

How to Maintain and Protect Your High School Eligibility 2016-17

Introduction

The Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) is comprised of approximately 750 member schools, both public and private, across the state of Missouri. MSHSAA's eligibility requirements have been voted on by the member schools and were adopted by your school when it became a MSHSAA member. Your school will also have local school requirements that you must comply with in order to be eligible.

Information contained on this page will acquaint you with the essential rules and regulations students and schools must follow in order to maintain and protect high school eligibility. No one requirement is more important than another. Any questions you have concerning these essential requirements or eligibility should be discussed with the school principal or athletic director. These administrators have copies of all MSHSAA eligibility requirements.

Please refer to the MSHSAA Website for a new interactive Rules Review Presentation on many of these eligibility topics. This presentation is available to and useful for students, parents, school administrators, school counselors, coaches, etc.

Eligibility Requirements

1. Bona Fide Student

- In order to represent your school, you must be a bona fide student and meet all eligibility requirements. You must be enrolled in and regularly attending classes at the member school you wish to represent and you must meet the academic requirements in MSHSAA By-Law 2.3 and those of your local school.

2. Citizenship

- You must be a creditable citizen. Creditable citizens are **those students whose conduct - both in school and out of school - will not reflect discredit upon themselves or their school.**

NOTE: Conduct involving law enforcement must be reported to your principal or athletic director immediately as your conduct may affect eligibility or contest outcomes.

3. Sportsmanship

- If you commit an unsportsmanlike act while participating in an event, you could become ineligible.
- If your conduct as a spectator is found to be unsportsmanlike, you could be barred from attending any further high school contests.
- The unsportsmanlike conduct of any spectator, regardless of age, could cause that spectator to be barred from attending school contests.

4. Academics

■ Grades 9-12

- You must have earned, the preceding semester of attendance, a minimum of 3.0 units of credit or have earned credit in 80% of the maximum allowable classes in which any student can be enrolled in the semester, whichever is GREATER, at your school.
- For your current semester, you must be enrolled in and regularly attending courses that offer 3.0 units of credit or 80% of the maximum allowable credits which may be earned at your school, whichever is GREATER.

- Credits earned or completed after the close of the semester will not fulfill this requirement. Summer high school courses for FALL academic eligibility may count provided the course is necessary for graduation or promotion or is a core subject course, and credit is placed on the school transcript. No more than one unit of credit in summer school shall be counted toward fall eligibility.
- Students promoted for the first time into 9th grade are considered academically eligible for the first semester after promotion.
- Do not drop courses without first consulting with your school principal, athletic director or counselor to determine whether doing so will affect your eligibility.

■ Grades 7-8

- You must be enrolled in a normal course load for your grade at the member school.
- You will be ineligible if you failed more than one class the previous grading period.
- You must have been promoted to a higher grade prior to the first day of classes for the new school year.
- Students promoted for the first time into 7th grade are considered academically eligible for the first grading period after promotion.

5. Semesters of Participation

■ Grades 9-12

- You are eligible to participate in any sport for a maximum of four seasons (an exception is in place for schools sponsoring baseball or softball in both the fall and spring). Any part of a contest played during a season counts as a season of participation.
- Your eligibility to participate in high school activities begins when you first enter the 9th grade and lasts for the next *eight consecutive semesters (four consecutive years)*.

■ Grades 7-8

- You are eligible for only your first two semesters of attendance in the 7th grade and for only your first two semesters in the 8th grade.
- You are not eligible to compete with or against students enrolled in the 10th grade or above when you are enrolled in either the 7th or 8th grade.

NOTE: Check with your school principal for exceptions to this rule if you are ineligible because of age.

6. Age Limits

■ Grades 9-12

- If you reach 19 years of age prior to July 1, you will be ineligible the next school year.
- Over-aged 8th graders should be moved up to the senior high team to have eight semesters of eligibility.

■ Grades 7-8

- In order to participate on or against teams made up of only 7th-graders, you must not have reached 14 years of age prior to July 1 preceding the opening of school.
- In order to participate on or against teams made up of only 8th-graders, you must not have reached 15 years of age prior to July 1 preceding the opening of school.
- In order to participate on or against teams made up of only 9th-graders (freshmen teams), you must not have reached 16 years of age prior to July 1 preceding the opening of school.
- Students may participate with the next higher grade team if they no longer meet the age limit for their grade.

NOTE: Check with your school principal or athletic director for options available to you if you are ineligible for your grade level because of age.

7. Entering School

- You must enter school within the first 11 days of the semester in order to be eligible that semester.

8. Recruiting of Athletes

- You will be ineligible for your career at a school if you are influenced by a person to attend that school for athletic or activities purposes. You may, however, return to your original school and be ineligible for no more than 365 days.

9. Playing Under A False Name

- If you compete under an assumed or false name, you immediately become ineligible for up to 365 days.

10. Amateur and Awards Standards

- An athlete must maintain "amateur standing" 365 days a year in the sport concerned in order to participate in interscholastic athletics – the following restrictions govern the receipt of awards in both interscholastic play AND non-school competition/participation.
- After entering a member school, you will become ineligible in the sport concerned if you receive any of the following PROHIBITED awards for participating in an athletic contest or being an athlete:
 - An award of cash, a gift-certificate/gift-card or an award that is the equivalent of cash is PROHIBITED for amateurs.
 - Merchandise which exceeds a manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP) of \$250 is PROHIBITED for amateurs. However, there is no value limit in regard to awards which are symbolic in nature, such as medals, ribbons, trophies, plaques, etc.
- Awards should be approved in advance by your school.
- Commemorative jewelry may be presented by the school (i.e. championship ring or necklace) (no value limit).

11. Non-School Competition

- You may not practice for, or participate with, a non-school team or in any organized non-school athletic competition and for your school team *in the same sport* during the school sport season. Contact your school's athletic director for specific details in regard to individual sports (swimming & diving, tennis, golf, cross country, track & field, wrestling).
- You may participate on a school team and a non-school team in *different* sports during the same season; however, you may not practice for the non-school team or participate in organized non-school athletic competition *on the same day* that you practice with or participate for the school team **without prior approval of your school administrator.**
- You must receive approval in advance from your school principal or athletic director in order to miss school time to practice for, travel to or compete in organized non-school athletic competition.
- You will become ineligible in any sport in which you play as a member of a junior college, university or college team.
- Before you join a non-school team or enter any non-school competitive athletic event, your school principal or athletic director should be consulted to make certain these standards are met.

12. Contact with Coaches

■ No-Contact Periods

- All Sports: The seven days prior to the first allowable practice date for each season is a no-contact period in which no "contact" takes place between school coaches and students enrolled in the member school, or who will be enrolled in the member school during the upcoming school year.

■ Camps, Clinics and Group Instruction

- During the school year outside of the school sport season, you may attend a non-school sponsored specialized sports camp(s) or group instruction, provided: it does not result in any loss of school time, it is not a team camp, no competition occurs other than limited scrimmaging, and no member of the coaching staff of the school you attend (or will attend) is involved in any way.
- During the school sport season, you may attend a school or non-school sponsored specialized sports camp(s) or group instruction under certain conditions. You may attend only ONE without being accompanied by a school coach; attendance may not result in any loss of school time, there may be NO competition other than limited scrimmaging, and a school administrator must approve your participation.
- You or your parents must pay all camp/clinic fees, tuition and other related expenses. A scholarship or waiver of fees shall result in the loss of your eligibility. The school may provide transportation at no cost during the summertime or during the school sport season.

NOTE: Before attending any specialized athletic camp(s)/clinic(s) or group sport instruction, you should consult with your school principal or athletic director to make sure it meets the criteria published in the MSHSAA Official Handbook.

13. College Auditions and Tryouts

- You may participate in a college tryout, audition or evaluation event for a specific sport outside the school season of the sport concerned.
- You may not miss school time to travel to or participate in the event unless your absence is approved in advance by the school administrator.
- You may not miss a MSHSAA-sponsored postseason athletic event to participate in or travel to and from the event.
- You may only attend one evaluation event **by invitation** per sport during the school year. You may attend any number of "open" evaluations outside of your school sport seasons.

NOTE: See your administrator before signing up and agreeing to attend any such events.

14. All-Star Games

- An all-star event is one in which an individual is invited to participate due to his or her high school achievements.
- You may not compete in an all-star game or contest before you complete your eligibility in the sport concerned. Participation in an all-star game or contest before ending your high school eligibility will result in you becoming ineligible to participate in any high school sport.
- A senior with no high school eligibility remaining for a specific sport may participate in *no more than two* All-Star games for that sport prior to summer. *Discuss the event with your administrator before agreeing to play.*

15. Residence Requirements

- A student may be eligible at the public or nonpublic school located in the district in which the student's parents reside. In the case of a public multiple-school district, a student may be eligible at the school **designated for the student to attend, based on parents' residence, by the board of education.**

16. Transferring Schools

- If you transfer schools, you will be ineligible for 365 days, unless your circumstances meet one of the exceptions listed in the MSHSAA Residence and Transfer Rules (By-Law 3.10). Make an appointment with the school's athletic director to review these exceptions. Several, but not all, are described below.
- Exception 1: If you move with your entire family to your new school district, you will be eligible at your new school provided you were eligible in all other respects at your former school and provided there are no other issues with the transfer. You and your entire family must move to the new residence at the same time **prior to** attending classes.
- Always check with your school principal or athletic director before you transfer to determine whether it will affect your eligibility.
- Discipline follows a student to a new school. Being expelled from a school also causes 365 days of ineligibility for a student.
- Exception 2: A student may be eligible immediately at the school of his or her choice upon first being promoted from the 8th grade into the 9th grade, provided the student is eligible in all other respects.
- Exception 10: Foreign Exchange Students are eligible for varsity competition for one year only and only if they are seniors (semester 7 or 8), provided they are participating in an exchange program listed by CSIET. However, no member of the school's coaching staff for the sport concerned may serve as a host family.
- You shall become ineligible for 365 days if you transfer to another school for athletic reasons.

17. Graduated Students

- You will be ineligible to participate after graduation from a senior high school. Students who are granted an early release after their junior year are ineligible for further participation. (NOTE: You are eligible to participate in state-series events which extend beyond the date of your school's graduation at the end of the spring semester of your senior year.)