

St. Stephen Athletic Program *Commitment Letter*

The following commitment letter needs to be agreed to and signed by the student athlete, parent(s), and coach(es) in order for the student athlete to participate in the St. Stephen Athletic Program.

General things to be aware of...

1. Team roster and playing time are decided by a combination of team need, skill level, practice performance, attitude, team versus self-orientation, and effort. These decisions are at the sole discretion of the coaches.

This applies to all playing levels. If a player is unknowing or unresponsive at practice, the player (and the player's parents) should not expect that he or she play in games.

2. The goal of the St. Stephen Athletic Program is to learn, have fun, and win games – in that order.
3. The overriding rule for behavior is simple. Any player whose conduct is detrimental to the welfare of the St. Stephen Athletic Program will be disciplined.
4. Practices will be conducted in a “safety first” environment.
5. Players get credit for the wins. Coaches take all the losses.

For everyone involved...

6. Players, coaches, and parents will use grammatically correct English, plain, to the point, free of euphemism, jargon, slang innuendo, etc.
7. Players, coaches, and parents will all communicate directly with each other.

For the players...

8. Players (or their parents) will directly contact coaches when they cannot attend a practice or a game. This is common courtesy, and in this program, it is required.
9. Excused absences occur when a player or a parent speak directly to a coach and get an agreement for the excused absence from a practice or a game.
10. An unexcused absence occurs when no direct contact is made by a player or a parent. **Telling another player to tell a coach of your absence is not direct contact and is considered an unexcused absence.** The consequences of an unexcused absence will be determined by the coach.

11. Players will be excused from practice for major projects or homework provided that 1) the time is spent studying, and 2) the privilege is not abused. (NOTE: The coaches reserve the right to find out if this is indeed the case.)
12. Players must understand that **the first part of being a student athlete is being a student**. If a player is having difficulty with his or her academics, he or she should inform his or her parents or a coach so that possible help can be found. If a player becomes ineligible, his or her skills are of no value to the team on game day because he or she cannot play.
13. Players and parents agree that St. Stephen sports take precedence over club sports.
14. Players agree to work their hardest at all times and to accept and implement instruction **immediately**.
15. Players will be given an opportunity to correct their mistakes, but **failure** to do so will result in a teammate getting a chance to play in his or her position. Our goal is to have our players play aggressively and make the occasional mistake. Our attitude toward mistakes is as follows:

recognize it, admit it, learn from it, and forget it

Coaches and players are both asked to subscribe to this theory regarding mistakes.

For the parents...

16. Parents agree to make sure their children know they love them, appreciate them, and are not disappointed with them, win or lose.
17. Parents agree to try to be completely honest about their children's athletic capability, their competitive attitude, and their sportsmanship.
18. Parents agree to be helpful but not "coach" their children before, during, and after games.
19. Parents will help their children understand that winning is important, but competing with your best effort is **most** important.
20. Parents agree not to try to live their athletic life through their children.
21. Parents agree not to coach from the stands. There is only one voice their children need to listen to during a St. Stephen athletic competition, and that is their coach's voice.

22. Parents agree not to compare the skill, courage, or attitude of their child with that of other members of the team.
23. As St. Stephen is a smaller school, parents agree to volunteer with concessions and/or tickets, at the scorer's table for home games. More hands make for less work.

For the coaches...

24. Our coaches will teach, not yell at, players. The coach's goal is a 5 to 1 ratio of praise vs. criticism. (NOTE: This is much easier for them to do if players accept and implement instruction immediately, as listed previously in #15.)
25. Coaches may question effort and attitude but **never** character or heart.
26. Coaches will be available to discuss a player's performance and areas that may need improvement. Only the child of the parents requesting the meeting will be discussed. This conversation with parents may take place by phone or in a pre-arranged meeting. **Coaches are not available to discuss these issues immediately before or after games.**
27. Coaches will do their best to end practice on time, every time.

St. Stephen Athletic Program Goals

- Live a life to God, both at and away from the court or playing field.
- Utilize and improve the talents and abilities with which the Lord has blessed us.
- Play, coach, and cheer with good sportsmanship at all times no matter what the circumstance, as we are representatives of our team, our school, and most importantly, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- Improve both our team and individual players at every practice and every drill.

I have read and agree to the St. Stephen Athletic Program Commitment letter.

Player _____ Date _____

Parent _____ Date _____

Coach _____ Date _____