



510.1 ATHLETIC AND ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION

I. PURPOSE

South Washington County Schools encourages the participation of both boys and girls in the district's athletic/activity programs. It is the district's Athletic/Activity philosophy that individual students will benefit through equal opportunities to grow physically and intellectually through their experience in interscholastic competition. Every reasonable effort will be made to provide the opportunity to students interested in participating in an activity, regardless of ability.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Participation in athletics/activities for all secondary students is limited by interest, ability, Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) rules and policies regarding eligibility and the following guidelines: Only students who are fully enrolled in South Washington County schools are eligible to be placed on that school's eligibility roster and participate in league programs offered by the school that the student attends. Exception: If a cooperative agreement is established with a South Washington County School and an outside school. This Co-op must follow the MSHSL guidelines (MSHSL Bylaw 403).

Participation will follow these guidelines:

Category I Activities (Team Sports) Students in grades 9 - 12 are eligible to participate:

1. Sports - football, soccer, volleyball, basketball, hockey, wrestling, baseball, golf, softball, tennis, track and lacrosse.
2. Fine Arts Activities - declamation, speech, debate, one-act play, high school musicals/plays, band and choir and orchestra.
3. ~~Grade 7 & 8 students will participate at their home schools and in organized programs external to the school (e.g. hockey).~~
4. ~~An exceptional athlete/participant in grade 7 or 8 will be allowed to participate at the varsity (includes junior varsity) level according to the process set forth in this policy. 7th and 8th grade students eligible to participate in a high school athletic program must do so at the high school in the student's high school attendance boundary. An exception to this policy will be allowed when teams are unable to field a 9th grade team after registration is completed. In this scenario, 8th graders will be allowed to play on the 9th grade team only.~~

Category II Activities (Individual Sports) Students in grades 7 - 12 are eligible:

1. Sports - cross-country running, swimming, gymnastics, ~~cross-country~~ Nordic skiing, ~~slalom~~ alpine skiing, ~~dance~~ adapted sports (~~soccer and softball~~), ~~wrestling~~, ~~golf~~, tennis, track and field
2. All participation is at the high school level. 7th and 8th grade students eligible to participate in a high school athletic program must do so at the high school in the student's high school attendance boundary.
3. Level of competition is determined by ability.

Criteria and Process for Approval of Exceptional Athlete(s)

1. An exceptional athlete/participant in grade 7 or 8 will be allowed to participate at the varsity or junior varsity level according to the process set forth in this policy. 7th and 8th grade students eligible to participate in a high school athletic program must do so at the high school in the student's high school attendance boundary.
2. An exception to this policy will be allowed when teams are unable to field a **complete** 9th grade team. In this scenario, 8th graders will be allowed to play on the 9th grade team only.
3. Requests for allowing a student to participate in other than their assigned grade or designated level will be limited to Varsity or **Junior Varsity** participation. ~~(includes junior varsity) and are not to consider promotion of the best athlete/participant of one grade level to the next grade level.~~ Seventh and eighth grade students are not to be placed on a 9th or 10th grade team causing players to be displaced/cut.
4. Requests are limited to the rare exceptional athlete/participant.
5. Requests may be made by the parents/student or the varsity coach.
6. All requests will be considered by the: parents, student, coaches (present grade level coach and varsity coach) and administration. A unanimous approval is required of all parties. Any one party may veto the request.
7. Consideration of all requests will be based on the social, psychological, educational, and physical best interests of the student.
8. The application and approval for an exception must be in place prior to the fourth Monday of the affected sport season.

POLICY ADOPTED: February 17, 2009

POLICY REVIEWED: April 2009, September 21, 2023

POLICY REVISED: April 23, 2009, December 4, 2014, August 23, 2018, February 20, 2020

