HOW TO MAINTAIN AND PROTECT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY

2026-27

INTRODUCTION

The Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) is comprised of approximately 724 member schools, both public and private, across the state of Missouri. MSHSAA's eligibility requirements have been voted on by the member schools and were adopted by your school when it became a MSHSAA member. Your school will also have local school requirements that you must comply with in order to be eligible. Information contained on this page will acquaint you with the essential rules and regulations students and schools must follow in order to maintain and protect high school eligibility. No one requirement is more important than another. Any questions you have concerning these essential requirements or eligibility should be discussed with the school principal or athletic/activity director. The MSHSAA Handbook is also available on the MSHSAA website.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. BONA FIDE STUDENT

- In order to represent your school, you must be a bona fide student or be a home school student or full-time virtual student who lives in your public or charter school's attendance area and meet all eligibility requirements. You must be regularly attending classes and you must meet the academic requirements in MSHSAA By-Law 2.3 and those of your school.

2. CITIZENSHIP

- You must be a creditable citizen. Creditable citizens are those students whose conduct - both in school and out of school - will not reflect discredit upon themselves or their school.

NOTE: Conduct involving law enforcement must be reported to your principal or athletic director immediately as your conduct may affect eligibility or contest outcomes. Failure to immediately report issues to your school will result in an automatic 365 days of ineligibility.

3. SPORTSMANSHIP

- If you commit an unsportsmanlike act while participating in an event, you could become ineligible.
- If your conduct as a spectator is found to be unsportsmanlike, you could be barred from attending any further high school contests.
- The unsportsmanlike conduct of any spectator, regardless of age, could cause that spectator to be barred from attending school contests.

4. ACADEMICS

Grades 9-12

- You must have earned, the preceding semester of attendance, a minimum of 3.0 units of credit or have earned credit in 80% of the maximum allowable classes in which any student can be enrolled in the semester, whichever is GREATER, at your school. Equivalent standards apply for home school students.
- For your current semester, you must be enrolled in and regularly attending courses that offer 3.0 units of credit or 80% of the maximum allowable credits which may be earned at your school, whichever is GREATER. Equivalent standards apply for home school students.
- Credits earned or completed after the close of the semester will not fulfill this requirement. Summer high school courses for FALL academic eligibility may count provided the course is necessary for graduation or promotion or is a core subject course, and credit is placed on the school transcript. No more than one unit of credit in summer school shall be counted toward fall eligibility.
- Students promoted for the first time into 9th grade are considered academically eligible for the first semester after promotion.
- Do not drop courses without first consulting with your school principal, athletic/activity director or counselor to determine whether doing so will affect your eligibility.

Grades 6-8

- You must be enrolled in a normal course load for your grade at the school, or its equivalent at a home school.
- You will be ineligible if you failed more than one class the previous grading period.
- You must have been promoted to a higher grade prior to the first day of classes for the new school year.
- Students promoted for the first time into 6th amd 7th grade are considered academically eligible for the first grading period after promotion.

5. SEMESTERS OF PARTICIPATION

Grades 9-12

- You are eligible to participate in any sport or activity for a maximum of four seasons. Any part of a contest played during a season counts as a season of participation.
- Your eligibility to participate in high school activities begins when you first enter the 9th grade and lasts for the next eight consecutive semesters (four consecutive years).

Grades 6-8

- You are eligible for only your first two semesters of attendance in the 6th grade, 7th grade and 8th grade.
- You are not eligible to compete with or against students enrolled in the 9th grade or above when you are enrolled in the 6th, 7th or 8th grade.

6. AGE LIMITS

Grades 9-12

- If you reach 19 years of age prior to July 1, you will be ineligible the next school year.
- Over-aged 8th graders should be moved up to the senior high team to have eight semesters of eligibility.
- Over-aged 5th graders should be moved up to the 6th grade team to participate, because they will be ineligible as seniors.

Grades 6-8

- In order to participate on or against teams made up of only 6th graders, you must not have reached 13 years of age prior to July 1 preceding the opening of school.

- In order to participate on or against teams made up of only 7th graders, you must not have reached 14 years of age prior to July 1 preceding the opening of school.
- In order to participate on or against teams made up of only 8th graders, you must not have reached 15 years of age prior to July 1 preceding the opening of school.
- Students may participate with the next higher grade team if they no longer meet the age limit for their grade.

NOTE: Check with your school principal or athletic director for options available to you if you are ineligible for your grade level because of age.

7. ENTERING SCHOOL

- You must enter school within the first 11 days of the semester in order to be eligible that semester.

8. RECRUITING OF ATHLETES

- You will be ineligible for your career at a school if you are influenced by a person to attend that school for athletic or activities purposes. You may, however, return to your original school and be ineligible for no more than 365 days.

9. PLAYING UNDER A FALSE NAME

- If you compete under an assumed or false name, you immediately become ineligible for up to 365 days.

10. AMATEUR AND BENEFITS

- An athlete must maintain "amateur standing" 365 days a year in the sport concerned in order to participate in interscholastic athletics – the following restrictions govern the receipt of awards in both interscholastic play AND non-school competition/participation.
- After entering a member school, you will become ineligible in the sport concerned if you receive any of the following PROHIBITED awards for participating in an athletic contest or based on the outcome:
  - o An award of cash, a gift-certificate/gift-card or an award that is the equivalent of cash is PROHIBITED for amateurs.
  - o Merchandise which exceeds a manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP) of $250, per month, is PROHIBITED for amateurs. However, there is no value limit in regard to awards which are symbolic in nature, such as medals, ribbons, trophies, plaques, etc.
- Awards should be approved in advance by your school. Name, Image, Likeness activities (NIL) should be discussed with your school prior to making agreements to ensure your eligibility is protected.
- Commemorative jewelry may be presented by the school (i.e. championship ring or necklace)(no value limit).

11. NON-SCHOOL COMPETITION

- You must receive approval in advance from your school principal or athletic/activity director in order to miss school time to practice for, travel to or compete in organized non-school athletic competition.
- You will become ineligible in any sport in which you play as a member of a junior college, university or college team.
- Before you join a non-school team or enter any non-school competitive athletic event, your school principal or athletic/activity director should be consulted to make certain your participation will not jeopardize your interscholastic eligibility.

12. CONTACT WITH COACHES

No-Contact Periods

- All Sports: The seven days prior to the first allowable practice date for each sport specific season is a no-contact period in which no "contact" takes place between school coaches and students enrolled in the member school, or who will be enrolled in the member school during the upcoming school year.

Sport-Specific Instruction

- Before attending any specialized athletic sport instruction, you should consult with your school principal or athletic/activities director to make sure it meets the criteria published in the MSHSAA Official Handbook.

13. COLLEGE AUDITIONS AND TRYOUTS

- You may participate in an event conducted by a college or university during the school year under certain conditions. Consult your athletic/activities director.
- You may participate in a college tryout, audition or evaluation event conducted by a private organizer for a specific sport outside the school season of the sport concerned.
- You may not miss school time to travel to or participate in the event unless your absence is approved in advance by the school administrator.

14. RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

- A student may be eligible as an enrolled student at the public or nonpublic school located in the district in which the student's parents reside. Home school, FPE school or virtual school students can be eligible at the public or charter school where the student resides with their parents. In the case of a public multiple-school district, a student may be eligible at the school designated for the student to attend, based on parents' residence, by the board of education.

15. TRANSFERRING SCHOOLS

- If you transfer schools, you will be ineligible for 365 days, unless your circumstances meet one of the ten exceptions listed in the MSHSAA Residence and Transfer Rules (By-Law 3.10). Make an appointment with the school's athletic/activities director to review these exceptions.
- You shall become ineligible for 365 days if you transfer to another school for athletic reasons.

16. GRADUATED STUDENTS

- You will be ineligible to participate after graduation from a senior high school or its equivalent. Students who are granted an early release after their junior year are ineligible for further participation.*(NOTE: You are eligible to participate in state-series events which extend beyond the date of your school's graduation at the end of the spring semester of your senior year.)*