

# Introduction

Every year over 300,000 students in the state of Missouri participate in interscholastic activities at the middle/junior and senior-high levels. The Missouri State High School Activities Association is comprised of member schools that establish eligibility criteria for students such as yourself to be able to participate. Look at these rules carefully. We want you to enjoy these years, maximize your interscholastic experiences and rekindle the spirit of citizenship in your own community.

Your years in high school and middle level/junior high school will be highlighted by your participation on one or more of your school's activities teams. These will be some of the most enjoyable years of your life. During this time, your school will have local school requirements that you must comply with in order to be eligible to compete. Also, your state association - the MSHSAA - has essential eligibility requirements that you must meet in order to maintain your eligibility.

Information contained in this pamphlet will acquaint you with the major rules and regulations you must follow in order to maintain and protect your high school eligibility. Any questions you have concerning these essential requirements or with your athletic eligibility should be checked with your school principal or athletic administrator. These administrators in your school have copies of all MSHSAA eligibility requirements.

The MSHSAA's eligibility requirements have been voted on by member schools and were adopted by your school when it became an association member. If there are rules in the pamphlet which you don't understand, ask your principal or athletic administrator to explain them.

Knowing and following all these requirements will enable you to maintain and protect your eligibility. Also, it is important for you to know that you must meet all the essential requirements in order to be eligible, as no one requirement is more important than another.

# Eligibility Requirements

## 1. Bona Fide Student

♦ In order to represent your school, you must be a bona fide student and meet all eligibility requirements. You must be enrolled in and regularly attending classes at the member school and meet the academic requirements in MSHSAA By-Law 213 and those of your local 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 by the student involving law enforcement should be reported to your principal immediately as your conduct may affect eligibility or contest outcomes.**

## 3. 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.
  - ♦ 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, whichever is greater, for your school.
    - ♦ Credits earned or completed after the close of the semester will not fulfill this requirement. Summer high school courses for academic eligibility may count provided the course is necessary for graduation or promotion (**no electives**), and it is placed on the school transcript. No more than one credit in summer school shall be counted toward eligibility. Correspondence courses do not count.
    - ♦ Students promoted for the first time into 7th or 9th grade are considered academically eligible for the first semester after promotion.
      - ♦ You must be making satisfactory progress toward graduation as determined by your local school's policies.
      - ♦ Do not drop courses *without first consulting with your school principal, athletic administrator* or counselor to determine whether it will affect your eligibility.

### ■ Grades 7-8

- ♦ You must be enrolled in a normal course load for your grade at the member school.
  - ♦ You must have been promoted to a higher grade prior to the first day of classes for the new school year. However, even though you may have been promoted, you will be ineligible if you failed more than two courses the previous semester.

## 4. Residence Requirements

♦ A student may be eligible at the public or nonpublic school located in the district in which the student's parents (as defined in By-Law 238.1-a) reside. In case of a public multiple-school district, a student may be eligible at the school designated for the student to attend by the board of education (open enrollment does not count toward meeting the "designated school to attend").

## 5. Transferring Schools

♦ If you transfer schools, you will be ineligible for 365 days - unless you meet one of the exceptions listed in the MSHSAA Residence and Transfer Rules. Make an appointment with the school's athletic administration to review these exceptions.

- ♦ If you move with your parents to your new school district, you will be eligible at your new school provided you were eligible in all other respects at your former school. A student shall not be eligible to represent two different schools in the MSHSAA state tournament series in the same sport during the same season.
  - ♦ You and your parents must move to the new residence at the same time.
    - ♦ Always check with your school principal **before** you transfer to determine whether it will affect your eligibility.
    - ♦ Discipline follows the student to the new school. Transferring while under suspension will cause you to be ineligible for 365 days.
      - ♦ A student may be eligible immediately at the school of his or her choice upon first entering when the student is promoted from the eighth grade into the ninth grade provided the student is eligible in all other respects.

## 6. Participation Limits

### ■ Grades 9-12

- ♦ You are eligible to participate in any sport 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 ninth grade and lasts for the next *eight consecutive semesters (four consecutive years)*.

### ■ Grades 7-8

- ♦ You are eligible for only your first two semesters of attendance in the seventh grade and for only your first two semesters in the eighth grade.
  - ♦ You are not eligible to compete with or against students enrolled in the tenth grade or above when you are enrolled in either the seventh or eighth grade.

♦ **NOTE: Check with your school principal for exceptions to this rule if you are ineligible because of age.**

## 7. Entering School

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

## 8. Amateur and Awards Standards

- ♦ After entering a member school, you will become ineligible in the sport concerned if you receive cash or services for participating in an athletic contest or being an athlete. This restriction applies to all sports in which MSHSAA member schools conduct interscholastic programs. (Merchandise received shall not exceed \$100 manufacturer's suggested retail price.)
  - ♦ You may accept awards which are symbolic in nature, such as medals, ribbons, trophies, plaques, etc. for participating in a school athletic program.
    - ♦ You may accept awards which are merchandise and the value of such award shall not exceed a \$100 manufacturer's suggested retail price.

- ♦ Awards of cash, gift-certificates or equivalents may not be accepted at all.
  - ♦ Awards as described above presented by a person or group other than your school, must be approved in advance by your school principal and the suggested manufacturer's retail price of a merchandise award shall not exceed \$100.
    - ♦ You may accept awards for participating in nonschool sponsored athletic competition *only* if the awards are symbolic in nature or the merchandise item does not exceed \$100 in suggested retail value. (*See above*)
      - ♦ Commemorative jewelry may be presented by the school (i.e. championship ring or necklace).

## 9. 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 eighth graders should be moved up to the senior high team to have eight semesters of eligibility.

### ■ Grades 7-8

- ♦ In order to participate on or against teams made up of only seventh-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 eighth-graders, you must not have reached 15 years of age prior to July 1 preceding the opening of school.
    - ♦ In order to participate on or against teams made up of only ninth-graders, you must not have reached 16 years of age prior to July 1 preceding the opening of school.
      - ♦ However, you may participate with the next higher grade when you no longer meet the age limit for your grade.

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

## 10. Playing Under A False Name

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

## 11. Graduated Students

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



visit us  
on-line at  
[www.mshsaa.org](http://www.mshsaa.org)

## 12. Nonschool Competition

- ♦ You may not practice for or participate with a nonschool team or in any organized nonschool athletic competition *and* for your school team in the *same sport* during the same season of the school team. Swimming and diving has a special exception. Contact your school's athletic director for specific details.
- ♦ You may participate on a school team and a nonschool team in *different sports* during the same season; *however*, you may not practice for the nonschool team or participate in organized nonschool athletic competition *on the same day* that you practice with or participate for the school team *without prior approval of your school administrator*.
- ♦ You must receive approval in advance from your school principal in order to miss school time to practice for, travel to or compete in organized nonschool athletic competition.
- ♦ You will become ineligible in any sport in which you play as a member of a junior college, college or university team.
- ♦ You may participate in international competition during the school year, *however*, the competition must meet the established criteria published in the MSHSAA Official Handbook *and* must be approved in advance by the MSHSAA Board of Directors.
- ♦ Before you join a nonschool team or enter any nonschool competitive athletic event, your school principal or athletic administrator should be consulted to make certain these standards are met.

## 13. College Auditions and Tryouts

- ♦ You may participate in a college tryout, audition or evaluation event for a specific sport *outside* the school season of the sport concerned (MSHSAA By-Law 242).
- ♦ You may not miss school time to travel or participate in the event unless your absence is approved *in advance* by the school administrator.
- ♦ You may not miss any MSHSAA-sponsored postseason athletic event to participate in or travel to and from the event.
- ♦ You may only attend one evaluation event **by invitation** per sport per year. You may attend any number of "open" evaluations (anyone may register) with no limit on college-sponsored tryouts.

♦ **NOTE: See your administrator before signing up and agreeing to attend any such events.**

## 14. All-Star Games

- ♦ An all-star event is one in which an individual is invited to participate due to his or her high school achievements.
- ♦ You may not compete in an all-star game or contest before you complete your eligibility in each high school sport. Participation in an all-star game or contest before ending your high school eligibility will result in you becoming ineligible to participate in any high school sport.
- ♦ A senior with no high school eligibility remaining for a specific sport may participate in *one* All-Star game for that sport prior to summer. *See your administrator before agreeing to play.*

## 15. Recruiting of Athletes

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

## 16. Transfer For Athletic Reasons

- ♦ You shall become ineligible for 365 days if you transfer to another school for athletic reasons.

## 17. Sports Camps and Clinics

- ♦ You may attend a specialized summer athletic camp(s)/clinic(s) *where you receive instruction or coaching from a member of your school's coaching staff* for a maximum of two calendar weeks in any one sport. A calendar week for any sports camp is defined as any seven consecutive days and any consecutive grouping of days shall be counted as one calendar week.
- ♦ You may attend a nonschool sponsored summer specialized sports camp(s) or group instruction for as long as you wish where you *do not* receive instruction or coaching from a member of your school's coaching staff.
- ♦ Fall Sports: No summer specialized sports camp involving a fall season sport shall be attended after July 31.
- ♦ During the school year outside of the school sport season, you may attend a nonschool-sponsored specialized sports camp(s) or group instruction, provided: it does not result in any loss of school time, attendance does not occur within 14 days of the start of the school sport season for the sport concerned, it is not a team camp, no competition occurs other than limited scrimmaging, and no member of the coaching staff of the school you attend (or will attend) is involved in any way.
- ♦ During the school sport season, you may attend a nonschool-sponsored specialized sports camp(s) or group instruction provided a school coach attends with you, camp attendance does not result in any loss of school time, it is not a team camp, there is no competition other than limited scrimmaging, and a school administrator approves your participation.
- ♦ If an individual sport skills camp is sponsored by a school, a) you may attend any camp of your choice up to and including the summer preceding your entry into the 8th grade or b) after you enter the 8th grade, you may only attend a school-sponsored sports camp at the school you are enrolled to attend (for graduation) in grades 9-12 (unless a transfer in grades 9-12 occurs).

- ♦ You or your parents must pay all camp/clinic fees, tuition and other related expenses. A scholarship, waiver of fees or a payment of travel expenses shall result in the loss of your eligibility.

- ♦ You may attend one sport camp per sport per year by special invitation. You may attend any number of "open" sport camps where anyone may register.
- ♦ No school-owned uniforms or player equipment shall be used in any camp, clinic or group sport lesson other than team camps where the school coach is present as one of the two weeks of school camp. Member schools may not rent, sell, lease or loan their uniforms or player equipment for use in non-school sponsored camps, clinics or contests.

♦ **NOTE: Before attending any specialized athletic camp(s)/clinic(s) or group sport instruction, you should consult with your school principal or athletic administrator to make sure it meets the criteria published in the MSHSAA Official Handbook.**

## 18. Sportsmanship

- ♦ If you should 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 athletic contests.
- ♦ The unsportsmanlike conduct of any spectator — regardless of age — could cause that spectator to be barred from attending school athletic contests.

## 19. Foreign Student Eligibility

- ♦ You are eligible for varsity competition for one year only (senior year), provided you are participating in an exchange program listed by CSIET.
- ♦ No person associated with the school may be involved in your selection.
- ♦ No member of the school's coaching staff shall serve as a host family.
- ♦ You must meet the age requirement of not reaching age 19 prior to July 1.
- ♦ You must possess a current and valid visa.
- ♦ You must have enrolled within the first 11 days of the semester.
- ♦ You must meet all other general student-eligibility requirements.
- ♦ If you meet all standards of eligibility except a CSIET program, you are a transfer student and the school must submit a transfer request for eligibility.



visit us  
on-line at  
[www.mshsaa.org](http://www.mshsaa.org)



# 2009-10 How to Maintain and Protect Your High School Eligibility

**"Eligibility to represent a school in interscholastic activities is a privilege students may attain by meeting the essential eligibility requirements established by member schools through this association and any additional requirements set by a member school for its own students.**

**Eligibility is not a student's right by law, and precedent-setting legal cases have affirmed this."**