

## **ELIGIBILITY FOR ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES**

The Waterloo Community School District recognizes the value of student participation in extracurricular activities. The purpose of the regulation is to improve the participation rate of students in athletics and activities as well as improve the District's overall graduation rate. A team approach, involving the District, parents, students, and staff, is necessary to enhance this regulation.

Extra-curricular activities include all school-sponsored programs for which a student does not receive a credit or grade. The participation of as many students as possible is encouraged. High School participation in sanctioned sports or activities, however, shall be subject to regulations governing eligibility.

No student shall participate in an athletic practice or contest without filing a doctor's certificate of good health, district health history form, concussion form, and an approved parental/guardian exemption request which includes a statement covering the HIPAA laws.

No student shall be discriminated against based on race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity (gender-related identity of a person, regardless of a person's assigned sex at birth), national origin, religion, or disability in any program or activity. This includes pregnancy or other related condition dependent upon physician diagnosis and certification to participate.

### **I. BASIC ELIGIBILITY, GRADES 9-12**

All students shall be considered eligible in the fall of their ninth grade year; unless a good conduct violation has occurred during the summer prior to the ninth grade year.

To be eligible for athletics and activities, students in grades nine through twelve must meet the requirements of the Iowa High School Athletic Association, the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union, Iowa High School Speech Association, Iowa High School Music Association, and the Waterloo Community School District.

### **II. IOWA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, IOWA GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC UNION, IOWA HIGH SCHOOL SPEECH ASSOCIATION, AND THE IOWA HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC ASSOCIATION REQUIREMENTS**

**FOUR SUBJECT RULE:** A student must be enrolled in at least four subjects at all times to be eligible.

- A. **1 "F" RULE:** If a student receives an "F" in any subject at the end of a semester, the student is ineligible to dress for and compete in the next occurring interscholastic athletic contests and competitions for 30 calendar days.
- B. Students taking online course work must complete all course work to remain eligible.
- C. The IHSSA (Speech) and IHSMA (Music) enforces the same rules regarding ineligibility.

After a student has sat out for **30** calendar days of ineligibility, after the first available competition date mandated by the state, he/she is immediately eligible again after serving their period of ineligibility. If a student completes the 30 day time period and does not complete the season of competition, he/she will not be eligible to compete in the next available sport.

### III. NINTH (9<sup>TH</sup>) GRADE ELIGIBILITY

- A. All incoming ninth graders are eligible unless a good conduct violation had occurred during the summer prior to the ninth grade year.
- B. A ninth grader who does not play softball/baseball and does not pass all classes after the first semester is ineligible for the first 30 calendar days of competition of the first sport he/she competes in.

### IV. WATERLOO COMMUNITY SCHOOLS REQUIREMENTS

- A. A student must meet the guidelines set by the state for academic eligibility.
- B. A student must be enrolled in four or more classes to be eligible to participate.
- C. A “reporting period” is defined as a semester.
- D. Proof of a physical examination by a physician and a completed concussion form must be on file each year in the athletic office. In addition, there is parental consent information, proof of insurance (waiver or school purchase), and completed district health history form that are requested to be on file in the Athletic Office prior to participation.

Student athletes, coaches, and administrators are advised to be aware of new federal legislation regarding the privacy of medical information, known as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), enacted on April 14, 2003. One of the many objectives of the legislation is to protect privacy of medical information. HIPAA includes rules forbidding health-care providers, insurers, and claims clearinghouses from selling or providing medical information to those who do not legitimately need it. Under the law, it is the right of the parent/guardian or students who are 18 years or older to determine who should have access to information regarding an injury or physical condition resulting from athletic activity.

- E. A student may not have had a twentieth (20<sup>th</sup>) birthday.
- F. A student is entering the ninth (9<sup>th</sup>) grade for the first time.
- G. A student may not, for the purposes of eligibility, take a class during the summer session to replace a grade earned in the same class the previous academic year for the purpose of determining eligibility.

Any other class taken during a summer session will be treated as an additional class and will be included with the grades for the previous spring semester. The student's GPA will be recalculated after an official transcript has been received.

## V. BASIC PARTICIPATION, MIDDLE SCHOOL

- A. All students will be considered eligible in the fall of their 7<sup>th</sup> grade year unless a good conduct violation has occurred during the summer prior to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade year. Grades will be monitored on a weekly basis for all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade student-athletes.
- B. Participation Requirements for Student-Athletes
1. No major discipline problems
  2. Attendance at all practices, team sessions (with the exception of excused absences)
  3. Work with academic supports provided and/or adhere to any academic improvement plans developed
  4. Meet District attendance policy requirements
  5. Adhere to District Student Conduct Code

Students who do not meet these requirements will be suspended from competition. The building Athletic Director and/or building administration will determine eligibility in each student's unique situation.

- C. Building administrators will work with teachers and coaches to develop a system to monitor student progress and eligibility.

Students are expected to keep up with homework on a daily basis. Study tables will be offered to students who are struggling and/or hold an "F" in any core class. For the vast majority of students, doing daily work will lead to satisfactory grades. Staff dealing with academics and extra-curricular activities shall develop a partnership. Teaching teams will work with coaches and sponsors to make sure that students have assigned work finished before engaging in other activities. Teaching students to understand this connection at the middle school level should lead to more success in all areas.

Attendance at school and practices is mandatory. If a student continually misses practice, he/she may be referred to the building athletic director or school activities administrator for removal from the team.

## VI. GOOD CONDUCT RULE, GRADES 7-12

- A. Any student whose actions, habits, behaviors, or conduct at any time or place is such that it degrades or becomes detrimental to the ideals, principles, policies, or standards of the school shall be ineligible until reinstated by the building administrator or his/her designee.

Students who are absent for all or part of a school day will not be allowed to participate in practice, competition, or performances on that day unless special

permission is received from the building principal or his/her designee. If a student begins attending classes as of 10:30 a.m., attends the rest of the day, and the absence prior to 10:30 a.m. was excused, the student will be allowed to participate in practice, competition, or performances that day.

Per our District policy, students who are on out-of-school suspension or expulsion are not allowed on any school property or to attend any school activity, including athletic events. Students who are on in-school suspension must go directly to and from the assigned room for in-school suspension and are not allowed on any other area of school property or to attend any school activity, including athletic events. Students who are assigned to in-school suspension for reasons other than behavioral will be allowed to practice and compete in athletic events.

## B. Automatic Ineligibility

1. Any student participant who in season or out of season:
  - a. admits or is convicted of breaking the law, or through the process of investigation by school officials is found in violation of breaking the law, except for traffic violations, curfew, or who is found to be delinquent;
  - b. or is found guilty of, or admits to, consumption, possession, acquiring, delivering, or transporting beer, alcoholic beverages, tobacco/nicotine products, or any controlled substance as defined in the Iowa Code as amended shall be considered to have committed conduct detrimental to the school, the interscholastic athletic program, or co-curricular activity program, and shall be ineligible for interscholastic athletics or co-curricular activities until reinstated by the building administrator or his/her designee.
2. For students found to be in violation of the District substance abuse policy, the following will apply:
  - a. All staff members shall report any violation of substance abuse to the building administrator or his/her designee.
  - b. If the student appears to be in physical distress, action shall be taken immediately to obtain medical care as deemed appropriate by school officials. The student will be kept under the supervision of designated school personnel at all times.
  - c. The building administrator or his/her designee and the School Resource Officer shall be responsible for conducting an investigation of the alleged violation.
  - d. The proper authorities shall be notified of all alleged violations of the law.
  - e. The controlled substance(s) shall be confiscated by the building administrator or his/her designee.
  - f. The student's parent, guardian, or legal custodian shall be contacted and notified of all violations and impending disciplinary actions. Parent, guardian, or legal custodian involvement will be requested in all situations concerning substance use/abuse.
  - g. The student shall be suspended for five (5) days during which time a conference will be held with the student's parent, guardian or legal

custodian to discuss the student's conduct. Possible results of this conference can include:

1. Readmission to school on probation.
2. Referral to a licensed substance abuse program for evaluation.

If it is determined that the student should be referred to a community agency for assistance, the student, parent, guardian, or legal custodian must give written consent for the exchange of information between the school and the appropriate agency(ies).

Failure by the student to successfully complete the program may result in referral to the Board of Education for possible expulsion.

3. Referral to the Board of Education for expulsion.

If referred for expulsion, the suspension will be extended with an alternate school program offered. Prior to referral to the Board for expulsion, the building administrator or his/her designee shall report each incident of substance abuse violations to the District administrator in charge of Athletics. The report shall include the circumstances relating to the incident and an explanation of any administrative action taken.

4. A student violating the substance abuse policy shall be ineligible to participate in all athletic and extracurricular activities in accordance with current District eligibility rules.

When school officials find students to be in violation of the Good Conduct Rule, the students will be denied the privilege of participating in a number of extracurricular activities as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense - 30% of scheduled events; if student self-reports within 48 hours of the incident or prior to the next event, whichever comes first, to the athletic director, then a less severe consequence may be imposed
- 2<sup>nd</sup> offense - 60% of scheduled events (this can be a combination of 2 sports, for example, 32% of football and 28% of basketball – end of season, beginning of another)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> offense – 1 complete sports season (this can be a combination of 2 sports, for example, 44% of football and 56% of basketball – end of season, beginning of another)
- 4<sup>th</sup> offense – 1 calendar year
- 5<sup>th</sup> offense –middle school and/or high school eligibility for sanctioned extra-curricular activities is permanently revoked. Upon request from either the student or parent/guardian, a meeting may be scheduled to review the circumstances and a final determination will be made by the athletic review board comprised of the Athletic Directors.

(Note: Any time that two (2) or more incidents are alcohol or drug related, the student must attend AND complete a Pathways type program before reinstatement.

If a violation occurs during the summer between the sixth/seventh or eighth/ninth grade, the student is ineligible based on the number of offenses stated above for the first available sport in which the student participates in.

Students are not allowed to join any sport after the tenth day of practice or in a fall sport after the third day of school of the season and apply their ineligibility to that sport in order to avoid punishment during another sport season. In addition, if a student in good standing (both in conduct and academics) joins a team after the first day of practice, that student must participate in at least 10 practices prior to a competition at the high school level (5 practices prior to competition at the middle school level).

### C. Discretionary Ineligibility

1. If a student, at any time or place:
  - a. is placed on official or unofficial probation by juvenile authorities or the school, or
  - b. is involved in or is taken into custody for any activity described in paragraph VI, B, 1, a or VI, B, 1, b

that student shall be subject to being declared ineligible by the building administrator or his/her designee. Before any decision is made, the facts shall be fully investigated and the building administrator or his/her designee shall meet and confer with the students and the building administrator or his/her designee shall also contact the student's parents/guardian verbally, and then follow up in writing. If it appears to the building administrator that the student has engaged in conduct that tends to degrade or be detrimental to the school, the activity program or athletics, the student may be declared ineligible, the lack of a conviction or admission notwithstanding.

If the conduct appears to the building administrator to involve violations of paragraph VI, B, 1, a or VI, B, 1, b, then the minimum periods of ineligibility set forth in paragraph VI, B, 2 shall apply.
2. For students who voluntarily seek help for substance abuse problems prior to a violation, the following will apply:
  - a. A student who is not currently under investigation for use, possession, and/or distribution of alcohol, or other controlled substances may voluntarily seek help from the building administrator or his/her designee for any substance abuse problem.
  - b. A student who seeks help, voluntarily, shall do so without penalty.
  - c. The building administrator may refer the student to a licensed substance abuse program for counseling and treatment.
  - d. If it is determined that the student should be referred to a community agency for assistance, the student, parent, guardian, or legal custodian must give written consent for the exchange of information between the school and the appropriate agency(ies).

- e. A student who voluntarily seeks help from a licensed or accredited counseling or treatment program approved by the Waterloo Community School District before the violation (VI, B, 1, a or VI, B, 1, b), will remain eligible for athletics and for participation in extracurricular activities so long as eligibility rules are not broken.
3. Students who violate the District Student Conduct Code (Policy 504.3) may also lose eligibility for athletics and/or activities. Examples of violations include but are not limited to:
- a. Weapons
  - b. Threats and Batteries
  - c. Arson/Chemical Devices
  - d. Drug/Alcohol/Controlled Substances
  - e. Theft
  - f. Property Damage
  - g. Tobacco/Nicotine products Violation (including e-cigarettes)
  - h. Disruption/Disobedience/Defiance
  - i. Harassment
  - j. Apparel/Appearance
  - k. Gambling
  - l. Vehicle Violation
  - m. Inappropriate Personal Behavior
  - n. Attendance Violation
  - o. Building Rule Violation
  - p. Bus Rule Violation
4. The student's building administrator shall determine the period of ineligibility. To the extent possible and recognizing that each case is different, the periods of ineligibility shall be equal for equal violations committed by students in the same school in the Waterloo Community School District. In all cases, the facts shall be fully investigated and ineligibility imposed or eligibility restored by the building administrator of the student involved.
- D. To the extent that they do not conflict with the policies and regulations of the Waterloo Community School District, and further to the extent that they involve administrative or ministerial rules not involving general discretionary powers which repose in this Board, all participants in athletic programs and/or fine arts programs shall follow the rules and regulations prescribed by the Iowa High School Athletic Association, the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union, the Iowa High School Speech Association, and the Iowa High School Music Association.

## **VII. TRANSFERRING TO WCSD AND INELIGIBLE FROM OTHER PREVIOUS DISTRICT**

Any student transferring into the Waterloo Community Schools who is ineligible under the prior school's Good Conduct Rule and has not completed the full period of ineligibility imposed by that school will not be eligible for extracurricular competition at any District high school until the full period of ineligibility has passed. Once the period of ineligibility has been completed, the student is immediately eligible for extracurricular competition, as far as any Good Conduct Rule is concerned.

## VIII. COOPERATIVE ATHLETIC AND ACTIVITIES ELIGIBILITY

Students who participate in District athletics and activities through cooperative sharing agreements with other school districts must meet the eligibility requirements of their own school as well as those of the Waterloo Community Schools.

## IX. STUDENTS WITH AN INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN

Students with an Individual Education Plan or students covered by a Section 504-B plan that is directly related to their course work, shall not be denied eligibility if the student is making adequate progress towards the goals and objectives on their IEP or accommodation plan. Eligibility requirements may be defined in their IEP. This will be determined by the building special education team.

If, because of the student's disability, accommodations or modifications are required in academic instruction, testing, grading, or code of conduct requirements, then those accommodations or modifications shall be incorporated into the student's IEP. The student must then be making adequate progress towards their goals set forth in the IEP to be eligible to participate. It shall be the responsibility of the building administrator to declare eligibility.

In situations that are unclear concerning the requirements for eligibility of the students in the IEP, the District administrator in charge of athletics or designee shall work with the IEP team to clarify eligibility and shall declare status of eligibility based on the review.

## X. FAIR AND EQUITABLE ADMINISTRATION

The building administrator or his/her designee is responsible for the fair and equitable administration of these regulations. These regulations shall be administered to balance the best interests of the student involved, the teammates, the school, the entire Waterloo Community School District, the league of competition, and the ideals, principles and standards of athletics extracurricular activities. The building administrator's decision shall be reviewed by the Superintendent and ultimately by the Board of Education in accordance with the established grievance procedures.

For your convenience, here is the link to the IHSAA Handbook:

[http://www.iahsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/2013\\_2014\\_IHSAA\\_Handbook.pdf](http://www.iahsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/2013_2014_IHSAA_Handbook.pdf)

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504.3 Student Conduct Code  
602.5 High School Graduation

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