

Serra Athletic Department Handbook

A. Philosophy

1. General: For many years the Junipero Serra High School Athletic Department has contributed to the spirit and pride of the school through excellence in athletics and the consistent fielding of highly competitive teams. This quality athletic program is a natural outgrowth of the Catholic Christian philosophy of Serra which seeks to develop all aspects of the human person. The primary goal of the athletic program is to build physical strength, self-discipline, and the team spirit in an atmosphere permeated with idealism, energy, and the values proclaimed to us by Christ.

It is the goal of our department to maintain the tradition of Junipero Serra Athletics while creating an educational environment. The educational development of our student-athletes through organized sports can aid students' mental and physical growth which further allows them to develop the core values of respect, responsibility, fairness, trust and good citizenship. Concepts of pride, discipline, and honor will be stressed in providing our student-athletes with the platform to grow in spirit, mind and body. The Junipero Serra High School Athletic Department through its individual teams will provide opportunities to enhance the development of attitudes and skills that prepare students for an adult life.

While taking great pride in winning, our Athletic Department will conduct all programs as educational activities. We will provide a safe and social environment for our student-athletes. This obligates our Athletic Department to provide adequate equipment and facilities, provide well-trained and experienced coaches, as well as equalized contests with skilled officials. We strongly discourage any pressure, which might lead to neglecting good sportsmanship or good physical and mental health. It is the role of the Athletic Department to make policies that govern the spirit of competition while recognizing the rights of the individuals within the objectives of the individual sport programs.

The interscholastic athletic program will be conducted in accordance with existing California Interscholastic Federation (CIF), Catholic Athletic Association, Camino Del Rey Athletic Association and Junipero Serra High School policies and rules.

2. STUDENT ATHLETES: To be part of this program is not the right of any student, but rather a privilege which demands a commitment to strive for excellence in all other areas of school life: spirituality, academics, school government, social activities, and discipline.

Perhaps in no aspect of school life is the individual called upon to represent Serra in such a public forum as in the athletic arena. Student athletes must therefore be made aware of their constant privilege and responsibility to represent Serra positively and display Christian values to the world.

The true Serra athlete wins respect by playing hard and demonstrating the highest degree of sportsmanship at all times. This sportsmanship is especially demonstrated in showing fraternal respect to members of opposing teams and schools. This sportsmanship is also demonstrated in obedience to coaches, appreciation for the talents of other team members, respect for racial diversity in all circumstances, use of acceptable language and an overall attitude of respect and involvement in the life of the school community.

3. COACHES: Coaches play an extremely significant role in Serra's athletic program. They are the natural role models who guide young athletes by their living example to the realization of all the goals of the athletic program. In order to be such a role model, coaches need to be completely imbued with the athletic philosophy of Serra. Coaches exercise their leadership from the perspective of faith. Outside the athletic arena, they continue to lead their teams by prayer, support and the example of a Christian lifestyle. Whenever exercising their authority, coaches demonstrate respect for the dignity of every player entrusted to their care and thus win for themselves the true respect of their athletes. Coaches also deal with parents, opposing coaches, administrators and other adults in a highly professional and Christian manner. A true Serra coach represents the ideals and values of the athletic program with dignity, pride, confident leadership and self-discipline.

4. PARENTS: Parents are the primary educators of their student athletes. Serra parents are therefore called to teach by word and example the values of the school and athletic program. Parents are strongly encouraged to support their sons/daughters during team competition with their presence and positive school spirit. Parents also need to be aware that they represent the school in a special way during all athletic contests. Members of the opposing team and the visiting fans/parents should always be treated with cordial respect. The same is true of those officiating in the game. Parents should especially realize that their support of the Serra coaching staff, both on and off the field, is a highly significant factor in the achievement of an effective team. Serra parents must represent the ideals of Serra both at home and away contests.

5. SCHOOL COMMUNITY: The Serra school community, including students, faculty, staff and administration, show their support of the athletic program by being present to witness and celebrate the talents of student athletes. Their support of Serra teams is marked by energy, enthusiasm and a positive attitude that flow from the school's commitment to Christ and His way of life.

In a special way, the school community demonstrates its Serra spirit by offering warm and friendly hospitality to all visiting teams, their families and fans.

6. RELIGIOUS DIMENSION OF THE ATHLETIC PROGRAM: Coaches are responsible for the spiritual welfare of their athletes. They should lead their teams in prayer before all practices and games. The most effective way that Serra athletes experience their unity and oneness on the deepest level is through their celebration of the Eucharist together. There should also be a public prayer at the beginning of all home athletic events, immediately preceding the national anthem or pledge to the flag. For over 60 years, the Serra athletic programs have been placed under the heavenly guidance and patronage of Blessed Junipero Serra. Let all those connected with the athletic program continue to call upon his protection and guidance as the entire school community strives to realize the values and ideals entrusted to it by Jesus Christ.

B. Requirements for Participation

1. PHYSICAL EXAMINATION: A yearly physical examination is required. The standard physical form must be completed by the physician and submitted to the athletic trainer prior to participation. The examination covers all sports for a 12 month period from date of exam.

2. MEDICAL RELEASE FORM: Each athlete's parent(s) / guardian shall complete a Medical Release Authorization Form, giving permission for treatment by a physician or hospital when the parents(s) / guardian is not available. This form must be completed prior to participation.

3. ATHLETIC FEE: Providing a high quality sports program requires significant financial support. Serra requires that families of athletes help in supporting this mission. Fees are listed in the tuition and fees section of this handbook and vary by sport. All fees must be paid prior to the first contest. If the fee is not paid, the student will be ineligible to participate until payment is received. These fees are not refundable if a student withdraws from a sport. Part of this fee will go to purchase practice clothing and equipment. These items are the students to keep after the season.

4. INSURANCE: This insurance is available to all students participating on an athletic team for a nominal fee. Football players are required by the Archdiocese to purchase additional insurance. Parents will need to verify they have purchased additional school insurance or possess a primary insurance plan for athletes to participate.

5. PARENT/STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ATHLETIC POLICIES: Signing and returning the parent/ student signed agreement in the back of this handbook is required for enrollment at Serra High School. By signing and returning this form, parents/guardians and student athletes are certifying that the athletic requirements and policies have been read, are understood, and will be followed. This signed document will be filed in the main office.

C. ATHLETIC POLICIES

A firm and fair policy of enforcement is necessary to uphold regulations and standards of the Junipero Serra High School Athletic Department. Participation on an athletic team is a privilege provided to students involving discipline and a willingness to make sacrifices. For these reasons those who wish to participate in an interscholastic sport at Serra must adhere to these policies. In addition to all policies detailed in this handbook, Serra HS adheres to all CIF, CAA, and Camino Del Rey League policies.

1. PRINCIPAL'S RIGHT TO AMEND: The principal reserves the right to amend the athletic policies and rules as necessary during the school year. Notice of any such amendments will be posted on the school's website and/or sent in written form to parents.

2. ELIGIBILITY: All incoming freshman are eligible to participate in the athletic program. Returning students who are academically eligible (GPA 2.0+) and not on disciplinary probation are eligible to participate. Students falling below a 2.0 may file an appeal through the Vice Principal to participate. Simply filing the appeal does not result in eligibility; a final written decision will be given. Students are ineligible until the appeal decision is reached. Further details are found in the academic policies section of this handbook.

Transfer students must first consult with the Athletic Director concerning their eligibility before beginning any conditioning, practicing, or playing in any contest. The Athletic Director will file the appropriate paperwork with the CIF-Southern Section office. The CIF- Southern Section will make the final determination concerning the eligibility of transfer students.

3. ATTENDANCE & ABSENCES:

Athletes who do not report to school for at least two full periods without prior clearance may not participate in sporting events that day. (An athlete must report to school for at least two full periods on Friday in order to participate in weekend activities.)

Athletes must attend all practices and games. **Practice is mandatory.** This includes the summer conditioning program. Three unexcused absences or any unexcused absence from a contest will disqualify an athlete from participation in the athletic program. Athletes who miss practice or games without a prior excuse approved by the coach or athletic director will be subject to disciplinary procedures, subject to the coach's discretion. Detention is not an excuse to be absent from practices or meetings. If you are injured you must still attend practices and meetings unless cleared by your head coach. Athletes are expected to be punctual. Tardiness will result in a loss of playing time. In all instances parents/guardians must give prior notification to the head coach whenever an athlete will be absent. Athletes will not be penalized by coaches for excused absences. Excused absences will be determined by the head varsity coach and athletic director. They can be given for the following reasons but are not limited to: medical illness and death of a family member.

4. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE:

Discipline in the athletic program is to be considered an aspect of moral guidance and not simply a form of punishment. The purpose of discipline is to promote genuine development, to increase respect for authority, to assist in the growth of self-discipline and to provide a team situation conducive to winning.

Disciplinary infractions of team rules, school rules and/or athletic department policy while in attendance at, or while being transferred to/from an athletic contest/event come under the jurisdiction of the regular school disciplinary procedures. The head coach must inform the Athletic Director and Dean of Discipline of any such infractions. The head coach may add to the punishment from the school. Athletes can be disciplined for the following infractions but are not limited to:

- a) Being tardy to meetings, practices or games;
- b) Unexcused absence from practice or game;
- c) Lack of sportsmanship;
- d) Failure to contribute 100% effort;
- e) Breaking training room rules.

Sanctioned disciplinary procedures include:

- a) Benching (sitting out of practice or games as designated by the coach);
- b) Grade reduction in 7th period course;
- c) Extra physical activity (extra push-ups, extra running, etc.)
- d) Suspension or expulsion (only instituted with the permission of the Varsity Head Coach; final decision lies with the Athletic Director).

Any student-athlete who remains on a team and after minor disciplinary action, continues to demonstrate poor team morale can be dismissed by the head coach. Notice must be given to the Athletic Director.

5. EXPULSION / WITHDRAWAL FROM A SPORT:

The Administration feels that team members have made a commitment to the school, fellow teammates and coach. An athlete who withdraws or is expelled has disrupted team unity and may have deprived another student-athlete of participating. Therefore an athlete who has withdrawn or been expelled from a sport after practice or competition has begun will disqualify that athlete from participating in any other sport during that particular season. The athlete also cannot use school athletic facilities during that time.

6. PARTICIPATION IN OUTSIDE ATHLETIC TEAMS DURING THE ATHLETIC SEASON:

Participating on an outside team in the same sport during the Serra season is specifically forbidden by C.I.F. Rules. The Athletic Director must approve all personal trainers, outside coaches, and participation on club/ travel teams. Any athlete who participates on an outside team in the same sport must be withdrawn from the team and all games, which he/she has participated in, must be forfeited.

Participating on an outside team in a different sport during the season is not forbidden but highly discouraged. It is in the best interest of the student-athlete to participate only on the high school team in the season of sport. The potential for fatigue, injuries, conflict of commitments and academic pressures may adversely affect the team performance. If the head coach feels that it is in the best interest of the high school and the athletic program, the coach may restrict student-athlete participation on the high school team if they choose to play on an outside team.

7. LOCKER ROOM USE:

Anytime athletes are in a locker room they must be supervised by a coach. Any athlete who enters or uses a locker room without expressed supervision will be subject to disciplinary action. Teams are responsible for the cleanliness of the locker room and for the damage that might occur. Black locks must be purchased from the main office and used on all athletic lockers. The school is not responsible for items left unattended in the locker room.

8. SUPERVISION/ FACILITIES: Athletes are to be supervised by a coach at all times in all facilities during all activities. Athletes are not to use athletic facilities unattended at any time for any exception.

9. Uniforms/Equipment: All equipment and uniforms are the property of Serra HS and are loaned to the athlete during his/her season of sport. The athlete is financially responsible for all equipment and uniforms checked out to him/her. The school will supply game uniforms for all sports except pep squad. All parts of the uniform (shorts, shirt, warm-ups, etc.) must be returned to the equipment manager at the end of the season. Failure to return the uniform will result in a \$100 fine for each piece not returned. Before awards are received, final exams are taken, or a student begins a new sport, the athlete must return all items or pay the determined fine.

10. EARLY DISMISSAL AND DEPARTURE: Because of the nature of athletics and the travel involved, it is often necessary for student-athletes to be released from class. This in no way releases the student-athlete from academic responsibility, including in class assignments, quizzes, tests and homework. Athletes are expected to notify their teachers prior to leaving campus and arrange to make up all assignments, quizzes or tests, and obtain homework.

11. TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL: Athletes may not drive themselves or other students to home or away contests or practices unless prior written approval is received from the Athletic Director. When transportation is provided for a team, all members of the team will ride in the vehicle provided to and from the contest unless advanced written permission is received and approved by the Head Coach with notice given to the Athletic Director.

12. LETTERING: The awarding of an athletic letter at Junipero Serra High School is an acknowledgement of excellence and achievement. In order to receive a letter an athlete must abide by the policies and rules of the team, school/handbook, and league. The student-athlete must play a combined 12 minutes in a season or equivalent in quarters/innings/etc. and in the head coach's opinion be deserving of such a letter. A coach may waive the above requirements and award a letter because of injury, superior effort, inspiration, or leadership with approval from the athletic director. A student must be eligible in all aspects (academic/behavior/etc) at the end of the season to receive a letter. Serra High School does not provide Varsity letters but they may be ordered from Serra's contracted vendor.

13. CHAMPIONSHIP RINGS: The accomplishment of a CIF-SS and/or State CIF title provides for an opportunity for the team to purchase rings. The school in no way is obligated or assumes any responsibility in providing rings to the participants. Our programs will make every effort to provide or subsidize championship rings through fundraising and donations; however, Serra High School assumes no obligation to provide them for the team members or coaches.

14. ADDITIONAL POLICIES SPECIFIC TO A PARTICULAR SPORT: Because of the uniqueness of each sport and difference in coaches' philosophies, some coaches may wish to augment this policy with rules that pertain only to their specific sport. This would be allowed such as all rules/policies are in alignment with the Serra Athletic Policies as detailed in this handbook and provided all rules/policies are not less rigid than the Serra requirements. Additional rules and policies will be distributed by the head coach to team members and parents before the beginning of each sport season.

D. BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS OF ATHLETES

Being a member of a Serra athletic team carries with it the responsibility of maintaining our athletic tradition while conducting oneself in a manner consistent with our Christian values. At all times student-athletes are expected to conduct themselves as Christian emissaries of Junipero Serra High School. Athletes should address coaches and other team members politely, courteously, and respectfully in a spirit of friendliness and in an atmosphere of cooperation.

The administration and coaching staff feels strongly that high standards of conduct and citizenships are essential in maintaining a sound program of athletics. Unacceptable behavior by an athlete will not be tolerated. Acts of unacceptable conduct such as, but not limited to insubordination, theft, hazing, vandalism, use of tobacco, alcoholic beverages or drugs, the violation of school rules, violation of the law, or immoral behavior which tarnishes the reputation of the team, athletic department and/or school will not be tolerated.

A student who elects to participate on our team is voluntarily making a commitment to themselves, to their teammates and the coaching staff. Being a member of our team carries a responsibility of a maintaining our athletic tradition while committing yourself to certain responsibilities and obligations. It is important to always conduct yourself as a representative of Serra High School. Show your pride, but have dignity and respect for others. Lead by example and be self-motivated. Tolerate nothing less than your best.

E. PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/guardians are expected to support the school's athletic philosophy as detailed in this handbook and specific responsibilities are listed below. Parents/guardians must support the decisions of the athletic department and coaching staff in the presence of their child even if they personally do not agree with the decisions. Parents/guardians should act as positive role models through their own actions to ensure their child has the best athletic experience possible!

1. Commitment from parents is a must and essential to the program's success but is not an entitlement to direct the program. Parents must understand and accept their roles as parents. It is inappropriate to discuss with a coach:
 - a) Playing time
 - b) Team strategy or play calling
 - c) Other coaches or athletes in the program.
2. Parents / guardians are expected to support Serra High School's philosophy and follow the school's policies. Failure on the part of parents/guardians to do so may result in the removal of their son/daughter from the athletic program.
3. Parents must ensure the completion of medical exams and release forms, eligibility (2.0 GPA) and athletic participations requirements.
4. Parents/guardians whose behavior at athletic events is not consistent with the Catholic Christian philosophy of Serra HS may be asked by the principal, the athletic director, a coach or another administrator to refrain from such behavior. Parents should always be respectful towards opposing players, coaches, spectators, and officials. Refusal to comply with such requests may result in the removal of the parent/guardian from the contest. Repeated refusal to comply with such requests may result in the removal of the parent/guardian's student from the team and school.
5. Parents will be asked to volunteer as boosters and help with logistics/ management of events, contests and fundraisers. Parents should make every effort to help in such requests.
6. Parents should try to make every effort to attend athletic contests. Your attendance means you acknowledge your son/daughter's work and effort and support his/her role on the team. Support your athlete in a positive way, offer constructive criticism, never admonish!
7. Parents are required to notify the head coach of any potential conflicts well in advance. At least a week notice is necessary to facilitate an absence from an event or contest.
8. Parents must help to reinforce the school's drug and alcohol free policies by refraining from the use of any controlled substances before and during Serra athletic events
9. If a parent or guardian has a concern to discuss with a coach, the following procedure must be followed:
 - a. The student-athlete must speak with the coach first regarding the issue.
 - b. After this has occurred, the parent or guardian may call or email the coach to make an appointment.
 - c. Never approach the coach before or after a contest unless the coach makes this request. These can be busy or emotional times for both the parent and the coach. This period does not promote objective analysis of the situation.
 - d. If the parent or guardian does not feel a satisfactory solution has been reached with the head coach, the parent or guardian may schedule an appointment with the athletic director.
 - e. There is no appeal beyond the athletic director regarding playing time or team membership non-selection.
10. Before you become critical of a particular coach please consider the following:
 - a. A head coach has all of his players and assistant coaches to consider with every decision that is made. While parents should be concerned about the team, they are usually only concerned about how a decision affects one athlete, their son/daughter.
 - b. Coaches may raise their voices and discipline players. This does not diminish their loyalty or concern for their players. Athletes need to learn how to take criticism and understand that it is not personal.
 - c. Our coaches are students of the game. They have analyzed countless hours of video, read instructional books, attended clinics/college practices in order to educate themselves about the game. Unless you have done all of this, please be careful about claiming to know more than the coach.

F. GUIDELINES FOR SPECTATORS AT ATHLETIC EVENTS

Spectators and parents alike must recognize that they represent the school and community. Therefore, they have an obligation to be a true fan who encourages through positive behaviors the practices of good sportsmanship. In addition, spectators are required to meet the following expectations. Spectators not meeting these expectations will be asked to correct their behavior or leave the contest.

1. Remember that school athletics are learning experiences for students and mistakes will be made. You would not jeer a student who makes a mistake in the classroom; why is an athlete an exception?
2. A ticket is a privilege to observe a contest, not a license to verbally assault others and be generally obnoxious.
3. Learn the rules of the game, so that you may understand and appreciate why certain situations take place.
4. Show respect for the opposing players, coaches, spectators and support groups. Treat them as you would treat a guest in your own home.
5. Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Do not question an official's call.
6. Recognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team.
7. Refrain from the use of any controlled substances (alcohol, drugs, etc) before and during games and afterwards on or near the site of the event (i.e. tailgating).
8. Refrain from cheers which downplay the opponent or which use profane or abusive language.

G. 7th Period Policies

Coaches and athletes are expected to treat this just as any other academic class. Proper attendance must be maintained and courses must be engaging for all enrolled students; grades will be given. Individual sports will be registered as a 2.5 graded physical education course. These courses will not replace existing Physical Education requirements or health requirements. The Junipero Serra High School grading scale will be used. Grading will be based on the student's ability to participate and commit themselves to the policies and rules of the Serra High School Athletic Department and their particular sport. Grading rubric for the specific sports teams will be based on the student-athlete's participation, commitment and the following of Athletic Department and team policies. The student-athlete will receive a "withdrawal" mark on the official transcript if that athlete quits or is expelled from a specific team.

H. Booster Club

The Serra High School Athletic Booster Club is a volunteer organization whose mission is to support all of Serra High School not just its athletic programs. Participation in the Booster Club is open to all members of the Serra family. The Booster Club will elect an executive board every spring and the president will report directly to the athletic director in all matters. The Booster Club will operate as outlined in its by-laws which are on file in the athletic director's office.