



**ATHLETIC
HANDBOOK
2024-25**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
GPL Mission Statement	3
Supporting the Mission	3
The Panther Way	4
Expectations	4-6
Coaches	4-5
Student-Athletes	5
Parents	5-6
Important SDHSAA Policies	6
GPL Academic Eligibility (guidelines, consequences, reinstatement)	6-7
GPL Code of Conduct	7
Athletic Programs (SDHSAA-Sanctioned, Club-Level, Intramural)	7
Dual-Sport Participation	7
Conference Affiliation	7
Awards	8-10
General Policy	8
Explanation of Awards	8-9
Varsity Lettering Requirements	9
Elastic Clause	10
Levels of Competition	10
Sub-Varsity (C, JV)	10
Varsity	10
Playing Time	10
Communication: Progression Regarding Questions and Concerns	10-11
Communication: Sports Information	12
Practices	12
Transportation	12
School Work/Denial of Participation	12
Medical Examinations and Forms	13
Athletic Trainer Services	13
Insurance	13
Facility	13
Training Rules	14
Uniforms	14
Grade School (St. Martin's) Participation	14-15

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Introduction

Welcome to the athletic department of Great Plains Lutheran High School (GPL). The faculty and coaching staff hope our student-athletes' experience with GPL athletics will be a blessing to them during their high school years and throughout their lives. This handbook has been developed to help you better understand the purpose, policies and procedures of GPL athletics and the important responsibilities of coaches, student-athletes, and parents.

GPL Mission Statement

Great Plains Lutheran High School provides a Christ-centered education to assist families in nurturing students as lifelong disciples of Christ.

Supporting the Mission

The GPL athletic program supports GPL's mission by providing students with a variety of tremendous blessings and opportunities. These include but are not limited to:

- Building Christian faith and character;
- Developing leadership, teamwork, coachability, discipline, work ethic, commitment, grit, respect, physical fitness, and problem solving skills;
- Understanding roles in pursuing and achieving individual and collective goals;
- Responding to victory and defeat (success and failure) with class and humility;
- Productively responding to and moving forward from mistakes and setbacks;
- Embracing challenges and competition;
- Seeing their participation in sports as one of many ways they can use their talents to glorify God.

In addition to the ways it helps student-athletes grow and develop, the GPL athletic program is a tremendous blessing to our entire school community in a variety of important ways:

- **School ambassador:** Our athletic program may be the most frequent way our school interacts with the community. Teams and athletes are discussed and celebrated in the local media. Athletic contests provide enjoyable entertainment for people of all ages and seasons of life. Teams engage in community service.
- **Unifier:** Our athletic program brings the entire school community together and involves many people in a variety of important roles (players/coaches, fans, cheerleaders, game personnel, pep band, etc.)
- **Source of excitement, pride and tradition:** The athletic program is the reason our school has a mascot and a fight song. Students look forward to games, pep rallies, and other associated festivities. Alumni are proud to return for homecoming and other events.
- **Source of accountability:** The athletic program encourages, motivates, and holds students accountable for meeting academic eligibility standards.
- **Support for at-risk students:** Participation in sports provides purpose, discipline, motivation, and structure for students who may not get it at home or elsewhere.

The Panther Way

The heart of GPL athletics can be summarized with the **PANTHER WAY** as it relates to our teams and student-athletes. These actions benefit our student-athletes both as a part of their sports teams and beyond in the classroom, workplace and many other endeavors in life.

- Pursue excellence.
- Work hard; work together.
- Lead with Christian character.
- Compete with grit and class.
- Embrace the challenge.
- Enjoy the process.
- Live by faith to the glory of God.

Expectations of Coaches

Uphold the policies and procedures outlined in the Athletic Handbook, School Handbook and Coaches' Handbook which can be summarized with these standards for coaches:

- Mindful of GPL's mission, view and use athletics as an important tool in students' Christian education - their growth in their physical, intellectual, spiritual and social-emotional wellbeing - with the goal of spending eternity in heaven with them.
- Make personal spiritual growth a priority, and strive to let your Christian light and love for Jesus shine brightly in your life and coaching.
- Along these lines, approach coaching in a way that is "bigger than" your sport/activity. Striving for excellence in the game itself and preparing our teams to compete well are important, but more so is seizing the opportunities to help your student-athletes grow in their Christian faith/character and a host of skills and attributes that will serve them well in life.
- Lead your team in representing our Savior and school well in all circumstances.
- Strive to build a strong team culture and guide your student-athletes in exemplifying the Panther Way.
- Uphold all school and SDHSAA policies that relate to your work, especially those specified in the Student, Athletic and Coaches' Handbooks. This includes encouraging students in their academic growth and holding them accountable for meeting eligibility standards and training rules.
- Strive to proactively and effectively communicate with parents, players and co-workers.
- Publicly be supportive of GPL and its leaders, staff, coaches and students. Defend, speak well of and take others' words and actions in the kindest possible way. Have each others' backs.
- When conflict arises, be proactive in addressing and resolving it in a professional, Christian manner. Model and encourage others to follow the proper "chain of command"... coach, Athletic Director, Principal, President, Board. Efforts to resolve conflict are often more effective in person or over the phone rather than email or text message.
- In a way that is appropriate with your coaching role, strive to continuously grow in your knowledge of the game/activity and coaching skill.

- Create practice plans that outline your process for helping your team grow and prepare. This includes employing injury-preventative training methods and participating in our school's year-round PLT4M strength training program.
- Strive to be a good steward of the resources at your disposal (facilities, equipment, uniforms, etc.). Hold yourself, your staff and your student-athletes accountable for putting away equipment, keeping storage areas clean and orderly, etc. Work with the Athletic Director to prepare an annual budget for your sport/activity.
- Strive to enthusiastically support your fellow GPL coaches/teams and the athletic program as a whole. Encourage our student-athletes and teams to actively support each other.

Expectations of Student-Athletes

Recognizing participation in GPL athletics as a privilege with incredible growth opportunities, student-athletes are expected to:

- Strive to represent their Savior, school, team, family and self by letting their Christian faith shine brightly in everything they do.
- Demonstrate respect for rules, officials, coaches, and all in authority.
- Demonstrate a spirit of sacrifice, cooperation, and teamwork.
- Follow the rules, policies, and procedures outlined in our School Handbook and Athletic Handbook.
- Follow specific team rules as presented by coaches.
- Strive to understand their role(s) on the team and support the goals of the team by being a "star in their role." This doesn't mean roles can't change; it speaks to one's role at any given time.
- Strive to be a good steward of the resources at their disposal (facilities, equipment, uniforms, etc.). Readily help coaches and managers by putting away equipment, keeping storage areas clean and orderly, etc.
- In summary, strive to exemplify the Panther Way at all times.

Expectations of Parents

Recognizing their role in supporting the GPL athletic program and its student-athletes, parents are expected to:

- Strive to serve as ambassadors of their Savior and GPL at all times.
- In every way possible, be supportive of GPL, its coaches and student-athletes.
- Strive to follow the proper chain of command (coach, athletic director, principal, president, board) and be proactive in directly handling questions and concerns.
- Avoid participating in negative talk (gossip) about anything related to GPL athletics or GPL in general.
- Avoid the temptation to "coach" their children from the sideline during games. Cheering and encouragement should be team-focused and general in nature. Specific instructional comments directed at individual players should be avoided. Players' attention needs to be solely focused on the game and coach's instructions.
- In competition settings, support GPL teams and student-athletes with positive, enthusiastic cheering. "Let the coaches coach, let the players play, let the officials

officialate and let the spectators be positive.” In summary, always cheer FOR, never AGAINST.

- Encourage and support their student-athlete(s) in understanding their role on the team and fulfilling it to the best of their ability while always striving to grow and improve.
- As able, actively and willingly respond to requests for volunteer service (concession stand, game personnel, team events, etc.).

Important SDHSAA Policies

GPL is a member school of the South Dakota High School Athletic Association (SDHSAA). Please visit SDHSAA.com/athletic-handbook for information on various important topics related to participation in high school athletics.

GPL Academic Eligibility (from Student Handbook)

Guidelines

- A student must maintain a 2.0 grade point average and have no F or Unjustified Incomplete grades to remain eligible for co-curricular activities. The grade point average used to determine eligibility will be based on grades reported at each quarter midterm and quarter end.
- The faculty and administration reserve the right to determine special eligibility criteria for students with special needs and for special circumstances.
- The period of ineligibility will be from the posting of the ineligible list to the end of the midterm or quarter.

Consequences

- During the first 10 school days of the period of ineligibility, the student will not be permitted to attend any group or team practices, rehearsals or meetings. During this time, the student will attend Tenth Hour, an after school study hall that runs from 3:35-4:15pm) Monday through Thursday, until grades improve.
- Following the 10 school days of ineligibility and the required improvement of grades, the student is expected to attend all group or team practices, rehearsals, and meetings, unless the season ends before the reinstatement date.
- If a student is in an event which is a single presentation, that student may or may not be allowed to complete that obligation (for example: a drama production).

Reinstatement

- A student identified as ineligible may appeal for full reinstatement after the initial 10 days of ineligibility. This request must be made in writing, and the administrative team will determine eligibility based on the student’s academic progress and faculty input.
- Students choosing not to appeal or having an appeal denied will be reinstated at the close of the eligibility term unless grades indicate continued ineligibility according to the procedures set by the administration.

- A student who transfers into Great Plains Lutheran High School and is ineligible according to our standards upon entry will remain ineligible until the end of the eligibility term.
- A student deemed ineligible as a result of fourth quarter grades will be allowed to practice at the start of the fall season for the following school year. A student may be reinstated for co-curricular and other activities on the 11th day of school if grades meet the eligibility criteria.

NOTES: Coaches and directors may have higher eligibility requirements. See individual activity training rules for more information.

GPL Code of Conduct

Refer to the GPL Student Handbook for Code of Conduct policies and consequences. Note that Code of Conduct Section XVI specifies that coaches and advisors may establish further policies for the effective operation of their activity. These policies also become part of the Code of Conduct.

Athletic Programs

GPL offers a variety of athletic programs that strive to meet the needs and interests of our students at several levels:

SDHSAA-Sanctioned Interscholastic Athletic Programs

- Fall: girls and boys cross country, boys football, girls volleyball, football cheerleading
- Winter: girls basketball, boys basketball, basketball cheerleading
- Spring: girls and boys track and field, girls and boys golf

Club-Level

- Spring: clay target shooting - GPL participates in the South Dakota State High School Clay Target League (SDSHSCTL). All participants need to have successfully completed an accredited gun or hunter's safety course.

Intramural

The Athletic Director and Student Council work together to provide several "in house" intramural sports seasons in which students compete with each other, not with teams from other schools.

The current intramural sports offerings are:

- Fall: co-ed futsal (indoor soccer)
- Winter: under review
- Spring: disc golf

Conference Affiliation

GPLHS is a member of the Eastern Coteau Conference (ECC) which includes the following schools: full membership - Britton-Hecla, Florence-Henry, GPL, Tri-State, Waubay-Summit, Waverly-South Shore, Wilmot; partial membership - Clark-Willow Lake, Deuel, Webster

Dual-Sport Participation

For various reasons that include but may not be limited to those listed below, GPL does not permit student-athletes to participate in more than one SDHSAA-sanctioned sport each season.

Rationale:

- With GPL's current enrollment, we are blessed to be able to field teams in every sport without dual-sport participation.
- It is difficult, if not impossible for a student-athlete to experience the full benefit of training and integration into a team with dual-sport participation.
- Dual-sport participation would result in student-athletes missing practice time in one sport while competing in another which could/would be perceived as unfair by other student-athletes and make practice planning and game preparation difficult for coaches.
- With GPL's academic rigor, students need sufficient time to devote to their school work both in and out of the school day. Dual-sport participation would result in student-athletes missing more school and have less time to devote to their school work outside the school day.

Awards

GPL's athletic department recognizes qualified athletic performance with varsity letters and pins, special individual and team awards, and career awards. It is our intent to recognize student-athletes' use of their God-given talents as well as to recognize the hard work and dedication they demonstrate in representing our Savior and school through athletic competition.

General Policy

Awards will be given to student-athletes participating in GPL-sponsored athletic programs. In order to be eligible for any GPL athletic award, the student-athlete must finish the season "in good standing" (minimal code of conduct or training rule violations) with the team. Injuries or other similar hardships do not compromise the "in good standing" status.

Explanation of Awards

GPL acknowledges student-athletes with the following awards:

- Participation – Participation in a sport may be recognized with a certificate.
- Letter – Lettering will be recognized with a school-issued "GP" chenille for the first varsity letter and the sport-specific pin for the first and subsequent varsity letters.
- Special awards
 - Team Awards (MVP, most-improved, newcomer, etc.) will be the responsibility of the head coach of each activity.
 - Panther Award (the player who encouraged others, was coachable, had a good attitude, worked hard, was a strong leader, let their Christian light shine, exemplified the Panther Way) will be the responsibility of the head coach of each activity.
 - Panther Career Athlete Award will be the responsibility of the athletic director and coaching staff. Description of Panther Career Athlete award:
 - One male and one female student-athlete of the senior class will be selected by the GPL coaching staff to receive this award. The recipient of

this award should be the student-athlete who had the most accomplished or noteworthy athletic CAREER at GPL. Only participation in GPL sports in grades 9-12 may be considered. Selection of the recipient should consider the extent and achievement of the student-athlete's participation as well as his or her Christian character.

- Extent: It is to the student-athlete's advantage to participate in as many seasons as possible - to be a three-sport or multi-sport athlete.
 - Achievement: It is to the student-athlete's advantage to perform at a high level. This will likely be evident with the awards and accomplishments that are listed.
 - Character: Ideally recipients of this award will exemplify strong Christian character. If two student-athletes are comparable in their extent and achievement, character may be the deciding factor.
 - How these facets of the award interact with each other will differ from year to year and athlete to athlete.
- Other Awards – all-conference, all-state, and other awards will be presented as selected by various entities.

Varsity Lettering Requirements

Complete the season "in good standing" and...

- **Basketball**
 - Play in a minimum of 60% of the quarters throughout the season (20 games = 80 quarters; 60% of 80 = 48 quarters needed)
- **Cheerleading**
 - Cheer in 90% of the games throughout the season
- **Cross Country**
 - Qualify for the state meet as an individual or
 - Qualify for the state meet as a scoring team member or
 - Medal in four meets
- **Football**
 - Play in a minimum of 60% of the quarters throughout a season (8 games = 32 quarters; 60% of 32 = 20 quarters needed)
- **Golf**
 - Compete in 60% of the varsity matches
- **Track**
 - Qualify for state meet as an individual or
 - Earn approximately 3 points per meet or
 - Be a top performer in his/her event(s) at GPL
- **Volleyball**
 - Play a minimum of 60% of matches throughout the season

Elastic Clause

The head coach has the authority to determine if a student-athlete may letter even if he or she has NOT met the requirements of the written policy. The head coach (in consultation with the athletic director) has the authority to determine if a student athlete may NOT letter even if he or she has met the requirements of the written policy.

Levels of Competition

Sub-Varsity (C, JV)

GPL offers sub-varsity level competition for many sports. Emphasis at this level is very much on development of skills, knowledge, and decision-making. Sub-varsity coaches will strive to embrace the process of teaching the game to student-athletes and helping them grow. Coaches are encouraged to award playing time based on student-athletes' abilities, preparation in practice, and commitment to team goals and expectations. While there should be no expectation of equal playing time, efforts will be made to provide playing time for all players.

Varsity

GPL also offers varsity level competition. Coaches will select athletes that are prepared for this highest level of high school athletic competition. While all the benefits of participating in sports will continue at the varsity level, emphasis will include assembling the best possible team with the goal of achieving victory. Striving to achieve victory is an appropriate part of pursuing excellence to the glory of God, and with it comes many important learning opportunities and life lessons.

Playing Time

As the talent/skill and level of commitment of student-athletes differ, so does the amount of playing time they will be awarded. With the previously stated goals of sub-varsity and varsity competition in mind, the coach has the responsibility of giving every student-athlete an appropriate level of playing time. GPL coaches are mindful of their responsibilities and strive to live up to them. Depending on the level of competition and situation, team-focused student-athletes need to accept their role on the team (how they are best able to help the team achieve its goals and be its best) and sacrifice their own desires for the good of the team. It is entirely possible and appropriate that a player on a varsity team may not experience playing time in every game.

Communication: Progression Regarding Questions and Concerns

"My dear brothers take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires"
(James 1:19).

GPL encourages student participation in co-curricular activities for the many ways they can grow and benefit from these experiences. The value of athletic programs is recognized as important to the total educational process.

Participation in co-curricular activities is a privilege with accompanying responsibilities, roles, and expectations. These responsibilities, roles, and expectations can possibly lead to misunderstanding. Gossip and all negative approaches to a question, concern or problem make it more difficult to solve. An important part of the solution needs to be proactive and direct communication between student-athletes, coaches and parents.

Regular, open communication with players is an essential part of effective coaching. Players need to feel free to communicate with coaches and trust that coaches will not mistreat them for expressing themselves. If a player has a question or concern, he or she is encouraged to directly discuss the matter with the coach before discussing it with anyone else. Parents can promote a healthy communication process by encouraging it in their children, being supportive of all student-athletes and coaches, and being positive role models as parent spectators.

To facilitate a healthy and effective communication process, the following guidelines are in place:

- Coaches will operate with an “open door” policy where they will receive and strive to appropriately respond to questions and concerns from student-athletes and parents. If a question or concern is expressed via email or phone message, they will strive to provide an initial response within 24 hours of receiving the message.
- If a player has a question or concern, he or she should bring the matter directly to the coach before discussing it with anyone else. One of the learning and maturing opportunities that athletic involvement provides a young person is seeking to solve problems directly instead of relying on a parent or a friend to solve them. This approach is consistent with what God tells us in Matthew 18.
- If a parent wishes to discuss a question or concern with a coach, the following procedure should be followed:
 - Contact with the coach should be made at an appropriate time. It should not happen immediately following a contest or late into the same evening. Please wait until the next day to address the coach. This gives both parties the opportunity to reflect on the situation.
 - Communication by all parties will be done in a spirit of Christian love. If the discussion cannot be carried out in a rational, calm, and mature manner the meeting will be immediately suspended. Please understand the inherent difficulty in discussing topics such as playing time, strategy, and decision-making. The head coach has the ultimate and final responsibility for the strategy of the game and the use of personnel in accomplishing that strategy.
 - Consider connecting with the coach in person or over the phone. There is much more room for misunderstanding emails and other forms of one-way communication.
 - In the majority of cases, we are confident the parties involved will arrive at an amicable solution to the question or concern.
 - If the student-athlete, parent, or coach cannot mutually agree upon a satisfactory solution, the subject should then be brought to the athletic director (first) and then to the principal for mediation.

Communication: Sports Information

Various methods of communication will be used to provide important information about the GPL athletic program and specific teams:

- Coaches will strive to effectively share important information and details with parents and student-athletes using means such as email, Google Classroom, team communication apps such as GroupMe, etc.
- The GPL Sports Page, the official newsletter of GPL athletics which includes updates from the Athletic Director and our Panthers' latest news and results, is published weekly and distributed via email.
- Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and X are used to share information about team news, results and accomplishments, schedule changes, etc.
- The Remind app is used to share urgent information about schedule adjustments often caused by inclement weather.
- The GPL Google calendar is updated with current athletic contest details.
- The GPLHS.org/sports website will be maintained to include important information.
- The SDHSAA's gobound.com/sd website contains information such as contest details, team standings, and much more.
- The Watertown Public Opinion newspaper, which has an online e-edition, provides good coverage of GPL's teams.

Practices

As a general rule, GPL athletic practices are closed to the general public and to nonparticipating students. This policy is in place to promote safety and prevent distractions. Members of the GPL family are welcome to observe practices in a way that does not interfere. Anyone who wishes to observe a practice should clear it with the coach ahead of time. Coaches reserve the right to close practices at their discretion.

Transportation

GPL normally arranges transportation for students to/from all off-campus co-curricular activities. Under normal circumstances, the team/group travels to and from the event in a school vehicle. Under special circumstances, students may leave from the event site with their parents, guardians, or another adult (18+ years old and a high school graduate) as long as parental consent has been furnished to the activity leader or vehicle driver with this "Transportation Permission Form" located at GPLHS.org. This form needs to be filled out for each occurrence; it is not a year-long permission form. It is helpful when parents fill out the form and communicate with the activity leader ahead of time rather than requesting a form from the activity leader or driver at the event.

School Work/Denial of Participation

The student-athlete is responsible for all schoolwork he or she may miss due to athletic events. Schoolwork should normally be submitted before the student leaves for the contest. If a student-athlete is delinquent in his or her school work responsibilities, the teacher, in conjunction with the coach and school administration, may deny athletic participation until the matter is resolved.

Medical Examinations and Forms

Our current policy states that ALL students (not only student-athletes) attending GPL should have a physical examination every two years. The “normal” schedule for most students would be to have a physical examination prior to their freshmen and junior years. Transfer students’ examinations also need to fall within a two-year time period. Student-athletes are required to submit specific forms each year.

Please note:

- Students will NOT be allowed to participate in athletic activities (including practices) until the necessary forms are completed and returned to the GPL office per SDHSAA policy.
- There are specific forms for concussions. All our students who receive a concussion during the school year will be cleared to return to play by medical personnel using impact testing.
- Doctors of Chiropractic are eligible to conduct physical examinations.
- Physical examinations completed after April 1 count toward the next two years.
- Deadlines:
 - Students participating in fall sports (FB, VB, XC) must return forms before the first scheduled practice.
 - All other students must return forms by the first day of school. We would appreciate them as soon as possible.
- Please feel free to speak with the athletic director or school office with any physical examination or form questions.

Athletic Trainer Services

Big Stone Therapies (BST) provides regular athletic training services. Properly trained personnel visit GPL at least weekly to check injured student-athletes. BST personnel are on duty at all home varsity football, volleyball and basketball games to provide care for injured players.

Insurance

GPL has catastrophic insurance through the SDHSAA that covers all students while involved in school-sponsored activities on and off campus. This coverage is secondary to any health/accident coverage retained by parents or guardians. If an accident or injury occurs, the claim for coverage should first be made with any applicable family insurance. A claim for any remaining balance can then be filed with the school’s coverage.

Facility

The Lord has richly blessed GPL with first class facilities and equipment to carry out its mission. Everyone plays an important role in the proper maintenance and care of our facility. This includes but is not limited to putting equipment in its proper place when not in use and trash in designated receptacles. Anyone using the gyms should wear non-marking athletic shoes designated for indoor use. GPL personnel will manage the control of lights, backboards, bleachers, and other equipment.

Training Rules

Each sport will have specific training rules that need to be understood, signed and upheld by all student-athletes. Training rules will generally cover the following topics: conduct and appearance guidelines, practice procedures, eligibility rules, sport-specific procedures, curfew times, etc.

Uniforms

GPL strives to provide high quality uniforms to its student-athletes. With the exception of golf, uniforms are owned by GPL. In some cases (football, volleyball, basketball), uniforms are washed and cared for by team managers. In other cases (cross country, track and field), it is the responsibility of student-athletes to wash and care for their uniforms. Uniforms need to be washed in cold water and hung to air dry. Uniforms should never be dried in a heated dryer. If a uniform is lost or damaged due to neglect, it will be the responsibility of the student-athlete to pay for its replacement.

Grade School (St. Martin's) Participation

Rationale for allowing St. Martin's students to participate in GPL activities:

- The SDHSAA recognizes St. Martin's and GPL as a "common opponent" (connected junior high and high school program) with regard to participation in its sanctioned activities.
- It is common in SDHSAA member schools for junior high students to participate in high school activities when they are needed and able to contribute.
- There are circumstances where GPL activities and students benefit from participation of St. Martin's students.
- St. Martin's students generally benefit from the experience of participating in GPL activities.

Overarching guidelines:

- GPL activities are primarily for GPL students. Decisions regarding participation of St. Martin's students need to be made carefully with this in mind. For example, what does this mean for postseason competition? There will be unique circumstances in every situation that need to be considered. In general, preference will be given to qualifying GPL students.
- Participating students will uphold St. Martin's policies related to activity participation.
- Participating students will uphold expectations of GPL activities such as team training rules.
- Participating students are expected to attend GPL practices and games/meets/matches when there is not a conflict with a St. Martin's activity. Under normal circumstances, GPL games/meets/matches should take precedence over St. Martin's practices.
- Participation in some activities may be determined with tryouts/cuts. If high school students are cut based on numbers, St. Martin's students will not be invited to participate. An exception could be a senior who gets cut from the Varsity team but

additional players are needed for the C-level or JV team. The equal opportunity for St. Martin's students will be the invitation for all interested students to try out.

- In order to participate in a GPL activity, St. Martin's students need to participate in the same activity at St. Martin's if it is offered.
- St. Martin's students will pay a \$25 fee for each activity in which they participate each school year. This will contribute to coach compensation, equipment and uniform use, transportation, etc.

Sport-specific guidelines:

- Cross country, track & field, golf: Participation is open to 7th and 8th graders, and they may participate at the Varsity level at the coach's discretion. Postseason participation needs to be carefully considered.
- Football: Participation on the GPL junior high team is open to 7th and 8th graders, and they may participate on the Junior Varsity team at the coach's discretion with careful consideration to what their participation means for high school students' playing time and development. Under normal circumstances, they may not participate at the Varsity level.
- Volleyball and basketball: Eighth graders may be invited to participate if there is need. Need is foremost determined by creating ideal practice circumstances, not improving the quality of GPL teams. If such need is determined, the invitation to participate will be extended to all eighth graders. If more eighth graders desire to participate than there is need, a tryout may be used to select players. Under normal circumstances, eighth graders may not participate at the Varsity level. They will ideally participate in C-level games. They may participate in Junior Varsity games at the coach's discretion with careful consideration to what their participation means for high school students' playing time and development. In an effort to give lower skill C-level high school players optimal practice opportunities, eighth graders may be invited to practice but not participate in games.
- Cheer: Eighth graders may be invited to participate if there is need. To be eligible to participate in GPL cheer, students may not participate in St. Martin's basketball. If such need is determined, the invitation to participate will be extended to all eighth graders. If more students desire to participate than there is need, a tryout may be used to select team members.