

# **Middle School Athletics Eligibility**

# Athletics

“Interscholastic athletics have a vital place in the total educational program when they are effectively planned, organized, administered, supervised, and evaluated. Through school athletics, many of the interests and needs of young people can be served better than through any other channel.”

State Board of Education 1987

# MS ATHLETIC REGULATIONS

- General Statute 115C-47(4) makes it the responsibility of the local board of education to regulate extracurricular activities, including athletics. This statute reads as follows:
- "Local boards of education shall make all rules and regulations necessary for the conducting of extracurricular activities in the schools under their supervision, including a program of athletics...provided that all interscholastic athletic activities shall be conducted in accordance with rules and regulations prescribed by the State Board of Education."

General Statute 115C-47

# AGE

- A student *shall not* participate on a seventh or eighth grade team if the student becomes 15 years of age on or before August 31 of 2014.

# ATTENDANCE

- Student *must be* in attendance 85% of the previous semester.
- This includes all absences.  
(Excused and Unexcused)
- Attendance is regulated by local LEA policy in terms of length of day required to be counted in attendance.
- Local attendance policy may be more stringent in terms of counting/earning credit for courses.
- Summer School does not count towards attendance.

# ATTENDANCE

- A student *must*, at any 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 not 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.

# ACADEMICS

- Students in grades 7 and 8, *must pass* at least one less than the number of required core courses each semester

and

- Meet promotion standards established by the LEA.

# ACADEMICS

- An athlete becomes “eligible” or “ineligible” on the first day of the new semester.
- Students entering the 7<sup>th</sup> grade for the first time are automatically eligible for their first semester.
- Summer school work that is used to make up part of the eligibility requirement, **must** be applied to the most recent semester.



# ENROLLMENT/RESIDENCE

- Student must be a regularly enrolled member of the school's student body.
- Student must participate at the school to which he/she is assigned by the local Board of Education.

# ENROLLMENT/RESIDENCE

- School assignment is based on the residence of the parent or legal custodian (Court ordered custody, not guardian) within the administrative unit.
- Student must live with the parents or legal custodian.

# ENROLLMENT/RESIDENCE

- A **“LEGAL CUSTODIAN”** is a person or agency awarded legal, court ordered custody of a child.
- A student may not have two residences for eligibility purposes. “Residence” as used for athletic purposes is defined as the equivalent of the term “domicile” as applied by the courts of North Carolina.

# ENROLLMENT/RESIDENCE

- Transfers within the same administrative unit may be governed by the Local Board of Education.
- A student transferred from one administrative unit to another by mutual agreement is immediately eligible, for athletic participation in the receiving unit, if eligible in all other respects.

# MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Student must receive a medical examination once every 365 days by a duly licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant.
- Students absent from athletic practice for five (5) or more days due to illness or injury shall receive a medical release by a physician licensed to practice medicine before re-admittance to practice or play.
- Students with potential head injuries must receive a medical release by a physician licensed to practice medicine before readmittance to practices or contests.

# SEMESTER RULE

- No student may be eligible to participate at the Middle School level for a period lasting longer than four (4) consecutive semesters. beginning with the students first entry into seventh grade.

# ELIGIBILITY LISTS

Eligibility lists shall be certified with the signature of the Principal and filed with the local superintendent (or designee) prior to the first game or contest in that sport.

# OFF SEASON SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- Off-season skill development sessions are allowed during the school year for seventh and eighth graders.
- Skill development sessions shall not be held during any tryout period of an in-season sport.
- All skill development sessions must be voluntary and open to all athletically eligible students. At no time may a coach require of any student off-season skill development sessions as a measure of potential or continued participation on a team.



# OFF SEASON SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- Skill development sessions are restricted in number of participants to one less than a team, on a daily basis.
- **NOTE: The maximum number of participants on a daily basis is: football (21), basketball (4), baseball (8), volleyball (5), tennis (4), soccer (10), golf (3), softball (8), wrestling (8), track (6), and cross country (4), lacrosse men (9), and lacrosse women (11)**

# OFF SEASON SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- Any team practice or game environment created in an off-season skill development session is prohibited during the students' school calendar year. Team practice in any sport is prohibited after the sports season ends until the first day following the final day of the school year.
- The primary focus of off-season skill development should be on individual student athletes, not team.

# OFF SEASON SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- During the summer, working with individuals, including rising and eligible seventh and eighth graders will be allowed, as long as it is not required.
- **NOTE: Seventh and eighth graders are not permitted to participate in high school open facility or skill development sessions during the school year.**

# DPI/LEA REGULATIONS

- 6<sup>th</sup> graders **are not allowed** to participate in the athletic program, practice or play.
- Managers may be 6<sup>th</sup> graders and do not have to meet the eligibility requirements (LEA decision). Managers may not practice as a player.
- A student may not dress for a game or scrimmage when he/she is not eligible to participate in the game.
- Cheerleading is a local decision activity. It is recommended that LEAs and schools follow the National Federation of State High School Associations' spirit rules and guidelines.

# DPI/LEA REGULATIONS

- To maintain amateur status, a student must not accept money or awards having utilitarian value (golf balls, clubs, tennis rackets, etc....) for participation in athletics.
- Loan equipment and supplies are prohibited items.
- Evening contests and/or games shall start no later than 7:00 pm when followed by a school day.

# DPI/LEA REQUIREMENTS

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# DPI/LEA REQUIREMENTS

- The local Board of Education or the conference of which the school is a member shall have the authority to set aside the effect of any eligibility rule, **OTHER THAN AGE**, upon the individual student when in its opinion, the rule fails to accomplish the purpose for which the rule is intended or causes undue hardship upon the student.

# DPI/LEA REQUIREMENTS

- Insurance coverage –  
Student Athletes should have proper insurance coverage. Catastrophic liability insurance is available through the NCHSSA.
- It is recommended that the Head Coach attend the NC Coaches Association/NCHSSA State clinics in the sport he/she coaches.



# DPI/LEA REQUIREMENTS

- Ejections are governed by the local School Board and Conference. The minimal requirements for ejections are :
- First Offense – Reprimanded and suspended for next game at level of play and any intervening games at either level.
- Second Offense – Placed on probation and suspended for the next two games at that level of play and for any intervening games at either level.

# DPI/LEA REQUIREMENTS

- Third Offense – The person shall be suspended for one calendar year.
- A Coach who is suspended at any level of grades 7 – 12 may not coach in any other grade level during the period of suspension.
- Penalties are cumulative from sport to sport and from sports season to sport season.

# DPI/LEA REQUIREMENTS

- Sports Seasons

Fall – Beginning of Fall semester to Nov. 15

Winter – October 15 - March 1

Spring – February 1 Until the end of school

# NCHSAA Sports Medicine Information

- On the remaining slides are Sports Medicine information taken from the NCHSAA Eligibility PowerPoint for High Schools. This includes concussion, neck injuries, heart issues, respiratory issues/asthma, heat illness, and skin infections.

# Sports Medicine

## Concussions

An online coach education course – “*Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know*” is now available from the National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS) at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com).

The course provides a guide to understanding, recognizing, and properly managing concussion in high school sports. The course is FREE, but you must register at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com).

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has endorsed the course and has provided many useful resources.

# Sports Medicine

## Concussions

- A concussion is a traumatic injury to the brain and presents a wide variety of signs and symptoms
  - Headache
  - Confusion
  - Amnesia (not remembering events before or after the injury)
  - Vision changes
  - Loss of consciousness
  - Dizziness
  - Irritability/emotional changes (inappropriate or atypical crying, laughing, etc)
  - Nausea/vomiting
  - Fatigue/feeling sluggish/slow/'foggy'
  - Having "bell rung"
  - Excessive fatigue/drowsiness
- ANY sign/symptom after a blow to the head is a concussion until proven otherwise

# Sports Medicine

## Concussion

- A high school athlete should NEVER return to play on the day they suffer a concussion
  - Returning an athlete to play before complete resolution of symptoms can lead to recurrent concussion, prolonged post-concussion symptoms, OR even ‘Second Impact Syndrome’ (which is often fatal)
- An athlete with suspected concussion cannot return to play until he/she is cleared by a licensed medical physician
  - Managing concussions is difficult even for well-trained and experienced medical providers. Coaches, you do not want this responsibility (or liability).
- **THIS IS NOW A STATE LAW!**

# Sports Medicine

## Concussions

Take home point: At the end of the day, it's not an athlete's knee, ankle, or elbow... it's his or her brain and you cannot get this one wrong.

- “WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT.”



# Sports Medicine

## Neck Injuries

Cervical spine injuries are typically caused by contact with a forward flexed neck

- 'spearing' position

Any numbness/tingling in BOTH arms is suspicious for a cervical spine injury

- a 'stinger' never causes burning in both arms

Take Home Point: Any suspected cervical spine injury should be immobilized and evaluated by medical personnel

# Sports Medicine

## Heart Issues

- Sudden cardiac death occurs in young athletes for a variety of reasons:
  - Most are due to genetic abnormalities of heart rhythms or heart anatomy
  - Drugs can trigger cardiac arrest (cocaine, stimulants, anabolic steroids, and ephedrine are common culprits)
  - Heat stroke can lead to cardiac arrest
  - Viral illnesses can cause 'myocarditis' (infection of the heart muscle) which can cause sudden cardiac arrest
  - Sickle cell trait makes athletes more likely to have sudden cardiac arrest (more common in African-Americans)

# Sports Medicine

## Heart Issues

There are red flags which can tip us off to undiagnosed heart problems

- Chest pain with exertion
- Passing out/fainting from exertion – this is not normal or due to being ‘out of shape’
- Family history of a sudden cardiac death or unexplained death before age 50

Take home point: *Any* athlete who passes out or has chest pain with exertion needs a medical evaluation

# Sports Medicine

## Respiratory Issues/Asthma

- Asthma attacks remain a leading cause of death among young people
- Be aware of common asthma triggers:
  - Respiratory infections
  - Both extreme heat/humidity and cold/dry
  - Pollen & other allergens

Take home point: Know who your asthmatic athletes are & make sure they have accessible inhalers

# Sports Medicine: Heat Illness

Death from heat illness is preventable

Hydration is only one part of the solution

Know who is at increased risk

- Obese, out of shape athletes
- Athletes with fever or recent stomach or respiratory infections
- Athletes with sickle cell trait
- Athletes with history of prior heat illness
- Athletes on illicit drugs, ADD meds, or supplements w/ stimulants

# Sports Medicine: Heat Illness

- Prevention is key
- Be aware of heat index (see handbook)
  - General Rule for high risk
    - 70 to 80 F with high humidity (> 70%)
    - 80 to 90 F with moderate humidity
    - 90 F with low humidity (< 30%)
- Practice at cooler times when feasible (mornings, evenings)

# Sports Medicine: Heat Illness

- Allow athletes/teams to acclimate and become accustomed to heat over time
- Allow regular breaks for cooling and hydration
- Monitor body weight pre/post practice
- Recognize early and initiate cooling immediately
  - confusion, collapse, nausea/vomiting

# Sports Medicine: Skin Infections

- Skin infections are common in contact sports
- Most skin infections are relatively minor and self-limited
- Resistant staph infections (MRSA) have become quite common and can be severe
- Skin infections are spread by skin-to-skin contact, sharing pads/equipment/work-out gear, dirty equipment
- Any boil or abscess needs medical evaluation



# Sports Medicine: Skin Infections

Take home point: the vast majority of skin infections can be prevented by good hygiene

- Shower right after every practice & game
- Do not share equipment, pads, work-out clothes, towels, etc
- Wash hands frequently with soap/water or anti-bacterial towels/gels
- Wash equipment, mats, clothes, towels, etc regularly

# DPI MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC MANUAL ONLINE SITE

- <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/healthfuliving/athletics/>