

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Policy Code:

3620

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) recognizes the value of interscholastic athletics and extracurricular activities in promoting leadership and team skills, practicing democratic principles, and encouraging the lifelong learning process. Students are encouraged to participate in opportunities available at the school, including interscholastic athletics and student organizations. All activities are open to all students attending that school unless a restriction is justified and has been approved by the principal. The principal shall ensure that students and parents are notified of the various opportunities for participation in extracurricular activities and shall establish rules, as necessary, to govern such activities.

A. REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Participation in extracurricular activities, including student organizations and interscholastic athletics, is a privilege, not a right, and may be reserved for students in good academic standing who meet behavior standards established by the board and the school.

Participation in extracurricular activities may be restricted if a student (1) is not performing at grade level as provided in policy 3400, Evaluation of Student Progress; (2) has exceeded the number of absences allowed by policy 4400, Attendance; (3) has violated the student conduct standards found in the 4300 series of policies; or (4) has violated school rules for conduct. School administrators choosing to exercise this authority to restrict participation shall provide this policy and any additional rules developed by the superintendent or the principal to all parents, guardians, and students.

B. ADDITIONAL RULES FOR SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

1. Interscholastic Athletics

a. General Rules

In addition to meeting the general requirements listed above, to be eligible for interscholastic athletics participation, students must meet all applicable eligibility standards of law and the State Board of Education, as well as any locally established requirements for interscholastic athletics participation.

b. Participation by Sixth Graders

Students in the sixth grade are eligible to participate in all interscholastic athletics except tackle football.

c. Students Who Transfer Schools Within the School System

It is the policy of the board that a student who transfers from one school in

the school system to another school in the school system will be immediately eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics at the new school, if otherwise permitted under the rules of the State Board of Education.

d. Home School Students

Any home school student whose primary residence (as defined in 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0207) is in the school system and who is dually enrolled in accordance with the school system's enrollment and assignment policies and procedures is eligible to participate in high school interscholastic athletics if the student complies with the requirements of this subsection and meets all applicable eligibility standards of law and the State Board of Education as well as any applicable locally established requirements for interscholastic athletics participation.

The student must present a home school card from the Division of NonPublic Education for the previous and current years as well as a transcript, attendance record, and immunization records. Prior to the first date of practice, the student must provide the results of a nationally standardized achievement test, taken within the last year, that indicates the student was on grade level at the time the test was taken. The student must also present proof of catastrophic accident insurance coverage unless the student is covered under the board's catastrophic athletic accident insurance policy.

The student must have been enrolled in a registered home school for 365 days prior to participation in athletics. Once dually enrolled and deemed eligible to participate in athletics, the student must maintain continuous dual enrollment. Failure to maintain continuous dual enrollment would render the student ineligible for athletic participation for 365 days.

The student must participate in a class schedule at the assigned school that is at least one half of the assigned school's instructional day. At least two classes must be taken on campus each semester. The student must pass all classes in which the student is enrolled at the assigned school in order to maintain athletic eligibility.

The student must notify the principal of the assigned school in writing of the student's intent to try out for an athletic team at least 10 days prior to the first practice date of each sport season in which the student wishes to participate. Failure to comply with this requirement renders the student ineligible for that sport season.

2. Student-Initiated, Noncurriculum-Related Student Groups at the Secondary Level

Student-initiated, noncurriculum-related, secondary school student groups will be permitted to conduct voluntary meetings on school grounds during noninstructional

time, regardless of the size of the group or the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at the meetings, provided that the meetings do not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of the educational activities of the school. The principal shall establish viewpoint neutral rules governing such meetings, including restrictions on when and where meetings may occur.

School employees may not promote, lead, or participate in student-initiated meetings but may be present at meetings to maintain order and discipline, to protect the well-being of the students and faculty, and to assure that attendance of students at the meetings is voluntary. School employees may not influence the form or content of any prayer or other religious activity or require any person to participate in prayer or other religious activity. In addition, non-school persons may not direct, conduct, control, or regularly attend the activities of the groups.

No public funds will be expended on behalf of the student-initiated, noncurriculum-related student groups except for the incidental cost of providing space for the group meetings.

Student-initiated, noncurriculum-related groups will have the same access to communication channels for publicizing their meetings as is allowed to all other noncurriculum-related student groups. However, school officials may indicate in such communications that the meetings are not sponsored by the school.

For purposes of this subsection, a noncurriculum-related student group is one that is not directly related to the curriculum. A student group will be considered curriculum-related only if (1) the group's subject matter is taught in a regularly offered course or relates to the curriculum as a whole; (2) participation in the group is required as part of a course; or (3) participation in the group results in course credit.

C. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities must be accorded the legal rights required by federal and state law.

2. Children of Military Families

School administrators shall facilitate the inclusion and participation in extracurricular activities of children of military families, as defined in policy 4050, Children of Military Families, transferring into the school, to the extent they are otherwise qualified, by:

- a. providing information about extracurricular activities to incoming

children of military families; and

- b. waiving application deadlines.

D. APPEALS PROCESS

The grievance procedure provided in policy 4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure, may be utilized by parents or students who believe that a student has been aggrieved by a decision made pursuant to this policy.

Legal References: Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12132, 28 C.F.R. pt. 35; Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. 4071-4074; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 300; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 705(20), 794, 34 C.F.R. pt. 104; G.S. 115C art. 9, 115C-12(23), -47(4), -390.2, -407.5, -407.55, -407.59, -407.60, -407.65, -407.70, -407.75; 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0204; State Board of Education Policy ATHL-001; *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities*, State Board of Education Policy EXCP-000; State Board of Education Policy HRS-D-001; N.C. High School Athletic Association Handbook available at <https://www.nchcaa.org/handbook>; Middle/Junior High School Athletic Manual (NCDPI), available at <http://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/academic-standards/programs-and-initiatives/nc-healthy-schools/athletics>

Cross References: Parental Involvement (policy 4002), Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 4010), Evaluation of Student Progress (policy 3400), Student Promotion and Accountability (policy 3420), School Improvement Plan (policy 3430), Children of Military Families (policy 4050), Domicile or Residence Requirements (policy 4120), Homeless Students (policy 4125), School Assignment (policy 4150), North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program (policy 4250/5075/7316), Student Clubs (4060), Student Behavior Policies (4300 series), Attendance (policy 4400), Community Use of Facilities (policy 5030)

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