

Enrollment of any school shall be determined by the total enrollment of the students at the end of the first school month of the present school year. Deadline for payment is November 1.

ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBILITY: A student is eligible at any member school upon initial entry into ninth grade. Initial entry is defined as the first day of classes that a student is in attendance and counted present or, if sooner, the first day a student practices or otherwise takes part as a member or potential member of a member school's athletic team prior to the start of the academic year (e.g., if a student participates in preseason football workouts prior to the beginning of the ninth grade academic year, this will be deemed the student's initial entry at this member school).

After initial entry into ninth grade, transfer and boundary criteria shall apply as follows:

- (a) The student must live within the member school's boundary as established by the LEA district; or
- (b) If the student's member school does not have a boundary established by an LEA (e.g., charter school, non-boarding parochial school, etc.), then the boundary for the member school shall be considered to be (i) the entire county in which the member school is located; and (ii) any addresses within a 25-mile radius of the member school as measured by an NCHSAA-designated computer program; or
- (c) There will be no boundary limitation if the student is a member of a parochial church affiliated with a non-boarding parochial school member and submits an authorized pastor verification form.

3. ELIGIBILITY FORMS: The regulations require that all students must be eligible prior to dressing or participating in any interscholastic contest, whether or not the sport is sponsored by the NCHSAA. Only those students listed on the eligibility forms are covered by catastrophe insurance. No student shall be listed on the form unless and until documents substantiating eligibility are on file in the school. Such documents shall be available for inspection until the student's eligibility has ended. The master eligibility blank should be used for each sport and shall list all players, varsity and junior varsity, participating in that sport. A copy should be on file at the school prior to the first regular season contest including Endowment games. Eligibility sheets are no longer required to be filed with the NCHSAA but must be made available upon request. It is required that eligibility sheets be shared among conference schools in each sport. Ineligible players are NOT allowed to participate in practice, either in season or out of season workouts, but this does not apply to summer workouts.

When completing Master Eligibility Lists, if a student's parent(s) or legal custodian(s) does not live within the LEA, please make all required entries and enter one of the following eligibility criteria on the second page :

(a) Any student proposed for a contest is eligible at the school to which the local board of education assigns him within the unit of residence of a parent or legal **custodian within this state (subject to the Transfer Policy below)**.

(b) When two boards of education within North Carolina by mutual agreement assign a student to a different school, and the NCHSAA has granted a waiver pursuant to the Transfer Policy below.

(c) Absent a Transfer described below, a student is eligible at his assigned school if he has attended school within that administrative unit the previous two semesters, provided it meets LEA policy

(d) Legal documents signed by a judge (ward of court) or social services (orphanage/foster home) are required to be submitted along with eligibility forms pertaining to students in these circumstances.

(e) Foreign exchange students (see later in this section).

It shall be the responsibility of the principal to see that no ineligible player participates. Schools should use the eligibility checklist developed by the NCHSAA and it is recommended that the eligibility power point presentation be made available for athletes, guidance counselors, other administrators and parents, especially at the preseason meeting.

4. RESIDENCE: A student is eligible to participate at the school to which he or she is assigned by the local board of education, within the administrative unit of residence.

“Residence” as used for athletic eligibility purposes is defined as the equivalent of the term “domicile” as applied by the courts of North Carolina. Under no circumstances can a student have more than one residence for eligibility purposes. It is the obligation of the school to know the residence status of each athlete and to require compliance with these requirements.

Except as otherwise provided, the residence of any student shall be deemed to be (a) that of his or her parents (if he/she lives with both parents); (b) that of the sole parent (if he/she lives with only one parent); (c) that of the parent with whom he/she spends the majority of nights during the school calendar year (if he/she has two parents who do not live together); or (d) that of the legal custodian if his/her custody has been awarded to a non-parent by a court of competent jurisdiction.

In the event the parents are separated or divorced, the residence of the student shall be that of the parent or other adult to whom primary physical custody has been awarded by a court of competent jurisdiction. If no custody order has been entered, the residence shall be deemed to be that of the parent with whom the student spends the majority of nights during the school calendar year.

Any change in residence must be bona fide. Determination of what constitutes a bona fide change of residence depends upon the facts of each case. In order for a change of residence to be considered bona fide at least the following facts must exist: (1) The original residence must be abandoned as a residence; that is sold, rented or disposed of as a residence, and must not be used as residence by any member of the family; (2) The entire family must make the change and take with them the household goods and furniture appropriate to the circumstances; (3) The change must be made with the intent that it is permanent.

No non-parental guardianship will be recognized where a student has a living parent unless: there has been a determination of abandonment of the student by such parent(s) or a determination that the student is a dependent juvenile as defined in G.S.7A-5 17(13) or comparable statute by a court of competent jurisdiction; or the student has been judicially declared a ward of the court or has been identified as an orphan or placed in a foster home by the Division of Social Services (or a comparable agency if out of state) and custody (not guardianship) has been determined by the court or social service agency. A student whose custody has been established by court order or social services agency decision is eligible for participation at the school to which he or she is assigned by the Board of Education of the local unit where the custodian resides.

The residence of a student who is emancipated shall continue to be his or her residence as of the time of emancipation, unless an exception is granted under the procedures established by the Hardship Rule.

A student who resides out of state but attends a member high school could be eligible, if the student attends a member non-boarding parochial school or is a member of a parochial church and submits an authorized pastor verification form; or if the out-of-state student is attending a member school as an employee benefit because a parent is working at the school, the school must request a hardship waiver of the residence rule with appropriate documentation as a result of the employee status.

The residence of a student who is in an organized and recognized foreign exchange program shall be considered to be the place to which he or she is assigned by that program, and is eligible

to participate at the school to which he or she is assigned by the local education agency. Foreign students who are not part of an organized and recognized foreign exchange program must present extenuating circumstances through the procedure established in the Hardship Rule. A foreign exchange student is eligible only during the first year of residence in the United States. With the exception of this residence rule, foreign exchange students are subject to all other eligibility requirements, including but not limited to, the prohibition on participation after graduation or eligibility for graduation from high school.

In no case will any exception be made to the following principles:

- No student may participate at a second school in the same sport during the same sport season, except in the event of a bona fide change in residence of the parent(s) or legal custodian; change of schools must be contemporaneous with change in residence.
- Documents purporting to establish guardianship or custody issued by a notary public, an attorney, a clerk of court, or any entity other than a court of record with competent jurisdiction will not be accepted.

5. TRANSFER POLICY: After initial entry into the ninth grade, and absent a bona fide move as provided in the Residence section in this Handbook:

(a) a student transferring from one member school to another member school within the same LEA must sit out 365 days for athletic participation. The LEA may create criteria for immediate athletic eligibility for transfers within the LEA.

(b) A student transferring from one member school in one LEA to another member school in a different LEA must sit out 365 days for athletic participation. Exceptions for immediate athletic eligibility for transfers from one LEA to a different LEA will be heard by a special NCHSAA transfer committee.

NOTE: If a member school is not part of a defined LEA (e.g., charter school, non-boarding parochial school, etc.), then the member school itself will be considered its own LEA for purposes of this policy (i.e., exceptions involving these member schools will fall under subsection (b) above).

6. RECRUITING/UNDUE INFLUENCE: No student shall be subjected to undue influence by an individual or group of individuals to induce or cause him to transfer from one school to another for athletic purposes. **If allegations of recruiting are made against a school, the burden of proof in substantiated form must be borne by the accusing party. Allegations of recruiting that are substantiated will be processed as infractions under the penalty code.**

For the purposes of this rule, “undue influence” consists of actions taken for the purpose and intent of soliciting or encouraging the enrollment of a student-athlete in a school, including but not limited to the following:

- initiating or arranging communication or contact of any sort (letters, email, phone, etc) with a prospective student-athlete or member of his or her family
- visiting or entertaining a prospective student-athlete or member of his or her family
- providing transportation or arranging for same for a prospective student-athlete or member of his or her family to visit a school or meet with anyone associated with a school
- providing verbal or written material, slide, film or tape presentations to a prospective student-athlete or member of his or her family which states or implies that a school’s athletic program is superior to that of any other school with the purpose or intent of soliciting or encouraging the enrollment of the student in that school, or that it would be advantageous for any prospective student-athlete to participate in athletics at that member school as opposed to any other school
- to use non-school athletic teams as a vehicle to solicit or encourage a prospective student-athlete or a member of his or her family to enroll the student-athlete at a different school.

The above applies to any individual who coaches at an NCHSAA member school, head or

assistant, paid or non-paid, faculty or non-faculty, parent volunteer, etc., as well as any other persons formally or informally associated with a school's athletic program.

7. ATTENDANCE: (a) A player must have been in attendance for at least 85 percent of the previous semester at an approved high school. Any student must be in membership to be able to make up days missed while in membership (days missed while not in membership may not be made up for athletic eligibility). For a regular 90-day semester, a student may not miss more than 13 days and be in compliance with the 85 percent rule.

(b) A student must, at the time of any game in which he or she participates, be a regularly enrolled member of the school's student body, according to local policy. If there is no local policy, "regularly enrolled" is defined as enrolled for at least one half of the "minimum load." It is recommended the student be in school the day of the contest.

(c) The student must be enrolled within the first 15 days and in regular attendance for the present semester to be eligible for athletics. A student whose family has moved into a school district shall immediately assume the same status in the new district as that from which he moved. Summer school attendance shall not be counted in determining percentage of attendance for athletic eligibility, but approved homebound programs do fulfill the attendance requirement.

(d) At the end of each semester, any participant who has failed to attend school 85 percent of that semester is immediately ineligible.

8. SCHOLASTIC REQUIREMENTS: A student must have passed a minimum load of work during the preceding semester to be eligible at any time during the present semester. The semester is normally considered half of the academic year. **All students must also meet local promotion standards, set by the LEA and/or the local school.**

A minimum load is defined as five courses in the traditional school schedule and three courses for schools on the "block" format. If the school is on an A/B form of block scheduling, a student must pass six of eight courses during what would traditionally be defined as a semester. Any student, including seniors, must pass that minimum load, even if they need fewer for graduation.

TRADITIONAL: pass five (minimum load)

BLOCK: pass three (minimum load, 90-minute classes)

A/B: pass six

HYBRID FORMATS:

- 3 block, 2 traditional – ("skinnies" is the parlance many systems use), most common hybrids use four block as the basis (two skinnies equal a block); must pass equivalent of three blocks. Could fail both "skinnies" but passing three blocks would meet minimum requirements.

- 2 block, 3 traditional – use seven traditional as the basis (block equals two); must pass equivalent of five traditional classes. Could fail one block only and be eligible (minimum requirement) but not more.

- 2 blocks and 4 traditional ("skinnies") – Use eight as the basis like an A/B format; (block equals two); must pass equivalent of six A/B classes. Could fail one block only and be eligible (minimum requirement) but not more.

- 1 block, 5 traditional – use seven as the basis (block equals two); must pass equivalent of five traditional classes. Could fail one block only and be eligible (minimum requirement) but not more.

Local units may be more restrictive, but not less restrictive.

Office assistance, teacher assistance or laboratory assistance may not be used toward academic eligibility. Audited courses may not be used toward academic eligibility.

No work previously passed by a student may be submitted as part of a minimum load.

Summer school work used to make up part of the minimum load must be applied to the most recent semester. Credit for summer work is a determination of the local unit.

A student, upon first entering grade nine, is academically eligible for competition on high school teams. This also applies to attendance.

A student not academically eligible at the beginning of the semester is not eligible at any time during the semester. (Exception: a student who receives an incomplete which causes him or her to fail to meet minimum scholastic requirements or is awaiting a final grade due to EOC re-testing, or any other state-mandated testing is ineligible until the course is satisfactorily completed, and eligibility is restored immediately). A student academically eligible at the beginning of a semester remains academically eligible throughout the semester.

Alternative or extended day school students who meet all other eligibility requirements may participate in athletics for the school to which they would normally be assigned if local policy allows it, provided the alternative/extended day school has no athletic program. The alternative schools referenced here are those operated by the school system itself. The principal of the school at which the students play shall be responsible for certifying their eligibility and shall have on file all records, including current attendance data, necessary to verify eligibility. Each such student shall be identified on the eligibility list, which shall be accompanied by a letter from the principal stating that these designated students meet all eligibility requirements.

The principal and coach shall have the same authority in player selection and application of team rules and regulations with alternative school students as with those enrolled in the regular school program.

Pupils enrolled in "exceptional students" classes shall be eligible for participation in inter-scholastic athletics provided the program of instruction is in accordance with the recommendations of the State Department of Public Instruction, and provided that in the opinions of the principal and teacher, such pupil is making "satisfactory progress." "Satisfactory progress" is defined that the pupil passes a minimum load on his level. All other regulations must be met.

At the end of the first semester, a superintendent or principal has eight days (excluding Saturday and Sunday) to check grades of students, removing such player immediately upon

FELONY POLICY

Any student who is subject to the NCHSAA eight semester rule who

(1) is convicted of a crime classified as a felony under North Carolina or federal law,

or

(2) is adjudicated delinquent for an offense that would be a felony if committed by an adult,

is not eligible to participate in the North Carolina High School Athletic Association sports program. Such ineligibility shall be immediate and shall prohibit participation in the NCHSAA sports program from the date of conviction or adjudication of delinquency through the end of the student's high school career. Appellate or other post-conviction review of the conviction or adjudication of delinquency does not affect the student's immediate ineligibility.

Note: "Convicted" and "conviction," for the purpose of this policy, includes the entry of (a) a plea of guilty; or (b) a plea of no contest, nolo contendere, or the equivalent; or (c) a verdict or finding of guilty by a jury, judge, magistrate, or other duly constituted, established, and recognized adjudicating body, tribunal, or official, either civilian or military. A person is "convicted" or "adjudicated delinquent" for the purposes of this policy, in North Carolina state courts, the courts of the United States, another state, the armed services of the United States, or another country.

knowledge of ineligibility and no later than the completion of the eight-day period and restore to eligibility any debarred player after he or she has qualified at the end of a semester. Any student who has his eligibility restored may participate the day following the completion of the semester of the ineligibility.

The purpose of the eight-day period is to allow schools ample time to check grades. A player should be removed before the eight-day period is up if the school has knowledge and has verified the student is ineligible.

9. MEDICAL EXAMINATION: In order to be eligible for practice or participation in interscholastic athletic contests, a player must receive a medical examination once every 365 days by a physician licensed to practice medicine, nurse practitioner or physician assistant and be cleared to play. The mandatory preparticipation form may be found online.

To participate in summer workouts, a player must have an up-to-date physical on file.

Students absent from athletic practice for five or more days due to illness or injury shall receive a medical release by either a physician licensed to practice medicine or his designee (nurse practitioner, physician's assistant or licensed athletic trainer) before readmittance to practice or contests. Students with potential head injuries must receive a medical release by a physician licensed to practice medicine before readmittance to practice or contests.

It is recommended that players be covered by adequate medical and accident insurance, and that medical aid be immediately available at all times. Schools should have medical release forms on site at athletic events in case medical treatment is required.

10. EIGHT SEMESTER RULE: No student may be eligible to participate at the high school level for a period lasting longer than eight consecutive semesters, beginning with the student's first entry into grade nine, or participation on a high school team as an overage seventh- or eighth-grade student, whichever comes first. For students who skip the ninth grade and advance directly to the 10th from the eighth, the year prior to entering the 10th grade is considered the year of first entry into ninth grade for athletics.

Playing as a member of a private or other non-member school team shall be deemed the same as playing as a member of a school team. Enforcement of this rule is to begin with entry into ninth grade, however.

The principal shall have evidence of the date of each player's entry into the ninth grade. The North Carolina cumulative record is sufficient.

11. MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SEASONS: No student may be approved for a high school contest if he has taken part in contests during four separate seasons in that sport (one season per year, whether the sport is played in North Carolina or not).

Playing as a member of a private or other non-member school team shall be deemed the same as playing as a member of a school team. Enforcement of this rule is to begin with entry into ninth grade, however.

A student shall not participate in school athletic contests after graduation from high school. This does not apply to spring sports playoffs.

12. AGE OF PLAYER: No student may be approved for any athletic contest if his or her 19th birthday comes on or before August 31, 2013; i.e., the date of birth was on or before August 31, 1994. The principal shall have on file evidence of the legal birth date of each athlete.

Evidence of legal birth date must be established by a copy of the birth certificate or from one of the following: a record from the State Bureau of Vital Statistics, Raleigh; a record from the county register of deeds office; an infant baptismal record; a recording from the attending doctor's registry or cashbook if specific; a news item at the time of birth from the local newspaper; or an official register sheet from the first grade.

A birth date as shown on a passport is acceptable verification of a foreign student's age.

An eighth grade student who is overage for middle school competition shall be eligible for

senior high school participation.

13. AMATEUR RULE: Money or awards having utilitarian value (Example: golf balls, clubs, tennis balls, racket, etc.) may not be given to students for participation in athletics except as noted in the following paragraphs. A student may receive merchandise, etc., if it does not exceed \$20 value per season. Students may not accept items by virtue of being on a “free list” or “loan list”. Enforcement of this rule by the NCHSAA begins with a student’s entry in the ninth grade, so to participate as a member of a high school tennis team, for example, an athlete may NOT receive racquets, warm-ups, etc., by virtue of being on a free list or loan list.

A player may accept a gift provided it meets each of these conditions: is available to every member of the team, is totally consumable and nontransferable (e.g., meals, trips, etc.) or is labeled in a permanent manner (i.e., monogrammed, engraved, etc.) and is approved by the local principal and superintendent.

A student may accept a medal, trophy, ribbon, pin, high school letter, sweater, jacket, blazer or blanket. Sweaters, jackets, blazers and blankets must carry the high school letter or other appropriate school emblem. None of the approved awards shall be accepted from an individual or non-school organization unless the giving of such an award has been approved by the principal and superintendent of the school the athlete attends.

Acceptance of money or a forbidden award will cause an athlete to lose athletic eligibility in that particular sport for a period of time to be determined by the Board of Directors.

A member school which has any connection with the presentation of a forbidden award—such as assisting in the selection of the person to receive the award, permitting the award to be given at a school function, or holding the award for a student until he has graduated—shall be subject to penalty.

Accepting a nominal, standard fee or salary for instructing, supervising or officiating in an organized youth sports program or recreation, playground, or camp activities shall not jeopardize amateur status. “Organized youth sports program” includes both school and non-school programs.

A student is entitled to receive “essential expenses” for any particular game, or games, in which he participates as a player—that is, meals, lodging and transportation for each particular game. Any remuneration beyond these essential expenses shall debar a student from future contests.

No student shall be eligible for any contest if he competes under a false name.

14. DRESSING FOR GAME OR PRACTICING: A player shall not dress for a game or scrimmage when he is not eligible to participate in the game. Dressing and sitting on the bench shall be interpreted as participating in the game. Exception: football, Eight Quarter rule. **Ineligible players are NOT allowed to participate in practice, either in season or during out-of-season workouts, but this does not apply to summer workouts.**

15. ALL-STAR, BOWL AND BENEFIT GAMES: (a) No student shall be permitted to participate in an all-star or bowl game unless he/she has completed high school eligibility in that sport; (b) no individual player is allowed to participate in more than two football or two basketball all-star contests during the school year; and (c) any student who fails to comply with the preceding requirements loses athletic eligibility for a period of time to be determined by the Board of Directors.

An all-star/bowl game is defined as any contest (where admission is charged either directly or indirectly) in which one or both teams is composed of players selected from two or more regularly constituted teams. This regulation does not apply to summer baseball and softball.

Other information regarding this topic may be found on the NCHSAA website.

Teams authorized to participate in benefit/fund-raisers (student/faculty game, etc.) must be composed exclusively of players from the same high school. An existing team may not play an outside team in a benefit game, and may not be coached by their coaching staff. A benefit game played during the sports season must count as an official contest.

16. PROFESSIONALS/COLLEGES: No student who has signed a professional contract will be eligible for high school competition in that sport.

No student who has played on a college team is eligible to play on a high school team.

A student who has enrolled and attended class in a college will not be eligible for high school competition, but this does not affect a regularly enrolled high school student who is merely taking the college course(s) for advanced credit.

GAME AND SPORT ADMINISTRATION

17. PRACTICE TIME: There shall be no athletic practice during the regular school day. This means no individual or team practice may begin until after the last regularly scheduled instructional period. No authorized practice, contest, or workouts may occur during the work day for teachers during the ten-month teaching calendar, and coaches may not use their vacation or leave time to hold a practice during the teacher work day. On the day following the end of the academic school year calendar, non-mandatory teacher workdays are governed by local policy. This rule also applies to non-faculty coaches. Exception: if a superintendent gives permission for schools in his/her unit to practice prior to the end of a work day DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER ONLY. Team practice in any sport is prohibited after the sports season ends until the first day following the final day of the school year.

18. GAME RULES: All high schools participating in interscholastic athletics shall use the game rules as set forth by the National Federation of State High School Associations. Golf and tennis shall use USGA and USTA rules respectively, except where local modifications apply. Women's lacrosse follows U.S. Lacrosse Association rules.

19. ATHLETIC CONTRACTS: A standard contract is recommended for use in all sports for non-conference competition (with two-year terms for football and basketball). Copies may be found online. All provisions of the contract must be fulfilled by both parties unless canceled by mutual agreement. The NCHSAA has no responsibility for enforcing oral contracts.

20. STARTING TIME: The starting time for all regular season and play-off games in all sports shall be determined by the home team, within certain limits. A contest may not usually begin until after the last regularly scheduled instructional period. If an event is held on campus or on school property, the team is considered the "home" team. If the event is held off campus (golf course, etc.), the team is designated the "host" team. The contest may begin before the last regularly scheduled period if a "host" team is involved, but schools are still urged to minimize loss of school time. This rule is designed to be used only if the operator of the facility dictates an early starting time to the host school.

Playoff games are under the auspices of the NCHSAA, so game times must be reasonable (customarily late afternoon, early evening or night), and are set specifically in football (7:30 p.m.), lacrosse (7 p.m.), baseball (7 p.m.), soccer (7 p.m.), and softball (7 p.m.). Teams may play at 6 p.m. in baseball, soccer, lacrosse and softball playoffs if mutually agreed upon. **Any deviation from this must be approved by the NCHSAA.** Recommended starting time in regular season is no earlier than 5:00 pm for baseball, lacrosse, softball, volleyball and soccer. Schools may play earlier than the playoff date designated on the bracket by mutual agreement, and Saturday playoff games may be played earlier than those times listed here by mutual agreement.

21. PRACTICE GAMES AND SCRIMMAGES: All sports at the high school are permitted two preseason varsity scrimmages, and this competition can be between two schools or with multiple schools. Football scrimmage rules are different and are spelled out in the football section of this Handbook.

Two scrimmages may be held in the same preseason week, and the preseason scrimmages must be conducted as events open to the public (no closed scrimmages allowed). Junior varsity scrimmages are allowed in conjunction with varsity scrimmages, at the same time and site.

Scrimmages must be played prior to the first official playing date and are subject to the regular weekly limitations in terms of numbers of contests (exception: football).

For the sports of football, volleyball, soccer, basketball, wrestling, lacrosse, baseball and softball,