

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

A comprehensive program of interscholastic athletic programs is offered for students in grades 7-12 in accordance with the rules, regulations, and guidelines of the Virginia High School League (VHSL) and the Virginia Standards of Accreditation (SOA). The conduct of this program is under the direct supervision of the school principal.

Specific regulations, consistent with all VHSL rules, for the orderly conduct of such programs shall be issued by the Superintendent. These regulations shall include but not be limited to all school division and VHSL rules and regulations associated with interscholastic athletics.

ISSUED:

LEGAL REF:

CROSS REF: IGDA – Student Organizations

JECB – Admission of Nonpublic Students for Part-Time Enrollment

JFCB – Sportsmanship, Ethics, and Integrity

LB^ - Relations with Private Schools and Other School Divisions

LBD^ - Home Instruction

ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION IN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS (Grades 9-12)

1. Scholarship

To be eligible to participate, a student/athlete shall:

- a. For the first semester: be currently enrolled in not fewer than five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation and have passed five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation in the immediately preceding year of the immediately preceding semester for schools that certify credit on a semester basis (VHSL policy: 28-4-1), **and**
- b. For the second semester: be currently enrolled in not fewer than five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation and have passed five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation the immediately preceding semester (VHSL policy: 28-4-1), **and**
- c. For each nine-weeks grading period: pass at least five classes. (Spotsylvania County Schools High School Program of Studies)

2. Bona Fide Student in Good Standing

To be eligible to participate, a student/athlete must NOT:

- a. be under any *suspension or expulsion for any school related activity, or
- b. be under arrest or charged with a crime which occurred in the school or outside of the school **that involves violence, alcohol, or any other prohibited substance, or
- c. be of such character or exhibit such conduct to reflect discredit upon his/her squad, team, and/or school.
(VHSL policy: 28-1-1 and 28-1-3)

*student/athlete shall **not** be eligible for participation until the next calendar day after the last day of the in-school, out-of-school suspension, or assignment to the alternative school.

**student/athlete arrested and/or charged with crimes of this nature will be suspended from activities until the disposition of charges:

First Offense – 30-day suspension from all activities, following the disposition of charges.

Second Offense – Suspension for the rest of the current year from all activities, following the disposition of charges.

3. Age

High School: To be eligible to participate, a student/athlete must **not** have reached the age of 19 on or before the first day of August of the school year in which he/she wishes to compete.
(VHSL policy: 28-5-1)

4. Enrollment

To be eligible to participate, a student/athlete **MUST**:

- a. be enrolled in Spotsylvania County Schools as a full-time high school student not later than the fifteenth school day of the semester in the appropriate school (VHSL policy 28-3-1 and 28-3-2 [1,2,3]), **and**
- b. not have been enrolled in the last four years of high school for a period of more than eight consecutive semesters, beginning with the semester in which he/she was enrolled for the first time in the ninth grade (VHSL policy 28-7-1), **and**
- c. not have enrolled in one high school and subsequently transferred to and enrolled in another high school without a corresponding change in the residence of his/her parent, or guardian. A student who transfers and enrolls in another high school without a corresponding change in the residence of his/her parent or guardian shall not become eligible for interscholastic competition until after he/she has been enrolled in the school for 365 consecutive calendar days (VHSL policy 28-6-2).

NOTE: Home Instruction does not constitute enrollment in a public school. Students who reside within a high school zone and have been granted approval for home instruction are **NOT** eligible for participation in any school-related activity sponsored by Spotsylvania County Schools
(VHSL policy: 28-3-3)

Any student approved for **Homebound Instruction** may **not** participate in or attend any athletic practice and/or contest until he or she has been removed from homebound instruction and has returned to school.

5. Attendance

Student/athletes may not practice nor participate in any contest unless they have been present for two entire blocks, unless they have permission from the Principal or Activities Director if designated by the Principal.

6. Amateur Status

To be eligible to participate, a student/athlete must be an amateur in that sport. An amateur athlete is one who engages in athletic completion solely for the physical, mental, social, and pleasure benefits derived there from.

(VHSL policy: 28-8-1)

Loss of amateur status is defined according to VHSL policy 28-8-3.

7. Consent Forms

To be eligible to participate, a student/athlete must submit prior to trying out for any school athletic squad or team an official *Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physical Examination Form*. This form must be completely filled in, properly signed, attesting that the student/athlete has been examined and found to be physically fit for athletic competition by a person licensed to practice medicine or osteopathy, or by a licensed nurse practitioner or a physician assistant under the regulations of the state Boards of Medicine and Nursing and under the supervision and direction of a licensed physician. In addition, a parent/guardian must sign and consent to the student/athlete's participation.

(VHSL policy: 28-9-1)

8. Participation Limitation

If a school maintains separate teams in the same sport for girls and boys during the school year, regardless of the sports season, girls may not compete on boy's teams and boys may not compete on girl's teams. If a school maintains only a boy's team in a sport, girls may compete on the boy's team. Boys may not participate on a girl's team in any sport other than cheerleading.

(VHSL policy: 54-2-1)

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ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION IN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS (Grades 7-8)

1. Enrollment

Students must be currently enrolled as a full-time student in a Spotsylvania County middle school at the time of the sport season in order to be eligible to participate.

2. Age

No member of a team shall reach a 15th birthday on or before the first day of school each year in which he/she wishes to participate.

3. Grade

Students in seventh and eighth grades, who are considered physically and emotionally able, are eligible to compete. No sixth grade students are eligible for any sport, either as a player or manager, including all games and practice sessions.

4. Scholarship

In order to be eligible for fall sports, a student must have been promoted from the preceding grade. In addition, any student who fails two subjects at the end of a nine week or semester grading period will be removed immediately from the team and will not be eligible to participate again during that sports season. Students who fail two subjects for a nine-week period ending prior to the start of the sports season will not be eligible during that season. Students who fail one subject at the end of a grading period will be placed on a probationary status and must improve to a passing grade during this period in order to continue playing after the probationary period at site Principal's discretion.

5. Conduct

Coaches have the right to establish certain expectations for acceptable conduct, behavior, and team rules. Each member of a team must have an acceptable conduct record for each grading period unless there are extenuating circumstances that have been determined by the Principal. Any student whose behavior results in a disciplinary action from the office may be removed from the team.

6. Consent Forms

a. Physical

Each member of a team must have had a physical examination before being allowed to practice or play in a game. A record of this examination must be kept on file at the school. A separate exam and complete form is required and must occur May 1 of the previous year through June 30 of the current year in which the student wishes to participate. Up-to-date insurance verification by the parent is a required part of the form.

(VHSL Form #2: *Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physical Examination Form*)

b. Parent Consent

Parent's written consent must be on file before a student may practice or play in a game.

(VHSL Form #2: *Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physical Examination Form*)

7. Absences from School

Students may not practice or play in a game if they have been absent from school, unless they have written permission from the principal. This permission will be given for non-sickness reasons only.

8. Suspensions

Students subject to in-school or out-of-school suspensions shall not participate in any practice or contest during the period of their *suspension.

*student/athlete shall NOT be eligible for participation until the next calendar day after the last day of the in-school, out-of-school suspension, or assignment to the alternative school.

9. High School Teams

a. 8th grade students may **not** participate on high school level teams even if that sport is not available at the middle school level,

b. Middle School students are **not** permitted to participate in any high school pre-season or in-season conditioning programs,

c. 8th grade students are permitted to participate in high school spring cheerleading tryouts for the upcoming fall season.

10. Middle Schools Athletic Handbook

Any student participating in middle school athletics will adhere to the rules, regulations, and procedures outlined in the Spotsylvania County School Middle School Athletic Handbook, which can be found on the division's website at the following link:
<http://www.spotsylvania.k12.va.us/fms/Athletics/Athletic%20Handbook%20-%20Final%2081807.pdf> .

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TRAINING/PRACTICE REGULATIONS FOR INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

Practice/Games during Inclement Weather

There will be no practice or games held on days when schools are closed for inclement weather or poor road conditions. The superintendent may grant an exception if schools have been closed for a lengthy period of time and, in the judgment of the superintendent, road conditions have improved enough to allow some practices or games to go on as scheduled. Practices and/or games must be conducted in the hours specified by the superintendent in the exception. On days when school is dismissed early for inclement weather all practices and games must be cancelled. On days when activity buses are cancelled due to inclement weather all practices and games must be cancelled.

Out-of-Season Practice

a. Conditioning

A high school can organize and supervise a conditioning program during the school year or in the summer as long as long as the program is general in nature, and includes only exercises designed to promote physical fitness and as long as the program is open to all members of the student body. This program could include weightlifting, running, and exercise. No school may issue equipment designed for a specific sport for this type of program. *Middle and Elementary School students are prohibited from participating in these programs.*

(VHSL policy: 27-8-2)

b. Camps

Student/athletes may attend specialized sports camps or clinics provided that the camp is open to everyone and that the school does not provide funding for any of the fees. Schools may, however, provide transportation for student/athletes attending a specialized sports camp. School may also issue equipment to students attending such camps, but not uniforms. *Middle and Elementary School students are prohibited from participating in these programs.*

(VHSL policy: 27-8-2)

c. Open Gym

Open gyms are permitted as long as they are truly open to all students in that school. The dates and times of the open gym must be publicized well in advance and in such a manner that all students are aware of the open gym. A coach may be present, but only if he/she has been appointed to this responsibility by a school administrator for supervision only; **COACHING IS PROHIBITED**. If only members of one high school team show up for open gym, then open gym must be cancelled for to continue with only members of one team constitutes a violation of the Out-of-Season Rule. *Middle and Elementary School students are prohibited from participating in these programs.*

(VHSL policy: 27-8-2)

d. Clubs

Club sports will **not** be sponsored by any Spotsylvania County School. Clubs are only approved for activities which are curriculum related.
(SCS policy: IGDA)

e. Parks and Recreation/Outside Leagues

Student/athletes who participate in a Spotsylvania County Parks and Recreation program and/or outside organized sports leagues on school property (under the authority of that outside organization) do not violate the Out-of-Season Rule if the use of the facility has been approved by the administration. A high school coach may be employed or enjoined by the Spotsylvania County Recreation Department or other governmental agency to teach only his/her specified sport and nothing else if the program is open to everyone in the community and that portion taught by the coach is an integral part of the community's diversified recreational program. School facilities may be used for the recreation program if approved by the administration.
(VHSL policy: 27-8-2)

Sundays

Student/athletes are prohibited from participating, practicing, or meeting for the purpose of the school team/squad on Sundays.
(VHSL policy: 27-12-1)

Practice and Game Uniforms and Equipment

Uniforms and/or equipment issued to student/athletes are the property of the school. The student/athlete will be responsible for the care and condition of same and will be required to pay for the issued items if they are not returned, or not in the same condition, save normal wear and tear. Uniforms and/or equipment are not to be worn or used for personal use.

Transportation

No student/athlete should be allowed to transport themselves to and from a game site. Under no circumstances shall a student/athlete be allowed to ride home from an away game with anyone other than the student's parent or guardian.

Participating in Two Sports during the Same Season

If an athlete desires to participate in two sports during the same season, the approval of the two head coaches will be required. Non-approval will negate dual participation and therefore the athlete must choose one sport only. Practice time must be split equally between the two sports or as agreed between the two coaches. The primary sport must be declared prior to the start of practice. The athlete must decide beforehand in which contest he or she will participate should the two sports have contests on the same date.

Hot Weather

Spotsylvania County Schools' athletic programs will adhere to the following hot weather guidelines:

Level 1: Heat Index of 105 and up
-No outside activities

Level 2: Heat Index of 95-104
-Limited practice with no equipment such as pads, helmets, etc.
-Careful monitoring of all athletes for signs of heat stroke
-Water breaks every 20-30 minutes

Level 3: Heat Index of 90-94
-Practice with removal of equipment during breaks
-Careful monitoring of all athletes for signs of heat stroke
-Water breaks every 20-30 minutes

Level 4: Heat Index below 90
-Practice with water breaks every 20-30 minutes
-Careful monitoring of all athletes for signs of heat stroke

(SCS Hot Weather Guidelines, issued August 6, 2003)

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