

## **Middle/Junior High School Athletic Eligibility**

Only students in grades six through eight may participate in middle school (6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades) or junior high school (7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades) interscholastic athletic competition, provided ninth grade is housed in the same building with seventh and eighth grades.

**NOTE: Sixth grade students are not eligible to participate in football.**

Eligibility begins for all students with initial entry into the sixth grade regardless of:

- (a) the school organization pattern
- (b) the decision of the LEA/Charter to allow 6<sup>th</sup> grade participation

In order to qualify for public school participation, a student must meet the following requirements;

### **Academics:**

1. In grades six, seven, and eight, the student must pass at least 3 out of 4 required core courses, and 1 of 2 elective courses the previous semester, and meet promotion standards established by the LEA.
2. If an athlete is "academically eligible" or "academically ineligible" at the beginning of any semester, that status is retained throughout the full semester.
3. It is the responsibility of the school principal to check the academic status of each student/athlete enrolled in school at the beginning and close of a semester.

**NOTE: An athlete becomes eligible or ineligible on the first day of the new semester.**

### **Age:**

1. The principal must have evidence of the legal birth date of the student.
2. A student shall not participate on a sixth, seventh or eighth grade team if the student becomes 15 years of age on or before August 31 of that school year.
3. A student shall not participate on a ninth grade junior high school team if the student becomes 16 years of age on or before August 31 of that school year.
4. A middle/junior high school student who is overage for middle/junior high school play shall be eligible for senior high school participation.
5. Ninth graders can be divided so that some play with the seventh and eighth grades at the middle school, provided the ninth grade is housed at the same building. Others may play at the senior high level, depending upon local policy.
6. Once a student begins practicing with a high school team, he/she may not, at a later date, move down to the seventh, eighth or ninth grade (junior high school) team.
7. A ninth grade student beginning play with the junior high school team may, at a later date, move to the high school team, but could not return to the junior high school team.

### **Attendance:**

1. A player must not miss more than 8 days of school the previous semester.
2. 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.

- (a) If there is no local policy, "regularly enrolled" is defined as enrolled for at least one-half of the "minimum load."
3. It is recommended the student be in school the day of the contest.

**Eligibility Lists:**

1. Eligibility lists shall be certified with the signature of the principal and filed with the local superintendent (or his/her designee) prior to the first game or contest in that sport.
2. One copy shall be kept on file in the office of the principal.
3. All eligible students shall be included and all information must be complete and accurate when certified by the principal.
4. It is recommended to keep these lists on file for at least three years.
5. A player shall not dress for a game or scrimmage when he or she is not eligible to participate in the game.
6. Dressing and being in the designated team area shall be interpreted as participating in the game.
7. Any school that uses an ineligible player or a player not included on the eligibility list in any contest is to immediately drop the player from the team and forfeit all games in which the player participated. (This includes individual sports.)
8. Schools not filing a completed eligibility list with the local superintendent's office or designee for any interscholastic athletic team shall be suspended from playing in that sport until such list is received by the local superintendent's office.

**Felony Policy:**

Any student who is subject to the Middle School six 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 Middle School Athletic sports program.
3. Such ineligibility shall be immediate and shall prohibit participation in the NC Middle School sports program from the date of conviction or adjudication of delinquency through the end of the student's middle school career.

**Gfeller Waller Concussion Awareness**

In order to be eligible for practice or preparation in any interscholastic athletic contest:

1. Student-athletes will be provided with the Gfeller Waller NCHSAA Student-Athlete & Parent/Legal Guardian Concussion Information Sheet.
2. Students shall read, initial, sign, and return Student-Athlete & Parent/Legal Guardian Concussion Information Sheet before beginning participation in practice or participating in interscholastic athletic contests.
3. Parent/Legal Guardian will be provided with a Gfeller Waller NCHSAA Student-Athlete & Parent/Legal Guardian Concussion Information Sheet.
4. Parent/Legal Guardian shall read, initial, sign, and return the Student-Athlete & Parent/Legal Guardian Concussion Information Sheet before the student begins participation in practice or participating in interscholastic athletic contests.

5. School Representatives (parent/coach/volunteer/school nurse/athletic directors/first responders) will be provided with the Gfeller Waller NCHSAA School & Athletic Personnel Concussion Information Sheet.
6. All above adults shall read, initial, and return the Gfeller Waller NCHSAA School & Athletic Personnel Concussion Information Sheet before students begin participation in practice or participating in interscholastic athletic contests.

**Promotions:**

Promotion is defined as progressing to the next grade.

1. In grades six, seven and eight, the student must meet state and local promotion standards each semester. This includes the academic requirement listed above.
2. Regardless of the school organization pattern, a student who is promoted from the fifth grade to the sixth grade automatically meets the courses passed requirement for the first semester of the sixth grade.

**Residence:**

The student must meet the residence criteria of G.S. 115C-366(a).

1. The student may participate only at the school to which the student is assigned by the LEA.
2. Transfers within the same administrative unit may be governed by the local Board of Education policy.
3. A student transferred from one administrative unit to another by mutual agreement, as provided in G. S. 115C-366.1 (F), is immediately eligible for athletic participation in the receiving unit.

**Semester Rule:**

1. No student may be eligible to participate at the middle school level for a period lasting longer than six (6) consecutive semesters, beginning with the student's entry into sixth grade.
2. The principal shall have evidence of the date of each player's entry into the sixth grade and monitor the six (6) consecutive semesters.

**Sports Pre-participation and Medical Examination Form:**

In order to be eligible for practice or participation in interscholastic athletic contests:

1. The student must receive a medical examination once every 395 days by a duly licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant, subject to the provisions of G.S.90-9, 90-18.1, and 90-18.2.

2. All eligible students must submit to the school athletic director a completed North Carolina High School Athletic Association Sport Pre-Participation Examination Form prior to participation in any practice or athletic contest. A copy of the Sport Pre-Participation Examination Form can be found at:  
<http://nchsaa.org/annual-forms-forms-needed-schools-every-year>

### **Students with Identified Disabilities**

Students with identified disabilities are eligible for participation in athletic programs at the middle/junior high school level.

1. Ninth graders participating in high school athletics are governed by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association.
2. Participation in athletic team tryouts may not be denied to a student with a disability, an IEP, or a 504 plan when accommodations or modifications are necessary to provide the student with an equal opportunity to benefit. For example, a deaf student would require an interpreter for the deaf.
3. A student with a disability, an IEP, or a 504 plan must meet all the requirements that apply to a regular education student.

### **Hardships**

The local Board of Education, Charter School or the conference of which the school is a member shall have the authority, in response to a request of a principal of a school, to set aside the effect of any (other than 6<sup>th</sup> grade participation in football) eligibility rule upon the individual student when, in its opinion, the rule fails to accomplish the purpose of which the rule is intended or when the rule works undue hardship upon the student.

1. Decisions of local Boards of Education, Charter Schools, or conferences regarding hardships are final.

**NOTE: It is to be understood that ordinary cases in ineligibility shall not be considered as coming under the hardship category, and that the conditions which cause the student to fail to meet the eligibility requirements, must have been beyond the control of the school, the student, and/or his/her parents. Injuries, illnesses, or accidents which cause the student to fail to meet one of the basic requirements are possible causes for hardship consideration.**



