

**Our Lady of Grace**

**Athletics Handbook**

**2014/2015 School Year**

**Our Lady of Grace School**

**3025 Highway Ave**

**Highland, IN 46322**

**www.olgraceschool.org**

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**\* - Denotes excerpts in this handbook were directly taken from CYO policies.**

**Catholic Youth Organization – Purpose \***

**The Northwest Indiana CYO** is committed to providing a ministry that helps bring youth to their full human potential. The CYO enables youth to reach for higher achievement by having requirements demanding specific grades in order to be able to participate and maintain eligibility in CYO programs. The CYO provides opportunities for young people to **develop strong moral character**, **self-esteem** and **leadership qualities** through activities of a social, educational, recreational and athletic nature.\* The athletic program at OLG is built upon sportsmanship, cooperation, fair play and Christian morals. Our Student-Athletes will display sportsmanship over showmanship, they will be courteous in the face of adversity, and they will be respectful of all members of the opposing teams and their fans. OLG will not participate in an MVP program in any way, shape or form. It is acknowledged that certain individuals may possess a higher athletic ability than others, but they will also learn it’s their responsibility to share that knowledge and skill with all members of the team in order to truly act as a cohesive unit.

**Athletics – Mission Statement**

The Athletic Program at Our Lady of Grace School teaches and strongly encourages Christian values as it promotes healthy activity, physical development, athletic skill, team camaraderie, good sportsmanship and school spirit.

**Athletic Board - Purpose**

The Athletic Committee is continually working in partnership with the CYO to manage the sports program at Our Lady of Grace School.

The Athletic Committee is made up of 7 individuals and is headed by the Athletic Director. Other positions include Treasurer, Secretary, Equipment Manager, Gym Scheduler, CCD/ Recruitment Director, Fundraising Manager and At-Large positions. The number of members may adjusted based on need as the board sees fit.

Potential new members to the board are selected by vote of the current board after they are nominated by an active member and their addition to the board is immediate after a positive vote. If a new member is replacing an active current member then they shall be considered a non-voting member until the person they’re relieving steps down.

Upon graduation of a member’s youngest child from OLG or the otherwise departure of the same child from OLG, the member’s position on the board would terminate at the end of the school year.

Upon becoming members of the athletic board, individuals are required to sign a participation agreement. This agreement is a reflection of the commitment of the individual member to the students of Our Lady of Grace School. It states clearly that all members will actively participate in fund raising activities and events in the advancement of the OLG athletics program. Failure to agree to this form could mean immediate dismissal from the committee. If after the agreement is signed, a member does not abide by their commitment, then they may be removed from the board by the Athletic Director *after* consultation with the full board.

**Athletic Committee Members**

**2014-2015**

 **Members Specific Responsibilities**

Joe Garcia Athletic Director

Georgina Suarez Treasurer

Kelly Bradkte Equipment Coordinator

Jim Wedryk Scheduling Coordinator

Lisa Hays Fundraising Coord/Secretary

Ken Peters CCD Liason

Jackie Mitchell At-Large Member

**Student Eligibility**

All students in grades 5-8 are invited to participate in athletics. (Fourth graders are routinely admitted to join cross country and may participate in the Bishop Noll and Andrean Invites but are ineligible to participate in the Diocesan Meet.)

Athletics is an extracurricular activity. The ability to participate in athletics is contingent on the grades a student earns in class. A poor class standing may render the student-athlete ineligible until grades improve. In order to be eligible for athletics a student-athlete must maintain a “C” average with only one “D” and not have any “F’s” on progress reports or report cards in the following subjects – religion, reading, language arts, spelling, math, social studies, science, music, health and physical education. Students who do not maintain a “C” average but do not have any “F’s” will be placed on probation. They may participate in one practice a week and are still eligible to participate in games while on probation. The student will be re-evaluated within 3 weeks, if the grades aren’t brought up to a “C” average (more than 1 “D”), then the student is removed from the team until the next grading period or progress report (whichever comes first). ***EXCEPTION***: If the student receives an “F” in any subject, with or without any “D’s”, they are ineligible, meaning, they may not participate in games or practices for a minimum of two (2) weeks. After two weeks the students grades will be re-evaluated, if improvement is made the student may be reinstated to the team with the teacher’s approval. **Please Note:** **It’s the students and the parents’ responsibility to trigger the re-evaluation after two (2) weeks, not the teachers, coaches or AD.** Coaches are encouraged to limit practice times before major tests in order to give all students time to study. Parents are also strongly encouraged to check out their student’s grades online frequently to avoid any possible probation or ineligibility. At the time a student is placed on probation or deemed ineligible, the parents will receive a sports slip letting them know what their child is deficient in. This form will require a parent’s signature and return to the school the next school day. Re-evaluations are done through Fast Direct mail between the parent, teacher and Principal.

Special needs students will be monitored by the principal. The principal reserves the right to deviate from the above eligibility policy in the case of students whose curriculum has been modified due to a learning disability or inability to achieve at the levels stated in the policy.

**Christian Conduct**

Christian principles of conduct are the overriding and primary criteria for athletic eligibility. All student athletes have a responsibility to represent Our Lady of Grace School in a Christian manner at all times. Student athletes who display behavior, whether in school or out of school, that is deemed inappropriate by school officials will be immediately suspended from the team and will not be permitted to attend practice sessions or games until a review by the school administration has been completed. Students suspended for conduct unbecoming a Christian may or may not be reinstated on the team.

**Coaches**

There are many individuals who are necessary to make the athletic program function. One of the most important of those individuals is the coaches. Our coaching staff is a purely voluntary group of individuals who are taking time out of their day to help the children of OLG meet their full potential. Our coaches are often parents or alumni or parents of alumni who enjoy teaching and mentoring our youth. They spend countless hours making up line-ups, gathering paperwork, setting up and conducting practices and drills, handling uniforms, teaching sportsmanship and fielding all types of questions from parents and players alike. It is not an easy job, but in the end it’s very rewarding to see players develop though the years. Our coaches are dedicated individuals who receive mandatory Virtus and Play Like a Champion training from the Diocese of Gary and CYO respectively. OLG also requires all coaches to attend a mandatory training session each year to refresh up on policies and procedures. This training also allows our coaches to share best practices with each other in order to make our athletic program more robust.

Role of the CYO Coach\*

Youth, with their inherent drive for activity and action and their quest for excitement and competition, find great satisfaction in sports. They look up to their coach and in many cases try to emulate him/her. Therefore the CYO coach must recognize that he/she has the power to build either future citizens who possess traits that are desirable and acceptable to society, or citizens who have a false conception as to what is right and proper.

The success of the OLG athletic program rests on the hard work of our parent volunteers, those who volunteer their time on the committee, but more importantly, the coaches who spend countless hours with the student-athletes at practice and in competition. In March of 1975, Bishop Grutka wrote, “*In the arena of sports, youth are sensitively and alertly receptive to the demonstrations of excellence and motivations leading to excellence. By your (CYO Coaches) Christian example and expert guidance, you are more than just a coach….you exercise the royal priesthood of the laity.”\**

Responsibilities of the CYO Coach

* Always concern yourself with the safety and welfare of the members on your team.\*
* Set an example of good sportsmanship and conduct yourself with integrity and dignity.\*
* Never make demand of a participant or team that would interfere with their academic success.\*
* Always check the eligibility of every participant on your team so as not to jeopardize the individual, the team or the school.\*
* Control not only your team, but also your parents and your fans.\*
* Always uphold and respect the decisions of the CYO league, the school and the CYO and its policies, rules and regulations.\*
* Always respect the referees and game officials and be sure that your team does the same.\*
* Make sure that all required forms are filled out completely and properly and turned into the AD/CYO office on time, this includes registrations/physicals and Code of Conduct forms.\*
* Check with the CYO officials and/or Gym Supervisor, when there is doubt on any matter.\*
* Returning coaches are responsible for forming their teams based on the previous year’s roster provided by the AD. This includes contacting players during registration periods.
* All coaches are responsible to schedule practices through the gym scheduler and abide by the rules set forth by the scheduler in terms of gym selection.
* Abide by the CYO’s Mandatory Playing Policy.
* Coaches must be “Virtus” and “Play Like a Champion” trained, they must also have an up-to-date coaches form on file with the AD and CYO office signed by both the School Principal and the Parish Priest. This form is the responsibility of the individual coach to take care of.
* Every year all coaches must attend a brief coaches meeting as established by the athletic board to cover all policies and rules.
* **Our Lady of Grace is not a “Win at all costs” school**. Coaches must understand this statement.

While our coaches receive all types of training, they are capable of making mistakes just like everyone else. Coaches may get tied up in the game and inadvertently forget to make a timely substitution, or they may not properly communicate a schedule change or event or have some paperwork wrong. When situations like this occur, the coaches are encouraged to communicate to individuals and do their best to prevent the situation to reoccur. Often time’s coaches have reasons for the moves they make during a game. Parents are strongly encouraged to discuss issues directly with the coach, preferably a day after the game or practice. Win or lose, times immediately following a game are the most emotional for players, coaches and parents, any discussion concerning playing time or game strategy, etc. should be held off until a later date. Parents and coaches don’t necessarily have to agree, it’s this reason that more parents are strongly encouraged to help coach whether as a head coach or assistant coach.

**Coaches Pool –**

OLG will attempt to maintain a coach’s pool which consists of individuals who have met the entire training requirement but have not been assigned a team. These coaches are welcome to work with teams at practice at the request of the head coach, but they are not allowed to be on the team’s sidelines during competitions if a team already has three CYO rostered coaches. In the event a rostered coach cannot complete their duties as coach of a team, a new coach will be selected from the pool for the remainder of the season. The pool can consist of any parent, alumni, parishioner or former coach, as long as they are CYO trained. Anyone wishing to join this pool is encouraged to contact an Athletic Board member.

**Parent Responsibilities**

Parents will be a positive role model by exhibiting sportsman-like behavior at games and practice.

Parents will take an active role in their child’s youth sports experience by providing encouragement, positive criticism and transportation to games and practices.

Parents will have all necessary documents (Physical, Code of Conduct, Handbook Receipt and fee’s) properly filled in and submitted on time.

Each sports season, parents must read, sign and support the Code of Conduct before their child may participate in any practices or contests.

**Physicals**

All students who are planning on participating in OLG athletics must have a completed physical turned into the AD prior to the first practice. This is not negotiable or up for debate. If a physical is not on file with the AD prior to practice, the student is not considered a member of the team and may not participate in physical activity. The head coach must verify with the AD on the required paperwork prior to the first practice being scheduled and must adhere to this rule. Physical forms will be available at the school office or can be downloaded from the CYO website at [www.nwicyo.org](http://www.nwicyo.org) or from the Links section on Fast Direct. OLG will only accept Gary Diocesan CYO registration/physical forms. IHSAA, Camp Lawrence and IHSA forms will no longer be accepted as of the 2014-15 school year.

**Code of Conduct Forms**

All student-athletes and their parents must sign a Code of Conduct (C of C) form. The C of C details the expected guidelines by which our coaches, athletes and parents must abide by in the spirit of our Christian teachings and our everyday expectation of one another. As stated in the Code of Conduct, “Criticism and disrespect for players, officials and opponents by over-anxious adults, over-protective parents or disrespectful children, more concerned with immediate success than long term benefits, undermine the purpose of the Catholic Youth Organization program.” Coaches, parents and student-athletes must understand that coaching or playing a sport for OLG is a privilege, and their demeanor in the field of play is a direct reflection of themselves and Our Lady of Grace School and Parish. The Code of Conduct form must be turned into the coach signed by the student-athlete and a parent at the first practice. Coaches are strongly encouraged to not allow a student to participate until this form has been turned in. These forms are located in the school office and can be downloaded from the CYO website at [www.nwicyo.org](http://www.nwicyo.org) or from the Links section of Fast Direct.

**Costs**

The cost to play sports at OLG is determined by the Athletic Committee. There are several factors which determine the cost, including, but not limited to: the CYO cost to field a team, gym rental costs and athletic equipment needs. The cost to play sports will be shared with parents as early as possible. Payment is required upon registration. Students should not receive their uniform until payment has been made. If for some reason a student plays that hasn’t paid their athletic bill, their final report card will be held until all payments have been satisfied. Fee’s to participate in various athletic tournaments will be provided by the athletic program on a case by case basis. *All fees paid to the athletic program for the purpose of a child playing a sport are non-refundable in the event the child drops out after the rosters are turned into CYO or is deemed ineligible due to poor grades.*

**Uniforms**

Uniforms (unless specifically purchased by the student) are the property of OLG. Due to the high cost of uniforms, it’s important that students keep them as clean as possible. The uniforms should only be worn during games or organized scrimmages. In the past, 8th grade teams have been allowed to purchase “commemorative” uniforms which they keep after the season is over. The decision to purchase these types of uniforms is rested solely on the individual team and is done separately from the Athletic Committee. If these types of uniforms are purchased, the cost to play the sport does not change. The additional cost for the “commemorative” uniforms is separate from the normal athletic fee. For instance, if the cost to play basketball is $65 but the 8th grade team decides to purchase a commemorative uniform at $25 apiece, the cost to play basketball is still $65. Uniforms are to be returned by the designated date which will be communicated well in advance. The uniforms are to be turned in clean and in good condition. A student will not be allowed to participate in the next sport until their uniform has been turned in and their report card will be withheld.

Uniforms will not be handed out to an athlete until the following has been completed;

* 1. A complete registration/physical form has been turned into the AD
	2. A complete Code of Conduct form has been signed and turned into the AD
	3. Full payment has been made or a written arrangement made to make full payment
	4. Parents sign the athletic handbook acknowledgement form. (1 per family, per year)

Specific sports uniform notes:

Volleyball – Spandex is not allowed in any grade during practices or games.

Boys/Girls Basketball – T-shirts worn under the jersey must be the predominate color, meaning when OLG is wearing white jerseys those athletes who choose to wear t-shirts underneath must wear white shirts. Same with blue jerseys = blue t-shirts. All players wearing a t-shirt must be either sleeveless or short sleeve, not both.

Leg compression sleeves must be white, beige or a single solid school color. The sleeve must be worn for medical reasons only with a Doctor’s note.

Headbands and armbands must match the whole team. One player cannot wear red and another wear black. Legal colors are white, black or beige or the predominate color of the jersey. Barrettes, bobby pins and jewelry are prohibited. **Earrings CANNOT be taped.**

Casts or braces made of hard unyielding leather, plaster, plastic, metal or any other hard substance may not be worn, even if covered with soft padding.

**Dispute Resolution**

Parents and coaches may not always agree. The decision of the coach during a game or practice must be followed by the athlete and the parents/family. Even if the perception of a wrong is being committed, as long as the safety of the athlete isn’t being put into jeopardy, the coach’s decision is final. In the event a parent doesn’t agree with the decision of the coach, they are welcome to discuss the matter with the coach in a non-confrontational manner at a later date (possibly later in the afternoon or the next day). If the matter is not resolved after discussion with the coach, the parents should bring their concerns up with the Athletic Director either via Fast Direct, e-mail or by phone. If the matter is still not resolved to the parents’ satisfaction, their next contact would be the OLG Principal who after consultation with the AD would have the final say in any matter brought forward.

**Team Formations –**

At the end of the preceding school year, registrations will be held for fall sports (Girls volleyball, soccer and cross country.)

During mid-September, registration will be opened up for Boys/Girls basketball. Registration for boys basketball generally ends by the 1st or 2nd week of October, while registration for girls basketball generally ends the 1st or 2nd week of November. Boys basketball season generally runs from October until the end of January. Girls basketball generally runs from mid-November until early March.

During early-mid January registration will be opened up for boys volleyball, the season runs from early February through March. Also in the spring, registration is accepted for Track.

With the exception of the “Athletic Handbook Acknowledgement Form and the Sport Slip”, the forms used by OLG during registration are the property of CYO and cannot be adjusted/changed without permission from the CYO. They only need to be completed once per school year and are kept on file with the AD and the CYO office. The forms that are necessary for registration are the following;

* Code of Conduct – Signed by the parent and the student.
* Registration/Physical – These forms are two forms on one page, the top portion is the registration, the lower portion is the physical. Please note, beginning with the 2014 school year, OLG will no longer accept physical forms from Camp Lawrence, IHSAA or IHSA. These forms do not include the registration portion. Parents are encouraged to take multiple forms to the child’s Doctor and have him/her fill out both. These forms will be available in the school office and are also available from the CYO website, [www.nwicyo.org](http://www.nwicyo.org) and in the Links section on the Fast Direct website.

As registrations are turned into the school office, students will be put into preliminary rosters. Those students who are registered and have paid and turned in all required paperwork will be assured a spot on a specific team. According to CYO rules in most cases the minimum amount of students needed to form a team is 8 while the maximum is 15. If we have a sport at 15+ players the team will be split into two separate teams. In the event the team is split, the coaches children will be placed on their teams, then the coaches will select players based on “playground rules,” meaning Coach “A” picks one player, then Coach “B” picks one player. OLG will not stack teams.

In the event we have a team with less than the 8 players required, those players may be given a few options, they may be moved up to the next grade level or they may be moved to a neighboring school who are short players in that particular grade. In the past OLG has combined teams with St. Mary’s Griffith, St. John Bosco and St. Stans. *\*\*Note: In the event a specific teams roster may be short due to player ineligibility, vacations or any other reason, up to 2 players from the grade below may be moved up temporarily to fill-in. The decision to move players between teams will be done as little as possible and will be done on a voluntary basis 1st. This rule applies to either CCD or OLG students on a teams roster.*

Registrations and placement on teams will be conducted until the deadline date is met. The deadline is established from CYO as the date in which all rosters must be final and turned into the CYO office. This allows the CYO personnel to develop season schedules. These dates will be clearly communicated via Fast Direct, notes sent home and in the weekly mass bulletins during the summer. **Students not registered by the deadline dates will not be allowed to participate in OLG athletics for that sport.** This includes having all required paperwork and fees up-to-date.

Uniforms will not be handed out until all forms and payments have been made. This includes uniforms for any pre-season tournaments such as the Andrean volleyball tournament or any Christmas Holiday tournaments.

**Athletic Competitions**

Students are expected to arrive at game sites at least 30 minutes early to participate in warm-up exercises per the coach. The coach may have different instructions based on the type of event. Athletes must adhere to the coach’s directions. Per CYO policy, players who arrive late to a game (after the game has started) may not be put in until the next quarter in basketball or the next set in volleyball. For instance if a volleyball player arrives 1 minute after the game has started, that player is not allowed to play in that set, but they must be allowed to play at the very beginning of the next set.

Athletes are expected to arrive ready to play physically, emotionally and spiritually. If any of these conditions aren’t present, it’s the responsibility of the parent and/or student-athlete to inform the coach. During the competition if an athlete has an injury that may not be apparent to the coach or spectators, it’s the responsibility of the athlete to make the coach or official aware of the situation so that it can be remedied.

In some cases, parents are required to help out with different parts of the game, for instance in volleyball, each team must provide a line judge, in soccer, parents may be required to serve as line judges as well. Time spent in these capacities does not count towards volunteer hours, but they are a necessary part of the game. Often times a coach will schedule a family to serve as a line judge. It’s important these schedules are followed so as to not disrupt game play or unfairly force another family to do more than their fair share.

**Lester Shideler Award – Purpose and Qualifications.**

Eighth grade athletes are eligible to be presented with the Lester Shideler award. This award is presented in the spring during the Athletic Awards banquet. The recipients of the award are determined in consultation with the 8th grade coaches and junior high teachers. It is presented to the athletes who demonstrated a Christian attitude towards sports and teamwork during their athletic careers at Our Lady of Grace School. The recipient is one who leads by example and demonstrates school pride and spirit. The recipient respects and encourages teammates, respects coaches and officials and works hard to improve his/her athletic skills. The athlete also demonstrates hustle at all practices and competitions. The award is not a Most Valuable Player award.

Additional qualifications include; the student athletes have to show a Christian attitude towards sports and teamwork. They must lead by example and be respectful to coaches, players and officials. It’s important to note, this award is not considered an MVP award. It can be awarded to a player who didn’t score one basket or who never got the ball over the net, but who played with a great attitude and tried their best. It’s awarded to two deserving and qualifying 8th grade students, generally one boy and one girl. Coaches from the students previous years are asked to nominate players who they believe qualify for this award. After receiving their responses and justification of their picks, the students’ teachers are then consulted to ensure the student athlete is truly one who deserves the award.

Qualifications for the award are based on how many kids in each gender participate in sports. A candidate must participate in sports for 2 years and must not be the only gender on that team in order to be nominated. For example if only one 8th grade girl played soccer, the coach would have no other nomination choice therefore he/she should not nominate a female in this case. The decision of the selection committee is final. Any committee members who have 8th grade children will not participate in the selection process.