



**2022-2023**  
**YOUTH SPORTS HANDBOOK**

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# **THE PHILOSOPHY OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SPORTS**

The philosophy of St. Mark Lutheran Elementary sports is in accordance with the school's overall philosophy statement. The primary goal of St. Mark is to educate based on the spiritual formation of Christian values and teachings, strong academics and the development of social skills. St. Mark Lutheran School seeks to introduce Houston families to the life-changing love of Jesus through Scholarship, Ministry and Leadership.

Just like the Middle School Athletic Program, the Elementary Sports Program does not have a tryout process. All who sign up on time are placed on a team in accordance to the appropriate grade level.

St. Mark recognizes that physical development is an important component of a student's well-being and thus seeks to aid in the total development of the individual through organized and cooperative team settings. In addition, it's important for students to develop socially as they learn to work in a team situation and to practice good sportsmanship. The Elementary Sports Program should also develop an athlete's self-esteem, respect for teammates and opponents, and show school spirit through Christ-centered leadership.

## **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ATHLETICS MANUAL**

The Athletics Manual is provided to inform parents and students of the athletic procedures and policies of St. Mark Lutheran School. We ask parents to carefully read all sections and review them with their child(ren).

St. Mark Lutheran and Administration retain the right to amend the Athletic Manual. By no means is this Manual considered all-inclusive. Administration and staff will exercise professional judgment and discretion as necessary to address situations fairly and consistently.

# PK - 2ND GRADE SPORTS

## WEST HOUSTON CHRISTIAN SPORTS ASSOCIATION (WHCSA)

The West Houston Christian Sports Association (WHCSA) was established for the purpose of making supervised athletic activities available to the children of various member churches/schools. WHCSA's motto is "Compassionately Competitive". WHCSA feels that this provides competitive athletics within the Christian framework where there is no need for a "win at all cost" approach.

The WHCSA is committed to a program which helps the member institutions do their best to ensure that the teams they field meet the standards. The principle by which we govern ourselves is the commonly held desire to give all children a chance to compete on a fair and equal basis. Our basic athletic objectives are to have the students:

- Participate in an active, vigorous sport
- Enjoy a feeling of acceptability in their performance
- Meet new friends in a different setting
- Come in contact with "positive and caring" older teens and adults who serve as coaches, referees or helpers.

The measure of success for WHCSA is the growth of each sport and the response from the children who participate. WHCSA strongly believes that commitment to this philosophy and these objectives will keep WHCSA successful.

The Athletic Director is responsible to attend all WHCSA meetings as the representative of St. Mark and reports back to the Principal.

### SPORTS OFFERED THROUGH WHCSA

Click the link to learn more about each sport.

[Soccer](#)

[Basketball](#)

[Baseball/T-Ball](#)

### REGISTRATION

[gostmark.org/youthsports](http://gostmark.org/youthsports)

Parents can choose to register for individual sports or they can register for all 3 sports at any time prior to each sport's registration deadline. **Late registrations cannot be accepted.**

## FEES

**The registration fee is \$120 per sport due at the time of registration.** Registration Fee includes league fees, referees, 8 scheduled league games per sport, uniform, team and individual photos, and medal.

*Refunds are considered on a case-by-case basis. Contact Coach Buyince at [ybuyince@gostmark.org](mailto:ybuyince@gostmark.org).*

## FORMING TEAMS

The Elementary Athletic Director will determine how many teams will be formed based on registration. If there is enough registration for 2 or more teams, the Elementary Athletic Director will split the teams equally (with consideration of siblings and carpool.) From time to time, the Elementary Athletic Director may combine players from two different grades. All teams must have a volunteer coach to form.

## SCHEDULES

Teams practice one day/week for 1 hour. Practices are based upon field and/or court availability. Games are played on Saturdays against fellow schools and churches in the WHCSA. Make-up games can be scheduled separately by the volunteer coaches. All participants must have a parent/guardian present or have made arrangements to have your child looked after before, during and after practices/games. Coaches reserve the right to send your child to SML Extended Care if no guardian is available or if behavior issues arise. At this point, the Elementary Athletics Director will be notified to review the situation. The Elementary Athletics Director will meet with parent, child and coach to resolve the issue. If a parent has a problem with the coach, please notify the Elementary Athletics Director.

## VOLUNTEER COACHES

St. Mark cannot offer elementary sports without our parents. As a volunteer coach, you will have the entire support of the St. Mark community. The number one reason kids play a sport is because it's fun. Honestly, so is coaching. Remember, kids STOP playing sports when they stop having fun.

**All volunteer coaches must attend the Coaches' Meeting at the beginning of each season.**

All lines of communication must be open between the Elementary Athletics Director, volunteer coaches, homeroom teachers and parents during the season. To ensure clear communication, we ask that the Elementary Athletics Director is included in all emails between the coach and the parents.

All volunteer coaches must provide to the Elementary Athletic Director 1 or 2 possible practice days during your season. *Please note that ALL MIDDLE SCHOOL activities on the field or in the gym have FIRST PRIORITY over Elementary Sports during their season.* If a practice day is a Saturday or Sunday, the Head of School needs to give approval.

If a coach would like to hold an extra practice or make up for a loss practice day, the coach would have to contact the Elementary Athletics Director to schedule the make-up day.

The coach is responsible for returning any borrowed equipment at the end of the season.

# PK-2ND GRADE SOCCER GUIDELINES

## SEASON

September - November

## GAMES/PRACTICES

Maximum 8 league games to be played on Saturdays.

Practices are usually once a week under the discretion of the coach. If a coach wants to set up a practice off-campus with the team on his/her own time, he/she may. Please inform the Athletics Director of any additional practices.

*St. Mark does not receive schedules from the league until the week the season begins.*

## TEAM SIZE

**PK/Kinder:** 8 or 9 on roster with 5 on the field in Pre-K and 6 on the field in Kindergarten.

**1st/2nd Grade:** Max roster size is 12 with 7 on the field.

All teams will use the league substitution/rotation schedule for players.

*There will be no goalie in the Pre-K division.*

## BALL SIZE

**PK - 1st Grade:** Size 3

**2nd Grade:** Size 4

## EQUIPMENT

**Shin guards are required for all games and recommended for practices.** No metal cleats allowed. No earrings, watches, jewelry, or objects in hair. Glasses must have protective frames.

## LENGTH OF MATCH

**PK/Kinder:** 20 min. practice / 10 min. break / Game: 4 5-min. quarters

**1st/2nd Grade:** Two 25 minute halves with 5 minute break between halves. Kickoffs will start each half.

# PK-2ND GRADE BASKETBALL GUIDELINES

## SEASON

January - March

## GAMES/PRACTICES

Maximum 8 league games to be played on Saturdays.

Practices are usually once a week under the discretion of the coach. If a coach wants to set up a practice off-campus with the team on his/her own time, he/she may. Please inform the Athletics Director of any additional practices.

*St. Mark does not receive schedules from the league until the week the season begins.*

## TEAM SIZE

Maximum roster size is 12. Minimum roster size is 6.

## BALL SIZE

**PK/K:** 27.5" - Junior/Youth/Size 5

**1st/2nd Grade:** 28.5" - Junior/Youth/Size 6

## GOAL HEIGHT

8 feet

## EQUIPMENT

**Basketball court shoes are required to play.** No earrings, watches, jewelry, or objects in hair. Glasses must have protective frames.

## LENGTH OF MATCH

7 minute quarters with a running clock. 3 minute halftime.

## PK-2ND GRADE BASEBALL/T-BALL GUIDELINES

### SEASON

March - May

### GAMES/PRACTICES

Maximum 8 league games to be played on Saturdays.

Practices are usually once a week under the discretion of the coach. If a coach wants to set up a practice off-campus with the team on his/her own time, he/she may. Please inform the Athletics Director of any additional practices.

*St. Mark does not receive schedules from the league until the week the season begins.*

### TEAM SIZE

Maximum roster size is 10.

### TYPE

**PK/K:** T-Ball

**1st/2nd Grade:** Coach Pitch

### BALL SIZE

9" Incrediball

### EQUIPMENT

**Must have a glove. No metal cleats allowed.** Batting helmet recommended.

**Only Official Little League Baseball bats, metal or wood will be permitted for use in the WHCSA.**

No earrings, watches, jewelry, or objects in hair. Glasses must have protective frames.

### LENGTH OF MATCH

Six innings or 60 minutes. Games will be called (will end) at the 60 minute mark.



## 3RD - 4TH GRADE SPORTS

While St. Mark does not officially form teams for this age group, parents can coordinate to organize an SML team. We recommend the following, more competitive, organizations:



### **TIMBERGROVE SPORTS ASSOCIATION (TSA)** **(Softball, Baseball, and Soccer)**

St. Mark is a proud partner of TSA. It is the mission of the Timbergrove Sports Association to provide a safe, fun, and competitive community sports environment for young athletes while promoting core principles of sportsmanship, respect, hard work, and volunteerism.

**Timbergrove Sports Association is a family-oriented league that provides opportunities for kids ages 4-15 to play baseball, softball, and soccer year-round.** Each season, we welcome close to 1000 players and hundreds of coaches and volunteers.

Timbergrove is committed to offering a safe, affordable, and valuable program for your family and your player. If you have questions about how to get involved, please email [info@timbergrovesports.org](mailto:info@timbergrovesports.org).

[How to Join TSA](#) | [Volunteer for Timbergrove Sports](#)

## KINGDOM BASKETBALL

Kingdom Basketball is a ministry of Tallowood Baptist Church to provide a God honoring environment for children and their families.

Teams are formed based on gender and grade level. No tryouts are required and parents are allowed to input team rosters.

Pre-game practice time is included in Saturday game schedules for Pre-K to 5th Grade. Practice time is offered during the week for teams 2nd Grade and up. All play is monitored by Christian referees and League Commissioners.

[Learn more about Kingdom Basketball.](#)