

ATHLETICS HANDBOOK



Divine Savior Academy
— SIENNA —

handbook

2024-2025

ATHLETIC OVERVIEW

Athletic Department Philosophy

The foundation of all interscholastic athletic programs and school activities at Divine Savior Academy is the Word of God. All programs are offered as an opportunity to grow as Christians outside of the academic school setting. All coaches and participants strive to model Christian behaviors and attitudes,

Athletic Department Mission

The mission of our athletic and activity programs is to develop and strengthen our participants' talents and abilities through unique learning opportunities difficult to duplicate in other areas of school life. The purpose of our programs is to develop in all participants the Christ-like characteristics of teamwork, dedication, sportsmanship, humility, and consistency of faith life in all situations.

Athletic Department Policies

All policies contained in this handbook have been revised and adopted by the school's executive council in accordance with the rules and regulations of the TAPPS (Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools)

Athletic Department Objectives

1. Spiritual Development
 - a. Provide a Christian environment where student athletes can grow in faith.
 - b. Encourage student athletes to let their light shine through great effort and good sportsmanship, properly representing their Savior and doing all to God's glory.
2. Intellectual Development
 - a. Student athletes learn to put schoolwork before their athletic involvement.
 - b. Student athletes learn exercises, skills and rules specific to their sport.
3. Physical Development
 - a. Student athletes learn to respect their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Student athletes' discipline and train themselves according to the physical needs of their sport.
 - c. Student athletes will develop strength, stamina, skills, and abilities for their sport's needs.
4. Social Development
 - a. Providing an environment where team play, cooperation, and respect for teammates and opponents is a priority.
 - b. Learn self-discipline, service, and humility as attitudes of team play that carry over into life.
 - c. Encourage friendships between teammates as they strive to reach their athletic potential.
 - d. Instill in student athletes that participation in interscholastic athletics is a privilege with accompanying responsibilities.

- e. Foster in student athletes an attitude that they faithfully commit themselves to all training rules.
5. Emotional Development
- a. Student athletes learn to cope in a Christian manner with feelings they experience in competition such as winning, losing, anger, trust, jealousy, frustration, etc.
 - b. Understand that winning is doing their best with their God-given talents, both individually and collectively.
 - c. Develop in the student athlete the sense of satisfaction and joy that comes from using their God-given talents to their fullest.

Athletic Programs

Girls' Sports

- Cross Country - HS Only
- Volleyball
- Basketball
- Tennis
- Track and Field
- Golf – MS&HS
- Cheerleading

Boys' Sports

- Cross Country - HS Only
- 6 Man Football
- Basketball
- Tennis (Spring)
- Track and Field
- Golf – MS&HS
- Baseball

Team Level Philosophy

We recognize the normal stages of a child's development and provide appropriate opportunities in athletics:

Varsity

Varsity competition is the culminating experience for each sport's program. It is an experience provided for the elite athlete and is the most demanding and competitive of all programs. Although junior and senior athletes dominate most varsity team rosters, gifted ninth and tenth grade athletes are eligible for varsity level play. Prior participation in the program does not guarantee an athlete a spot on the roster, even if the athlete was a member of the varsity squad the preceding year. While contest participation over the course of a season is desirable, a specified amount of playing time at the varsity level is never guaranteed, since the outcome of the contest becomes an important consideration at this level. A goal of a varsity team should be to qualify for post-season play in district, regional or state competition. In the individual sports (cross country, tennis, golf, etc.), opportunities are presented to qualified, dedicated team members to represent the district in individual championship competitions at the league, division, and state levels.

These opportunities are only provided, however, to those individuals who show a complete and ongoing commitment to the team.

Junior Varsity

Junior Varsity athletes are in the process of gaining the valuable knowledge, skill and experience required for varsity competition. Junior Varsity athletes may, on occasion, participate in varsity contests. Decisions of this nature are based on the evaluation of the athletes' abilities by the coaching staff and are not absolute. Skill, conditioning, work ethic and reliability are big factors in an athlete's quest to move up. At this level, athletes are expected to have visibly committed themselves to the program and continued self-development. To this end, increased emphasis is placed on physical conditioning, refinement of fundamental skills, elements and strategies of team play, and social and emotional development. Junior varsity programs work towards achieving a balance between continued team and player development and the quest for victory. The outcome of the contest does become a consideration at this level.

Middle School

Middle School programs, in general, offer an introduction to the world of competitive athletics. At this point, the focus is on learning basic skills and game rules, fundamentals of team play, social and emotional growth, and healthy competition. While we try to avoid cuts at the middle school level, certain factors exist that must be dealt with by imposing a limitation on the number of students that can be accommodated in specific programs. Opportunities for contest participation for each team member will exist over the course of a season, providing that the athlete meets program expectations. Playing time will vary between individuals and will be determined by the coach. Determining factors will include readiness capacity, skill level, team expectations and safety. Creation and size of teams is determined by many factors including but not limited to the number of participants interested in a sport, facility availability, safety and coaching resources. Whatever we do we want to do it well. Decisions will be made on a season-by-season, team-by-team basis if we cannot provide a healthy experience for all parties involved.

ATHLETIC EXPECTATIONS

Game and Practice Attendance

It should be the goal of every member of a team to be at all practices. Improvement within a team comes from everyone being at each practice and working hard

- Students must be present in at least half of the school day (4 periods to participate in practice or games on that day. If a student leaves school due to sickness, they are not allowed to participate in practices or games.
- Students who are serving an in school, or out of school, suspension will NOT be eligible to practice or play in any games during their suspension.
- If a student misses a practice or a game, he/she is required to notify the coach by phone or email.
- If you know you will be absent for an excused reason, please notify the coach as soon as possible.
- If an athlete has an unexcused absence from practice, he/she cannot participate in the next game, match, or meet; however, the athlete IS REQUIRED to be with their team and be supportive during the event or this absence will also be considered unexcused and the athlete will now accrue an additional non-participation competition.
- Only a doctor's note will be accepted for missing workouts. Our coaching staff will design a workout for your specific ailment that will allow you to still participate instead of sitting out.
- Injured players are still part of the team and should attend all practices.

Every member of a team is also expected to be at every scheduled contest. Every athlete is considered an integral part of the team. Everyone contributes to the unified team effort and success. This commitment is necessary for the progress of DSA teams and the athletic program's consistency. Students must be in attendance for the entire school day to participate in an athletic contest that day.

If emergencies arise, the coach should be contacted as far in advance as possible. This communication is important to make sure every situation can be handled in the best interest of the athlete, family, team, and athletic department. Continued unexcused absences could result in dismissal from the team.

Equipment

Divine Savior will provide all teams and athletes with the proper equipment to be successful. It is the responsibility of the coach and the team members to take care of all school equipment, especially uniforms. Athletes will be held responsible for irresponsibly damaged equipment and lost equipment.

All uniforms will be washed and cared for by the students and families. The uniforms will be turned in at the end of the season. If an athlete fails to return the issued uniform, the athlete will be charged for the full replacement cost.

Divine Savior Academy is proud to be partnered with Nike for Varsity level sports. This partnership will help ensure our programs to be outfitted with the best uniforms and equipment possible. It is our intent that all athletes will be equipped with Nike footwear and team uniforms for each sport.

Practice Gear and Apparel

Practice wear should be comfortable, allow for movement, and be in good condition. Clothing must be appropriate for a Christian school setting. If an athlete's practice apparel is unacceptable, the coach will ask them to change and the athlete will not be allowed back into practice until apparel is appropriate. If practice gear is issued to team members, they are required to wear that practice gear for all practices. All school-issued practice gear must be returned at the end of the season.

Transportation

All team members are expected to ride with parents to and from all away games. If the school van is available for the team, they will have the opportunity to ride in the van. It must be communicated with the coach as to how your child is getting to and from the away games. Communications should be made in email or writing. Coaches will be in contact with you prior to games for travel. We suggest that parents caravan or carpool to away games. This policy is to ensure that all team members arrive at every game away from Divnie Savior on time. Departure times will be given to all team members by their coach. Players are not allowed to drive themselves to away games.

Injuries

All injuries should be reported to coaches immediately. Coaches will determine if injury requires an assessment from a doctor. If so, the coach will fill out an injury form and hand it to the parent. There must be communication between doctors, parents, and coaches if an injury occurs. If a student goes to a doctor for an injury, they must have a note clearing them to play.

Playing Time

Coaches evaluate athletes daily in order to make playing-time decisions based on an athlete's ability, effort, and attitude. These decisions are not debatable. If you have concerns regarding your child's playing time, schedule a private meeting with your child's coach (see ATHLETIC COMMUNICATION page 8).

Sportsmanship

Coaches, spectators and athletes will show respect at all times to officials, opponents, and spectators of the opposing team. Each one of us has a great opportunity to represent our Savior, our school, and ourselves, especially in an emotional setting like an athletic contest. Though this may be difficult at times, it is vital to let people see us as the Christians we are, showing love and respect to all. At the high school level fines can be given out by TAPPS. Fines can be given to parents, athletes, coaches, or schools. Parents and athletes will be responsible for any fines they are associated with.

The decisions of game officials are always final and our athletes, parents, and fans should respect their judgments and decisions. Any concerns with the officials will be communicated by the coach.

Dress and Grooming

A neat appearance goes a long way in representing our school. School grooming rules as stated in the school handbook will be strictly enforced by coaches. School uniforms or game uniforms should be worn to and from all games. The coach will determine if athletes will wear school uniforms while traveling to an away game or if athletes will wear game uniforms while traveling to an away game.

Parent Volunteers

All parents of student-athletes are encouraged to volunteer at DSA sponsored events. We recommend that every family volunteers for 5-6 slots throughout the year. Opportunities will be sent out prior to the beginning of the seasons. This includes gate ticketing, concession (both hosted by DSA Booster Club), first down markers at football games, clock/scoreboard at volleyball and basketball games, etc.

ELIGIBILITY

The following eligibility requirements apply to members of athletic teams, student clubs, and student organizations.

To assist students in focusing on their academics and to ensure that they use their gifts to their fullest, the following process is put into place.

- Academic Eligibility applies for any student participating in organizations, clubs, and athletic teams). Divine Savior requires that a student must not accumulate any F's or two or more D's at the end of a quarter marking period for high school and mid-quarter for middle school. If a student does end a quarter or mid quarter marking period with any F's or multiple D's, that student will be declared academically ineligible for the next quarter marking period. Any student receiving an incomplete is declared academically ineligible until the coursework is completed, at which time their final grades will be reviewed for eligibility status. If the completed coursework and resulting grade meet the requirements listed above, the student will be declared academically eligible for participation in co-curricular activities.
- Academic eligibility/ineligibility lasts for an entire quarter. An academically ineligible student is not allowed to participate in any practice, meeting, game, or performance of any co-curricular or service activity until the end of the next quarter when eligibility has been regained. A student declared academically ineligible after the fourth quarter will serve his/her ineligibility for co-curricular activities at the beginning of the following year. Co-curricular activities include participation in athletics, Student Council, NHS, NJHS, Student Ambassador, etc.

Substance Abuse Violations (for all students in student organizations, clubs, and athletic teams)

Substance Abuse Violations regarding alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, and drug paraphernalia are in effect 365 days per year. Young, Christian students should honor God with their bodies and use their God-given talents to the best of their ability. Illegally using and abusing controlled substances is harmful for the development of all students and athletes.

The following penalties and offenses are accumulated throughout a student's enrollment at Divine Savior Academy. If a violation occurs at the end of a school year, the penalty will carry over to the start of the following school year. The penalties below will be enforced if a student is discovered to be using alcohol, tobacco, vape pens, or drugs.

Possession/Use of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Paraphernalia

- **1st Offense** – Two consecutive interscholastic contests or two weeks, whichever is the greater suspension from all athletic activities, student clubs, student organizations, and school activities in which the student is actively participating.

2nd Offense – Six consecutive contests or three weeks, whichever is the greater suspension from all athletic activities, student clubs, student organizations, and school activities in which the student is actively participating.

3rd Offense – Permanent suspension from all athletic activities, student clubs, student organizations, and school activities in which the student is actively participating.

Possession/Use of Illegal Drugs, and Paraphernalia

1st Offense – One year suspension from all athletic activities, student clubs, student organizations, and school activities in which the student is actively participating.

2nd Offense – Permanent suspension from all athletic activities, student clubs, student organizations, and school activities in which the student is actively participating.

A. Students will remain part of the team and are allowed to practice with the team while under suspension.

B. If a student is not involved in a sport at the time of the violation, the suspension will begin at his/her next involvement with a team sport. A student may join a team on which they have not previously participated to serve the suspension. However, they must complete the season in good standing for the suspension to be considered served.

C. If the suspension is not completely fulfilled during one sports season, it will be proportionately carried over to the next season of participation.

D. Students suspended for conduct code violations will travel with the team on the bus/vehicles to contests (with the exception of overnight trips). These suspended athletes will remain on the bench or sidelines with the team in street clothes.

ATHLETIC COMMUNICATION

PROPER PROCEDURES

Athletic achievement requires sincere commitment from all athletes, parents, and administrators. For all of us to be successful, effective communication must occur. Divine Savior Academy's athletic department and administration believe strongly in being accessible to parents and supportive of the coaching staff. We are continually attempting to improve communication with the students and parents. For our programs to be successful, it is necessary that everyone understand the focus and direction of the programs.

Your Expectations

- A. It is reasonable to expect your child's coach to inform you:
 - 1. When and where practices are held.
 - 2. About his/her coaching philosophy.
 - 3. About expectations he/she has for all athletes on the team.
 - 4. What is required to be a member of the team.
 - 5. If your child is injured during participation in a practice or contest.
 - 6. Whenever any disciplinary action results in your son/daughter being denied participation in a practice or contest.

- B. It is reasonable for you to expect that your child will receive:
 - 1. Coaching that will focus improvement of skills.
 - 2. Instruction in being a member of a team.
 - 3. Guidance in positive Christian values.
 - 4. Loving discipline when necessary.
 - 5. Open communication on any topic.
 - 6. Care and Christian concern.

- C. Typical concerns that are appropriate to discuss with a coach are:
 - 1. Any unhealthy mental or physical strain you detect in your child at home.
 - 2. How you can contribute to your child's skill improvement and development.
 - 3. Any dramatic changes you detect in your child's behavior.

Our Expectations

- A. It is inappropriate to discuss with a coach:
 - 1. Playing time.
 - 2. Team strategy or play calling.
 - 3. Other student athletes.

- B. Coaches often need parents to tell them:
 - 1. Any specific health concerns about your son/daughter expressed directly and informally to the coach at a mutually convenient time.
 - 2. Notification of any schedule conflicts concerning practice or competitions well in advance.

3. Your commitment to the program, and how you contribute to the program's success.
For example, one way is to be sure your son/daughter is at practice each day on time and to supervise your child's nutrition and rest.
 4. Strategies that have worked for you in dealing with your son/daughter being successful in the past.
- C. If you have a concern to discuss with a coach, what procedure should you follow?
1. Make an appointment with the coach at a mutually convenient time. If the concern is in relation to competition, contact should not be made until the following day.
 2. If the meeting with the coach does not result in resolution to the problem, contact the athletic director to discuss the situation.

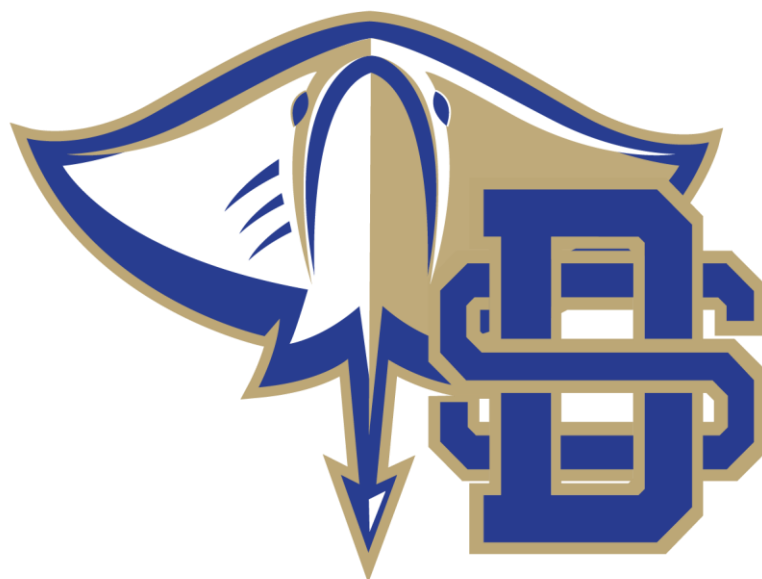
STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Expectations:

- If a student joins a student run organization (org), that means he/she commits to the expectations as outlined by that particular org. This will vary. Each org should have a documented list of goals and expectations for members to view. These orgs only work when there is ownership by students by cooperating with each other and fully participating.
- If a student has to miss an org meeting/activity for a valid reason, then he/she should inform the org leaders and/or advisor in advance. Unannounced misses should not happen. If they happen repeatedly, the org leaders and advisor will understand that to mean that the student has dropped out of the club. (Note: If a student is dropped from a club because of a lack of participation, they cannot ethically add that club onto their college applications or resumes.)
- Students must be in attendance at school on the same day as org meetings and activities in order to participate.
- Each org will have different expectations for meetings, time commitments, size of group, entrance requirements, projects, competitions, equipment, transportation, funding, varsity letters and other awards. These will be decided by the individual org leaders, faculty advisor, and sometimes by an outside organization (Ex. National Honor Society).

MAKE AN IMPRESSION

As athletes, fans and coaches we must always be mindful of the fact that we are representing our Savior and Divine Savior Academy at all co-curricular activities. As ambassadors who publicly represent Divine Savior Academy, we will be identified by the light we let shine. Many times, the only contact that other schools and communities have with DSA is through athletic events and activities. Our appearance, conduct, sportsmanship, and play will leave an impression everywhere we go. This is one way we can show our love for our Savior and live the mission of Divine Savior Academy!



GO RAYS!