

The Wake County Public School System sponsors a varied activities program for all students enrolled in the secondary schools. Because certain of these activities, including athletics, meet outside of the school day and require a significant amount of time on the part of students, the following eligibility requirements are mandated. For purpose of this policy, participating in athletics includes try-out, practice, play and meeting all WCPSS, Department of Public Instruction, and NCHSAA eligibility requirements.

- A. This policy shall apply to secondary students who represent the schools by participation in athletics, marching band, and student council executive council. The principal may at his/her discretion include any other after-school activities, clubs, or functions under this policy.
- B. All students must be properly enrolled and in attendance at the school in which they are participating, except as provided in Section Q below. Per Policy 6203.H, students in grades 9 – 12 (high schools) who transfer to a school will be prohibited for 365 days from participating in athletics that come under the jurisdiction of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association.
- C. Students in grades 7 – 8 (middle schools) participating in athletics must carry student accident insurance available through the system or provide evidence of comparable coverage.
- D. Students in grades 9 – 12 (high schools) who participate in high school sponsored and supervised athletics are covered by an Athletic Insurance Policy, which provides limited benefits. The policy provides excess coverage for students with other insurance coverage but, it pays when other benefits have been exhausted. In cases in which a student has no other coverage with a commercial insurance agency, Medicare, or Medicaid, the WCPSS athletic insurance policy is the primary policy.
- E. All students participating in athletics must receive a medical examination once every 365 days by a duly licensed physician, nurse practitioner or physician's assistant, except where specifically exempted by the Senior Administrator for Athletics due to a bona fide religious objection. As a condition for approving a religious exemption, the parent shall be required to complete a release of liability form developed by the Superintendent/designee.
- F. All students must have been in attendance for at least eighty-five (85%) of the previous semester.
- G. All students must be present in school for the entire day in order to participate in activities or practices, except where specifically exempted by a physician. Other exemptions may be granted by the principal of each school based on attendance policy 6000.3.
- H. Students assigned to In-School Suspension (ISS), Out-of-School Suspension (OSS), or an alternative program in lieu of suspension shall not participate in co-curricular activities or athletics during the assigned time and may regain eligibility the next calendar day following completion of ISS, OSS, or an alternative program with principal's approval.
- I. All students participating in co-curricular activities and athletics shall demonstrate an acceptable level of academic achievement as follows:
 - 1. Students in grades 7-8 (middle schools) shall:
 - a. Meet promotion requirements for the year. Students promoted with focused intervention are eligible for athletics.

- b. Earn passing grades during each semester in one less course than the required core courses to be eligible for participating during the succeeding semester. Passing grades must be attained in language arts and mathematics. In addition to the core course requirements, at least fifty percent of all remaining courses must be passed.

2. Students in grades 9-12 (high schools) shall:

- a. Meet promotion requirements at their school. To be promoted, students must attain units of credit that are earned through successful completion of required courses specified by their school and Board Policy.
- b. Earn passing grades in five (5) subjects, or three (3) for block schedule schools, or six (6) for schools on an A/B form of scheduling during each semester to be eligible for participation during the succeeding semester.
- c. The cumulative overall grade point average for all courses shall be no less than one point five (1.5).

3. If a student's (high schools only) cumulative grade point average is less than one point five (1.5), eligibility may be granted by the principal when all of the following conditions exist:

- a. The student's overall grade point average for the immediate past semester is two point zero (2.0) or better.
- b. Courses successfully completed by the student have placed him/her on track toward graduation.
- c. Attendance requirements as specified in 6860.F are met.

J. Students in grades 9 – 12 (high schools) participating in co-curricular activities and athletics declared ineligible under the provisions of Policy 6860.I.2(c) and 6860.I.3 may request an appeal. Students in grades 9 – 12 (high schools) participating in non-athletic activities declared ineligible under the provisions of Policy 6860 may request an appeal. Appeals may be initiated by the parent or guardian, or the student. Each request for an appeal must be made in writing and sent to the principal of the school for action. Students whose appeals are approved by the school will be put on an established and monitored contract that defines the parameters under which the student may participate in co-curricular activities and athletics for that school year. A list of these students participating in athletics will be provided to the Senior Administrator for Athletics. A list of these students participating in non-athletic activities will be provided to the appropriate area Superintendent. Students participating in athletics who appeal at the school level and whose appeals are denied may appeal by writing a letter and sending it to the Senior Administrator for Athletics for a decision. Students participating in non-athletic activities who appeal at the school level and whose appeals are denied may appeal by writing a letter and sending it to the appropriate area Superintendent for a decision. The decision of the Senior Administrator for Athletics or the area Superintendent shall be final except where a parent/guardian demonstrates a right to appeal to the Board of Education under G.S. 115C-45(c).

K. In addition to the foregoing provisions, students in grades 7 – 8 (middle schools) who participate in co-curricular activities and athletics must also meet all other requirements of the State Board of Education. According to State Board of Education Guidelines, there are Hardship categories that may be considered (other than the age rule). The conditions that cause the student to fail to meet the eligibility requirements must be beyond the control of the school, the student and/or his/her parents. Hardships must be made in writing to the principal of the school. The principal will forward their decision to the Senior Administrator for Athletics. Students whose hardships are denied at the school level may appeal the decision by writing a letter to the Senior Administrator for Athletics. The

decision of the Senior Administrator for Athletics shall be final except where a parent/guardian demonstrates a right to appeal to the WCPSS Board of Education under G.S. 115C-45(c).

- L.** In addition to the foregoing provisions, students participating in athletics in grades 9 – 12 (high schools) must meet all other requirements of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association and the State Board of Education. According to North Carolina High School Athletic Association guidelines, there are Hardship Rules that may be considered (other than the age rule). The conditions that cause the student to fail to meet the eligibility requirements must be beyond the control of the school, the student and/or his/her parents. Hardships must be made in writing to the principal of the school. If the school principal approves of the Hardship, the application for consideration must be made in writing by the principal, and approved by the Superintendent's designee (Senior Administrator for Athletics). If the Hardship is approved by the Senior Administrator for Athletics, it will be sent to the NCHSAA for a decision by their staff.
- M.** Students in grades 9 – 12 (high schools) participating in athletics may not participate at a second school in WCPSS in the same sport season, unless participation is approved by the Senior Administrator for Athletics as the Superintendent's designee.
- N.** Middle and high schools must follow all guidelines set forth by the Department of Public Instruction and the North Carolina High School Athletic Association including but not limited to, the hot weather guidelines provided in the NCHSAA Handbook, and the National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) Guidelines for Lightning Safety. For inclement weather guidelines for all student activities and athletic games/and or practices, refer to Policy 2311 R & P, 1.6(e).
- O.** Middle and high schools must have a written emergency action plan for each sport for all practices and games, and for other physically strenuous co-curricular activities.
- P.** Students enrolled and attending WCPSS Special/Optional Schools (e.g. Longview, Mary Phillips, Mt. Vernon, River Oaks) may participate in interscholastic athletics at their base school. Students must meet all WCPSS, Department of Public Instruction, and NCHSAA eligibility requirements. The principal of the school in which the student participates shall be responsible for approving participation in athletics and is responsible for certifying their eligibility and having on file all records pertaining to eligibility.
- Q.** Students enrolled and attending WCPSS middle or high school programs without interscholastic athletics will have the opportunity to participate in athletics. For each school without interscholastic athletics, the Superintendent/Designee will assign a school for athletic purposes.

Legal Reference: G.S. 115C-47 (4), NCHSAA Handbook, SBE Athletic Manual

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