

***“Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them;
for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”***

Matt. 19:14

Archdiocese of Cincinnati

Charter on Catholic Youth Athletics



Promulgated March 1, 2014

Catholic Youth Athletics furthers the mission of the Catholic Church by providing sports experiences for youth that are firmly rooted in the Catholic faith tradition, based on the goals of Catholic youth ministry, and aligned with the evangelizing mission of the Catholic Church.

Mission of Catholic Youth Athletics
Archdiocese of Cincinnati Charter on Youth Athletics



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LETTER FROM ARCHBISHOP SCHNURR

Dear Friends,

After decades of little Archdiocesan involvement in parish-based and elementary-age athletics, with the Charter on Catholic Youth Athletics I am responding to the hundreds of Catholics across the Archdiocese who have told us that it's time for us to once again get involved.

Through careful listening to pastors, deacons, parents, coaches, Boosters organizations, youth ministers and catechetical leaders, we've heard over and over of the tremendous potential of youth athletics to be a form of youth ministry and catechesis, especially if athletic programs, coaches, leagues and parents see it – and live it – that way.

The Charter sets out a mission, goals, principles and a framework that proclaim a new day in Catholic Youth Athletics here in the Archdiocese, a fresh moment for youth athletics to grow into an even more effective and fruitful evangelizing and faith-building force in our parishes, schools and our Catholic families.

I am profoundly grateful to all those who for so many years have nurtured character, sportsmanship, and faith in our young athletes. When the Archdiocese stepped away from youth sports, they stepped into the breach and carried on to this very day, and for that great gift, I'm thankful. This Charter honors their dedication and commitment to Catholic Youth Athletics by building on the foundation they have laid, not replacing it. The Charter accomplishes what the Archdiocese was asked to do, and no more: it's not a "takeover" of youth athletics as some have feared, but establishes a systematic way that our athletic programs can be faithful to our deepest beliefs and values, while preserving the autonomy of our parish and school athletic organizations, and the leagues that serve them.

Organized sports can form our children physically, mentally and spiritually. The Charter addresses the formation of our children in all three areas. The Charter specifies the way we are to proceed with youth athletics in the Archdiocese and I urge you to observe what is set forth therein.

By this letter I promulgate the Catholic Youth Athletics Charter for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. The Charter will take effect on March 1, 2014. It applies to all parishes, schools, offices, agencies and other institutions which operate under the administrative authority of the

Archbishop. The Charter will be administered through a Commission, appointed by the Archbishop, with the well-being of the children and families who participate always in mind. Our Catholic Youth Athletics Commission, once inaugurated, will offer reasonable time frames for leagues and athletic organizations to comply with the Charter, along with ample support and guidance.

All the members of our local Church are called to be vigilant in implementing this Charter.

I offer my thanks and the thanks of all the faithful of the Archdiocese to those who have collaborated in preparing and those who will be implementing this Charter, and I encourage all the leaders of our parishes and schools to join wholeheartedly in supporting and cooperating with its implementation.

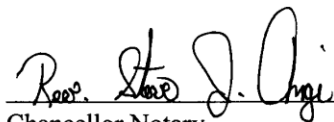
May our Blessed Mother continue to intercede for us and may the Holy Spirit continue to guide and protect us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Dennis M. Schnurr
Archbishop of Cincinnati

Given this twenty-fifth day of February, 2014
At the Chancery of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, Ohio



Chancellor Notary

Archdiocese of Cincinnati

Charter on Catholic Youth Athletics



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“Every five years, commencing with the effective date of this Charter, the Catholic Youth Athletics Commission of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati will undergo a formal and comprehensive evaluation of this Charter and its implementation, and will offer recommendations for improvements to the Archbishop. Moreover, each year the Commission will undertake ongoing quality improvement via annual evaluations that will solicit feedback from athletics organizations, leagues, parents and participants.”

[Section 3.2.5\(a\), p. 15](#)

INTRODUCTION. Background & Terminology

Background

Through multiple consultations and conversations with pastors, parents, coaches, athletics directors, youth ministers, school principals, and catechetical leaders about youth athletics across the Archdiocese of Cincinnati since 2009, these significant needs surfaced, prompting the creation of this “Charter on Catholic Youth Athletics” (the “Charter”):

- Clear and robust Catholic identity in youth athletics;
- An evangelizing mission that understands youth athletics as a form of youth ministry in the Catholic Church;
- Enhanced and sustained leadership development, Christian virtues, life skills and character development in youth athletics;
- Clear and reasonable guidelines affirming the priority of Catholic faith formation and worship on Sundays, Holy Days, and during liturgical seasons;
- Consistent standards and expectations regarding Christian behavior, good sportsmanship, and fair play for players, parents, coaches, volunteers, athletics organizations, and leagues, in line with the Great Commandments, the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule;
- High standards of sportsmanship and fair play established and maintained by trained and skilled coaches and athletics leaders, along with accountability systems to ensure that standards are met or exceeded; and
- Best practices regarding the safety and well-being of children.

Accordingly, a broadly representative Task Force of more than fifty pastors, athletics organization members, deacons, athletics directors, coaches, youth ministers, catechetical leaders, and parents has developed this Charter in direct response to what we’ve heard, to establish policies and best practices for elementary-age and parish-based high school (except for “Excluded High Schools” as defined below) youth athletics that take place within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

The Charter was further reviewed, amended and approved by the Archdiocesan Pastoral and Presbyteral Councils in preparation for approval by the Archbishop.

Terminology

This Charter provides guidance for Catholic parishes, elementary schools, athletic organizations, and leagues so they can develop their own “Organizational Documents” (as defined below), policies and best practices so as to respond to the needs cited above. This Charter contains broad policies and best practices that should be applied according to the requirements of a particular sport, location, or setting.

The Charter does **not** apply to the “Excluded High Schools” (as defined below) which are governed by other athletics policies applicable to High Schools in the State of Ohio.

The Charter also establishes the “Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Youth Athletics Commission” (the “Commission”, as defined below) that will assist Catholic parishes, schools, athletic organizations, and leagues in incorporating these policies and best practices into their own Organizational Documents. Working with Catholic parishes, schools, athletic organizations, and leagues, the Commission will assess their compliance with the Charter guidelines.

When used in this Charter the following terms have the definitions below:

“Archbishop” means the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

“Archdiocese” means the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

“Best Practice” describes a provision of the Charter that is recommended and does not have the force of policy. Important: specific provisions of this Charter are understood to have the force of policy unless noted as a “Best Practice.”

“Catholic Youth Athletics” means organized youth athletics conducted through Archdiocesan parishes, non-parish Catholic elementary schools, athletic organizations, and the leagues that serve them; and using the “Facilities” (as defined below).

“Charter” means this Archdiocese of Cincinnati Charter on Catholic Youth Athletics.

“Commission” means the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Youth Athletics Commission as envisioned by this Charter.

“Decree” means the [Archdiocese of Cincinnati Decree on Child Protection](#) (current version, effective July 1, 2013).

“Excluded High Schools” means the following Catholic high schools which are governed by other athletic policies applicable to high schools in the State of Ohio: Alter, Badin, Carroll, Catholic Central, Chaminade Julienne, DePaul Cristo Rey, Elder, Fenwick, LaSalle, Lehman, McAuley, McNicholas, Moeller, Mother of Mercy, Mt. Notre Dame, Purcell Marian, Roger Bacon, Seton, St. Rita School for the Deaf (Secondary), St. Ursula, St. Xavier, Summit Country Day (Secondary), and Ursuline.

“Facility” or **“Facilities”** means any court, field, gymnasium, stadium, track, or other facility used by athletic participants that is owned by a parish or by a Catholic school in the Archdiocese.

“Guiding Principles” means those principles described in [Section 1.3.2 \(p. 7\)](#) of this Charter.

“Non-Parish School” means a Catholic elementary school that operates independently of a parish or parishes, under the authority of a principal, not a Pastor.

“Organizational Documents” means the internal articles of incorporation, articles of organization, charters, bylaws, codes of regulations, and other formation documents of parishes, schools, athletic organizations, and leagues operating within the Archdiocese.

“Pastor” means the Pastor of a parish, or in parishes without a Pastor, the priest who is the Parochial Administrator.

“Policy” means a specific provision of the Charter that is required in order to be in compliance with the Charter. Important: specific provisions of this Charter are understood to have the force of policy unless noted as a “Best Practice.”

SECTION 1. Mission, Goals, and Guiding Principles

1.1 Introduction

This section of the Charter contains the Charter’s mission, goals and guiding principles. The rest of the Charter flows from these statements, and provides specific policies and best practices for leagues serving Catholic Youth Athletics here in the Archdiocese; as well as policies and best practices for the youth athletics organizations of our parishes, and non-parish schools.

1.2 Mission

Catholic Youth Athletics furthers the mission of the Catholic Church by providing sports experiences for youth that are firmly rooted in the Catholic faith tradition, based on the goals of Catholic youth ministry, and aligned with the evangelizing mission of the Catholic Church.

1.3 Goals and Guiding Principles

1.3.1 *Goals.* Catholic Youth Athletics is a form of youth ministry that leads young people closer to Christ, and takes its inspiration and direction from the 1997 U.S. Bishops’ document, *Renewing the Vision – A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*. That document identifies three overarching goals for all youth programs in the U.S. Catholic Church:

Goal 1. Discipleship: to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.

Goal 2. Participation: to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community.

Goal 3. Growth: to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

1.3.2 *Guiding Principles.* The policies and best practices detailed in this Charter flow from these goals and are aligned with them. Since the Charter provides a framework of policies and best practices for elementary-age and parish-based athletics in the Archdiocese (except for the Excluded High Schools), the various athletics organizations, leagues, tournaments, teams, and practices that are a part of Catholic Youth Athletics will also reflect these overarching goals. The Guiding Principles are:

(a) Discipleship, Faith and Family First: Catholic Youth Athletics proceeds from and should always include Christian discipleship in the Catholic faith, in support of the parents and families whose children participate. Charter policies and guidelines are developed with Christian discipleship, the Catholic faith, and family well-being as top priorities.

(b) Evangelizing Mission: The whole Church and each of its members are called to the mission of evangelization; so too, is Catholic Youth Athletics a part of that mission. Participants, parents, families, coaches, athletics organizations, fans, and alumni – all those involved in some way in Catholic Youth Athletics – are invited into this evangelizing mission bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to a world much in need of it. The Charter establishes clear expectations regarding the evangelizing mission of Catholic Youth Athletics.

(c) Responsible Participation in the Church: Catholic Youth Athletics will reflect the priority of regular, consistent, and responsible participation in the Church, in her worship, education, community, ministries and service to the world. The Charter includes policies and best practices affirming the priority of active participation in the Catholic faith community, including faith formation as well as worship on Sundays, Holy Days and during liturgical seasons.

(d) Faith, Character and Virtue Development: In Catholic Youth Athletics, winning, performing, and succeeding are always subordinate to the development of faith, character and virtues in participants and their families. The Charter establishes policies and best practices regarding Christian behavior, good sportsmanship, and fair play for players, coaches, volunteers, athletics organizations, and parents, in line with the Great Commandments, the Ten Commandments, and the Golden Rule.

(e) Trained and Competent Coaches and Athletics Leaders: Coaches and athletics leaders serving in Catholic Youth Athletics understand their roles as forms of youth ministry leadership, and will get training that leads to competence not only in coaching a given sport, but also in modeling and sharing faith, developing young Catholic disciples, and helping young people and their families stay meaningfully connected to the Catholic Church.

(f) Safety and Well-being of Children: The safety and well-being of young people in Catholic Youth Athletics are paramount. The Charter describes policies and best practices to promote the safety and well-being of children.

(g) Good Stewardship and Accountability: Athletics organizations and leagues that serve the parishes and schools of the Archdiocese should demonstrate good stewardship of money and other resources, with trustworthy and transparent systems of financial accountability.

In and through the experience of Catholic Youth Athletics, children and their families will better follow Christ, be drawn closer to the Church, and will grow in character, virtues, and Christian service. The provisions of this Charter have been developed to make this mission a reality in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

SECTION 2. How This Charter Works

2.1 The Commission in Relation to Leagues and Catholic Athletics Organizations

2.1.1 *Charter Approval and Compliance.* Upon approval of this Charter by the Archbishop, it will become a “General Executory Decree” of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Thereafter, organized youth athletics conducted through Catholic parishes, schools, athletic organizations, and the leagues serving them, that wish to be identified with Catholic Youth Athletics, desire to compete with other participating Catholic Youth Athletics entities, and desire to use Facilities, should be in compliance with this Charter. They should adopt, into their own Organizational Documents, the applicable provisions of this Charter, and otherwise abide by its provisions.

2.1.2 *Role of the Commission.* The Charter provides for the creation of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Youth Athletics Commission (the Commission), which will administer it, appointed by and under the authority of the Archbishop. The Commission will have members from all regions of the Archdiocese (Cincinnati, Dayton, and North), and will be composed of various constituencies such as parents, coaches, athletics directors, league leaders, youth ministers, catechetical leaders, pastors, and/or deacons. The Commission will serve the organizations and leagues that make up Catholic Youth Athletics in the Archdiocese, including:

- (a) Parish, and non-parish school, athletics organizations (for example “Boosters” or “Athletics Board”): In order to participate in Catholic Youth Athletics using Facilities, and/or to compete in the name of the parish in other venues, athletics organizations are expected to adopt, into their own Organizational Documents, the applicable provisions of this Charter, and to otherwise abide by the provisions of this Charter. The Commission will assist such organizations in complying with Charter policies and guidelines.
- (b) Leagues serving Catholic Youth Athletics: Leagues serving Catholic Youth Athletics in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati are expected to adopt, into their own Organizational Documents, the applicable provisions of this Charter, and to otherwise abide by the provisions of this Charter. The Commission will assist leagues in complying with Charter policies and guidelines.

2.2 Assessment of Compliance, Non-Compliance and Consequences

2.2.1 *Organizational Documents.* The Organizational Documents of athletics organizations and leagues should be in compliance with the provisions of this Charter. Organizations that wish to be identified with Catholic Youth Athletics, desire to compete with other participating Catholic Youth Athletics entities, and desire to use Facilities, should adopt, into their own Organizational Documents, the applicable provisions of this Charter, otherwise abide by the provisions of this Charter, and have their Organizational Documents approved by the Commission for compliance with the Charter. Compliance will result in approval to participate in Catholic Youth Athletics in the Archdiocese. Non-compliance will be determined by the Commission, as follows:

(a) **Athletics Organizations Not in Compliance:** If athletics organizations are found to be not in compliance with this Charter by the Commission, the Commission will administer a warning. If the warning is not satisfactorily addressed within the time determined by the Commission, the Commission will recommend to the Pastor or non-parish school principal that the athletics organization be put on probation. If the probationary period expires and the athletics organization is still in non-compliance, the Commission will recommend to the Archbishop or his designee that the athletics organization be suspended. Suspension means that an athletics organization or league may not be identified with Catholic Youth Athletics, may not compete with other participating Catholic Youth Athletics entities, and may not use Facilities. Decisions regarding the suspension of parish, or non-parish school, athletics organizations will be made by the Archbishop or his designee in close cooperation with the parish Pastor, or non-parish school principal.

(b) **Leagues Not in Compliance:** If a league is found to be not in compliance with this Charter by the Commission, the Commission will administer a warning. If the warning is not satisfactorily addressed within the time determined by the Commission, the Commission will recommend to the Archbishop or his designee that the league be placed on probation. If the probationary period expires and the league is still in non-compliance, the Commission will recommend to the Archbishop or his designee that the league be suspended. Suspension means that a league may not be identified with Catholic Youth Athletics, may not compete with other participating Catholic Youth Athletics entities, and may not use Facilities. Decisions regarding league suspensions will be made by the Archbishop or his designee, at the recommendation of the Commission.

(c) In the case of egregious instances of non-compliance, the Commission may move directly to recommending probation or suspension as warranted.

SECTION 3. Structure of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Youth Athletics Commission

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 *Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Youth Athletics Commission.* This Charter calls for the creation of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Youth Athletics Commission by the Archbishop to provide:

- (a) Consistency: To work towards consistency of Catholic identity, norms for behavior and sportsmanship, due process, and fairness in youth athletics across the Archdiocese.
- (b) Oversight: To provide an Archdiocesan-wide perspective on youth athletics to work towards a unified expression of Catholic identity in Catholic Youth Athletics.
- (c) Governance: To provide a central structure for maintaining Archdiocesan policies and best practices, fairly and consistently applied from parish to parish, school to school and region to region – while respecting and honoring regional differences and uniqueness.

3.1.2 *Principles.* The work of the Commission will be founded on the following:

- (a) Christian charity: In all things the Commission will have the Great Commandments, the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule at heart and in mind. Meetings, decisions, communications, and actions will be guided by love, the well-being of children and their families, and serving the common good of the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese.
- (b) Subsidiarity: The Church teaches that a matter ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest, or least centralized authority capable of addressing that matter effectively. The Commission will proceed with that same assumption in its deliberations, decisions and actions.
- (c) Peer review: Whenever possible the Commission will perform its various assessments and approvals based upon the review and judgment of peers. Thus the Commission will consist of members from participating athletics organizations, leagues, parishes, and schools.

3.2 Organizational Structure

3.2.1 *Overview: Executive and Regional Committees.* The Commission will consist of an Executive Committee and two Regional Committees, one serving Cincinnati and the other serving both the Dayton and North areas of the Archdiocese. Regional Committees will handle regional Commission business, and the Commission as a whole will handle matters related to or affecting the entire Archdiocese.

3.2.2 *Executive Committee.* The Executive Committee will coordinate the overall work of the Commission and will be composed of the combined “Key Three” leaders from each Regional Committee, and the Director of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry (or staff designee), who will serve as its convener and facilitator. Its responsibilities will include:

- (a) Overseeing the implementation of this Charter;
- (b) Recruiting and organizing the leadership of the Regional Committees;
- (c) Recruiting for and convening subcommittees as needed;
- (d) Supervising, supporting, monitoring, assessing, and assisting the Regional Committees;
- (e) Periodic assessment of Catholic Youth Athletics relative to the mission, goals, principles and provisions of this Charter;
- (f) Reviewing and recommending revisions of the Charter as needed;
- (g) Recruiting for and convening subcommittees as needed; and
- (h) Problem-solving regarding Catholic Youth Athletics regarding matters affecting the entire Archdiocese.

3.2.3 *Regional Committees.* Each of the Regional Committees will have a “Key Three” leadership group that will be responsible for managing the work of the Regional Committee. The leadership group will consist of an athletics chaplain (priest or deacon), a representative of the Archdiocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, and an individual selected by the regional athletics organizations and leagues, and approved by the Archbishop. Key Three responsibilities will include:

- (a) Overseeing the implementation of this Charter in the region;
- (b) Recruiting and organizing committee members;
- (c) Recruiting for and convening subcommittees as needed;

- (d) Reviewing organizational compliance documents of athletics organizations and leagues to determine compliance;
- (e) In cases of non-compliance, deciding upon and communicating warnings, and probations and suspension recommendations;
- (f) Periodic assessment of regional Catholic Youth Athletics relative to the mission, goals, principles and provisions of this Charter;
- (g) Reviewing and recommending revisions of the Charter as needed;
- (h) Managing regional appeals (see [Sections 3.2.4\(d\), p. 15](#), and [5.2.8\(e\), p. 27](#));
- (i) Problem-solving regarding Catholic Youth Athletics regarding matters affecting the region.

3.2.4 *Subcommittees.* As appropriate to Archdiocesan and regional needs, the Executive Committee and/or the Key Three leadership group of each Regional Committee may convene subcommittees as needed, including, but not limited to:

- (a) Catholic Faith & Spirit Subcommittee, responsible for:
 - (i) Providing resources for athletics organizations, coaches, teams, players and families;
 - (ii) Supporting those filling the role of “Spiritual Liaison” (as defined below); and
 - (iii) Recommending amendments or additions to this Charter, its by-laws, and the practices and procedures of the Commission.
- (b) Leagues Subcommittee, responsible for:
 - (i) Assessing league compliance with this Charter;
 - (ii) Advising league leaders regarding Charter compliance;
 - (iii) Problem-solving regarding league-related matters; and
 - (iv) Recommending amendments or additions to this Charter, its by-laws, and the practices and procedures of the Commission.
- (c) Athletics Organizations Subcommittee, responsible for:
 - (i) Assessing athletic organization compliance with this Charter;
 - (ii) Advising leaders of athletics organizations regarding Charter compliance;

- (iii) Problem-solving, regarding matters related to athletics organizations; and
 - (iv) Recommending amendments or additions to this Charter, its by-laws, and the practices and procedures of the Commission.
- (d) Grievances and Appeals Subcommittee, responsible for:
- (i) Handling alleged instances of non-compliance with this Charter and recommending appropriate responses for decision by the members of the Regional Committee (for example, warnings, probation, or suspension);
 - (ii) Handling alleged league or athletic organization violations of due process as defined in this Charter and recommending appropriate responses for decision by members of the Regional Committee; and
 - (iii) Recommending amendments or additions to this Charter, its by-laws, and the practices and procedures of the Commission.

3.2.5 *Other Commission Duties.*

- (a) **Periodic Charter Review:** Every five years, commencing with the effective date of this Charter, the Commission will undergo a formal and comprehensive evaluation of this Charter and its implementation, and will offer recommendations for improvements to the Archbishop. Moreover, each year the Commission will undertake ongoing quality improvement via annual evaluations that will solicit feedback from athletics organizations, leagues, parents and participants.
- (b) **Convening Gatherings as Needed:** In support of the mission, goals and principles of this Charter, the Commission may offer seminars, special programs, and multi-day coaching conferences, addressing Catholic Youth Athletics ministry as well as other topics such as coaching methods, practice planning, game strategy, etc. – providing opportunities to celebrate Mass together, hear motivational talks by well-known individuals, and attend workshops to learn more about coaching, coaching as a ministry, and other topics of interest.

SECTION 4. Children in Catholic Youth Athletics

4.1 Introduction

This section describes policies and best practices intending that children participating in Catholic Youth Athletics are safe, have fun, are treated fairly and respectfully, and grow in their faith, character and virtues through the experience, including those related to:

- Eligibility ([Section 4.2, p. 16](#));
- Safety and well-being of children ([Section 4.3, p. 18](#));
- Playing time ([Section 4.4, p. 23](#)); and
- Non-discriminatory practices ([Section 4.5, p. 24](#)).

4.2 Eligibility

4.2.1 *Determining Eligibility.* Eligibility for participation on a Catholic Youth Athletics team shall be determined by the following:

(a) Parish registration: The participant's parent or legal guardian is registered with the parish sponsoring the team. If the parents of a participant are registered at more than one parish, the child is expected to play in only one parish per school year (July through June);

OR

(b) Catholic elementary school: The participant attends a Catholic school sponsoring the team. If a participant from one parish attends another parish's school, or a non-parish school, the participant may participate either on the team(s) of the school they are attending, or the parish's team(s);

OR

(c) Unaffiliated participants: Children (Catholic or non-Catholic) who are not registered with a Catholic parish or attending a Catholic school may participate in Catholic Youth Athletics only by special application and permission by the parish Pastor, or non-parish school principal), the athletics organization(s) and the league(s).

4.2.2 *Terms of Team Membership.* In any case, the participant is expected to play for that same parish or school for the rest of that school year, unless the family residence moves to a different locale and parish, in which case a change is permitted. If an individual's parish or school sponsors a team in a particular sport, the individual is to participate on that parish's or school's team and is not permitted to play for a different parish or school without written approval by the parish Pastor, or non-parish school principal, the athletics organization(s) and the league(s), on a case-by-case basis.

4.2.3 *Religious education requirements.*

(a) Catholic participants: Catholic participants will be enrolled in and regularly attend the parish's or school's religious education in the current school year (which may be scheduled during the summer or the school year). Three or more unexcused absences from religious education sessions will normally result in suspension from the team. Legitimate excused absences such as due to illness will be assessed on a case-by-case basis at the local level.

(b) Non-Catholic participants in Catholic schools: In the case of non-Catholic children enrolled in Catholic schools, they are eligible to play provided they attend the school's religious education classes in the current school year.

(c) Non-Catholic participants in Catholic parishes: In the case of non-Catholic children whose parents have enrolled in RCIA or are otherwise in the process of becoming Catholic, they are eligible to play provided they are enrolled in and regularly attend the parish's religious education in the current school year. Missing three or more religious education sessions will normally result in suspension from the team.

(d) Unaffiliated participants: As described in [Section 4.2.1\(c\), p. 16](#), unaffiliated participants are not required to attend religious education, but may be welcomed and encouraged to do so.

4.2.4 *Other Eligibility Requirements.* The athletics organization of a parish or school has the right to establish in its Organizational Documents additional criteria for eligibility, with the approval of the Pastor or non-parish school principal, and may deny team membership to any otherwise qualified individual based on those criteria, provided the criteria are aligned with the mission, goals, principles, policies and guidelines of this Charter.

4.2.5 *Where Participants May Join Teams.* Determination of the parish or school where a child is eligible to join a team is based on (i) the home parish where the parents and family are registered; then (ii) the school (in the case of non-parish schools); then if neither the child's home parish nor school offers a given sport, (iii) proximity to the child's residence. In this case, distance considerations are expected to radiate out in all directions from the child's primary residence, as follows:

(a) The first request for participation is expected to be made to the parish/school that is closest to the individual's residence. If the closest parish/school does not have a team, or doesn't accept the individual, the individual may play for the second closest parish, and so on.

(b) A parish that cannot provide a complete team in a particular sport, but has children interested in participating, can:

(i) Place them on another parish team geographically adjacent to the parish that cannot field a team, or

(ii) Form a combined team with one or more adjacent parishes, in which case all children from a given parish are expected to play for that team.

(c) If no parish or school is able to accept an individual, the league and/or the Commission may assist in placing the individual in an appropriate program.

4.3 Safety and Well-Being of Children

4.3.1 [Archdiocese of Cincinnati Decree on Child Protection](#). The provisions of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati *Decree on Child Protection* must be followed by participating organizations, meaning that the Archdiocese of Cincinnati *Decree on Child Protection* and all related policies and recommendations are in full effect, *including the following sub-points of 4.3.1 which have been excerpted verbatim from the Decree* (visit the Archdiocesan website to review the *Decree* in its entirety):

(a) Regular and occasional volunteers: For purposes of the *Decree*, a "regular volunteer" is an adult who is not a cleric or employee (for example, a catechist, scout leader, coach, server coordinator, etc.) who functions in a regular relationship having contact with children. This includes interns, student teachers and others in similar capacities. For example, a regular volunteer is one who has contact with children on any overnight event; on at least a monthly basis; or in a multi-day program (e.g. Vacation Bible School). A regular volunteer has contact with children at least once a month, or participates in any overnight event with children. It does not include the occasional volunteer such as a driver or chaperone whose contact with children is less than one hour per month for activities that are not overnight.

(b) VIRTUS®: (A.3 Policy) All candidates for ordination, clerics, regular volunteers and employees who have contact with children must attend a VIRTUS® Child Awareness Session on the *Decree* before they have contact with children. Responsible supervisors who hire personnel furnished by a third party contractor who have contact with children, or who utilize auxiliary services personnel, are to inform such personnel of the existence of the *Decree*, inform them of the requirements of the *Decree* which pertain to them (for example, the C.9 Policy), and give such

personnel the option of attending a VIRTUS® Child Awareness Session on the *Decree*. (A.9 Recommendation) All adult volunteers are encouraged to attend a VIRTUS® Child Awareness Session, including training on the provisions of the *Decree*, even if they are not regular volunteers as defined in the *Decree*.

(c) Fingerprinting and Background Check (B.1 Policy): Background checks through fingerprinting or otherwise in a manner approved by the Chancellor in accord with the current policies of the Archdiocese must be performed on adults as follows: candidates for ordination, clerics, regular volunteers (see definition above) and employees may not have contact with children until an acceptable background check through fingerprinting or otherwise in a manner approved by the Chancellor is completed in accord with the current policies of the Archdiocese.

(d) Recruiting Volunteers (B.3 Policy): Those persons who recruit volunteers to work regularly with children in the parishes, schools, agencies and institutions of the Archdiocese must exercise caution in selecting volunteers. No volunteer has the right to insist on a particular volunteer position. If there is any cause for concern in a particular case, the matter should be brought to the attention of the responsible supervisor for further review.

(e) Permission, Health Information and Release of Liability Forms (C.2 Policy): A child may participate in an organized program sponsored by a parish, school, agency or institution of the Archdiocese only with the written consent of the child's parent or guardian on a standard *Permission, Release and Medical Power of Attorney* form (available online at the Archdiocese website at www.catholiccincinnati.org). Such written consent is expected to provide for emergency care of the child, as warranted by the program or activity.

(f) Minimum of Two Adults, Gender Ratio, Etc. (C.3 Policy): For any activity sponsored by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, at least two adults, both of whom have successfully completed a VIRTUS® Child Awareness Session and background check through fingerprinting or otherwise in a manner approved by the Chancellor in accord with the current policies of the Archdiocese, and who are not related to each other, must be present for any activity, including but not limited to after school tutoring of any sort (whether the tutor is hired by the parents or not).

Moreover, the number and gender of the adults are to be in proportion to the age, number and gender of the participants, and the duration and difficulty of the activity. Prudence is required in applying this policy to different age groups, length of activity and the risk level of the activity.

(i) A ratio of 1:10 is recommended;

(ii) Whenever there is a mixed group of boys and girls it is preferred that one adult of each gender is present. The proportion of male / female chaperones should be similar to the proportion of the children;

(iii) Single sex athletics must have at least one adult of the same gender as the players (e.g., in case of injury or illness requiring attention in a rest room).

Whenever possible, one of the adults should be a parent or guardian of a participant.

Exceptions for this C.3 Policy are only allowed for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, regular day-school or religion classes conducted on the grounds of the parish, school, agency or institution, and if for unanticipated reasons, only one adult can actually be present for an activity which is not overnight.

For purposes of this C.3 Policy, “adult” excludes 18 and 19 year-olds not yet graduated from high school and others who have graduated from high school but who wish to attend activities with members of their high school class during the three months following their graduation with others who are less than 18 years of age.

(g) Discipline (C.4 Policy): No child may be disciplined corporally or corrected with abusive language.

(h) Reporting (Ohio Revised Code § 2151.421(A)(1)(a); § 2151.421(G)(1)(a)): Ohio law ***requires*** all persons acting in an official or professional capacity to immediately report any actual or suspected act of child abuse to the public children’s services agency or to a municipal or county peace officer in the county where the child resides or where the abuse or neglect is occurring. Failure to do so is a misdemeanor and can result in prosecution. The Archdiocese encourages all persons to immediately report any actual or suspected acts of child abuse to Civil Authorities. In either case, a person reporting in good faith in making such a report is immune from both civil and criminal liability.

4.3.2 *Concussions*. Head injuries can happen in any sport. Catholic Youth Athletics should comply with state law (see [Ohio HB 143](#) for more details) as regards concussions, including:

(a) Before practice or play begins for each sport or season, the parent or guardian of each participating child should review and sign the head injury information sheet required by Section 3707.52 of the Ohio Revised Code and available at www.healthyohioprogram.org/concussion.

(b) Before beginning to coach or officiate, coaches and officials in Catholic Youth Athletics should receive training on concussions and the requirements of Ohio law.

(c) If a player exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with having sustained a concussion or head injury while participating in practice or competition, the player shall be removed from the practice or competition by either of the following: (i) The individual who is serving as the student's coach during that practice or competition; or (ii) an individual who is serving as a referee or official during that practice or competition. Parents are expected to be notified of the injury as soon as possible.

(d) If a player is removed from practice or competition as per Section [4.3.2\(c\)](#) above, under Ohio law the coach or referee who removed the player must not allow the player, on the same day the player is removed, to return to that practice or competition or to participate in any other practice or competition for which the coach or referee is responsible. Thereafter, under Ohio law the coach or referee shall not allow the player to return to that practice or competition or to participate in any other practice or competition for which the coach or referee is responsible until both of the following conditions are satisfied: (i) The student's condition is assessed by a physician or other authorized licensed health care provider; and (ii) the player receives written clearance that it is safe to return to practice or competition from a physician or other authorized licensed health care provider.

4.3.3 *Heat, Inclement Weather, Lightning, Thunder and Thunderstorms.*

(a) **Lightning, Thunder:** When thunder is heard or a lightning bolt is seen at a practice or competition, teams will suspend play and take shelter immediately. Once play has been suspended, play or practice will not resume until approximately 30 minutes has passed since the last thunder was heard or lightning flash witnessed.

(b) **Heat:** To prevent heat illness (i.e. heat cramps, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke), when there are high temperatures, leagues, athletics organizations, coaches and teams should exercise prudence (such as by monitoring athletes closely, limiting practice duration, allowing lighter clothing, providing frequent fluid breaks for rehydration, and/or providing for shade).

(c) **Best Practice – Inclement Weather:** When at outdoor practices and competitions, coaches, athletes, game officials and administrators should be aware of potential inclement weather and the signs that indicate thunderstorm development. It is advisable to monitor local weather forecasts the day before and morning of the practice or competition and by scanning the sky for signs of potential thunderstorm activity. Weather can also be monitored using small, portable weather radios from the National Weather Service (NWS). The NWS uses a system of severe storm watches and warnings. A watch indicates conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop in an area; a warning indicates severe weather has been reported in an area, and everyone should take proper precautions.

4.3.4 *Best Practices – Safety of Parish or School Gymnasiums, Athletics Fields, Athletics Facilities.* The maintenance, upkeep, and general condition of a Facility are the responsibility of the parish or non-parish school that owns the Facility.

Coaches and adult athletics leaders should take care to ensure that their children are using Facilities that are safe and secure, including:

- (a) **Gymnasiums:** Paying attention to any apparent damage to backboards, bleachers, and other seating that could render such items unsafe. Gymnasiums that lack sufficient space outside the boundaries of play can pose safety risks to larger players whose momentum could carry them into walls or chairs; accordingly, it is recommended that athletics events for larger children be scheduled in larger gymnasiums.
- (b) **Athletics Fields:** Before beginning practice or play, coaches or athletics leaders should inspect the field(s) for any unsafe conditions.
- (c) **Postponing or Cancelling:** If it is apparent that the condition of a Facility may pose a risk of injury, coaches and athletics leaders are expected to postpone or cancel events until a safe Facility is available, and any such postponement or cancellation will not incur a penalty.
- (d) **Reporting:** Any problems with a Facility should be reported to (i) the leaders of the parish, or non-parish school, responsible for the Facility, and (ii) the league leaders who schedule athletics events at the Facility. If the problems persist and as a result there are ongoing safety risks, the coaches, athletics leaders, league leaders or concerned parents should contact the Commission.

4.3.5 *Best Practices – Age, Human Development and Health Considerations.* To avoid injury and to enhance the health and well-being of children it is imperative that coaches and athletics leaders who work with younger children avoid putting demands on their bodies and emotions for which such children are not developmentally suited. Coaches and athletics leaders who work with younger children are expected to be especially attentive to asking too much of children at too early an age. Parents are expected to be vigilant in monitoring the development of their children and working with coaches and athletics leaders to do what is best for their children. The Commission should assist parents, athletics organizations and leagues in determining age-related health considerations regarding athletic activities.

4.3.6 *Best Practice – Biennial Red Cross Certification.* It is a Best Practice for athletics organizations to have a minimum of one coach or other adult with Red Cross Basic First Aid Certification present at practices and games. Athletics organizations are expected to maintain records of Red Cross Basic First Aid Certification of participating coaches and volunteers. Red Cross Basic First Aid Certification should be renewed on at least a biennial basis.

Best Practice – Archdiocesan Role. The Commission should provide information on Red Cross Basic First Aid training to parishes, and non-parish schools, and their athletics organizations.

4.4 Playing Time

4.4.1 *Instructional, Recreational and Competitive Designations.* These designations are defined as follows to assist athletics leaders in establishing age-appropriate practices and in clarifying playing time:

- (a) Instructional (Up to and including Grade 5): Respecting their young age and the well-being of their families, instructional play will take place in a single league, include no more than two tournaments in addition to the league tournament, and with teams of roughly equal skill in that sport. (See below for playing time norms in instructional athletics).
- (b) Recreational (Grades 6-12): For the purposes of this Charter, it is assumed that all Catholic Youth Athletics are recreational unless otherwise designated as competitive. (See below for playing time norms in recreational athletics.)
- (c) Competitive (Grades 6-12): Teams and leagues that opt for the competitive designation will publish that designation so that players, parents and families are clear on playing time expectations and any other differences from recreational athletics. (See below for playing time norms in competitive athletics.)

4.4.2 *Expectations Regarding Playing Time.* Whatever the league, the level, or the team, it's vital that all (i.e., children, parents, coaches, athletics leaders) are clear in advance on expectations regarding playing time, and how it will be monitored and maintained through the season. Even in leagues and on teams that are competitive, all children have a right to full team membership with roughly equivalent privileges and responsibilities, without nepotism or favoritism, including playing time in accord with the following:

- (a) Instructional athletics (up to and including Grade 5): Children are expected to have roughly equal playing time in practices, games and tournaments, monitored and maintained through the season by the coach or other athletics leader.
- (b) Recreational athletics (Grades 6-12): An athletic activity is assumed to be recreational unless explicitly and publicly designated as competitive. Children in recreational athletics should have roughly equal playing time in practices, games and tournaments, monitored and maintained through the season by the coach or other athletics leader. Coaches may limit playing time as a disciplinary measure (for example, as a consequence for missing practices, consistent tardiness, or other infractions).

(c) Competitive athletics (Grades 6-12): An athletic activity is assumed to be recreational unless explicitly and publicly designated as competitive. In teams and in leagues designated as competitive, minimum standards for playing time that are reasonable and appropriate to the sport will be established by those teams and leagues, made public, monitored and maintained through the season. It is expected that competitive teams will be formed no earlier than 6th grade, unless otherwise granted an exception by the Commission. If 5th and 6th grade students are combined into a single team (necessitated by numbers of available players) the norms applicable to 6th grade students will apply. At the competitive level of play such standards do not guarantee that every player in every game will be provided playing time. For health and safety reasons standards may vary by sport and playing time may vary by game. The enforcement and administration of playing time expectations reside with the parish, or non-parish school, athletics organization. Coaches may limit playing time as a disciplinary measure (for example, as a consequence for missing practices, consistent tardiness, or other infractions).

(d) League role: Leagues will support playing time norms; however, leagues are not responsible for enforcement and administration of them.

Provided they meet the minimum standards described here, parishes, and non-parish schools, may enhance, increase or add to these playing time requirements to ensure fairness.

4.5 Non-Discriminatory Practices

4.5.1 *Discrimination.* Discrimination based on ethnicity, nationality, gender and race is contrary to Catholic moral teaching and is unacceptable in Catholic Youth Athletics. This applies in particular to:

- (a) Scheduling (e.g., preferential treatment to boys' over girls' sports);
- (b) Team formation (e.g., selections based on race, ethnicity or nationality); and
- (c) Playing time (e.g., decisions based on race, ethnicity or nationality).

SECTION 5. Leagues Serving Catholic Youth Athletics

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 *Athletics Leagues in the Archdiocese.* Unlike in some other dioceses where leagues and tournaments are directly under the auspices of and administered by a diocese, athletic leagues in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati function autonomously but in close partnership and cooperation with the Archdiocese. While these leagues are not directly under the authority of the Archbishop, leagues that wish to be identified with Catholic Youth Athletics, serve parish and non-parish school athletics organizations that participate in Catholic Youth Athletics, and schedule/use Facilities, are expected to incorporate the provisions of this Charter (as detailed below) into their Organizational Documents, and to operate in compliance with this Charter and Archdiocesan policies and decisions.

5.1.2 *Leagues in Compliance with Charter.* Leagues that operate in compliance with the provisions of this Charter will be in good standing with the Archdiocese and as such may be identified with Catholic Youth Athletics, and may use Facilities. This section of the Charter describes the criteria to be met by Catholic Youth Athletic leagues serving the Archdiocese in order to be in compliance with the Charter, as assessed by the Commission. Leagues in compliance with this Charter as determined by the Commission may schedule Facilities and organize competitions and tournaments, in close cooperation with the parishes, or non-parish schools, that own and maintain the Facilities.

5.1.3 *Non-Compliance.* If the activities of a league, including its representatives/members, are found not to be in compliance with this Charter by the Commission, the Commission may administer a warning. If the warning is not satisfactorily addressed within the time determined by the Commission, the Commission may place the league on probation (with penalties commensurate with the nature of the non-compliance). If the probationary period expires and the league is still found to be in non-compliance, the Commission may recommend to the Archbishop (or his designee) that the league be suspended until the non-compliance is satisfactorily addressed. Suspension means that the non-compliant league may not be identified with Catholic Youth Athletics, and may not use Facilities until such time as the specifics of non-compliance are satisfactorily addressed, as assessed by the Commission.

5.1.4 *Suspension for Non-Compliance.* In the case of egregious instances of non-compliance, the Commission may move directly to recommending probation or suspension as warranted.

5.1.5 *Relative Size and Resources.* Smaller leagues with fewer resources available to devote to Charter compliance may request and receive assistance from the Commission.

Smaller leagues with fewer resources will not be penalized due to their size or resources, but will receive special assistance from the Commission in reaching compliance.

5.2 League Criteria for Compliance with this Charter

5.2.1 *Approval of Organizational Documents.* In order to be in compliance with this Charter, leagues should have Organizational Documents approved by the Commission, and are expected to be operating in good faith in accord with their Organizational Documents and this Charter; specifically:

5.2.2 *Mission, Goals and Guiding Principles* ([see Section 1, p. 7](#)).

5.2.3 *Children in Catholic Youth Athletics* ([see Section 4, p. 16](#)).

5.2.4 *Legal, Insurance and Financial Matters* ([see Section 7, p. 40](#)).

5.2.5 *Code of Conduct* ([see Section 8, p. 43](#)); *Implementing the Code of Conduct* ([see Section 6.2.12, p. 35](#)); and *Ejection and Suspension* ([see Section 6.2.13, p. 36](#)).

5.2.6 *Scheduling Criteria: Sundays, Triduum, and Religious Education.*

(a) **Sundays and Holy Days:** No scheduling of athletics activities (including games, practices, tournaments, and other meetings) at parishes, schools or at Facilities, on or off-site, on Sundays and Holy Days before 1:00pm (e.g., 1:00pm kickoff, tipoff, starting whistle, etc.). Also, no scheduling of athletics activities on-site at Catholic parishes that adversely affect the parish's worship (for instance due to noise or parking problems) during Saturday and Sunday afternoon and evening liturgies.

(b) **Triduum:** No scheduling of athletics activities (including games, practices, tournaments, and other meetings) on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday or Easter Sunday.

(c) **Religious education and sacramental preparation:** Athletics activities (including games, practices, tournaments, and other meetings) are not to be scheduled when the children involved normally would be attending religious education, sacramental preparation programs and the like. If conflicts occur, programs of religious education, sacramental preparation and the like take precedence. Coaches are expected to support the faith formation of their players, and in no case are children to be penalized (for example, being required to sit out all or part of a game) by coaches or athletic leaders for missing a practice or game due to participation in such programs.

5.2.7 *Catholic Identity and Archdiocesan Policies.*

(a) **Archdiocesan policies:** Insofar as leagues are operating within the Archdiocese

and serving its people, parishes and schools, leagues are expected to abide by and cooperate with Archdiocesan policies, including but not limited to the [Archdiocese of Cincinnati *Decree on Child Protection*](#) and required parental permission/release of liability/medical information forms.

(b) Clear Catholic identity: The language of league Organizational Documents should clearly contain elements of Catholic identity, reflecting the mission, goals and principles described in this Charter.

(c) Prayer: League Organizational Documents should include a provision calling for prayer at all meetings, gatherings, competitions and tournaments, as a consistent, clear and compelling reminder of our Catholic identity. Prayer at competitions and tournaments whenever possible should not be limited to the players on the field but should be offered over the public address system, so all may participate. Minimally prayer should happen before games, but may also happen at other times as appropriate.

5.2.8 *League Governance.*

(a) Effective and participative governance: Open, transparent and public governance structures (typically including a board) with representation from participating parishes and schools, including regular and effective ways for parish or non-parish school athletics organizations and their leaders to influence league decisions and activities (such as through annual evaluations, listening forums, and similar undertakings).

(b) Financial reports: Complete and detailed financial reports each fiscal year, available to the public.

(c) Municipal, state and federal laws: Leagues are expected to abide by municipal, state and federal laws, including but not limited to laws regarding safety of children, reporting of child abuse, concussions, finances, and taxes.

(d) Evaluations: Regular and systematic evaluations by participating parishes, and non-parish schools, athletic organizations, and parents, with results available to participating athletics organizations and parents.

(e) Due process, grievances, appeals, and responsiveness to parishes, schools and athletics organizations: In the spirit of the Mission, Goals and Guiding Principles of this Charter, leagues should be responsive to requests and grievances as they arise. League Organizational Documents should include clear and reasonable due processes to ensure that participating athletics organizations, parents and children will have satisfactory recourse in the event of grievances. League decisions will be final; however, an appeal may be made to the Commission if (a) due process as described in the league's Organizational Documents has been claimed to have been violated; or

(b) other non-compliance with the league's Organizational Documents and this Charter has been credibly alleged.

5.2.9 *League Operations.*

(a) Recruiting: Recruiting outside of one's parish or school (or in the case of combined teams, outside those parishes and schools) is prohibited.

(b) Limits on Games and Tournaments: Specific, age-appropriate and sport-appropriate limits on numbers of games and tournaments are expected to be established by each league, and detailed in its Organizational Documents.

(c) School day evening competitions and practices: On school days (other than Fridays) no competitions or practices should be scheduled to start after 8:30pm.

(d) Safety of Facilities: Leagues should select Facilities in good condition and suitable for the participating children. Leagues should not allow play or practice at Facilities where there is any apparent safety concern. The size of some gyms makes them suitable only for young children, and unsafe for older children, so leagues should determine the suitability of Facilities for certain age groups.

(e) Competitive balance: Leagues should, within the limits of their capabilities, establish competitive balance in regular competition and in tournaments. Provisions for this will vary from sport to sport and according to ages, sizes of teams, and other similar factors.

(f) Playing time: Leagues should establish norms for playing time in accord with the provisions detailed in [Section 4.4 \(p. 23\)](#) of this Charter. ***Those leagues that manage the same sport in different locales of the Archdiocese should have the same playing time policies.***

(g) Medical preparedness: Leagues should establish standards of medical preparedness regarding responding to the kinds of injuries that may typically occur in given athletic activities; and they should communicate those standards effectively to participating athletics organizations and competing teams.

(h) Lightning, inclement weather: Leagues should use the same policy as detailed elsewhere in this Charter ([see Section 4.3.3, p. 21](#)).

(i) Age of participating children: Leagues should use the best available information on appropriate practices regarding the suitability of organized competition at certain ages, relative to the given sport. Age limits for children in grades 6-12 normally will follow state guidelines. In every case the safety and well-being of children should be paramount (see [Section 4](#), especially [4.4, "Playing Time," p. 23](#)).

(j) “Playing up” and “playing down”: Decisions to move children to a higher (“up”) or lower (“down”) level of competition should be made by competent and conscientious league and athletics leaders, with the needs, safety and well-being of the children paramount. If a person is moved “up” or “down” to complete a team, or due to size, weight or age, that person is expected to stay there for the duration of the season. Playing “down” a larger or more athletic child in order to increase the competitiveness of a team is prohibited.

(k) League registration procedures: Leagues should establish and maintain consistent, ongoing practices of managing registrations to avoid any semblance of preferential treatment. All registration deadlines should be clearly communicated and implemented, firmly and consistently, with respect to all participants.

SECTION 6. Youth Athletics Organizations of Parishes and Non-Parish Schools

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 *Role of Catholic Athletics Organizations.* The athletics organizations of our parishes, and non-parish schools, are the heart and soul of Catholic Youth Athletics. It's the place where the Catholic identity of participants, coaches and teams is authentically affirmed, modeled, and lived out. This Charter understands the parish, and non-parish school, athletics organization to be:

- (a) An integral part of the mission, ministries, and life of the parish, or non-parish school, and committed to that mission above and beyond other considerations;
- (b) Under the direct authority of the Pastor (parish) or principal (non-parish school);
- (c) Part of the youth ministry of the Catholic Church, with leaders, coaches, adult volunteers, and parents who understand the youth ministry mission of Catholic Youth Athletics ([see Section 1, p. 7](#));
- (d) Guided by the mission, goals and principles of this Charter ([see Section 1, p. 7](#)); and,
- (e) A source of inspiration, character development, virtue and Catholic Christian behavior that ideally will be beyond reproach.

6.1.2 *Criteria for Compliance.* This section of the Charter describes the criteria for the athletics organizations of Archdiocesan parishes, and non-parish schools, to be in compliance with this Charter. It is expected that the criteria detailed here will be met by our athletics organizations as assessed by the Commission in order to be in compliance with the Charter. Athletics organizations in compliance with this Charter as determined by the Commission may be identified with Catholic Youth Athletics, may compete with other participating Catholic Youth Athletics entities, and may use the Facilities, including conducting meetings, practices, competitions and tournaments, under the authority of the Pastor or non-parish school principal, as the case may be.

6.1.3 *Non-Compliance.* If the activities of a particular athletics organization, including its representatives/members, are found not to be in compliance with this Charter by the Commission, the Commission may administer a warning; if the warning is not

satisfactorily addressed within the time determined by the Commission, the Commission may recommend to the Pastor, or principal of a non-parish school, that the athletics organization be placed on probation (with penalties commensurate with the non-compliance). If the probationary period expires and the athletics organization is still found to be in non-compliance, the Commission may recommend to the Archbishop (or his designee) and the Pastor, or principal of a non-parish school, that the athletics organization be suspended until the non-compliance is satisfactorily addressed. Suspension means the athletics organization in question may not be identified with Catholic Youth Athletics, may not compete with other participating Catholic Youth Athletics entities, and may not use Facilities.

6.1.5 *Suspension for Non-Compliance.* In the case of egregious instances of non-compliance, the Commission may move directly to recommending probation or suspension as warranted.

6.1.6 *Approval of Organizational Documents.* Athletics organizations should have Organizational Documents approved by the Commission, and are expected to be operating in good faith in accord with their Organizational Documents.

6.1.7 *Relative Size and Resources.* Athletics organizations of smaller parishes and schools that have fewer resources available to devote to Charter compliance may request and receive assistance from the Commission. Smaller athletics organizations with fewer resources will not be penalized due to their size or resources, but will receive special assistance from the Commission in reaching compliance.

6.2 Athletics Organizations' Criteria for Compliance with this Charter

6.2.1 *Required Elements.* The Organizational Documents of parish, and non-parish school, athletics organizations should include the following:

6.2.2 *The Ministry Mission of the Athletics Organization.* The youth ministry mission of the parish or school is the mission of the parish, or non-parish school, athletics organization. Regardless of formal title (for example "Boosters" or "Athletics Board") the athletics organization normally is an extension of the mission and youth ministry efforts of the parish, or non-parish school. Athletics organizations are responsible for organizing, coordinating and sustaining high quality athletics experiences for young people that build up their faith, character, virtues, self-confidence, communication capabilities and leadership skills, in the context of athletics. Athletics organizations stand in for Jesus when he says, "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matt. 19:14

6.2.3 *Structure, governance, operations.*

(a) Parish or school liaison: There should be a clear organizational connection between the athletics organization and parish, or non-parish school, under the

authority of the Pastor, or principal of a non-parish school, if possible with a staff member assigned as the representative of the Pastor or principal to the athletics organization.

(b) Accountability: The athletics organization should be accountable to the Pastor, or principal of a non-parish school, (including resources, finances, buildings, insurance, and other matters).

(c) Spiritual Liaison: The athletics organization should establish a Spiritual Liaison ([see Section 6.2.14, p. 36](#)).

(d) Stewardship: The athletics organization should be a fiscally responsible steward of its monies and other resources, with revenues and expenses accounted for through normal parish, or non-parish school, financial accounting.

6.2.4 *The Mission, Goals and Principles of this Charter* ([see Section 1, p. 7](#)).

6.2.5 *Children in Catholic Youth Athletics* ([see Section 4, p. 16](#)).

6.2.6 *Legal, Insurance and Financial Matters* ([See Section 7, p. 40](#)).

6.2.7 *Code of Conduct* ([see Section 8, p. 43](#)).

6.2.8 *Scheduling Criteria: Sundays, Triduum, and Religious Education.*

(a) Sundays and Holy Days: No scheduling of athletics activities (including games, practices, tournaments, and other meetings) at parishes, schools or at Facilities, on or off-site, on Sundays and Holy Days before 1:00pm (e.g., 1:00pm kickoff, tipoff, starting whistle, etc.). Also, no scheduling of athletics activities on-site at Catholic parishes that adversely affect the parish's worship (for instance due to noise or parking problems) during Saturday and Sunday afternoon and evening liturgies.

(b) Triduum: No scheduling of athletics activities (including games, practices, tournaments, and other meetings) on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday or Easter Sunday.

(c) Religious education and sacramental preparation: Athletics activities (including games, practices, tournaments, and other meetings) are not to be scheduled when the children involved normally would be attending religious education, sacramental preparation programs and the like. If conflicts occur, programs of religious education, sacramental preparation and the like take precedence. Coaches are expected to support the faith formation of their players, and in no case are children to be penalized (for example, being required to sit out all or part of a game) by coaches or athletics leaders for missing a practice or game due to religious education, sacramental preparation, or participation in Sacraments.

6.2.9 *Coaches in Catholic Youth Athletics.* If athletics organizations are responsible for overseeing the youth ministry mission of youth athletics, then it's the coaches and the

adults that assist them in the day-to-day meetings, practices, games and tournaments who are key to making youth athletics a ministry with young people and their families. Their roles are twofold: to develop young athletes, and to help form young Christians. Athletics organizations are expected to exercise great care and attention in the recruitment, selection, preparation, training and support of coaches. Our children – God's precious children – are in their hands. Coaches of teams under Catholic auspices in the Archdiocese should:

- (a) Charter compliance: Abide by and uphold the Organizational Documents of the athletics organization and the mission, goals, principles, policies and procedures of this Charter, including the [Archdiocese of Cincinnati Decree on Child Protection](#), and the Code of Conduct ([see Section 8, p. 43](#)).
- (b) Sportsmanship: Represent the team with a high level of sportsmanship, integrity and respect towards team, parents and opponents at all times (sidelines and practices included).
- (c) Player development: Support and assist in the spiritual, emotional, social and physical development of all players by providing opportunities for athletic skills training, character development, and spiritual growth.
- (d) Faith and spirit: Work with the athletic organization's Spiritual Liaison to ensure an environment conducive to growth in faith, character, and virtues. Reinforce with children and their families the importance of faith and religious practices including Sunday Mass, Holy Days of Obligation and regular, ongoing religious education.
- (e) Regular prayer: Ensure that prayer happens at each practice and game.
- (f) Head coaches:
 - (i) Ensure that assistant coaches are clear on the Code of Conduct (see Section 8, p. 43) and how they are expected to enforce it in practice. All coaches, including head coaches, are expected to sign and submit copies of the Code of Conduct affirming their commitment to it. These should be retained and kept on file at the parish, or non-parish school.
 - (ii) Meet prior to the beginning of each season with the Spiritual Liaison to review evaluations from the previous season or year, and to plan for ongoing quality improvement.

6.2.10 *Coach Recruiting and Selection.*

- (a) Age Requirements:
- (i) Head coach (at high school or elementary levels): A head coach should be at least 21 years of age and in compliance with the *Decree on Child Protection*.
 - (ii) Coach (at high school level): At least 21 years of age and in compliance with the *Decree on Child Protection*.
 - (iii) Coach (at elementary level): At least 19 years of age, a high school graduate, and in compliance with the *Decree on Child Protection*.
- (b) Criteria:
- (i) In recruiting and selecting coaches for teams, athletics organizations are expected to seek out, recruit and select persons based on these criteria:
 - A. Virtues: Lives the values and virtues of the Catholic faith whether or not a member of the Catholic Church.
 - B. Capabilities: Knowledgeable about coaching children in a particular sport.
 - C. Rapport: Exhibits a positive rapport with both children and adults.
 - D. Maturity: Exhibits appropriate maturity (e.g., level-headed, able to control temper, take responsibility for mistakes, accept criticism).
 - E. Commitment: Able to commit the time necessary for preparation, practices and games.
 - (ii) In large organizations with athletics directors and/or head coaches, they are preferred to be active, practicing Catholics in good standing with the Church and active in their parishes.

6.2.11 *Minimum Requirements for Coach Preparation.*

- (a) Compliance with Archdiocese of Cincinnati *Decree on Child Protection* ([see Section 4.3.1, p. 18](#)).
- (b) Annual Coaches' Athletics Ministry Meeting.
- (i) Annual training and updates: The athletics organization is expected to have at least one meeting per year for all coaches in which they receive a presentation of the mission, principles and goals of Catholic Youth Athletics ministry ([see Section 1, p. 7](#)) and Code of Conduct ([see Section 8, p. 43](#)), along with any updates

on safety, Charter developments, Best Practices, changes in parish, or non-parish school, policies or practices, and other matters. Parishes, and non-parish schools, have the option of offering this at least once for everyone or multiple times as per sports seasons.

(ii) Archdiocesan role: The Commission will provide resources to assist in this training.

(c) Annual Evaluations: The athletics organization should secure anonymous, written evaluations of coaches from parents whose children are participating in the athletics program at least on an annual basis, or more frequently during or after sports seasons.

(i) Archdiocesan role: The Commission will provide evaluation forms that may be used by athletics organizations.

(ii) Follow-up: Athletics organization leaders should review evaluations and use them in assisting coaches in their development, counseling them on problems, working with them to correct serious deficiencies, using them to determine that a coach needs to be replaced, and when warranted keeping parish or school leaders informed.

(iii) Record-keeping: Evaluations should be retained for at least three years to allow for continuity of perspective in working with coaches. Leaders of the athletics organization are responsible for establishing a secure and confidential location for these at the parish, or non-parish school.

(d) Best Practice – Biennial Red Cross Certification ([see Section 4.3.6, p. 22](#)).

6.2.12 *Implementing the Code of Conduct* (see Section 8, p. 43 for full Code of Conduct).

(a) Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their players during practices, games, meetings, and tournaments.

(b) Parents are responsible for their own behavior, and the behavior of children in their care.

(c) Commission role: The Commission will provide resources to assist athletics organizations, coaches and parents in implementing the Code of Conduct.

(d) Best Practice – Partnership of coaches and parents: Coaches and parents should be partners in establishing and maintaining the Code of Conduct.

6.2.13 *Ejection and Suspension: Sanctions for Non-Compliance with the Code of Conduct.* Participation on a team and attendance at practices and games are privileges not rights for players, coaches, parents and fans. In the case of a violation of the Code of Conduct, a coach or other official or authorized leader may choose to deliver a warning, or if the violation warrants it the individual may be ejected and suspended, as follows:

(a) Ejection: A coach, parent, or fan who is ejected for any reason must leave the premises (including the field of play, stands, and adjacent areas such as nearby parking lots) and shall be suspended for the next scheduled game. A player who is ejected from the game is not required to leave the premises. However, if a player (or child fan unaccompanied by an adult) is ejected and required to leave the premises, that child should be supervised by at least two adults until the child is directly under the supervision of a parent or guardian, in compliance with the *Decree on Child Protection*.

(b) Suspension: An individual who is suspended shall be prohibited from attending the next game. Suspensions for egregious violations may include multiple games, practices, and other team activities at the discretion of athletics leaders.

Suspension shall follow ejection as a consequence of the violation. Any violation of the suspension or a subsequent violation shall trigger an escalating series of responses, as follows:

<u>Violation</u>	<u>When/Where Occurred</u>	<u>Sanction</u>
First	Before, during, or after a game or practice	Ejection for the rest of the game or practice; attendance at next game prohibited.
Second	Before, during, or after a game or practice	Ejection for the rest of game or practice; attendance at next two games prohibited.
Third	Before, during, or after a game or practice	Attendance at practices, games and any other team activities is prohibited for the rest of the season.

6.2.14 *The Role of the Spiritual Liaison.* As noted above, athletics organizations should have a designated Spiritual Liaison (the “Spiritual Liaison”) as follows:

(a) Selection:

- (i) Catholic: The Spiritual Liaison should be an active Catholic in good standing with the Church. The Spiritual Liaison may be ordained, religious or lay, a paid staff member, or a volunteer.
 - (ii) Appointed by Pastor or principal: In a parish, the Spiritual Liaison should be appointed by the Pastor and report directly to him or his designee. In a non-parish school, the Spiritual Liaison should be appointed by the principal or his or her designee.
- (b) Duties:
- (i) Communication: Responsible for communicating the spirit, mission, goals and principles of this Charter to all in the athletics organization.
 - (ii) Meetings and monitoring: Ensure that the annual coaches' ministry meeting(s) is (are) scheduled. Attend the annual coaches' ministry meeting(s) and monitor attendance at such meetings by the coaches.
 - (iii) Promote ministry spirit: Assist coaches in implementing a spirit of ministry, as reviewed annually at the Coaches' ministry meeting, in practices and games throughout the season.
 - (iv) Evaluations: Participate in end-of-year evaluations of coaches and discussions regarding their return for future years.
 - (v) Resources: Provide resources, including prayers and other resources, to assist coaches in their youth athletics ministry.
 - (vi) Listening: Be a listening ear outside of the athletics organization for coaches, parents or athletes.
 - (vii) Develop guidelines: In consultation with the Pastor, or principal of a non-parish school, and athletics organization leadership, establish any guidelines to be fulfilled by coaches or teams to integrate Catholic/Christian faith and spirituality more fully into the athletics programming.
 - (viii) Grievance Committee: The Spiritual Liaison should be a member of the athletics organization Grievance Committee.
- (c) Evaluation: An annual review of the Spiritual Liaison should take place with the Pastor, or principal of a non-parish school, or designee, with input from coaches and athletics organization leadership.

6.2.15 *Financial Responsibilities.* The athletics organization is responsible for monitoring the completion, accuracy and timely submission of records, reports, documentation and fees as required by the parish or school, Archdiocese and government,

to ensure transparency and accountability regarding the finances of the organization. An organizational officer (e.g., treasurer, vice-president, bookkeeper, or accountant) will be designated to:

- (a) Prepare annual budgets; collect fees and dues; maintain accurate records of receipts and expenditures; and should provide accurate, complete and timely reports as required by the organization, the parish, or non-parish school, the Archdiocese and the government; and
- (b) Pay all outstanding bills promptly upon receipt.

6.2.16 League and Tournament Participation.

- (a) Approved leagues and tournaments: Athletics organizations are expected to participate only in leagues approved by the Pastor, principal of a non-parish school, or the Commission. Tournament participation is limited to tournaments sponsored by leagues, or parishes or schools within the leagues.
- (b) Tournament fees: There shall be no financial or other obligation placed upon parents to participate in more tournaments than those for which the athletics organization has planned and paid.
- (c) Uniforms: Team uniforms are for parish- and/or school-sanctioned activities (e.g., games, tournaments, pep rallies, etc.). Teams are not to wear their uniforms outside parish- and/or school-sanctioned activities.
- (d) Best Practice – Parity between boys and girls: Athletics organizations should strive for parity between boys’ and girls’ athletics.
- (e) Best Practice – Tournament limits: Athletics organizations should establish reasonable and not excessive tournament schedules to avoid undue burdens on families.

6.2.17 Grievance Committees and Grievance Due Processes. The Archdiocese and its parishes and school are committed to a safe and healthy environment for children, parents, coaches and spectators at all athletic events that take place in its name. Effective communication between athletics organizations, leagues, parents and children, inspired by Christian ideals, is an essential element of Archdiocesan athletics programs. Moreover, the Catholic principle of subsidiarity calls for matters to be handled at the lowest possible level, so that grievances are best managed and settled locally between people of good faith. In order to ensure healthy and effective communications especially in situations of disagreement or conflict, athletics organizations shall include the following in their Organizational Documents:

- (a) Grievance process: This is the step-by-step due process to be used in the event of problems or conflicts with coaches, parents or athletes within the

organization. Such a process likely will vary with the size of the parish, or non-parish school, the size of the athletics organization, and the numbers and sizes of teams. The steps will include where to initially register a grievance, how the grievance will be handled from there, how final decisions will be made, and will be characterized by a presumption of good faith, Christian charity, personal responsibility, adherence to the principles of this Charter, and a commitment to both the well-being of children and the common good of the faith community.

(b) **Grievance Committee:** The Grievance Committee of the athletics organization is the group responsible for managing the grievance process. Its purpose is to effectively manage and resolve any problems or conflicts in the athletics program that have reached the point of initiating that process. The Grievance Committee normally will consist of 3-5 members, including the Spiritual Liaison, Pastor, or principal of a non-parish school, or official designee, and the president of the athletics organization. Decisions of the Grievance Committee are final; however, an appeal may be made to the Commission if: (a) due process as described in the Organizational Documents of the athletics organization has been claimed to have been violated; or (b) other non-compliance with the athletic organization’s Organizational Documents and this Charter has been credibly alleged.

6.2.18 *Other Criteria.*

(a) **Family-friendly environment:** Provide a family-friendly environment free of alcohol, tobacco or any illegal controlled substances (for example, no “tailgating” where alcohol is present onsite at practices, games or tournaments).

(b) **Best Practice – Electronic communications:** Use electronic communications and social media to promote the growth and development of youth through the Catholic faith, in accord with Archdiocesan policies on social media.

(c) **Best Practice – Resources:** The athletics organization should provide resources to coaches and parents on Catholic Youth Athletics ministry.

(d) **Best Practice – Assist parents:** Assist parents in their role as primary in the faith formation of their children.

(e) **Best Practice – Alignment with parish/school programming:** Align with the other youth ministry programming of the parish, or non-parish school.

(f) **Best Practice – Foster spirit:** Work to foster parish, or non-parish school, spirit and pride.

(g) **Best Practice – Partnerships:** Cultivate partnerships with other aspects or ministries of the parishes, or non-parish schools, and with organizations and businesses in the community.

SECTION 7. Legal, Insurance, and Financial Matters

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 *Compliance with Laws and Policies.* The provisions of this Charter are based upon the intent of the Archbishop, the Archdiocese and its agents and institutions, to abide by all Church, Archdiocesan, federal, state, and local laws and policies.

7.1.2 *Compliance with Charter Required as a Condition of Participation.* As a condition to being identified with Catholic Youth Athletics, organizing competitions with other participating Catholic Youth Athletics entities, and using Facilities, leagues, athletics organizations, athletics leaders, coaches and any other representatives of the Catholic Church are responsible for conducting youth athletics in compliance with this Charter. Individuals and organizations found to be not in compliance with this Charter will no longer enjoy the privileges connected with Catholic Youth Athletics, including but not limited to:

- (a) Being permitted to be identified with Catholic Youth Athletics;
- (b) Being allowed to participate in Catholic Youth Athletics;
- (c) Being allowed to use Facilities; and
- (d) Having access to parish or school communications to convey information about youth athletics.

7.2 Transportation

7.2.1 *Transportation Laws and Policies.* The same laws, policies and guidelines that govern other Archdiocesan programs, schools and ministries are in effect for athletics programs under Catholic parish or school auspices, as follows:

- (a) Laws:
 - (i) In an automobile, all passengers must wear seat belts, with no more than one passenger per seat belt.
 - (ii) Schools must transport by bus (by mandate of the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Revised Code).
- (b) Policies:
 - (i) If it becomes necessary for any priest, deacon, auxiliary services personnel, personnel furnished by a third party contractor, employee or volunteer to provide

transportation for children, the following guidelines must be strictly observed:

- A. Priests, deacons, auxiliary services personnel, personnel furnished by a third party contractor, employees or volunteers must never transport one child alone. There are expected to be at least two adults in every vehicle that transports children. In exceptional situations, it may be permitted for one adult to transport children in a vehicle, provided a caravan of vehicles goes directly from point A to point B, with no stops in between;
- B. When traveling in a caravan there must be a minimum of one adult in every vehicle. If a vehicle is traveling alone, there must be at least two adults in the vehicle;
- C. Children must be directly transported to their destination, or make only previously planned stops (e.g. stopping for food or gas on a long trip). If an emergency stop must be made, all reasonable efforts must be made to ensure that two adults are present (e.g. calling another car in the caravan to pull over as well);
- D. Children must never be transported without written permission from the child's parent or guardian;
- E. Clerics, auxiliary services personnel, personnel furnished by a third party contractor, employees or any volunteers must avoid unnecessary physical contact with children while in the vehicle.

(ii) 15-passenger vans have been prohibited since May 2005 as per the recommendation of the General Secretary of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

7.2.2 Archdiocesan Recommendations and Clarifications.

- (a) For liability reasons, the Archdiocese prefers that buses rented from a third-party who supplies the driver are used for transportation.
- (b) When Church leaders are providing transportation for an event, a teen may drive him or herself (and siblings) only with written permission of the parent or guardian. They may not transport other passengers.
- (c) The driver's insurance is the primary insurance coverage, not the Archdiocese.
- (d) If an event begins and ends at the site of an activity, the Church leader does not need to organize the transportation.
- (e) Church leaders never organize transportation for parish or school events using drivers under the age of 21.

7.3 Bookkeeping and Accounting

7.3.1 Policies regarding financial bookkeeping, accounting, and accountability.

Athletics organizations that are part of a Catholic parish or school are governed by Archdiocesan policy with regard to financial bookkeeping, accounting, and accountability. As such, like all other organizations, ministry groups, or committees of a parish or school, they are responsible to and under the direct authority of the Pastor, or principal of a non-parish school, for timely, accurate and complete financial reports.

7.3.2 Transparency. To avoid the appearance or reality of malfeasance, parish and non-parish school athletics organizations, and the athletics leagues that serve them, are expected to maintain well-organized and transparent systems of financial record-keeping and accountability.

SECTION 8. Catholic Youth Athletics Code of Conduct

8.1 Introduction

All who are involved in Catholic Youth Athletics are expected to conduct themselves as examples of Christian behavior. This is essential and expected as a witness to the mission of the ministry of Catholic Youth Athletics, both on the field of play and away from it. The conduct of coaches and players in practices and in competitions has a powerful impact on the conduct of parents and fans, the love of the sport, and the reputation of the Catholic faith community. This Code of Conduct extends to all events or activities sanctioned or sponsored by athletics organizations; including but not limited to meetings, games, practices, travel to and from events, attendance at another team’s game, camps, players’ clinics, officials’ clinics, and during other related activities. Any violations of this Code of Conduct will be subject to disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the athletics organization leadership, and/or league leadership.

8.2 Code of Conduct

There are four sections to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Youth Athletics Code of Conduct, as follows:

8.2.1 *Spirit of Catholic Youth Athletics.*

(a) Treat everyone with respect and love according to the Great Commandments: “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.” Matt. 22:37-40

(b) Demonstrate good sportsmanship, patience, manners and an attitude indicative of the spirit and mission of the Catholic Church.

8.2.2 *Adherence to Laws, Rules and Policies.*

(a) Catholic canon law and Archdiocesan laws and policies including, but not limited to, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati *Decree on Child Protection*.

(b) Federal, state, and local laws and ordinances.

(c) The mission, goals, principles, and policies of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Charter on Catholic Youth Athletics, and those of the Organizational Documents of

participating athletics organizations and leagues.

8.2.3 *Specific Violations.*

- (a) Eligibility: Violation of the eligibility policies of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Youth Athletics Charter, including using an ineligible player.
- (b) Recruiting: No recruiting for athletic purposes or to enhance a team's competitive advantage is permitted.
- (c) Leaving the field of play: No team may leave the field, floor, game or tournament because of dissatisfaction with the officials, or their decisions.
- (d) Losing control: Coaches are expected to control their own conduct and the conduct of their players and report to the league and Commission instances where opponents, officials, parents, or fans have failed to control their own conduct.
- (e) Running up the score: It is not permitted to humiliate an opposing team by playing in such a way so as to intentionally run up the score after the outcome of the game is no longer in question.
- (f) Inappropriate communication and behavior: The use of inappropriate, insulting, disrespectful, bullying and demeaning language or behavior before, during or after meetings, practices or games by players, coaches, officials, parents, fans, site personnel, volunteers, or others involved in any parish athletics program is prohibited. Also prohibited are physical intimidation and the use of profane, vulgar, abusive or sexually-oriented language, in oral, written or electronic forms of communication (such as texting or email), by players, coaches, officials, parents, site personnel, volunteers, or fans.
- (g) Escalating behaviors: Behaviors that incite others to act in ways that are in direct conflict with the spirit of Catholic Youth Athletics are prohibited.
- (h) Vandalism and theft: There will be no vandalism, theft, or destruction of property at any athletics venue.
- (i) Alcohol, tobacco, illegal controlled substances: No alcohol, tobacco, or any illegal controlled substance is permitted at practices, league competitions, or tournaments where children are present (such as "tailgating" where alcohol is present). Athletics organizations are expected to establish and communicate zero tolerance policies regarding alcohol, tobacco, and illegal controlled substances at competitions, tournaments and gatherings where children are present.

8.2.4 *General Violations.* Activities that are contrary to the mission, goals, principles, values, provisions or spirit of Catholic Youth Athletics as described in this Charter are prohibited.



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