

Date: August 21, 2012
TO: Parents and Players of SC Athletic Program
FROM: St. Cecilia Athletic Board
RE: New Participation Agreement

For the past several years, the Athletic Board has provided a signed participation agreement for the players and their parents when playing on teams for St. Cecilia. The intent of the agreement was to try to ensure that when a player committed to playing for a St. Cecilia team, they were committed to attending practices and games for the entire season. This policy spelled out “excused” and “unexcused” absences and the specific consequences for excessive absenteeism.

The Athletic Board members understand that many student-athletes have interests outside of St. Cecilia, whether it is other club sports teams, activities within the arts, cultural interests, or other pursuits. It is important for children to have a vast array of experiences to help them determine what their likes and dislikes may be. The challenge occurs when there are **conflicts**, and student-athletes and their parents have to make choices on which activity takes precedence. Past Boards determined that by instituting a participation agreement, parents and players would be forced to put St. Cecilia first. The reality is this did not always happen. Enforcement of the previous rule has been difficult.

When a student-athlete commits to a team, especially a team that does not have a significant number of players, e.g. 11-12 players for an 11 sides soccer team, or 7-8 players for a 6 player volleyball team, it is important to fully commit to that team. If outside activities prevent full commitment, players and parents, as well as coaches should reflect on what impact an absence from games and practices will have on the team as a whole. Will the team have to forfeit because of an absence? (There is a fine for the parish when a team forfeits). Will the cohesiveness of the team be impacted from lack of practice by everyone on the team? How does another player feel when he/she comes to every practice and game and a teammate who only attends games is allowed to start every game?

The Athletic Board has rewritten the participation agreement to stress communication with coaches and Athletic Directors. There can still be consequences for excessive absenteeism. We will encourage coaches to have team meetings prior to the start of the season to ensure players and parents are clear on their expectations of their players and their attendance. Any known conflicts should be discussed as soon as they are known to ensure minimal impact on the team. Coaches have an obligation to the entire team. If a player chooses to miss practice(s) and/or games(s) with no communication to the coach or consideration to the impact of the team, the coach or the Athletic Director may impose consequences for absences that are not due to illness or injury. While we no longer are differentiating between “excused” and “unexcused” absences, we expect players and parents to take attendance seriously.

Please give careful consideration to your participation in the Athletic Program. If a player knows ahead of time that he/she cannot attend practice regularly and is going to miss a significant amount of league games, the player should not commit to a team. Again, **communication** prior to the start of the season with coaches and the Athletic Director(s) is essential.

Sports at St. Cecilia are for all students athletes regardless of skill. This is the one time children can play and not worry they will not make a team. There is a team for everyone. Athletes should be rewarded for attending practice, focusing and working to improve their skills, attending games and giving 100%.

Questions about the revised participation agreement should be directed to the Athletic Directors and or members of the Athletic Board.