school must be presented in writing and approved by the administration.
 - All club activities supported by the Catholic school will be solely for the benefit of the Catholic school's students.

- Students involved in club activities fall under the policies and procedures of the Catholic schools.
- Christian values of fairness, honesty, effort, self-discipline and cooperation are an integral part of the participation of students, coaches/sponsors, parents and fans.

5350 Practicing/Playing Up

No student who is enrolled in a grade below the ninth shall be eligible to participate in a high school contest except when granted permission by the Executive Director of the MHSAA and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools

No student who is enrolled in a grade below the ninth shall be eligible to participate in a high school practice except when granted permission by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools

The Superintendent will take into consideration the following:

- A formal recommendation from the high school coach
- A formal recommendation from the high school activities director
- A formal recommendation from the grade school administration
- Evidence of an insufficient number of high school students to constitute a team

Any eighth grade student allowed to practice/play up shall meet the high school academic eligibility requirements.

5400 Grade School Activities / Athletics

5410 Participation

At the discretion of the administration, the Catholic school may provide competitive interscholastic programs for registered Catholic school students in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8.

A student is eligible only to compete for four years, one year at each of his/her grade level of school.

- The Catholic school administration shall ensure that all students in grades 5-8 are provided the opportunity to participate in the school's athletic program.
- Student participants must remain eligible for continued participation.
- A student who has participated on a previous team during a prior season will not automatically be eligible for the upcoming season. A player must annually renew his/her eligibility.

Students will participate at grade level unless otherwise approved by the Administration.

A team's entire competitive season must be completed before any member of that team may begin participation in another sport. This restriction applies to practices as well as games or matches.

- EXAMPLE: A player participating with the football or soccer team must complete the entire football or soccer season before participating in any practices, games, matches, scrimmages, etc. for another sport ...such as basketball or volleyball.

A student-athlete may compete for his/her school in only one sport, on only one team in the same sport, and in only one league during a sport season. No dual participation in the same sport is permitted.

Combining teams is allowed only if there is a shortage of players at a specific grade level, only after all options have been exhausted.

5411 Academic Eligibility

All Catholic grade school / middle school students participating in school-sponsored activities are expected to maintain passing grades throughout the entire grading period. To ensure consistent academic grading assessment for student participation, weekly or bi-weekly grade checks may be conducted by the school administration.

- If at any weekly or bi-weekly grade check, a student fails to earn passing academic scores and/or the student's cumulative academic scores do not meet the school's minimum expectations for participation in school-sponsored activities, the student and his/her parents will be formally notified of the academic deficiencies.
- If at the next weekly or bi-weekly grade check, the student fails to earn passing academic scores and/or the student's cumulative academic scores do not meet the school's minimum expectations for participation in school-sponsored activities, the student will be declared ineligible to participate in school-sponsored activities until the next weekly academic grade check.
 - The student may be required to practice with his/her team but may not compete in any games.
- If at the next weekly or bi-weekly grade check, the student fails to earn passing academic scores and/or the student's cumulative academic scores do not meet the school's minimum expectations for participation in school-sponsored activities, the student will be permanently removed from the activity in order to focus on academics.

Regardless of academic eligibility standing, a Catholic school student will never be denied participation in liturgies, retreats, or any religious / spiritual development event sponsored by the school.

5412 Sports and Seasons

The administration will establish a length of season and total number of games permitted for all grade school co-curricular, curricular, and club athletics / activities.

The following sports are sanctioned by the Diocese for grade school students:

- Basketball
- Wrestling
- Football (Touch or Tackle)
- Soccer
- Track
- Volleyball
- Cross Country

Leagues or conferences provide a structure that helps to make athletic programs more effective. It is recommended that Catholic grade school teams belong to a league or conference. If possible, the league or conference should be organized on an area-wide or geographical basis.

5414 Practices / Games

Neither practice nor competition will take place without the adult supervision, as assigned by the school administration.

- The adult supervisor shall be a person who is 21 years of age and is formally listed as a coach, director, etc. of the team. It is highly recommended that there be at least two adults present in a supervisory role at all times.

There is to be neither practice nor competition during the hours the involved student's school or religious education classes are in session.

All practices and games (independent, league and tournament) must take place during the defined sport season. This prohibits Catholic grade schools from providing coaches, equipment, uniforms, school names, liability insurance, and practice and/or game facilities to their school-based teams to continue play during the summer in leagues or tournaments. This includes any organized activity such as practices, drills, scrimmages, games, etc.

- A game is defined as competitive play between two teams of different schools during which time and score is kept.
- A scrimmage is defined as play between two teams of different schools during which no time or score is kept and during which coaches may interrupt action to give coaching advice.

To compete/play is defined as participation in any practice, tryout, game or scrimmage under the supervision of a coach. Tryouts and Scrimmages are considered a practice.

5318 Participation Fee

Participants in co-curricular activities may be assessed a participation fee per activity, defraying the expenditures for each activity.

- Participation fees will be based on a fair and consistent process for all participants.
- The Catholic School will make financial arrangements for a fee assistance for those students whose families are unable to financially afford to pay a participation fee.
- As part of the annual budgeting process, the Administration and Finance Committee / school governance will determine the participation fee.

When an event and/or practice is on the same days as an instructional day, student participants shall be in attendance at school for the entire day.

- Unless pre-arranged and approved by the Administration, a student who is absent for any portion of the day will be ineligible to practice or participate in the activity for that day.

5420 Physical Examination

All students in grades 5-8 participating in a school-sponsored athletic program will submit to a physical examination and return to the Dean / Director of Activities a statement of good health signed by the student's physician.

All students must have parents sign a waiver stating that the child is in good health and has permission to be participating in an athletic program.

All documentation of physical exams and/or parental permission must be complete and on file before a student may begin participating in the activity.

- Physicals will be held on file for one calendar year

5422 Student Accident Insurance

The Catholic school is required to obtain Student Accident Insurance for all registered and admitted students in the school that will medically insure the student(s) in the event they are injured while participating in a school-sponsored function.

The insurance will be a supplemental insurance policy for students with medical insurance and the primary health insurance for students without health insurance coverage.

5424 Extra-Curricular Activities

- The Catholic grade school extra-curricular activities program shall include interscholastic competitive activities approved by the school administration in consultation with the Governance Body.
- In consultation with the Governance Body, the school administration will determine which programs will be sponsored under the co-curricular activities program.
- All extra-curricular activities require that participants not only develop competitive and sportsman like attitudes but that they acquire the skills necessary to compete effectively at the interscholastic level.
- Christian values of fairness, honesty, effort, self-discipline and cooperation are an integral part of the participation of students, coaches, parents and fans.
- Students involved in extra-curricular activities fall under the policies and procedures of the Catholic Schools.
- The development of sportsmanship, a competitive spirit, and winning teams are all goals of all interscholastic extra-curricular activities.

5426 Co-Curricular Activities

- The curricular activities program for shall include interscholastic competitive activities, of the academic nature, such as Math Counts, Science Fairs, and Science Olympiad.
- The Dean / Director of Activities, in consultation with the administration will determine which programs will be supported and/or sponsored under the co-curricular activities program.
- The Catholic school will provide facilities and instructional materials for each curricular activity.
- All co-curricular activities will be an extension of the classroom, curriculum, and course work for all participants.
- Students involved in co-curricular activities fall under the policies and procedures of the Catholic Schools.

5430 Club Activities

- Club activities include interscholastic competitive activities, of the academic and/or athletic nature, such as the ski club, environmental club, soccer club, and Key Club, which are not sanctioned by the MHSAA or other competitive organizations to which the school belongs.
- The Dean / Director of Activities, in consultation with the administration will determine which programs the Catholic school will support and/or sponsor.
- The Catholic school will not be responsible for any financial expenditures of a club activity.
- The Catholic School may provide facilities for club activities.
 - Any fundraising for the club activity supported by the Catholic school must be presented in writing and approved by the administration.
 - All club activities supported by the Catholic school will be solely for the benefit of the Catholic school's students and will follow the policies and procedures of the Catholic schools.

- Christian values of fairness, honesty, effort, self-discipline and cooperation are an integral part of the participation of students, coaches/sponsors, parents and fans.

5500 Travel and Lodging

- When it is a necessary component of the school program, in support of the educational experience, Catholic schools will provide transportation and lodging for its students and chaperones / coaches to and from a school-sponsored activity.
- The school shall bear all financial obligations associated with travel and lodging, in a fiscally responsible and prudent manner.
- Travel must be kept to a reasonable distance, especially on days preceding a school day.
- High school travel shall remain within the state boundaries unless approved by the Superintendent.
- The maximum travel distance for grade school athletics / activities shall be 150 miles (one way) except when playing other Catholic schools.

Exceptions to the 150 miles maximum distance shall be pre-approved by the School Council / Board / Commission

5510 Vehicles

When making travel arrangements, the students' health and education shall be safeguarded by the school.

When contracting travel with a third-party vendor, the school shall assure that the business is in good standing with the State Department of Transportation.

When providing its own transportation, the school's vehicle(s) shall be approved by State of Montana's Department of Transportation for passenger travel.

Under no circumstances shall the school transport its students in a vehicle not approved by the Diocese.

Passenger vans that accommodate 11 – 15 passengers are NOT acceptable modes of transportation.

5520 Parent / Guardian Transportation

Transportation provided by parents / guardians is an acceptable form of transportation for teams for teams representing the Catholic school.

- When parents transport a team from the Catholic school, the necessary documentation (See Field Trip Appendix) shall be completed prior to the event.
- The school is not responsible for any travel expenditures when parents transport a team.
- This policy applies to parents and/or guardians only. The school will not make arrangements for any other adult to transport children to or from a school-sponsored activity.

5530 Lodging

- Students will stay overnight on school-sponsored trips, only when it is necessary and/or determined that continued travel shall be unsafe and place the students and chaperones/coaches at risk.

- The school is responsible for making the lodging arrangements, safeguarding the safety and security of the students, as well as taking into account the school's economic ability.

5540 Academic Release Time

The Catholic school will release students from their academic courses, with adequate time for safe travel and event preparation. Specifically, the school will take into account adequate travel time, breaks, and event preparation when determining when the students shall be dismissed from class.

- The school should schedule an hour break for every four hours of travel.
- If the destination is an athletic event, it would be expected that the team would arrive one to two hours before beginning of the contest.
 - Exceptions can be made by the School Administrator