

## NCHSAA HANDBOOK VERSION

## 1.2 ELIGIBILITY

**1.2.1 Initial Entry:** A student may participate in athletics at any member school upon initial entry into ninth grade provided they meet applicable NCHSAA and local Board of Education eligibility requirements. 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).

(a) Upon initial entry into ninth grade, transfer and boundary criteria shall apply as follows:

- (1) The student must live within the member school's boundary as established by the local board of education (LEA); or
- (2) If the student's member school does not have a boundary established by an LEA (e.g., charter school, non-boarding parochial school, etc.), after initial entry, 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
- (3) There will be no boundary limitation if the student is a member of a parochial church affiliated with a non-boarding parochial member school and submits an authorized pastor verification form.

(b) Home school students

- (1) Documentation from the Division of Non-Public Education must be presented upon initial dual enrollment-attendance, immunization, transcript, school number, etc.
- (2) Home school students must communicate athletic intent at a member school in which they are domiciled and follow the enrollment and assignment procedures/policies established by the local board of education.
  - (i) Notice to principal must take place within ten days prior to the first practice date of each sports season.

**1.2.2 Master Eligibility Sheets:** All students must be eligible prior to dressing or participating in any interscholastic contest, whether or not the NCHSAA sponsors a championship in that sport.

- (a) Only those students listed on the master eligibility sheet(s) are covered by catastrophic insurance.
- (b) No student shall be listed on the sheet unless and until documents substantiating eligibility are on file with the school. Such documents shall be available for inspection until the student's eligibility has ended.
- (c) The master eligibility sheet 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.
- (d) 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.
- (e) Ineligible players are NOT allowed to participate in practice, but this does not apply to summer workouts or skill development.
- (f) When completing Master Eligibility Sheets, 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:

- (1) Any student proposed for a contest is eligible at the school to which the local board of education assigns them within the unit of residence of a parent or legal custodian within this state, subject to the Transfer Policy. (see 1.2.10).
- (2) When two boards of education within North Carolina by mutual agreement assign a student to a different school, and the NCHSAA has authorized eligibility pursuant to the Transfer Policy. (see 1.2.10)
- (3) Absent a transfer referenced above, a student is eligible at his or her assigned school if he or she has attended school within that administrative unit the previous two semesters, provided it meets LEA policy.
- (4) Legal documents signed by a judge (ward of court) or social service (orphanage/foster home) are required to be submitted along with eligibility forms pertaining to students in these circumstances.
- (5) Foreign exchange students (see 1.2.9.i).
- (6) The NCHSAA has approved a Transfer Waiver Request and/or a Hardship Request to waive the residency requirement on the student's behalf.

(g) It shall be the responsibility of the principal, and/or his or her designee, 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.

**1.2.3 Age of Player:** No student may be approved for any athletic contest if his or her 19th birthday comes on or before August 31, 2018; (i.e., the student's date of birth was on or before August 31, 1999).

- (a) The principal shall have on file evidence of the legal birth date of each athlete.
- (b) 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 cash book if specific; a news item at the time of birth from the local newspaper; or an official register sheet from the first grade.
- (c) A birth date as shown on a passport is acceptable verification of a foreign student's age.
- (d) An eighth-grade student who is overage for middle school competition shall be eligible for high school participation.

**1.2.4 Attendance:** A student-athlete must meet the LEA attendance policy during the previous semester at an approved high school.

- (a) A student must, at the time of any practice and/or 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."
- (b) It is recommended the student be in school the day of the contest.
- (c) At the end of each semester, any participant who has failed to meet the LEA attendance policy of that semester is immediately ineligible.
- (d) Home school students:
  - (1) Must have been enrolled in the registered home school for 365 days prior to being eligible in a member school.
  - (2) Once deemed eligible at a member school, the student must maintain continuous dual enrollment.
    - (i) Unenrollment would render the student ineligible for 365 days.
  - (3) Must participate in a class schedule that is at least one half of the school's instructional day
    - (i) At least one class must be on campus each semester or meet LEA requirements.

**1.2.5 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. Home school students must be on grade level according to a nationally standardized achievement test indicating grade level.

(a) 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. Home school student must pass all courses in which he/she is enrolled in (public school).

- (1) Traditional: pass five (minimum load)
- (2) Block: pass three (minimum load, 90-minute classes)
- (3) A/B: pass six
- (4) Hybrid Formats:
  - (i) 3 block, 2 traditional – ("skinnies" is the parlance many systems use), most common hybrids use four blocks 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.
  - (ii) 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.