

# Bethlehem Lutheran School

# Athletic Handbook



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<https://www.bethlehemsaginaw.org/student-life>

<https://www.facebook.com/BLChargers>

## **Introduction**

The athletic program at Bethlehem Lutheran School exists first and foremost to glorify God. Romans 11:36 states "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen." The purpose of this handbook is to outline the philosophy and policies of the athletic program so it can be an enjoyable and rewarding experience for all who participate.

## **Philosophy**

At Bethlehem, the athletic program exists to instill in the hearts of our children a greater love and child-like faith in Jesus and love for other human beings. It is our aim to facilitate this goal through athletics. Through a student's participation in sports, it is hoped that the student will further develop spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically and socially. Students will be encouraged to be the best they can be in an effort to glorify God.

The element of competition and winning, though it exists, is controlled to the point that it does not determine the nature of the program. Students are stimulated to desire to win, to improve, and to excel, but the principles of good sportsmanship prevail at all times to enhance the learning opportunities within each contest.

Bethlehem believes that participation in athletics, both as a player and as a student spectator, is an important part of the student's educational experience. Such participation is a privilege that carries with it responsibility to the school, to the team, to the student body, to the community, and to the student himself. In both play and conduct, the student is representing all of these groups. Such experiences enhance the knowledge, skill, and emotional patterns possessed by students, thereby making them better people and citizens.

Finally, we feel athletic competition can help one learn how to glorify God effectively in all areas of life. Every athlete does well when he knows what to do. This idea applies to representing Jesus in athletics as well as carrying out athletic assignments. The Bible tells us everything we need to do to represent Jesus in all aspects of life. The Bible is filled with principles that can be applied directly to athletics. Coaches and athletes have a responsibility to do their best in representing Jesus by preparing mentally and spiritually for what calls them to do.

## **Sport Level Philosophies**

**“C” Team (Saturday Morning Basketball):** This level exists primarily for the development of fundamental skills and basic understanding of rules. Winning is not overemphasized, but rather the focus is on the development of team and individual skills. Scores are reset each quarter to deter too much focus on winning at this level. Coaches are encouraged to involve all team members and provide relatively equal playing time.

**“B” Team:** This level of participation is again developmental, with greater attention given to technique and team skills. Team success is more of a priority but not the main emphasis. Student athletes must be willing to discover and accept their role on the team, which may include unequal playing time. Coaches are encouraged to involve all players. However, playing time will be based on the athlete’s attitude, practice presence, and skill levels. Absence from games, practices, and arriving late or leaving early may result in loss of playing time. As a need arises, students at the “B” level may be asked to participate at the “A” level. This is done only under agreement with the parent(s), coach and athletic director.

**“A” Team:** While individual and team skills continue to be developed, participation at this level is more competitive. Team success and winning are more of a goal at this level. Coaches may exceed more than three practices and games in a week to meet the competitive needs of the team. Student-athletes must be willing to discover and accept their role on the team, which may include unequal playing time. Playing time will be based on the athlete’s attitude, practice presence, and skill levels. Absence from games, practices, and arriving late or leaving early may result in loss of playing time. As a need arises, students at the “B” level may be asked to participate at the “A” level. This is done only under agreement with the parent(s), coach and athletic director. League rules generally do not allow 8<sup>th</sup> graders to participate below the “A” level.

## **Objectives of Participation**

To glorify God with our talents and express thankfulness for our God-given gifts.

To practice Christian love among students, parents and coaches.

To provide Christian discipline when a problem arises.

To develop character traits such as responsibility, leadership, sportsmanship, teamwork and self-control.

To stimulate school spirit and pride without compromising respect toward others.

To prepare our students for advanced levels of athletic participation by developing fundamental skills and knowledge of the rules.

## Player Responsibilities

Members of athletic teams at Bethlehem Lutheran School are expected to conduct themselves in a Christ-like manner before, during, and after any game or practice. They are expected to follow God's command given in Colossians 3:23 which says, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord."

The following are specific expectations:

- Respect my teammates, coaches, game officials, opponents and equipment.
  - 1 Peter 2:17 – "Show proper respect to everyone."
  - Never underestimate your opponent.
  - Listen to and obey those God has placed above you.
  - Take care of equipment and return all Bethlehem issued uniforms/equipment at the completion of each season.
- Maintain a positive attitude at all times in practices and games.
  - Ephesians 4:23 – "Be made new in the attitude of your minds."
  - Remember that a great effort is usually the result of a great attitude.
  - Talent is overvalued; character wins out.
- Give my best effort at all times.
  - Colossians 3:23 – "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord."
  - Give your best effort at all times regardless of the score.
  - Don't worry when we are down, and don't relax when we are up.
- Support and encourage my teammates.
  - 1 Thessalonians 5:11 – "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up."
- Never use any inappropriate language.
  - Ephesians 4:29 – "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth."
- Play without fear of failure or injury.
  - 2 Timothy 1:7 – "For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power."
- Never give up in any game.
  - 2 Timothy 4:7 – "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."
- Adhere to the academic requirements of the athletic program and individual teachers.
- Faithfully attend practices and games. Repeated absences will lead to limited playing time and/or missed games.
- Be punctual in arriving at practices and games out of respect for coaches and teammates.

## Coach's Responsibilities

Coaching is a privilege and a responsibility. Coaches at Bethlehem are expected to:

- Serve as a Christian example to all of our athletes, parents, and officials.
- Communicate, first with the Athletic Director and then, if needed, with the Principal any enforcement of rules and regulations.
- Communicate team expectations with the athletes and their parents at the beginning of the season. Each coach may schedule a parent meeting as they see fit.

- Assume responsibility for all students under their guidance. This includes being at practices and games before players arrive and until all players have left.
- Supervise practices and games by ensuring a safe environment for players at all times.
- Make every attempt to get every player in each game.
- Keep all discussions, disagreements, etc. within the coaching staff. Head coaches are responsible for assistants.
- Stress and exercise good sportsmanship.
- Make every effort to teach and reinforce fundamentals and teamwork. Educate yourself as necessary to gain the necessary knowledge to be an effective coach.
- Complete a practice schedule in collaboration with the Athletic Director. The schedule will be posted to the gym calendar in the school office and sent home with the athletes. Practices must end by 6:30 in the case of Advent and Lenten services and no longer than 2 hours in length. Practices must end by 8:00 PM. Generally try not to exceed three practices and games in any given week for "B" level sports and below.
- Keep equipment in its proper area and put all equipment away at the end of practice. Turn off all lights and make sure doors are locked if you are the last to leave the building.
- Return school/gym keys within two weeks of the last game to the Athletic Director, Principal or School Secretary.
- To have medical consent forms in their possession and school-provided Medi-kits at all practices and games.

## **Parent Responsibilities**

Our goal is for all of our athletes to have the most positive athletic experience possible. 1 Peter 3:8 says, "We should be of one mind. Be tenderhearted and keep a humble attitude." With this goal in mind we ask of all parents:

- Always encourage all players in a positive manner.
- Always support referees, officials, coaches, and players on Bethlehem or opposing teams, never using inappropriate language or attitudes.
- If a parent has a concern regarding any decision of the coach, he should adhere to the following chain of command: speak to the coach first. Give 24 hours when possible to allow cooler heads to prevail. If further conversation is needed, then move on to the Athletic Director, Principal, etc.
- Be supportive of the coach's philosophy and decisions in front of your child and/or other parents. Remember that they are volunteers.
- Parents will refrain from coaching their child during practices and games. Please allow coaches to coach at practices and games.
- Be respectful fans at home and away events. Demonstrate a Christian attitude at all times.
- Parents should encourage athletes to follow the rules of the program and to show respect to their coaches at all times.

In order to assist the athletes and the program, parents will:

- Help your child maintain his or her commitment to the team by ensuring he or she attends all contests.
- Model good time-management skills for the child by picking them up and dropping off on time for

games and practices.

- Attend athletic contests.
- Participate in carpooling with other parents. Do not rely on coaches for rides to away games.
- Provide volunteer efforts or pay the participation fee per the volunteer policy in this handbook.
- Athletic uniforms should be treated with great care. Please refrain from wearing them for leisure activities, or as Physical Education apparel. Uniforms should be turned in, to the athletic director, within a reasonable amount of time at the conclusion of a sports season. If a uniform is turned in and the uniform is in sub-par condition the parent(s) shall be financially responsible for that uniform.

## **Games/Practices/Scrimmages**

Most practices at Bethlehem will be held on weekdays after school hours. In some cases, however, practices or scrimmages may be held at other locations and on Saturdays. Schedules will be provided at the beginning of each season to the athletes. Practices will be limited to 2 hours and must end by 8:00 PM. As a general rule, teams will not exceed any combination of 3 practices and/or games for “B” level teams and below unless approved by the Athletic Director.

Practices cannot conflict with Advent or Lenten services and must end 1/2 hour before the services begin. Practices will not be held before school and on Sundays.

## **Tryouts**

Tryouts may be held for any sport at the discretion of the Athletic Director and the Coach. Generally this will be done to manage the number of athletes on a team. Students who try out for a team will be notified of making the team or being cut via a sealed envelope.

## **Regulations and Requirements for Student Participation**

### **Sports Physicals**

As per school policy, everyone in grades 3 – 8 that participates in league sports **must have** a physical form on file with the school. The physical is valid for up to one year from the date that it occurred. Bethlehem schedules a day with doctors on site to give families the opportunity to get this taken care of at the beginning of the school year. Each family also has the option of having it completed by their own family physician.

### **Required Forms**

In addition to the physical form listed above, the following forms must be submitted each year prior to participation on any athletic team. Each form is available on the website or in the school office.

1. Athletic Contract (includes volunteer policy)– signed by parent and student
2. Emergency Medical Treatment Consent Form
3. Concussion Form

## **Volunteer Requirements**

Each family will sign up for the required slots per the volunteer policy or pay the required participation fee before any student can compete in a game for that season.

## **School Attendance and Effect on Eligibility**

Any athlete that misses physical education class due to sickness or injury may not participate in practices or games that day. A student must be in school for at least 1/2 of a day to be eligible for that evening's practice or sporting event. There may be special circumstances in which a student may miss a majority of school in a given day. In those instances, please express your situation with the principal or athletic director and a fair decision will be made (e.g. special doctor/dental appointments or funerals). If a student is absent on Friday, he or she may participate in an event taking place the next day. Also, if a student repeatedly missed multiple days in a week, the Athletic Director or Principal can make that student ineligible for the game.

Students who are or will be absent, arrive late, or leave early from practice must notify the coaches in writing or by phone call. If students will miss a game they need to notify the coach prior to the missed game.

## **Attendance at Practices and Meetings**

Team members are expected to be present at all practices, team meetings, contests, and special occasions unless excused by the head coach.

## **Care of School Equipment**

The athlete is responsible for all equipment and uniforms issued to him/her. Lost, stolen, or damaged equipment will be paid for by the athlete or his parents before any grades are issued.

## **Medical Release to Participate after Consulting a Doctor**

If an athlete is seriously injured and consults a doctor, he/she must have a doctor's release before he/she can practice or compete in athletic contests.

## **Concussion Policy**

In accordance with Public Acts 342 and 343, any athlete suspected of having suffered a concussion will be removed from a practice or game immediately. The athlete may not return to practice or competition until a written clearance is obtained from a medical doctor.

## **Personal Conduct**

Your conduct, both in and out of the classroom, must demonstrate a consistent desire to live a Christian life. You are in a training environment as one who is learning to appropriately respond to and obey those who are in charge. Positive interaction with teachers, coaches, and parents whether on or off the floor/field, in or out of the classroom, traveling to and from contests, or any other place, is mandatory. You are representing Bethlehem Lutheran School. If you repeatedly demonstrate unreliable conduct or behavior, you will not be permitted to represent Bethlehem on the athletic floor or field.

## **Quitting a Team**

The normal rule for athletes quitting a team is that they are ineligible for any other sport during the season that has already begun. An athlete who goes out for a sport, but is “cut” would be eligible for another sport during that season. The Head Coach should notify the Athletic Director immediately when a player quits or is dropped from a team.

## **Team and Individual Discipline**

Each coach will have discipline rules for minor infractions, such as inattention to directions, horseplay, tardiness to practice, etc.

## **Academic Requirements**

If a student is failing a subject, he/she will lose eligibility until a passing grade average is achieved. The student’s teacher will track their record after informing the Athletic Director, coach(es), and parent(s). Poor or below average grades, which demonstrate lack of effort, will also cause you to lose your eligibility. Grades do not have to be failing, but if students are not working up to their ability level, they may lose their eligibility.

## **Length of Eligibility**

Ineligibility will, under normal circumstances, be one week in length. Serious or repeated violations of the above may result in permanent removal from the team. The one week ineligibility will be in effect the week following (Sunday through Saturday) notifications being forwarded to the appropriate parties. Missed practices for the above or unexcused may cause coaches to limit playing time in upcoming contest(s). If a student is ineligible, they may not suit up for a contest but may at the coach’s discretion be required to sit on bench in street clothes.

## **Notification**

An ineligibility notification form will be sent to parents giving the dates and reason for the ineligibility. The form is to be signed and returned to the child’s teacher the following day.

## **Athletic Contests**

### **Spectator Decorum**

Athletic contests are full of emotions, excitement, and competition. We are here to support, encourage, and praise the athletes. We ask that everyone set a positive example by controlling their emotions in dealing with referees, players, fans, etc. Players, coaches and referees will all make mistakes because we live in an imperfect world. Expressing negative or complaining comments only detracts from allowing the children to enjoy their experiences. Please focus on giving positive vocal support to players, referees, coaches, and other fans. We ask that everyone relate respectfully our Christian love with one another regardless of the outcome of an athletic contest.

### **Rules of Order**

Students are to remain in the building at all times until games are completed.

Please stay off the playing surface as much as possible during, and after games.

Locker rooms are for players and team officials only.

Please do not loiter in the concession stand area or anywhere away from the gym. Return promptly to watch the game.

Parents with players should stay after and help if possible after games for clean-up.

## **Other Items**

### **First Aid Administration**

In the case of an emergency, Bethlehem supports anyone who is willing to administer first aid to an individual. The coaches are knowledgeable of Bethlehem's first aid procedure. In the case of a medical emergency the principal and/or athletic director should be notified in a speedy manner, and an accident form shall be filled out. Each coach will be provided a Medi-kit to have on hand at all games.

### **Inclement Weather**

If there is an unexpected home team school closing, all games and practices are cancelled for that evening. Games will be rescheduled with the other school, if possible.

### **Transportation**

Transportation to and from athletic contests and practices is the parents' responsibility. If parents are unable to drive, student-athletes are encouraged to carpool with parents of teammates.

### **Latchkey**

If a practice is not held immediately after school, students are not allowed to stay in the school building or grounds unsupervised. Coaches are not responsible for the students before and after practices and games. Therefore, all athletes must go to Latchkey or leave the premises before practices and games. The only exception is if the coach is at the school and has agreed to monitor the students after school.

## **Social Media Guidelines**

Representing Bethlehem Lutheran School and its athletic department is an honor and a privilege provided to a select group of individuals. This privilege includes being held to a high standard in how you represent Bethlehem in the public forum. Through social media, you are now being monitored by many who are part of the Bethlehem family, but also others from schools of opposing teams and the general public.

Please consider what you post on social media sites and make sure you are providing a Christian example and a positive image of Bethlehem. Social media can be a great way to interact with friends, fans, and the public as well as to promote the athletic program. Used irresponsibly, it can be a quick way to destroy your reputation and that of the school. Inappropriate posts may result in consequences that affect the athlete's playing time or eligibility on the team.

Bethlehem has a Facebook page for news and results of athletics contests. This is intended as a method of promoting our teams and athletic program. Please use discretion when adding comments and other content on this site.

## **Athletic Program Administration**

The Athletic Director and members of the Athletics Advisory Board administer the Bethlehem Lutheran athletic program. The Athletic Director and Advisory Board report to the Principal and the Board of Day School Education. Bethlehem Lutheran School teams are nicknamed the "Chargers". The school colors are red and white.

## Interscholastic Competition and Organization

Bethlehem is a member of the Tri-County Lutheran League that is made up of 16 Lutheran Schools in five counties in Mid-Michigan in four divisions:

### Blue Division

Faith, Bay City  
St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth  
Peace, Saginaw  
Holy Cross, Saginaw

### White Division

Christ the King, Sebawaing  
St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth  
St. Michael, Richville  
St. Paul, Millington

### Red Division

St. Paul, Saginaw  
Immanuel, Bay City  
Bethlehem, Saginaw  
St. Peter, Hemlock

### Gold Division

Immanuel, Frankentrost  
St. Paul, Lapeer  
St. Paul, Flint  
Trinity, Reese

## Sports Offered

Bethlehem Lutheran School offers the following sports:

<u>Sport</u>	<u>Grades</u>	<u>Season</u>
Boys' Soccer	5-8 (4, girls)	September - October
Girls' "A" Volleyball	7-8 (6)	September – October
Girls' "B" Volleyball	6-7 (4-5)	September – October
Girls' "B" Basketball	6-7 (5)	November – December
Boys' "B" Basketball	6-7 (5)	November – December
Girls' "A" Basketball	7-8 (6)	January – February
Boys' "A" Basketball	7-8 (6)	January – February
Girls' "C" Basketball	4-5 (3)	January – March
Boys' "C" Basketball	4-5 (3)	January – March
Girls' Soccer	6-8	One-Day Tourney (April)
Boys' Volleyball	6-8	One-Day Tourney (April)
Boys' and Girls' Track	4-8	April - June

\*grades/genders in parentheses are as necessary.

The Athletic Director reserves the right to determine whether adequate numbers of athletes and coaches are available to offer a sport in any given year. The athletic director, coaches and parents may agree to allow a player to move up a level when need or ability justifies the promotion.

**DIRECTIONS TO REESE HIGH SCHOOL**

1696 S. Van Buren Rd., Reese, MI 48757

Take I-675 south, merge onto I-75 north (toward Mackinac Bridge), take the M-81 exit (151) toward Reese/Caro. Turn right onto M-81 (E. Washington Rd.) continue for 10.5 miles through town. Turn left onto S. Van Buren Rd., Reese High School is just north of the railroad tracks.

**DIRECTIONS TO TRINITY, REESE**

9858 North St., Reese, MI 48757

Take State St. South to I-675 South. Take I-675 South to I-75 North. Go about a mile to M-81 East. Take M-81 East about 20 minutes to Reese. As you go through Reese, watch for a white church on the left. At the church, turn left onto Rhodes St. (you cannot turn right). Trinity will be a block down on the right. If you cross the railroad tracks, you have gone too far.

**DIRECTIONS TO ST. MICHAEL'S, RICHVILLE**

9444 W. Saginaw, Richville, MI 48757

Take M-46 East past Frankentrost and past M-83 (Gera Rd.). Stay on M-46 until you reach Richville (M-16 and M-15 will intersect). At the 4-way intersection, take a sharp left. The school will be on your right a block down. (As you enter Richville, you will pass the church. The school is the next road over.)

**DIRECTIONS TO HOLY CROSS, SAGINAW**

610 Court St., Saginaw, MI 48602

Take Bay Rd. South to Court St. Turn left onto Court St. Take Court St. to N. Fayette (one block North of Michigan). Turn left onto N Fayette. The school is right on the corner.

**DIRECTIONS TO PEACE, SAGINAW**

3161 Lawndale, Saginaw, MI 48603

Take Shattuck Rd. West to Hospital Rd. and turn right (North). The school will be on your left just after you turn onto Lawndale.

All soccer games will be played at Peace Lutheran School

**DIRECTIONS TO ST. PAUL, SAGINAW**

2745 W. Genesee, Saginaw, MI 48602

Take State St. East to Bay Rd. Turn right on Bay. Go about one block to Genesee and turn right. St. Paul is one block down Genesee on your left.

**Soccer games** are played at the Saginaw Township soccer complex across from Valley Lutheran High School (directions below)

**DIRECTIONS TO VALLEY LUTHERAN H.S.**

3560 McCarty Rd., Saginaw, MI 48603

Valley Lutheran High School is Between Bay Rd. and Mackinaw Rd. on McCarty Rd..

**DIRECTIONS TO CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN SCHOOL**

612 E. Bay Street, Sebawaing, MI 48759

Go North on I-65, merge onto I-75 North (US-23 North) toward Bay City. Take the M-25 East exit (162A) toward downtown Bay City, merge onto M-25 E, go east for 2.9 miles (you will go over the bridge), turn onto M-25 (N. Madison Ave.), turn right onto M-25 (Center Ave.) continue to follow M-25 for 27.8 miles. Turn right onto E. Bay St. (Estimated travel time – 1 hour)

