

MONTANA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS-GFB



Policy Manual

SECTION 8000: STUDENT ACTIVITIES & ATHLETICS HANDBOOK

2022-2023

Table of Contents

8000 Student Activities and Athletics	3
8100 Intent of Catholic Schools Athletics / Activities	4
8150: Relationship of Activity Employees, Volunteers, and Coaches to Diocese	4
8200 Dean of Activities / Activities Director	5
8250 Coaches / Sponsors	5
8300 High School Activities / Athletics	5
8305 Events	5
8310 Student Participation	6
8310.1 Academic Eligibility	6
8310.2 Practices / Games	6
8310.3 Participation Fee	6
8310.4 Participation	6
8310.5 Physical Examination	6
8310.6 Student Accident Insurance	6
8310.7 Kneeling & Protests	6
8320 Extra-Curricular Activities	7
8330 Co-Curricular Activities	7
8340 Club Activities	7
8350 Practicing/Playing Up	7
8400 Grade School Activities / Athletics	7
8410 Participation	7
8410.1 Academic Eligibility	8
8410.2 Sports and Seasons	8
8410.3 Practices / Games	8
8410.4 Participation Fee	8
8410.5 Participation & Attendance	9
8410.6 Physical Examination	9
8410.7 Student Accident Insurance	9
8410.8 Kneeling & Protests	9
8420 Extra-Curricular Activities	9
8430 Co-Curricular Activities	9
8430.1 Club Activities	9
8500 Travel and Lodging	10
8510 Vehicles	10
8520 Parent / Guardian Transportation	10
8530 Lodging	10
8540 Academic Release Time	10

8000 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.

8100 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."

8150 Relationship of Activity Employees, Volunteers, and Coaches to Diocese

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.

Since each Catholic school employee/volunteer works for the Diocese and the Bishop is the head of the Diocese, all employees work for the Bishop. Even though contracts and work agreements might be signed by a local school administrator, each employee and volunteer ultimately enters into a working relationship with the Bishop and represents him and the Diocese.

All school employees and volunteers are mandatory reporters and thus are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect promptly to:

- Montana Child and Family Services Division – 866.820.5437
- The school administration
- The Superintendent (who will notify the Bishop's office)

8200 Dean of Activities / 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.

8250 Coaches / Sponsors

- When possible, the Catholic School will hire and retain coaches / sponsors / directors who are currently employed in the Catholic Schools.
- 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.
- 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.

8300 High School Activities / Athletics

8305 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

8310 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.

8310.1 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.

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.

8310.2 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.

8310.3 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.

8310.4 Participation

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.**

8310.5 Physical Examination

All students participating in a school-sponsored athletic program will submit to a physical examination and return to the 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.

8310.6 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.

8310.7 Kneeling & Protests

It is expected that students will show respect for the flag. However, the Catholic school will not immediately or unilaterally punish a student for kneeling during the National Anthem or Pledge of Allegiance before an extracurricular or co-curricular contest.

8320 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. Students involved in extracurricular athletics / activities fall under the policies and procedures of the Catholic schools.

8330 Co-Curricular Activities

The co-curricular activities program shall include interscholastic competitive activities, of the academic nature, such as Mock Trial, Science Fair, and Science Olympiad. The 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.

8340 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 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.

8350 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 MHSA 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. Any eighth grade student allowed to practice/play up shall meet the high school academic eligibility requirements.

8400 Grade School Activities / Athletics

8410 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.

8410.1 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. 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.

8410.2 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.

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.

8410.3 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.

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.

8410.4 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.

8410.5 Participation & Attendance

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.

8410.6 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 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

8410.7 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.

8410.8 Kneeling & Protests

It is expected that students will show respect for the flag. However, the Catholic school will not immediately or unilaterally punish a student for kneeling during the National Anthem or Pledge of Allegiance before an extracurricular or co-curricular contest.

8420 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. Students involved in extracurricular activities fall under the policies and procedures of the Catholic Schools.

8430 Co-Curricular Activities

The curricular program for students shall include interscholastic competitive activities, of the academic nature, such as Math Counts, Science Fairs, and Science Olympiad. The 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.

8430.1 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. 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.

8500 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
- Careful attention should be paid to any activity involving water--swimming, soaking, etc. Because so many Safe Environment violations happen in these venues, supervision must be vigilant.

8510 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 the 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.

8520 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 (as opposed to travel from home), 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.
- 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.

8530 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.

8540 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 the beginning of the contest.