

Exemption from Physical Education

Section A - Introduction

Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/27-6) requires all enrolled students to participate in a physical education course unless otherwise exempted for a permissible reason. This policy defines reasons and applicable procedures for eligible exemptions.

Section B - Exemption for Medical or Religious Reasons

In order to be exempted from participation in physical education for medical or religious reasons, a student must present an appropriate excuse from a person licensed under the Illinois Medical Practice Act or from his or her parent/guardian.

An exemption based on a medical reason must include a signed statement from a person licensed under the Illinois Medical Practice Act that certifies the medical reason for the request. Upon written notice to the principal or designee from a student's parent/guardian, which includes that signed statement, a student will be exempted from engaging in the physical activity components of physical education.

An exemption based on a religious reason must include a signed statement from a member of a clergy that certifies the religious reason for the request. Upon written notice to the principal or designee from a student's parent/guardian, which includes that signed statement, a student will be exempted from engaging in the physical activity components of physical education to which the religious reason applies, such as during a period of religious fasting.

Section C - Exemption for Students Receiving Special Education Services

A student who is eligible for special education may be exempted from physical education courses in either of the following situations:

1. He or she (a) is in grades 9-12, and (b) his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP) requires that special education support and services be provided during physical education time, as determined by the student's IEP team; or
2. He or she (a) has an IEP, (b) is participating in an adaptive athletic program outside the school setting, and (c) the student's parent/guardian documents the student's participation as required by the superintendent or designee.

Section D - Exemption for In-Season IHSA Athletic Participation

A junior or senior student who is participating in a school-sponsored, IHSA sport may be exempted from physical education courses during the season that the student is participating in that sport. In order for a student to be eligible for this exemption, the student must maintain continuous enrollment in at least six 0.5 credit per semester courses, other than physical education or health.

The following conditions apply by season:

- Fall sport athletes may be exempted during the fall season and must return to class when the season ends. All fall sport athletes must attend their physical education classes during the first two weeks of the first semester to participate in class orientation activities.
- Winter sport athletes may be exempted during the winter season and must return to class when the season ends. Due to the timing of the season, a winter sport athlete may be exempted during portions of the first and second semester terms. All winter athletes must attend their physical

education classes during the first two weeks of the second semester to participate in class orientation activities.

- Spring sport athletes may be exempted during the spring season and must return to class when the season ends.

Any student who ends participation in an eligible IHSA sport before the end of the season must immediately return to physical education class. The enrollment record of a student excused from participating in physical education activities will be managed accordingly:

- The student will continue to be enrolled in their scheduled physical education course; and
- The student will be double-scheduled in an SRT for the duration of their exemption.

A student is responsible for requesting an exemption each season through the process defined by the principal or designee.

Section E - Exemption for In-Season Marching Band Participation

A junior or senior student who is enrolled in a course for credit that requires marching band participation may be exempted from physical education courses during the time the student is participating in marching band. In order for a student to be eligible for this exemption, the student must maintain continuous enrollment in at least six 0.5 credit per semester courses, other than physical education or health.

The following condition applies:

- Marching band participants may be exempted during the fall season and must return to class when the season ends. All marching band participants must attend their physical education classes during the first two weeks of the first semester to participate in class orientation activities.

Any student who ends participation in marching band must immediately return to physical education class. The enrollment record of a student excused from participating in physical education activities will be managed accordingly:

- The student will continue to be enrolled in their scheduled physical education course; and
- The student will be double-scheduled in an SRT for the duration of their exemption.

A student is responsible for requesting an exemption each year through the process defined by the principal or designee.

Section F - Exemption for Early Graduation

Any student who is a candidate for Early Graduation as specified in Board Policy 6:300 - Graduation Requirements, is eligible for the Physical Education credit requirement to be reduced. However, students shall be required to be enrolled in a Physical Education course during each semester they are enrolled in the district; enrollment in the required Health course shall satisfy this requirement for the semester during which the student is enrolled in the required Health course.

Section G - Exemption for Enrollment in Academic Classes

A junior or senior student may be exempted from physical education courses during the time the student is:

1. Enrolled in academic classes that are required for admission to an institution of higher learning (23 Ill. Admin. Code § 1.425(c)(3)(B)); or
2. Enrolled in academic classes that are required for graduation from high school, provided that failure to take such classes will result in the student's being unable to graduate (23 Ill. Admin. Code § 1.425(c)(3)(C)).

A student is responsible for requesting an exemption through the process defined by the principal or designee.

See the Parent and Student Handbook for information regarding short-term absences, make-up procedures, and additional information.

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