



Athletics Handbook

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ATHLETICS AT THE SAN FRANCISCO SCHOOL

Athletic Mission Statement and Principles

The San Francisco School (SFS) is proud to offer competitive athletic opportunities for our students to develop lifelong skills, physical fitness and wellness, community, personal growth, and sportsmanship. The Athletics program enhances and complements the overall San Francisco School community by providing student athletes with positive learning experiences through challenges of athletic discipline and responsibility.

The success of our Athletics program is based on the student athlete experience and how the Athletics program contributes to each child's development. Through guiding principles of **commitment, character, community, and leadership**, the Athletics program seeks to develop the student athlete physically, mentally, and socially to prepare them for their next stages in life.

Sportsmanship Statement

Through all facets of athletic participation, we ask coaches, student athletes, parents and all spectators to practice our school's community guidelines, specifically - Be Respectful.

- Demonstrate Respect for Opponents
- Demonstrate Respect for Officials
- Demonstrate Respect for Teammates and Coaches
- Demonstrate Respect for the Game

San Francisco Athletic League (SFAL) - Parental and Fan Code of Conduct

- Realizing that athletics are part of the educational experience and the benefits of involvement go beyond the final score of a game
- Encouraging our students to perform their best just as we would urge them on with schoolwork knowing that others will always turn in better or lesser performances
- Participating in positive cheers that encourage our students; and discouraging any cheers that would redirect that focus – including those that taunt and intimidate opponents their fans and officials
- Leaning, understanding and respecting the rules of the game, the officials who administer them and their decisions
- Respecting the task of our coaches face as teachers; and supporting them as they strive to educate our youth
- Respecting our opponents as fellow students, and acknowledging them for striving to do their best

- Developing a sense of dignity under all circumstances
- Be a fan...not a fanatic

This Handbook will provide further information on our program operations, our policies, and our guiding principles. We are extremely proud of our Athletics program; the student athletes who represent our school, the coaches who provide education and inspiration, and the SFS community of supporters who help us achieve our goals.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS PROGRAM

Athletic Offerings

SFS currently offers four interscholastic sports over the course of 3 seasons. Each season lasts approximately 11 weeks in duration.

FALL SEASON (September – November)

Cross Country (Co-ed)
Volleyball (Co-ed)

WINTER SEASON (November - February)

Boys Basketball
Girls Basketball

SPRING SEASON (February - May)

Boys Futsal
Girls Futsal

League Membership

SFS competes primarily in The San Francisco Athletic League (SFAL)*, which is comprised of the following schools:

Children's Day School (CDS)	Live Oak
Chinese American International School (CAIS)	Lycee Francais de San Francisco
Katherine Delmar Burke's School (KDBS)	Presidio Hill School (PHS)
Kittredge	SF Friends (SFFS)
KIPP San Francisco	SF Christian
	Synergy School

**Please note: most of these schools do not have an onsite gymnasium. Therefore, athletic competitions will most likely take place at offsite facilities.*

In addition, we may also participate in the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) Athletic Leagues or the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco (JCCSF) Basketball League.

Team Rosters

As an environment that fosters and promotes physical fitness and wellness, SFS encourages all students to participate in interscholastic sports. All middle school students are eligible to play interscholastic sports (about 80% of 6th-8th graders participate in at least 1 sport).

SFS practices a 'no-cut' policy. Prior to each sport season, a Letter of Interest (LOI) will be provided to all students. The LOI serves as a sign up to participate on a team and the family's initial commitment. At times, there will be an assessment period to determine which level is best suited for individual success. Most of our teams are split up by grade level or are a combination of grade level, pending roster numbers. All of our teams foster a developmentally appropriate approach and balances both participatory and competitive experiences.

Season Commitment

Each student athlete plays a pivotal role on his or her respective teams. With this role, the student athlete commits to the team experience, personal development, physical conditioning, sportsmanship, friendships, and the overall spirit of the game.

As we are educating life lessons of commitment, accountability, and responsibility, we stress regular attendance at practices and games (11 week season - approximately 1 full practice per week and half of the game season). We understand schedules can be conflicting. It is our goal to partner with our student athletes and families to assure healthy experiences.

Student athletes with academic, attendance or behavior problems that become chronic will find their athletic eligibility subject to review. Student athletes who are suspended from school may not participate in practices and games during their suspension period. In addition, student athletes may not participate in practices or games if they have not arrived at school by 10 a.m. and/or if they miss more than half of their classes. We will make considerations for High School visits and testing, for celebration of religious holidays, and for medical appointments (also adhering to the guidelines of Injuries/Safety/Health section).

Junior Varsity and Varsity Levels - Playing Time

Our teams are generally divided into 2 levels "Junior Varsity" and "Varsity". If our teams participate in Leagues outside of the SFAL, there may be League guidelines with regards to playing time.

The Athletics Director, along with the Middle School Head and the participating teams, will decide what level is most appropriate for each team.

Our SFS Athletics philosophies focus on skills and fundamental development. We understand the spirit and learning pieces of competition, however, our priority is our participants' growth as young adults and as players of the game. Below is an outline of what we feel is developmentally appropriate for each division.

Junior Varsity (JV) division is competition against other 5th (some schools consider 5th as Middle School) 6th, and 7th grade teams (or combination). This division is generally for our younger grade levels. At this level, our guiding philosophy is to strive for equal playing time. Coaches are not mandated to account for the precise time played, but are encouraged to provide equal opportunity for each student athlete.

Varsity division is our highest level and is generally against other 8th grade and 7th grade teams. Playing time will be based on the coaches' discretion with guidance from the Athletics Director. We will account for work ethic, positive attitude, commitment and attendance to practices/games, and skill level. We value every student athlete's participation and we feel the above criteria are developmentally appropriate.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Practice & Game Schedules

The creation of team practice schedules is a collaborative process. For Winter and Spring seasons, we factor in each student athlete's personal schedule, coaches' availability, and facility calendar. Fall practices dates are generally predetermined. Student athletes will be asked to note conflicts via our LOI registration. We then try to tally the best availability based on the majority of that potential team. This combined with potential coaches' schedules and our facility availability leads to the creation of our teams' practice schedules.

Each team has two practices per week (weekdays only). Practices are an hour and 30 minutes and start at 3:30pm or 4:30pm. There is no practice on school holidays. At times, our coaches will hold special training sessions on Teacher Workshop or Conference holidays. Appropriate athletic attire is required for practices.

Game Schedules are created with the SFAL member schools. The minimum regular game season is six games. Pending each team's record, there could be an opportunity to participate in Playoffs (single elimination). Game schedules will be available on our school website. It is posted approximately 1-2 weeks after the start of the season. Playoff weeks and Finals dates are determined in the previous school year by the SFAL.

Uniform & Equipment

The school will provide uniforms and team equipment. All student athletes will be issued their respective sports' uniform prior to the first scheduled competition. We expect all student athletes to take pride in and responsibility for their uniform and how they represent the school. Uniforms and team equipment are property of the School and the following rules are mandated:

- Return the uniform/equipment clean and in good condition (way it was received)
- Return the uniform/equipment within one week of the last competition

Student athletes who have damaged or misplaced their uniforms may be subject to consequence such as replacing the uniform.

Sports uniforms (black shorts) and player equipment* (knee pads and shin guards) are required to participate in competition. If the student athlete fails to prepare for competition (does not wear uniform or bring proper equipment), he or she may not be allowed to participate.

**Student athletes are expected to provide their own player equipment. Any student athlete that is financially unable to purchase player equipment should contact the Athletic Director.*

SFS will not allow financial circumstance to prohibit any student athlete from participation.

Travel & Early Dismissal

For offsite games, families will need to provide their own transportation. We understand that not all parents can make accommodations due to their work schedules therefore we rely heavily on our community of parents for carpool assistance and coordination.

Coaches are NOT allowed to transport the players. Coaches are instructed to wait with players until they have transportation.

Please make your best efforts to assure transportation to and from games well in advance. We ask that families arrive to offsite location approximately 20 minutes prior to the start time.

Early dismissal from the school day may be granted on occasion. Most of these incidents may occur during Playoffs and/or Finals. Student athletes are responsible for any work due or missed. Notice will be provided to the teachers, however, the student athletes should also check in.

Injuries, Safety & Health

It is inherent that with participation in sport, we may likely face some sort of injury. Given that the 6th – 8th grade student body goes through various physical changes, this may mean they are more susceptible whether it is in their everyday or in an actual sport. Injuries can vary and only the student athlete can explain their level of pain. This is a great exercise for the student athlete as they try understanding and articulating their own body.

We trust what our student athletes tell us about their injuries. We will ask questions to learn more about what they're feeling. We will also inquire their input on what they can do or may be limited to with practice and/or games.

If by chance there is any medical condition or limitation from a physician, we ask that this be communicated immediately to the Athletic Director and/or Coach. If there is a restriction by a physician, then we also require documented clearance before participation begins again. Our goal is to partner with the family and physician for a healthy recovery.

Please note, our Coaches will show their best discretion as it pertains to an injury during a game or practice. They have been guided to err on the conservative side of caution. If the family should feel differently, then we will set up a discussion to do what is in the best interest of the student athlete.

As mentioned in our Season Commitment section, student athletes may not participate in

practices or games if they have not arrived at school by 10 a.m. and/or if they miss more than half of their classes. Therefore, if the student athlete is sick and contagious, then we ask the student athlete to return when they are able to participate.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

With teamwork, our Athletics program builds a sense of community. Student athletes unite with their peers and provide inspiration through their collaborative spirit and sportsmanship. The support from our community of the student body, faculty, administrators, and parents/guardians is the foundation of our Athletic teams' successes. Through communication, assistance, and understanding, we are able to come together and assure our student athletes are in a positive position to achieve their goals.

Communication

Communication between players, athletic staff and parents is imperative to build our community and maintain organization in our Athletics program. Announcements, changes, and cancellations will be communicated to the appropriate parties as soon as possible. As we work with other schools and programs to schedule games and practices, we anticipate changes could or will occur. Weather conditions will also play a part in possible changes and updates. Although we prefer changes to not occur in scheduling, we hope parents are supportive and understand the operational aspects.

Communication vehicles:

- Email blasts
- Informing student athletes during the school day
- School website – Athletics page and Calendar

Conflict Resolution

Despite our efforts to communicate and promote our athletics philosophy, conflicts may arise, as we are all passionate as a community. Whether it be amongst players, parents, or coaches we hope to proceed to resolution with respect and professionalism.

By participating on sports teams, athletes hone their communication skills as they work toward achieving their goals. In the same breath, we encourage players to constructively communicate any issues or concerns to their teammates and/or coaches so they can better their problem- solving skills through effective communication. We also encourage parents to have their child raise their concerns themselves and take ownership in the resolution.

If by chance the parent feels compelled to engage, they should respectfully and professionally communicate their concerns with the coach and follow the appropriate chain of authority in communication – Players/Parents > Coaches > Athletics Director > Middle School Head > Head of School. The Head of School (or in his absence the Acting Head of School) has final authority. We are all here to support our students.

We advise parents, players, and coaches to allow the emotions to settle for a day and then assess the appropriate specifics to discuss. Through open and honest communication, we hope to acknowledge that conflicts are teaching points for our student athletes, parents, and staff – these are all life lessons toward growth and we are all learning from each other.

Athletics Staff

The goals of our coaching staff are to provide positive, constructive, and memorable experiences for our teams and student athletes. Our coaches are outside contractors/volunteers, faculty/staff members, and/or parents. In addition, we may also have coaches-in-training (CIT) to assist with our teams. All coaches (parent volunteers included) are directly supervised by the Athletics Director.

Coaches are directed to value every player and work towards providing positive experiences. We encourage coaches to be direct with their expectations and provide encouraging communication. Coaches have autonomy over decisions related to team positions, strategies and tactics.

With regards to playing time, coaches will use their best discretion. Coaches have been coached on our Athletics philosophies as depicted in our Junior Varsity and Varsity Levels section (see page 5).

A coach's role is essential in the overall student athlete and team experience therefore we appreciate the personal investment and sacrifice of their daily lives to create these rewarding experiences.

Parents' Role

The parents in our community play an integral part in our SFS Athletics experience. We appreciate the support and encouragement that you provide to your child and all of our SFS athletes.

We also understand parents can be engrained in their passion not only for their child and for that of the game. Parents behaving as model spectators produce a positive environment for all children. Parents who harass officials, make comments regarding the judgment decisions of coaches or coach from the stands are counterproductive to the values of good sportsmanship and negatively impacting the game environment. Based on our SFAL rules, the Athletic Director or site manager reserves the right to remove such parents or spectators from school contests.

Youth sports competition can be a vehicle to many positive life lessons. There are values on both sides of winning and losing. We hope to partner with parents to help drive the goal of developing life-long athletes. Through meaningful conversations with our student

athletes we can help foster deeper impact in their relationships with the sport, with their teammates, with their coaches, and with you.

- Be the model of character and integrity
- Express joy in their efforts
- Listen and let them do all the talking

STUDENT-ATHLETE/PARENT AGREEMENT

Agreement must be signed and returned to Athletics Director prior to participation.

We have carefully read and discussed the SFS Athletics Handbook. We understand the mission and fully support SFS Athletics program.

Student athlete's name: (please print)

Grade:

Student Athlete Signature:

Date:

Parent(s) name: (please print)

Parent(s) Signature: Date:
