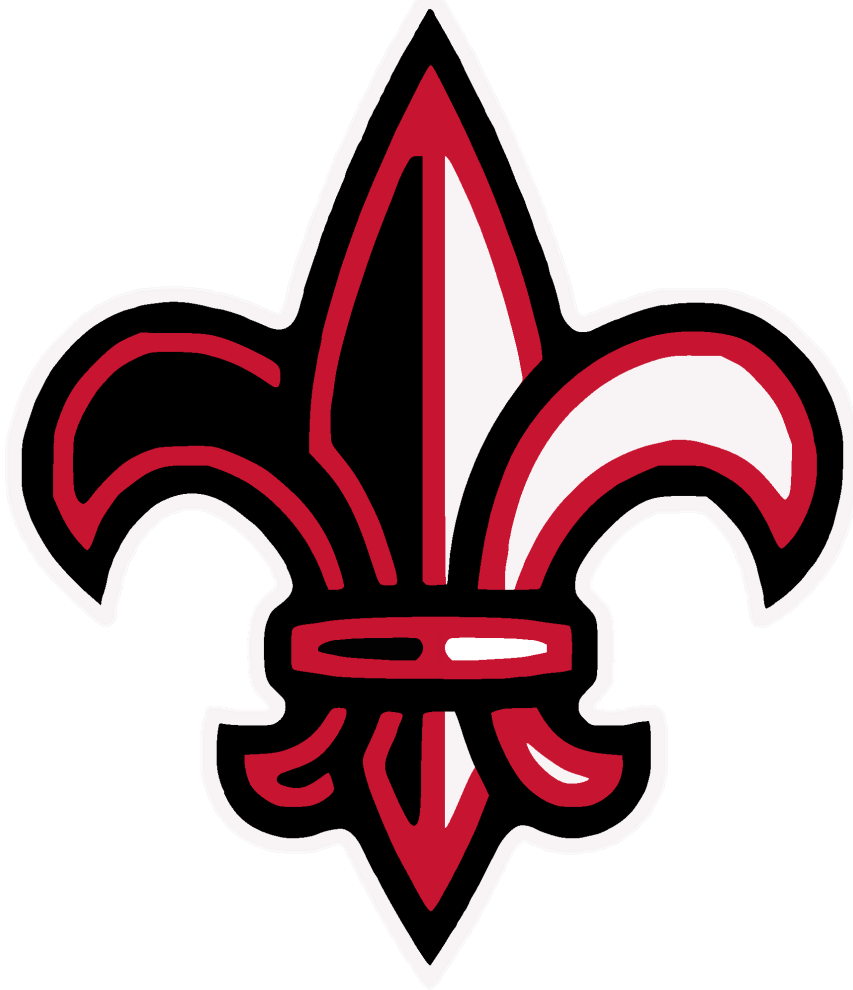


Holy Spirit Catholic School



Middle and High School (6-12) Athletic Handbook 2026-2027

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Athletic Program Philosophy

Our Athletic Department strives to offer our student-athletes the opportunity to participate, compete, and succeed at the highest level. The athletic program is an integral part of the education process of Holy Spirit Catholic School. The program promotes a greater desire in our student body and community to take an active part in our sports programs, either as participants or spectators. Holy Spirit Catholic School Athletics promotes self-growth and personal development through comprehensive physical education and strength and conditioning programs that educate, improve, and elevate the performance of our student-athletes both on and off the field. We believe in preparing student-athletes for a lifelong journey of faith and learning by enabling them to become responsible, productive citizens.

Affiliation

Holy Spirit Catholic School is a member of the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA), and we compete with other member schools unless granted permission by the AHSAA. The primary role of the state athletic association is to promote fair and equitable interscholastic athletic competition for member schools and participants.

As a member of AHSAA, it is the responsibility of all administration, coaching staff, and student-athletes to adhere to and support the rules and regulations that govern the activities sanctioned by these organizations.

General Policies

- Participation in high school athletics is a privilege, not a right. **Athletics is one piece of the total educational program at Holy Spirit Catholic School; athletes are students first.**
- The safety of our athletes is first and foremost. This includes ensuring all facilities for practice, workouts, and competitions are thoroughly reviewed and our coaches are properly trained.
- Student-athletes are required to be fully enrolled at Holy Spirit Catholic School to participate in athletics.
- Student-athletes and coaches must dress appropriately for athletic and school events. Athletes must remember when they are off campus that they will be wearing the Holy Spirit logo and must always project a positive image. Travel attire to and from games is determined by the head coach.
- **Student-athletes unable to honor their commitments to their chosen sport for any reason will be ineligible to participate in any other sport during that season.**
- Student-athletes may drive themselves to events inside Tuscaloosa County only, and they may only transport siblings. For events outside of the county, coaches may arrange bus

transportation or use parent drivers over the age of 21 possessing a valid driver's license. An up-to-date Diocesan Driver Information Form and Youth Protection Certification must also be on file for all volunteer drivers.

- Student-athletes must comply with all items in the Holy Spirit Catholic School Family Handbook including the Alcohol, Drug, and Tobacco and Mandatory Drug Test policies set forth by the school and the Diocese of Birmingham.
- The use of social media by a student-athlete, or family member, considered to be inappropriate will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Holy Spirit Catholic School Family Handbook. *Please be familiar with the social media policy outlined in the Holy Spirit Catholic School Family Handbook.*
- Equipment/Uniforms- All student-athletes are responsible for the proper care and use of equipment/uniforms issued to them. For all equipment/uniforms not returned at all, or in good condition, other than normal wear, families will be responsible for replacement costs.
- In-Season Athletes and Pre-Season Play In-season coaches have priority in all matters pertaining to multi-sport athletes. Close communication with in-season coaches regarding athletes that play multiple sports is required. In-season coaches must not be hindered by lack of communication or an injury that removes the player from participation.
- Dual Sport Participation- A student-athlete may participate in two sports during the same season under the following conditions:
 - The two head coaches must meet and discuss schedule implications and have the Athletic Director approve plans for managing any conflicts.
 - Student-athletes may not play on two team sports simultaneously. For example, a student-athlete could play soccer and participate in track events, but they could not play soccer and baseball.
- Coaches will follow and abide by all rules and policies of the AHSAA and Holy Spirit Catholic School. The varsity coach of each program is responsible for the overall program of that sport and is responsible for the supervision of all assistants, junior varsity, and middle school coaches involved. All coaches are under the supervision of the Athletic Director.
- Coaches will provide information regarding their teams and upcoming season to the Athletic Director, parents, and athletes at the beginning of the season.

Athletic Philosophy for Each Program Level

At the middle school level, coaches focus on skill development, team success, continuous education of the sport, learning strategy and plays, and accountability. There is an emphasis on individual development of each team member while understanding the goals of the team. All team members will participate in each competition although playing time does not necessarily have to be equal.

Junior Varsity players will continue to improve the skills learned at the middle school level and have an enhanced understanding on winning through the execution of strategy and tactics learned from the coaching staff. A continued emphasis on individual skill development is made to prepare for varsity level competition.

At the varsity level, players are competing to win without sacrificing the integrity of individual or team dynamics. Coaches continue to develop individual skills; advanced techniques and understanding of the sport are learned.

Requirements for Participation

All student-athletes are required to have a Dragonfly Max account in accordance with AHSAA rules and regulations. The information needed to sign up for a free Dragonfly account is available on the Holy Spirit Catholic School webpage under the "Athletics" tab.

- Sports Physical Examination (AHSAA form) signed by an MD or DO (certified physician) only are good for **one calendar year** from the month of examination. **Student-athlete's name should be signed at the bottom of the front page and should appear in the top-left corner of the back page.**
- NFHS Sportsmanship Program completed online (once in middle school and once in high school)
- Concussion Parent/Student Liability Waiver Form (completed yearly)
- AHSAA Student Release Form (completed yearly)
- Copy of Birth Certificate (must be issued by the Bureau of Vital Statistics from the state where born.)
- Sports Participation Fee: yearly fee of \$650; can be paid at the beginning of the sports season or can be added into families' FACTS account.
- **Maintain a 70 average in core classes**
- **Students accumulating five demerits will be suspended from participation in athletic contests until sufficient behavioral progress is made as demonstrated by two weeks**

without earning additional demerits. Students in ISS or OSS may not participate in practices or contests during the suspension. Students on disciplinary probation will not be allowed to participate in athletics.

Academic Eligibility Requirements

Holy Spirit Catholic School encourages participation in middle school and high school athletics; however, student-athletes are reminded that such participation is a privilege and not a right. Their academic welfare takes precedence over their participation in any practice or game. Academic probation will be as follows:

- Students who are failing classes or drop below a 70 average in their core classes will not be allowed to participate in practices or contests until academic progress is made.
- If the student athlete has failed to improve the failing grade(s), the student athlete will not be allowed to practice or play in any competitions until the grade(s) is passing.
- Students who chronically fail to turn in assignments, may not be allowed to participate in contests until progress is made.
- This policy is meant to encourage student-athletes to actively maintain their academic standing. The Athletic Department has eligibility requirements in accordance with the Holy Spirit Catholic School Handbook Appendix D.

Risk of Participation

All student-athletes and parents must realize the risk of serious injury may be a result of participation in athletics. Parents are responsible for providing health insurance for their children who are participating in athletics. Holy Spirit Catholic School will use the following safeguards to make every effort to eliminate injury.

- Coaches will conduct a mandatory pre-season meeting prior to the start of each season to fully educate the athletic policies for all families. At least one parent/guardian is expected to attend.
- Coaches will continuously instruct all student-athletes about the proper techniques in their respective sport.
- The Athletic Department provides a certified athletic trainer on site at Holy Spirit Catholic School to assess, monitor, and rehabilitate injuries. This includes access to an orthopedic doctor and clinic availability that may be different to that of your family doctor. It is imperative that all injuries are reported to the head coach first so that they may be aware of the athletic trainer's involvement in the recovery process.
- The AHSAA provides catastrophic insurance that Holy Spirit Catholic School pays for encompassing all middle school, junior varsity, and varsity sports. It is for accidental injury medical expenses and can be used only for injuries that occur during AHSAA

events (practices, games, meets, etc.). Student-athletes must have an updated physical in Dragonfly to be eligible.

Parent/Family/Staff Expectations

Positive involvement in sports requires commitment from students, parents, family members, coaches, and all spectators. The following expectations and policies are intended to aid in providing the best opportunities to our student-athletes while respecting coaches and staff.

- Our success is dependent upon volunteers and supporters. Parents and/or family members of athletes are kindly asked to help with transportation, gates, concessions and facilities clean-up for home sporting events. Volunteer signups are posted on our website under "Athletics." **All families must volunteer for at least 2 shifts per student-athlete per sport. Families not fulfilling this volunteer obligation will be charged a \$100 fine.**
- Positive support from parents, family, and community members regardless of playing time is expected. Support for our coaching staff regardless of lineups, playing time, etc. is also expected. Our student-athletes and their families need to remain committed to the team, fellow parents, and coaches throughout the entire season.
- Every athletic event is an opportunity to represent the entire school and community of Holy Spirit Catholic School. **Berating fellow or opposing fans, coaches, players, or officials will not be tolerated and could result in removal from Holy Spirit Catholic School athletic events.** Players, coaches, and officials will make mistakes throughout the course of the game. Aggressively reminding them of mistakes often has a negative impact on our teams and is a poor representation of our school. Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated as a representation of Holy Spirit Catholic School.
- Discipline and structured environments are vital to athletic success therefore it is expected that our coaches will have disciplined and structured programs. Support of our coaching staff when disciplinary matters arise is vital. Disciplinary expectations and repercussions are to be reviewed at the beginning of each season during parent/player team meetings.
- **Parents and family members that have concerns or grievances will NOT contact the head coach, assistant coaches, or Athletic Director within 24 hours of a competition. This time allows coaches and families to separate from the emotions of intense competition. If an issue still needs to be addressed after this time, please contact the head coach directly**

and schedule an in-person meeting with the student-athlete present. Coaches will not communicate concerns or grievances through text messages, phone calls, emails, or social media. **Parents must contact and meet with the head coach prior to contacting the Athletic Director.** If after the meeting there is still the need to discuss further, please contact the Athletic Director.

- Alcohol is strictly prohibited before and during all Holy Spirit Catholic School athletic events.

Student-Athlete Expectations

The community, school administrators, and the coaching staff feel strongly that high standards of conduct and citizenship are essential in maintaining a sound program of athletics.

Acts of unacceptable behavior, such as, but not limited to theft, vandalism, disrespect, immaturity, or violation of any rules in the Holy Spirit Catholic School Family Handbook, tarnish the reputation of everyone associated with the athletic program and will not be tolerated.

- **Attendance:** A student-athlete is expected to attend all classes on their schedule on the day of a competition. To be eligible to participate in the competition of the day, the student-athlete must be present for half of the school day. Team members are expected to be present at all practices, team meetings, competitions, and special occasions unless excused by the head coach. If a player will miss for any reason, it is the player's responsibility to contact the head coach (email, phone, etc.) 24 hours in advance.
- **Commitment:** Playing time is not guaranteed. Our coaches are making year-round commitments to develop, plan, and execute for their student-athletes, and it is the expectation that your child respects that and buys into the program. Student-athletes are part of something that is bigger than themselves. Even in sports that compete individually, they are representing the school, their coaches, the community, and their family.
- **Club and Travel Teams:** The AHSAA prohibits a student from participating in a school sport and a club/travel team of the same sport at the same time. For example, a student cannot compete on their club soccer team and play for their high school soccer team in the same season. A team's season begins the day of that team's first contest and ends when that team's competitive season has been completed.
- **Ejections:** Coaches and players that are ejected from competition will receive the following penalties:

- First Ejection: Minimum \$300 fine. (The fine can be reduced one-time to \$100 if the student-athlete fined completes the NFHS's Captains Course within 10 days of the date of the ejection.).
- Second Ejection: Minimum one-game suspension and \$500 fine.
- Third Ejection: Minimum suspension for the remainder of the season and \$750 fine.

NOTE: Holy Spirit Catholic School will not pay these fines on behalf of the coach or athlete.

End of Season Banquets

Holy Spirit Catholic School appreciates the time and effort that student-athletes and their families devote to their sport(s) program(s). Athletic Department letters and bars are distributed to the student-athlete by the Head Coach of each sport for completing one full season of varsity competition. For the most part, the process is as follows:

- Certificate of Participation: All athletes (middle school, junior varsity, and varsity) will receive a certificate of participation.
- Letter: This is distributed for the first time the student-athlete competes at the varsity level in any sport.
- Emblem: This is distributed the first time competing at the varsity level in a particular sport.
- Bar: This is distributed for each year the student participates in a particular sport after receiving a letter the initial year.
- Sport Specific Awards: Coaches will acknowledge student-athletes who have made a positive contribution to the team over the course of the sport season.
- Banquets: There will be a Fall Banquet, Winter Banquet, and Spring Banquet, each held in the high school gym recognizing all the players that participated on a team.

Programs Offered

All teams are contingent on having enough students to meet the requirements to field a team

*One Team- the sport has one team regardless of grade level but matches/meets/games are based on the skill level of each student-athlete.

<u>Sport</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Season</u>	<u>Summer Month Competition</u>
Cross Country	One Team	Fall	-
Cheer	JV, Varsity	Fall, Winter	-
Football	Jr. High (7th-9th), Varsity	Fall	July
Swimming	One Team	Fall	-
Volleyball	Middle School, JV, Varsity	Fall	July
Women's Basketball	Middle School, Varsity	Winter	June
Men's Basketball	Middle School, JV, Varsity	Winter	June
Baseball	One Team	Spring	-
Softball	One Team	Spring	-
Women's Soccer	One Team	Spring	-
Men's Soccer	One Team	Spring	-
Golf	One Team	Spring	-
Tennis	One Team	Spring	-
Outdoor Track	Middle School, Varsity	Spring	-