



Competitive Sport Policy

At St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School our programme of Physical Education (PE) and Sports is designed to be fully inclusive and reflective of our belief that God has created each child in His image and yet with their own particular set of special gifts and talents that we wish to see them develop and enhance during their time with us. Therefore, we aim to provide opportunities for the participation of children of all ages and abilities to involve themselves in sporting activity and competition within school and with other schools. Children are offered a range of sports and sporting activities through PE lessons and also through a broad extra-curricular offer.

We believe in the value of competitive sport and healthy competition as part and parcel of a well-rounded holistic education. As such, we will endeavour to run as many teams and clubs as possible at different levels and in a wide variety of sports at both 'friendly' level as well as more competitive cup or league competitions.

The Staffing of Fixtures and Training

School staff, who are part of our school sports programme, show a much valued and valuable commitment to our pupils and are timetabled to take teams for home and away matches, tournaments and competitions as well as running training sessions and clubs. Staff give freely of their time, often outside of school hours and on some occasions even at weekends, in order to provide competitive

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sporting opportunities for pupils. We expect this to be something that is recognised and respected by pupils and parents/ carers alike.

When taking on the running of a team, members of staff do so in the expectation that the experience will be a rewarding and an enjoyable one for pupils. They know that they must coach the children to the best of their ability and instil in them the values of good sportsmanship, including being both gracious winners and sporting losers. Competitive sport, by its nature, has winners and losers. It is an important aspect of sport and a lesson for life that pupils, whilst playing to win, must also learn to manage disappointment and failure in a positive and constructive manner.

The Selection of Teams

The selection of teams is organised by age and then ability.

Our Policy regarding 'A' teams for league/ cup/ tournament competitions at any age is to select our strongest team. In exceptional circumstances, a child will be allowed to play for a team in an older year group where competition rules allow for this.

In 'friendly' competitions and fixtures, we will endeavour, as far as possible, to rotate team selection in order to give a fair chance to all interested pupils to be able to play as part of a team.

In all circumstances, teams are selected by staff using their professionalism and experience to pick the right team to represent the school for that particular occasion. Factors taken into consideration when selecting a team include form, fitness, attitude, approach, discipline, organisation and whether or not the match/ competition is of a competitive/ 'friendly' nature. Whilst attendance at

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after school training is not necessarily a prerequisite for selection, the additional training time will be of benefit to those attending.

We try to tread the fine path between encouraging excellence and giving opportunities for all, but it is impossible to please everyone all the time and there will invariably be limits to the number of matches/ competitions that it is possible to arrange and to participate in. Nevertheless, we will try to strike a clear balance between competitive matches and the development of both the individual and the team.

Occasionally children may be asked to play in a position/ participate in an event other than their preferred ones. This is something that we expect each pupil to try and adapt to if asked and is usually a very beneficial experience for the child.

Parents may, of course, wish to speak to a member of staff about how their child is getting on and how they might make further progress. However, on no account must any parent try to influence team selection.

We recognise that it can be disheartening for a child not to be selected for a particular team. In these circumstances, staff will explain to the child why this has happened and it is something that we expect children to learn to cope with. Not all children can be selected for the 'A' teams, but it is important that those who are do not boast, show off or criticise those who aren't. This can be hurtful and undermining. The school does not condone this attitude in any way and may view this type of behaviour as a sign that a child may not be ready to represent the school in competitive sporting competition.

Substitutes

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If a pupil is selected as a substitute for a team, they will be guaranteed to play at least one quarter of the game. In exceptional circumstances, e.g. a cup final match, or important league match, coaches may decide not to use substitutes. This decision will be at the discretion of the team coach; however, it is certainly the exception not the rule.

We will endeavour to select the minimum number of substitutes required for competitive matches, so as to avoid disappointment to pupils. However, in 'friendly' competitions we may select a larger than usual number of substitutes in order to allow maximum participation.

It is important before any fixture or competition that children know the reason for their selection and the part that they can expect to play in this. Therefore prior to handing out letters about a particular fixture or event, the member of staff responsible for the team will endeavour to hold a 'team meeting' with the children to discuss this. We will ensure that communication with parents makes clear the purpose for the event or fixture e.g. a 'friendly' match or a competitive league match.

Codes of Conduct

We would hope that the following guidelines would be recognised already by all members of our school community to ensure that children benefit from positive experiences of school sport and sporting competition, however it is worth outlining our expectations of our coaches, pupils, parents and spectators:

Coach's Code of Conduct:

'I will...'

- remember that children participate in sport for pleasure*

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- give all players attention and opportunities
- encourage all players, even when mistakes are made
- seek to improve all children's fitness levels, appropriate to their age
- be reasonable in the demands on children's time, energy and enthusiasm
- operate within the rules and the spirit of the sport
- be respectful toward opponents and officials

Player' Code of Conduct:

'I will...'

- play by the rules of the sport and show respect toward officials
- work hard for my team and for myself
- be a good sport by applauding all good performances, whether by my team mates or opponents
- participate for my own enjoyment and benefit
- acknowledge positively the efforts of my opponents
- co-operate with my coach, teammates and opponents

Parents' Code of Conduct:

'I will...'

- remember that my child plays sport for her/ his enjoyment, not mine
- focus on my child's and the team's efforts and performance rather than winning or losing
- allow the coach to be the person who instructs and controls the team
- encourage all players, even when mistakes are made
- encourage my child to play by the rules and settle disagreements respectfully
- respect official's decisions
- assist my child to follow and understand the players' code of conduct

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Spectators' Code of Conduct:

'I will...'

- remember that children play organised sport for their own fun
- refrain from verbally harassing players, coaches or officials
- applaud good play and achievement by my child's team and the visiting team(s)
- never ridicule or scold a child for making a mistake during a game/ competition
- respect the officials' decisions
- Relax and enjoy the game/ competition whether my child/ my child's team wins or does not



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