

**“Huskies”**

**2021-2022**

**ATHLETICS PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

***“CHARACTER THROUGH ATHLETICS”***

**Holy Trinity Catholic Academy  
503 Shelton Avenue  
Shelton, CT 06484  
203-929-4422**

**<http://www.holytrinitycatholicacademy.org>**

Dear Parents, Students, and Coaches:

*"[I] consider sports as an instrument of education when it fosters high human and spiritual ideals; when it forms youth in an integral way in values such as loyalty, perseverance, friendship, solidarity and peace. Surmounting differences of cultures and ideologies, sports offers an ideal occasion for dialogue and understanding among peoples, for building the desired civilization of love; to put into practice these values, based on the dignity of the human person, in face of possible interests that might darken the nobility of sports itself."*

- Pope John Paul II (Sept. 16, 2002)

**\*Please be aware that ALL COVID PROTOCOLS MUST be followed  
by all who are a part of the HTCA Sports Program in any manner.**

Welcome to Holy Trinity Catholic Academy!

As a school community, we all must consider the appropriate role of athletics here at HTCA. A core characteristic of Catholic Christianity and Catholic schools is the concept of relationship and community and the conviction that human kind is "made for each other" (*Educating for Life*, Thomas Groome, p.60). Our prayer is stronger in community. Academic achievement is greater in a community with a similar mission and goals. Our athletic program adds another dimension to our school community. Pope John Paul II says that as manifestations of the communal body of Christ, athletics serve to unify all individuals, including coaches, student-athletes, and families in a spirit of peace.

This handbook outlines the philosophy and reflects the policies of the HTCA Athletics Program for the 2021-2022 school year. Please read this document carefully, sign the attached agreement, and return it to school before attending the first practice date. The agreement states that you intend to abide by the policies of the HTCA Athletics Program during the 2021-2022 school year.

Our Athletics Program extends the work of HTCA by offering another environment in which high human and spiritual ideals can be fostered to help children grow towards a deeper understanding of themselves and their roles in God's great world. Thank you for doing your part to help positively affect and develop the lives of all children by building a peaceful environment within our school, our parish, and in our larger community.

In peace,



Dennis Kelly, Athletic Director

# **HTCA ATHLETICS**

## ***HTCA Mission Statement***

HTCA offers a Christ centered education while providing an academically challenging program. In fostering the Catholic philosophy of serving God and community, and by instilling a lifelong desire for learning, each child is prepared spiritually, intellectually, and socially to become a loving citizen and a disciple of Jesus Christ.

## ***HTCA Athletics Program Mission***

The HTCA Athletics Program dedicates itself to the pursuit of excellence in athletics within the framework of a Catholic community and in accordance with its primary role as an educator and spiritual guide. The Athletics Program is committed to providing opportunities for each individual student-athlete to reach his/her highest potential while developing the qualities and spirit of a Catholic Christian utilizing a Core Gospel Values approach.

## ***HTCA Athletics Program Philosophy:***

*“Do you not know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? Run so as to win. Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one.” Corinthians 9:24-25*

As a Catholic school, HTCA upholds Christian values and principles. Though our athletic teams strive to win in the sense of having the best score, we recognize the real value of Catholic school athletics is realized only if it fosters the development of the human person—both in spirit and in body—by cultivating Christian character, strengthening personal integrity and responsibility, and promoting the pursuit of excellence in all endeavors. **Participation on a team is a privilege.** With this privilege come responsibilities in the areas of preparation, attitude, sportsmanship, and academics. These responsibilities exist both in and out of school, both in athletic and non-athletic settings. We recognize the need for God’s support and guidance in meeting these responsibilities.

## ***Conference Affiliation:***

The HTCA 5<sup>th</sup> Grade through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade boys and girls participate in several local leagues (i.e. St. Ann; Shehan Center) depending on team preferences and needs. Our 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Graders participate in the HTCA run and sponsored “Suburban League.”

# **REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

## ***Nondiscriminatory Policy***

HTCA Athletics Program admits any students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its participatory policies, admissions policies, or athletic programs.

## **Athletic Registration Form**

Students wishing to participate in sports will complete the HTCA Program Athletics Registration on or before October 15<sup>th</sup>.

Any student who decides to participate on a team after the deadline should see the Athletic Director before attending practice. Deadlines are not intended to prevent a student from participating on a sports team, but they are necessary to make sure that team sizes do not become too large to allow for proper instruction of participants. Registration need only be completed one time during the school year.

## **Pre-Season Orientation Meeting**

Prior to beginning each season, the Athletic Director will hold a meeting for all potential student-athletes and their parents. During this meeting the Athletic Handbook will be reviewed. The coaches will also facilitate a discussion group during this meeting to introduce themselves and share their expectations specific to their sport. Parents should contact the Athletic Director prior to the meeting should they not be able to attend.

## ***Fees***

2021-2022 Sports Participation Fees:

Winter:

- Basketball: \$TBA
- Cheer: \$TBA

Spring:

- Cross Country: \$TBA
- Volleyball: \$TBA
- Golf: \$TBA

Other sports will be considered, such as tennis and soccer, based on availability of coaches, facilities and player interest.

For those families who have more than one child participating in the Athletics Program for the 2021-2022 season, each additional child is half price.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## *Levels of Competition*

Development of the skills fundamental to sport receives primary emphasis on each athletic team offered at our school. Each team experience, however, may be slightly different depending on the level at which the team is competing.

LEVEL	<b>Varsity</b> Teams at this level strive to prepare students for high school athletics	<b>Junior Varsity</b> Teams at this level serve as transitions from the developmental level to varsity level teams.	<b>JJV and Developmental</b> Though each team at HTCA emphasizes the development of fundamental skills, the *Suburban League will offer an optional “developmental” team for very first timers depending on sign-up and demand.
COMMITMENT REQUIRED	<i>High</i> Students and families must commit to ~4 events a week—practice, games, scrimmages, etc.  *attendance at Sunday practices and practices during holiday breaks may be requested.	<i>Moderate</i> Students and families must commit to ~4 events a week—practice, games, scrimmages, etc.  *attendance at Sunday practices and practices during holiday breaks may be requested.	<i>Low</i>
TRYOUTS	<i>Varies according to sign up interest and capacity</i>	<i>Varies according to sign up interest and capacity</i>	<i>None</i>
COMPETITION	Officiated games against other schools as well as tournament and non-conference games. Season ends with a conference and Diocesan tournament	Officiated games against other schools as well as tournament and nonconference games. Season ends with a conference and Diocesan tournament	Suburban League games provide participating athletes opportunities to practice learned skills in competitive game situations that have modified rules enforcement that place an emphasis on learning and development. Suburban league games are officiated by IAABO board (IAABO.org) certified refs.
PLAYING TIME	3 minute minimum	3 minute minimum.	All athletes participate with emphasis on equal playing time for each athlete
SKILLS EMPHASIZED	-Advancing game strategies - Leadership skills on and off the field/court -Individual fundamentals reinforced and extended	-Importance of next level conditioning, team dynamics and skill development -Formal game strategies introduced - Tournament play and Diocesan playoffs	-Basic individual fundamentals -Introduction to team dynamics and rules of formal competition

Suburban League: HTCA runs basketball league for 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Boys and Girls. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade team is a “developmental” (introductory) level team that will play a limited practice and game schedule with modified rules. Games are held at the HTCA gym during the season.

SEASON	GIRLS	BOYS
Winter	<p><i>Basketball</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varsity – 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades</li> <li>• Junior Varsity – 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades</li> <li>• JJV – 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades</li> </ul> <p><i>Cheerleading</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades</li> </ul>	<p><i>Basketball</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varsity – 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades</li> <li>• Junior Varsity – 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades</li> <li>• JJV – 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades</li> </ul> <p><i>Cheerleading</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades</li> </ul>
Spring	<p><i>Golf, Volleyball and Cross Country</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades</li> </ul>	<p><i>Golf, Volleyball and Cross Country</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades</li> </ul>

### ***Transportation Policy***

In accordance with the policies of the Diocese of Bridgeport, HTCA does not provide any transportation to or from athletic events. **All transportation is privately arranged by parents/guardians.** HTCA and the Diocese of Bridgeport assume no liability for accidents that may occur en route to any sporting practice or activity.

## **COACHING EXPECTATIONS and REQUIREMENTS**

Coaches are first and foremost educators and must work in coordination with the parents who are the primary educators of children. At all times, coaches must be examples of Christ the Teacher who serve as role models for student-athletes to emulate. They must be messengers of the school mission and ensure that athletic programs embody the Catholic characteristics prevalent at HTCA.

HTCA Athletics Program also embraces the values and principles developed by the following organizations:

- **Positive Coaching Alliance (positivecoach.org):**

All coaches will be offered the opportunity to be certified as “Double Goal” coaches. Positive Coaching principles provide our coaches with a “how to coach” set of skills. Positive Coach “Double Goal Coach” training roots our coaches in fostering a winning attitude in our children but emphasizes the most important goal of teaching life lessons through sports.

- **Character Counts (charactercounts.org):**

Our affiliation with the Character Counts organization assists our coaches to best understand “why we coach” and that is to build in our children outstanding sportsmanship and character traits while pursuing victory with honor.

### Goal Setting

When working with HTCA student-athletes, a successful coach will work towards goals in the following three dimensions: team, personal, and school.

#### **Team Goals**

HTCA coaches build a team by:

1. Advancing the athletes’ understanding of their role as members of the communal body of Christ.
2. Creating a positive and memorable experience that will be cherished by the student athlete for the rest of his/her life.
3. Teaching the specific and unique skills of this sport to the very best of his/her abilities by using all means, methods, and resources available.
4. Teaching the skills of healthy competition that will prepare athletes and the team to succeed.

#### **Personal Goals**

HTCA coaches grow as individuals by:

1. Modeling character, sportsmanship, self-discipline, and a lived faith.
2. Appreciating the moments of grace throughout a season, at times of winning and losing.
3. Becoming a lifelong learner of their sport.
4. Maintaining perspective in and throughout all athletic endeavors, realizing teachable moments exist in all experiences.
5. Fostering positive relationships with all school community stakeholders.

## **School Goals**

HTCA coaches contribute to the school community by:

1. Infusing the Gospel Values and school mission in all athletic activities.
2. Promoting academic excellence as an essential component in the development of student-athletes.
3. Committing to effective communication with administrators, teachers, parents, and athletes.
4. Supporting the development of student-athletes as leaders and role models in the greater school community.
5. Creating a culture of school unity and spirit as exemplified through sportsmanship, positive fan participation, and respect for all.

## **Conduct of Coaches**

Coaches are called to be models and witnesses to their faith each day and as such, coaches are expected to uphold high standards of conduct in and out of season.

## **Language**

Language should be appropriate and constructive at all times. Coaches are expected to not only monitor their own language, but they should also set and enforce standards of appropriate language for their athletes. This includes, but is not limited to swearing, harassment, exclusionary language, sexual innuendo, personal attacks, and unsportsmanlike gestures.

## **Treatment of Opponents**

Although opponents are not a part of our school community, they are members of the larger body of Christ and should be treated as such. Coaches should model such respect for their athletes and should instruct players on how to welcome their opponents and all visitors in a way that conveys a sense of hospitality and community.

## **Prayer**

Athletic experiences play an important role in the spiritual formation of students at HTCA. Genuine and lasting spiritual development is only possible through careful and conscientious preparation by those in leadership positions. Coaches, as team leaders, are chosen not just to be mentors and role models for student-athletes, but also to be witnesses. Prayer should become an intentional component to a team's culture, not just a rushed event before or after a game or practice. Rather than emphasizing winning, prayers should focus on embodying the spirit of Christianity. Coaches are encouraged to build and create spiritual traditions into their approach to coaching at HTCA.

## Coaching Duties

In addition to serving as witnesses and models of faith, Holy Trinity coaches are expected to fulfill the following duties:

- Plan out practices and games
- Supervise athletes at all times until they are picked up from practices/games
- Condition athletes properly
- Assign volunteers when/where needed for “front door” administration and other activities as needed
- Assess athletes’ readiness for practice & competition
- Instruct properly on what to do and what not to do
- Maintain safe playing conditions
- Ensure cleanliness of facilities
- Provide proper equipment
- Communicate practice and game schedule to athletes and parents
- Select, train, and supervise assistant coaches
- Certify as Virtus trained coaches

## Virtus

**All coaches and referees MUST be Virtus trained.** The VIRTUS programs empower organizations and people to better control risk and improve the lives of all those who interact with the Church.

More info and training registration and schedule can be found at: <https://virtusonline.org/virtus>

## Communication with Athletes and Parents

Holy Trinity coaches should establish clear procedures and guidelines for communication with athletes and parents that align with the philosophy and mission of HTCA. **Mrs. Lanni, Head of School, MUST be copied on all email correspondence.** E-mail should be used only to communicate basic information, such as time and location of games and practices. Discussions of concerns should always be done in person. If a face-to-face meeting is not possible, a phone call is acceptable. Before meetings, establish clear agendas and communicate that certain topics will not be discussed. Coaches do not have to discuss playing time, coaching strategies and specific plays, or information pertaining to other athletes.

## Awards and Recognition

The Athletics Program hosts an annual Sports Appreciation Dinner at the conclusion of the spring season. Coaches are expected to attend the evening to publicly introduce their players and summarize their season. Recognition of athletes, however, should be utilized throughout the season as a means of personal athlete formation and team-building. Particular recognition of athletes should embody the goals and philosophies of the athletic department and program, not only physical talent. Some areas of recognition may include one’s academics, sportsmanship, and Catholic nature/spirituality.

HTCA Athletics Programs awards a \$250 scholarship at the annual banquet to a graduating 8<sup>th</sup> grade boy and girl who have exemplified the truest ideals of the Holy Trinity Sports Program during their athletic career.

## **STUDENT EXPECTATIONS and REQUIREMENTS**

Students and parents should recognize that **participation in the Athletics Program is not a right of all students, but rather a privilege** to those selected individuals who possess the ability, attitude, disposition, cooperative spirit, and desire to represent the HTCA community in a favorable way. By joining the HTCA Athletics Program, a student becomes a representative of his/her team and of HTCA.

### **Eligibility and Probation**

We expect student-athletes to maintain academic and behavioral standards in keeping with the HTCA Parent-Student Handbook and the teachings of the Catholic Church. These regulations and procedures apply while on school premises, during practices and competitions, and in the public arena.

A student will be considered ELIGIBLE to participate in interscholastic athletics at HTCA if their most recent academic report card or progress report reflects:

- ❖ A grade of C- or better in all subjects
- ❖ A grade of 1, 2, or 3 in conduct for all subjects (a 3 is a concern and needs improvement)

A student-athlete will be considered ON PROBATION should his/her most recent academic report card or progress report reflect any one or a combination of the following academic grades or conduct:

1. A grade of D+ or lower in any subject
2. A grade of 4 in conduct in any subject

A student-athlete will also be considered ON PROBATION, by the decision of the Head of School, should his/her behavior require:

1. Removal from a classroom
2. After-school detention
3. Out-of-school suspension

Probation is one, two (2)-week period during which a student-athlete works to improve his/her grades and/or conduct. During this two-week period, a student is still considered a full, participating member of the athletic team; however, students will not be allowed to attend practices. *This probationary time should be spent wisely in improving one's grades and conduct.* Student-athletes are encouraged to seek extra help from those teachers in courses where he/she is struggling either before school or after school. HTCA faculty and staff are always willing to assist students in their academic studies and personal growth as young adults.

The only exception to the two-week probationary period is the *Incomplete*. As soon as the student-athlete makes up the work that caused the incomplete AND the work is to the satisfaction of the appropriate teacher, the student-athlete is no longer on probation.

### **Evaluating Probationary Improvement**

A student-athlete remains a full, participating member of a team if his/her grades at the end of the probationary two-week period reflect a passing average or better in every class, and the student-athlete maintained conduct in keeping with the HTCA Parent-Student Handbook and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

### **Ineligibility**

A student-athlete will be considered *INELIGIBLE* for interscholastic sports at HTCA should there be no improvement after the two-week probationary period. *Ineligibility* means that a student-athlete may NOT participate in interscholastic athletics at HTCA for the remainder of the season. This will result in the removal of the student from the team's roster.

All student-athletes are allowed one (1) probationary period per school year. Should a student-athlete fail to meet the academic and behavior standards outlined above more than once during a school year, he/she will be considered ineligible and will no longer be permitted to participate in interscholastic sports at HTCA for the remainder of the school year.

### **Student-Athlete Expectations**

A student-athlete's behavior is governed by the same rules, regulations, and procedures that apply to all students as set forth in the Holy Trinity Parent-Student Handbook. Each student athlete is expected to demonstrate and encourage in others behaviors that reflect good sportsmanship. If behavior infractions occur, student-athletes may face both a school and an athletic consequence.

## **Attendance**

**All student-athletes must be marked as present in school on the day of practice or a game in order to participate.** Please see the *Parent-Student Handbook* for what constitutes an absence.

All student-athletes must recognize the time commitment made to a team. One is expected to attend all practices and games. If one cannot attend a practice or game, the coach and/or athletic director **MUST BE** notified *in advance*. Consequences for a missed practice or game will be informed by the team rules as outlined by the coach/team at the beginning of the season in addition to the natural consequences that result from missing practice instruction or game experience.

## **Dress Code/Uniforms**

Student-Athletes are highly visible representatives of the school and, as such, are responsible for using good judgment in their overall appearance. All teams, regardless of level, have a responsibility to ensure that their game attire speaks volumes of their class and excellence. All game shirts will be tucked in. No player should make modifications to his or her uniform. Athletes are to wear a school issued uniform and treat their uniform with respect. Teams that treat their uniforms with respect, exude class. *Uniforms must be returned to the athletic director within seven (7) days of the last game.* Progress reports and/or report cards may be withheld until the uniform is returned. If a uniform is not returned, parents are responsible for the cost of replacing the uniform.

## **Sportsmanship**

All student-athletes are expected to represent HTCA in an exemplary manner. This behavior is expected both on and off the court or field. Student-athletes are expected to display the best of Christian courtesy and manners to all officials, coaches, opposing coaches, players, and spectators. At all times good sportsmanship is the rule, not the exception. The penalty for unsportsmanlike behavior during a practice or game will be left to the discretion of the coaches for each sport along with input from the athletic director. This can range from sitting out at practice to a one-game suspension. In extreme cases when an athlete has been ejected from a game, multi-game suspensions and dismissal from the team may be appropriate. The athletic director and Head of School will make the final decision following a meeting with the athlete, coach, and parent.

## **Transfer Students/Injured Students**

Transfer students or students injured at the beginning of a season are eligible to play if there is one more than half of the games left in that sport's season. A transfer student is defined as enrolling in HTCA after the season begins.

No regularly enrolled student will be allowed to join a team after the first game (tournament or league) has been played.

# EXPECTATIONS of PARENTS and STAKEHOLDERS

*“It is incumbent upon parents to cooperate closely with the school teachers to whom they entrust their children to be educated; in fulfilling their duty teachers are to collaborate closely with parents who are willingly heard and for whom associations or meetings are to be inaugurated and held in great esteem.”*

*- Code of Canon Law, 796*

HTCA coaches and administrators respect the primacy of the parents as the first teachers of their student-athletes and will partner with parents in the formation of student-athletes. Parents and other members of the community play a vital role in the holistic education of children including students’ participation in school sponsored athletics. Together, all stakeholders should actively work to ensure that the Catholic mission and identity of HTCA permeates the athletics program.

## Top Five Ways to Support your Student-Athlete

1. **Be present** – Show up to games, cheer, and support our teams!
2. **Be positive** – Children learn from modeling. When talking about the game, season, performances and decision-making, please share the gift of a positive outlook on life. Make sure that your child knows that win or lose, he/she is loved and supported.
3. **Encourage independence** – Encourage student-athletes to be responsible for the care of their athletic gear and to be prepared for practices and games. In addition, student-athletes should speak directly with their coach about any questions and/or concerns.
4. **Observe the “24 Hour Cushion”** – As do all good educators, HTCA coaches will naturally and deliberately reflect on game situations and decisions. Please allow coaches the time they need to process their decisions before approaching them with any questions. As stated above, coaches need not discuss playing time, coaching strategies and specific plays, or information pertaining to other athletes.
5. **Model behavior expectations for visiting spectators** – Take pride in our athletic program and model for visitors how we...
  - i. CHEER for our team rather than against our opponents.
  - ii. RESPECT the integrity and authority of game officials.
  - iii. ALLOW coaches to coach without criticism from the spectators.
  - iv. HELP clean up at the end of athletic events.

## Transportation

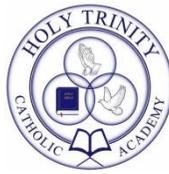
**Transportation to/from practices and games is the sole responsibility of the parents.** Please ensure that your student-athlete is picked up promptly at the end of each practice/game.

### **Removal from Team – Parent Decision**

The Head of School, Athletic Director and coaches will respect and support the decision of a parent to remove his or her child from a team for any reason. However, once the child is removed, he or she may not return to that team for the remainder of the sport season.

### **REVISIONS/MODIFICATIONS TO POLICY**

The Head of School may make changes to any policies outlined in this handbook as needed and has the final decision with regards to any policy. Changes will be communicated to the public on a timely basis. *The Head of School has the authority to remove a student or cancel a season if student-athletes or parents are not adhering to HTCA standards.*



**HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC ACADEMY (HTCA)  
503 SHELTON AVENUE  
SHELTON, CONNECTICUT 06484**

**PARENT - PLAYER ATHLETIC PROGRAM HANDBOOK  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT SIGN-OFF FORM  
2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR**

**Family Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**We the undersigned have read and agree to the contents of the  
HTCA 2021-2022 Athletic Program Handbook.**

**Player  
Name (Print)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Player  
Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian  
Name (Print)** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian  
Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this form to your child's Coach ASAP.**

**Your child will NOT be allowed to participate in any practice/game  
until this form is returned.**