

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Policy Code:

3610

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, the superintendent, or 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 failed to meet any applicable attendance requirements; (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, including attendance requirements, 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 have been in daily attendance 85 percent of the previous semester and must meet all applicable eligibility standards of the State Board of Education, ~~the North Carolina High School Athletic Association, and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction~~ 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.

A student participating in high school interscholastic athletics may participate

only on the team consistent with the gender on the student's birth certificate unless otherwise permitted under North Carolina High School Athletic Association rules and regulations.

c. Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) Agreements

A student participating in interscholastic athletics may enter an agreement to use the student's name, image, or likeness subject to the requirements of 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0211.

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 section, 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.

3. Overnight Trips

Students are prohibited from sharing sleeping quarters with anyone of the other biological sex as defined in G.S. 12-3.3 during any activity or event authorized by the school unless (1) the member of the other biological sex is the student's immediate family member (i.e., a parent, sibling, or grandparent, including step or half relationships) or (2) the parents of all students sharing the sleeping quarters have provided written permission to the school.

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 4176, 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.

3. Athletic Participation by Home School Students

Home school students who are dually enrolled in accordance with the school system's enrollment and assignment policies and procedures are eligible to participate in high school interscholastic athletics if they comply with all of the following.

- a. The student must present a home school card from the Division of Non-Public Education for the previous and current years, as well as a transcript, attendance record, and record immunizations.
- b. The student must submit proof that the student has been enrolled in a registered home school for 365 days prior to participation in athletics.
- c. 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.

- d. The student must be enrolled in at least three (3) Gaston County School courses per semester. Further, at least two classes shall be taken on the referenced school campus they are domiciled. The third may be off campus through the Career and College Promise Program (CCP) or through the North Carolina Virtual School (NCVPS).
- e. The student must pass all classes in which the student is enrolled at the assigned school in order to maintain athletic eligibility.
- f. 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.
- g. 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.
- h. The student must comply with all other applicable North Carolina High School Athletic Association rules and regulations regarding eligibility for athletic participation.

A dually enrolled student who transitions to full enrollment within the school system will then be governed by State Board of Education and North Carolina High School Athletic Association rules and regulations regarding fully enrolled students.

D. APPEALS PROCESS

The grievance procedure provided in policy 4030, 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. 12-3.3; 115C art. 9, 115C-12(23), -47(4), -76.110, -390.2, -407.5, -407.55, -407.59, -407.60, -407.65, -407.70, -407.75; 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0207, .0208, [.0211](#); State Board of Education Policy ATHL-001; Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities, State Board of Education Policy EXCP-000; N.C. High School Athletic Association Handbook, available at <https://www.nchsaa.org/handbook>; Middle/Junior High School Athletic Manual (NCDPI), available at <http://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/academicstandards/programs-and-initiatives/nc-healthy-schools/athletics>

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