

## PHILOSOPHY

Athletics are an integral part of the total educational program and contribute substantially to the learning experience of all students. Through interscholastic athletics, an opportunity is provided for students to achieve beyond the normal physical education curriculum. Our program is tailored to provide meaningful learning experiences that fit harmoniously into the over-all educational program. We recognize that vigorous physical activity is vital to healthful living and participation in athletics should be founded on a clean and disciplined lifestyle. We endeavor to develop young athletes to the full extent of their capabilities.

## ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES

Nordonia Hills City Schools offers a comprehensive variety of athletic activities for prospective student athletes. The following is a list of interscholastic sports presently available:

### BOYS' ATHLETICS

#### FALL:

**Cross Country\***  
**Football\***  
**Golf**  
**Soccer**

#### WINTER:

**Basketball\***  
**Bowling**  
**Wrestling\***  
**Swimming**  
**Ice Hockey (Coed)**

#### SPRING:

**Baseball**  
**Tennis**  
**Track\***

### GIRLS' ATHLETICS

#### FALL:

**Cross Country\***  
**Cheerleading\***  
**Golf**  
**Soccer**  
**Tennis**  
**Volleyball\***

#### WINTER:

**Basketball\***  
**Bowling**  
**Cheerleading\***  
**Swimming**

#### SPRING:

**Softball**  
**Track\***

\*Denotes Middle School Program

## NORDONIA ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATION

**Superintendent**  
**Joe Clark**

**Athletic Director**  
**Rob Eckenrode**

**High School Principal**  
**Casey Wright**

**Assistant Athletic Director**  
**Ron Gura**

**Middle School Athletic Director**  
**Rita Covin**

**Middle School Athletic Office:**  
**330-908-6614**

H.S. Athletic Offices: 330-908-6000 or 330-908-6001

Email: [Rob.Eckenrode@nordoniaschools.org](mailto:Rob.Eckenrode@nordoniaschools.org)

## **AFFILIATIONS**

Nordonia Hills City Schools is a member in good standing of the Ohio High School Athletic Association and the Suburban League. All athletic department administrative procedures comply with the provisions and constitutions of these two organizations.

The Suburban League consists of the following schools:

Nordonia	Cloverleaf	Copley	Green
Highland	Revere	Tallmadge	Wadsworth

## **CANCELLATION OF ATHLETIC CONTESTS DUE TO WEATHER**

If the Nordonia Schools are closed due to inclement weather conditions, all athletic contests will be cancelled unless the two superintendents agree to hold the event. Practices may be held only with the permission of the athletic office. Information during inclement weather can be obtained by contacting the head coach.

## **ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENT ATHLETES**

All athletes must be present for 1/2 of the school day on all days of practice or contests (Friday for weekend events) to be eligible to participate in any team activity. Medical appointments, funerals, or other emergencies may be excused if approved by the coach and athletic director. If an athlete is absent all day Friday or the day before a school vacation, he/she may participate in a weekend or vacation day contest with permission from the athletic office.

## **DISTRICT AND OHSAA ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

The Nordonia Board of Education permits students in grades 7 through 12 to participate in interscholastic activities if the following guidelines are met:

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL (Grades 7 and 8)**

1. Must achieve a 1.5 grade point average at the end of each grading period. Students who achieve less than a 1.5 GPA at the end of a grading period but are above a 1.0 may be permitted to participate provided they engage in a structured academic intervention program approved by the Superintendent and monitored by the building principal.
2. Must be passing a minimum of five courses of those subjects in which the student received grades in the preceding grading period.
3. Incoming 7th grade students' grade point average will be first established at the end of the first grading period.

### **HIGH SCHOOL (Grades 9 through 12)**

1. Must achieve a 1.5 grade point average at the end of each grading period.
2. Students who achieve less than a 1.5 GPA at the end of a grading period but are above 1.0 may be permitted to participate provided they engage in a structured academic intervention program approved by the Superintendent and monitored by the building principal. Study tables will be made available to all students grades 9-12. Study tables will be held before school for 50 minutes a minimum of 2 days per week at Nordonia High School. A student who does not participate in the required number of study tables or is dismissed for disciplinary reasons or lack of effort will immediately become ineligible for a minimum of one week.
3. During the preceding grading period, the student must have received passing grades in a minimum of FIVE one-credit courses or the equivalent which count toward graduation. The eligibility or ineligibility of a student continues until the start of the fifth school day of the next grading period, at which time the grades from the immediately preceding grading period become effective.
4. Incoming 9th grade students' grade point average will be established at the end of the first grading period.
5. A student with an IEP **may** be exempt from the grading provisions set forth in this policy. However, the student is still subject to all OHSAA requirements.
6. Failure to comply with the academic eligibility requirements results in interscholastic ineligibility for the succeeding grading period.
7. Student athletes must meet all other requirements as set forth by the Ohio High School Athletic Association and the Nordonia Hills Board of Education.

### **IN SEASON/OUT OF SEASON**

The athletic season shall be defined as beginning with the dates established by the OHSAA and ending with the final formal contest or activity scheduled for each sport. This includes tournament and awards programs. Any athlete who leaves or is suspended from an athletic team before the completion of its season, may not begin any workouts or practices for the next season until the original season is completed.

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL FORM/ PHYSICAL EXAM FORM**

All Nordonia students wishing to participate in interscholastic athletics must have completed emergency medical authorization and physical examination forms and filed them with the athletic office or their coach prior to the first day of participation. All students and parents/guardians must also sign the OHSAA Authorization Form and Student Code of Responsibility.

### **PARTICIPATION FEES**

Participation fees will be charged by the Nordonia Hills Board of Education for anyone participating in athletics. These fees are non-refundable if an athlete quits, is injured, or becomes academically ineligible during the season. This fee does not guarantee playing time on any team.

## **GUIDELINES FOR CUTTING**

The protocol for “cutting” must be communicated both verbally and in writing to all prospective student-athletes on or before the first day of tryouts. The coach will be available to address any concerns relative to the criteria for team selection. The coach also has the responsibility to see that each student understands the process.

At the high school, any student cut from a team may request a conference with the coach. During the conference, the coach will explain the reasons why the student did not make the team and suggest possible alternatives for improving skills, therefore, enhancing the student’s opportunity for making the team in the future. If the coach anticipates a problem, it is recommended that the parent be contacted and encouraged to become involved. It is the responsibility of the head coach and Athletic Director to ensure that all policies set forth by the Nordonia Hills Board of Education are followed.

The coaching staff will participate in the evaluation of each student athlete in a given sport in a fair and equitable manner. The head coach will be responsible for making the final decision with respect to the varsity squad of his/her sport. At the middle school, the grade level coach will select his/her squad with the input of the varsity head coach. Any student cut from a high school or middle school team will be notified verbally rather than through a posted list.

Try-outs will be a minimum of three days in length before cuts are made to ensure adequate time to evaluate candidates. Every attempt will be made to give each student the same amount of time to demonstrate skills.

Understanding that twelfth grade student-athletes have demonstrated three years of loyalty to an athletic program, varsity head coaches will consider longevity prior to releasing a senior from the team/program. This consideration in no way guarantees the senior-athlete a roster spot. Seniors must demonstrate the same level of dedication, work ethic and ability as all other athletes being evaluated for a position on an athletic program roster.

## **LETTER/AWARD POLICY**

Each sport has a specific criteria for earning a varsity letter in their respective activity. All athletes must remain academically eligible and complete their entire season to be eligible for an award unless having received permission from the Athletic Office. The following are the general criteria for the athletic department:

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**Certificate of Participation** - All athletes.

**Muncie Award** - Awarded to the 8th grade athlete in each sport who demonstrates team spirit, is academically eligible throughout the entire season, is a team player, is cooperative, has a positive impact on the school climate, is respectful of other students and staff, has a positive attitude, always gives a good effort, and is dependable. A committee made up of head coaches from the season, the athletic director and a school administrator will nominate the athletes. Candidates will be selected based on a consensus of the committee.

**Knight Award** – Awarded to one 8th grade football player who has been selected by his teammates.

**Coaches Award** - Awarded to one player in each sport.

### **HIGH SCHOOL**

Freshman & Junior Varsity	Certificate of Participation
First Year Varsity	Letter with insert
Second Year Varsity	Choice of Key-chain or Pin
Third Year Varsity	Plaque
Fourth Year Varsity	Plaque

\*The varsity athlete from each team with the highest GPA for the most recent 9 week grading period will be awarded a plaque from the Athletic Department.

Fall Sports	First nine week grading period
Winter Sports	Second nine week grading period
Spring Sports	Third nine week grading period

All athletes who participate in a sport and earn a 3.5 GPA or better during that nine week grading period will receive a Suburban League Scholar Athlete Award recognizing their accomplishment.

### **INDIVIDUAL CRITERIA FOR A VARSITY AWARD**

<b>Football</b>	Athlete must play in 1/2 of the varsity quarters and/or make a viable contribution to the team.
<b>Tennis</b>	Athlete must play in 1/3 of the varsity matches and/or make a viable contribution to the team.
<b>Basketball</b>	Athlete must play in 20 varsity quarters and/or make a viable contribution to the team.
<b>Track</b>	Athlete must score in 1/2 of the varsity meets or have a total of 15 team points or meet the time/height/length standards established by the coaching staff and/or make a viable contribution to the team.
<b>Soccer</b>	Athlete must play in 1/2 of the varsity halves and/or make a viable contribution to the team.
<b>Baseball/ Softball</b>	Position players must play in 1/3 of the varsity innings. Pitchers awards are based on use as a starter and/or reliever. Any others who make a viable contribution to the team.
<b>Wrestling</b>	Athletes must win at least one varsity match and must have wrestled in a minimum of 3 varsity matches. Any others who make a viable contribution to the team.
<b>Golf</b>	Athletes must have competed in 1/2 of the varsity matches and/or make a viable contribution to the team.
<b>Volleyball</b>	Athlete must play in 1/4 of the varsity games and/or make a viable contribution to the team.
<b>Cross Country</b>	Athlete must complete in 1/2 of the regular season varsity meets and/or make a viable contribution to the team.
<b>Swimming</b>	Athlete must earn a minimum of 85 points and/or meet the time standards established by the coaching staff and/or make a viable contribution to the team.
<b>Bowling</b>	Athlete must play in 1/4 of the varsity games and/or make a viable contribution to the team.
<b>Hockey</b>	Athlete must play in 1/2 of the varsity periods and/or make a viable contribution to the team.

## **MEDICAL RELEASE**

Any student who is seen by a physician or any medical personnel for an injury or illness must have a note from the medical professional to be released to participate.

## **NORDONIA ATHLETIC BOOSTERS**

The Nordonia Athletic Booster Club is a volunteer organization which raises money to support the athletic programs by subsidizing the purchases of uniforms and equipment, etc. Parents are urged to show their support by joining the organization and encouraged to volunteer their time when and where help is needed.

## **SPORTSMANSHIP**

Nordonia places the highest priority on good sportsmanship and integrity. As a parent or student athlete, you play a fundamental role. We ask you to take your responsibility seriously and lead by example. Please attend our athletic contests with spirit and enthusiasm, but also with courtesy to our opponents and their fans. Any spectator who is in violation of these and/or any Suburban League sportsmanship guidelines may be asked to leave the premises without refund. Together, we can portray and establish a positive image of the Nordonia Hills School District. Athletes are encouraged to take on the responsibility of talking with their coach should an issue arise. Open communication between parents and coaches is highly recommended for the benefit of the program.

## **TRAVEL**

Nordonia High School athletes are required to travel to and from contests on vehicles provided by the Board of Education. Special provisions and parental requests must be turned into the athletic office 24 hours prior to the contest.

## **HAZING POLICY**

Hazing is defined as doing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to do any act of initiation into any student or other organization that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm to any person. It is the policy of the Nordonia Hills Board of Education, School District and Athletic Department that hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational policy and athletic philosophy and shall be prohibited at all times. No administrator, faculty member or other employee of the school district shall encourage, permit, condone or tolerate any hazing activities. No student shall plan, encourage or engage in hazing. Permission, consent or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to hazing does not lessen the prohibition contained in this policy. Students participating in this activity may be subject to suspension or dismissal from an athletic team.

## **VACATION POLICY**

Athletes missing mandatory contests during a scheduled vacation will be required to sit out the following number of contests.

Miss 1 - 2 contests	Sit out one contest upon return
Miss 3 or more contests	Sit out two contests upon return

Athletes missing mandatory practices during a scheduled vacation may be required to make up missed practices at the coaches' convenience before returning to the normal line-up.

## TICKET INFORMATION

Student Pre-sale (**FOOTBALL ONLY**) \$4.00  
 (@ Nordonía Middle School & High School during Friday lunch periods)

### **Football**

All Tickets at the gate \$6.00

Senior Citizens Free to all Nordonía home athletic events w/  
 league pass obtained from the athletic office.

### **Varsity basketball, soccer, swimming and wrestling**

Student tickets purchased at the gate \$4.00

Adult tickets purchased at the gate \$6.00

### **JV/Freshmen Games (single games)**

Student tickets purchased at the gate \$2.00

Adult tickets purchased at the gate \$3.00

### **Middle School Games**

Student tickets purchased at the gate \$1.00

Adult tickets purchased at the gate \$2.00

## SEASON TICKET PASSES

**Student 10 game pass** \$30.00

**Adult 10 game pass** \$50.00

Student and adult 10 game passes are good at any home athletic event during the school year. These passes will **not** be honored at any Suburban League away games or OHSAA tournament games. Sports include: football, soccer, volleyball, basketball, swimming and wrestling.

**Family Football Pass** (5 home games) \$80.00

**Family Basketball Pass** (10 home games) \$100.00

Family passes will admit up to 4 individuals. Families must present themselves at the gate all at the same time.

# **ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT**

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The Nordonia Board of Education, school administration, and coaches believe that interscholastic athletics are an integral part of the total educational program. High standards of behavior, scholarship, and citizenship are important to a sound athletic program. Students volunteering to participate must assume the responsibilities of this privilege and are required to meet expectations beyond those set for non-athletes.

## **SCOPE OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Student athletes are subject to the following code of conduct throughout their season, 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the duration of the season. The season will be defined as the official first day of practice as set forth by the OHSAA through the last contest and any subsequent awards programs or all star games. If a student athlete violates this code toward the end of their season, penalties could carry over into their next season of participation.

The Nordonia Athletic Department will proactively attempt to enhance the physical and emotional growth of each Nordonia student athlete.

### **The Athletic Department will:**

1. Host a meeting at the beginning of each season for all parents of athletes to discuss the current Athletic Code of Conduct. Parents and athletes must sign the Athletic Code of Conduct contract before the athlete can participate in any athletic activity.
2. Provide opportunities for high school and middle school athletes to be positive role models for all Nordonia students.

### **The coaches will:**

1. Distribute written expectations specific to their sport, during or prior to the first week of the season.
2. Discuss the current Athletic Code of Conduct with their team during or prior to the first week of the season.
3. Enforce the Athletic Code of Conduct and the expectations specific to their sport.
4. Consistently emphasize the importance of the high standards set for all athletes.

## **AREAS OF PARTICIPATION DENIAL**

### **CHEMICAL ABUSE (alcohol and drugs):**

An athlete shall not use, possess, or smell of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs, nor shall he/she possess drug paraphernalia. This includes marijuana, hallucinogens, and other illegal drugs. An athlete shall not use, possess, or sell look-alike drugs or substances, which are thought to be drugs, sold as drugs, or thought by the seller or buyer to be mind altering substances or illegal drugs. An athlete shall not use performance enhancing drugs, including but not limited to anabolic steroids.

**First Violation:** The athlete will be denied participation for the remainder of the season. However, if the athlete chooses to schedule, attend and successfully complete an assessment by a Certified Chemical Dependency Counselor level III (CCDCIII) and follow the recommendation's of an approved agency and/or individual, then the athlete may return to practice and the team after three (3) athletic days. In addition to this suspension, the athlete will be denied participation in a total of 20% of the regular season contests. If there are fewer than 20% remaining in the season, the penalty will carry over into any post season games and then into the next season of participation.

**Example:** The infraction occurs during the basketball season. The penalty would be 20% of 22 contests or 4 contests. If only 2 contests (10% of the season) remain, the remaining 10% would be based on the number of contests in the next season of participation.

**Second Violation:** The athlete will be denied participation for the remainder of the season and must miss a minimum of 30% of the regular season contests. If there are fewer than 30% of the contests remaining in the season, the penalty will carry over into any post season contests and then into the next season of participation. (See the example above) The athlete will be required to attend a follow up appointment with the previous agency of assessment.

**Third Violation:** The athlete will be denied participation for one calendar year and be required to attend a follow up appointment with the previous agency of assessment.

**Note:** An athletic day refers to any day that has a scheduled practice or contest.

## **TOBACCO PRODUCTS**

An athlete shall not smoke or possess tobacco products of any kind at any time.

**First Violation:** The athlete will be denied participation for the remainder of the season. If the athlete chooses to schedule and complete the tobacco cessation program with the school's community intervention counselor, the suspension will be reduced to three (3) athletic days. In addition to this suspension, the athlete will be denied participation in a total of 20% of the regular season contests. If there are fewer than 20% of the contests remaining in the season, the penalty will carry over into any post season contests and then into the next season of participation.

**Example:** The infraction occurs during basketball season. The penalty would be 20% of 22 contests or 4 contests. If only 2 contests (10% of the season) remain in the season, the remaining 10% would be based on the number of contests in the next season of participation.

**Second Violation:** The athlete will be denied participation for the remainder of the season and must miss a minimum of 30% of the regular season contests. If there are fewer than 30% of the regular season contests remaining in the season, the penalty will carry over into any post season contests and then into the next season of participation. (See the example above.) The athlete may not return to any participation until they present to the athletic office proof of counseling.

**Note:** An athletic day refers to any day that has a scheduled practice or contest.

### **ATTENDANCE**

An athlete is required to attend all mandatory activities designated by the coach.

**Second Unexcused Absence:**

Minimum – Administrative discretion.

Maximum – 5 days of practice and one contest

**Third Unexcused Absence:**

Minimum – Administrative discretion.

Maximum – Remainder of the season or 90 days, whichever is greater.

Athletes must be in school on the day of a contest for a minimum of one half of the school day. Being absent on the day of a contest will render an athlete ineligible for that contest. Such absence or tardiness can be excused only by a principal.

### **INSUBORDINATION**

An athlete shall not refuse to comply with a reasonable request, order, or direction of any coach, administrator, or other authorized personnel.

**Penalty:**

Minimum – Administrative Discretion

Maximum – Remainder of the season or 90 days, whichever is greater.

### **PROFANITY OR VULGAR DISPLAYS**

An athlete shall not use profane, obscene, or vulgar language. This includes gestures, either nonverbal or written.

**Penalty:**

Minimum – Administrative Discretion

Maximum – Remainder of the season or 90 days, whichever is greater.

### **DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY**

An athlete shall not willfully cause damage to either public or private property, including but not limited to:

1. Vandalism: An athlete shall not attempt to deface public or private property.
2. Theft: An athlete shall not take and/or acquire the property of others without their consent.

**Penalty:**

Minimum – Administrative Discretion

Maximum – Remainder of the season or 90 days, whichever is greater.

### **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

An athlete shall not act in a manner unbecoming to the Nordonia Hills City School District.

**Penalty:**

Minimum – Administrative Discretion

Maximum – Remainder of the season or 90 days, whichever is greater.

### **VIOLATION OF STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

In addition to the penalties set forth in the preceding rules and regulations, violation of existing school codes, or criminal acts, may lead to suspension from athletics for a period of time up to the maximum of the remainder of the season or 90 days, whichever is greater.

### **DENIAL OF PARTICIPATION**

1. The Athletic Director issues an ATHLETIC INTENT TO DENY PARTICIPATION statement to the athlete. An informal hearing follows. The coach may or may not be present.
2. After the Intent has been issued and signed by the athlete, the building Principal will sign the Intent and give a copy to the athlete. The parents of the athlete will be informed that they have twenty four hours from the time of notification, to appeal the denial. The appeal request should be directed to the Athletic Director.
3. The Athletic Director should convene the appeals board within forty-eight (48) hours, two work days, after receiving a request for an appeal.
4. The number of members and composition of the appeals board is determined by the building Principal. The appeals board will hear statements from both parties, ask questions and subsequently make a recommendation to the building Principal. The Principal may either follow the recommendation of the appeals board or deny it.
5. Should the violation occur either before the school year begins or during a recess period, a designated administrator will act as the appeals officer. There is no appeal within the school system beyond the appeals board.

### **OTHER ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS**

#### **REASONABLE CONDUCT**

The Nordonia Athletic Department recognizes that the safety and welfare of individual athletes and teams are a priority. Athletes are expected to behave appropriately during school and extracurricular activities. Detrimental actions include, but are not limited to, insubordination, repeated absenteeism, fighting, sexual misconduct, negative/apathetic attitude, unsportsmanlike conduct, lying and inappropriate language or gestures.

Recognizing the varying degrees of severity, the type of misconduct, and an athlete's previous record of conduct, each situation will be considered individually. The coach and/or athletic director will determine appropriate consequences, which may include denial of participation or dismissal from the team. In all cases, the athlete will have the right to due process and a written record of the incident will be filed with the Athletic Director.

#### **ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT**

An athlete must complete and return the Athletic Code of Conduct contract, physical examination, parental code of conduct and emergency medical forms before participating in any team activity.

### **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY**

Academic eligibility is a prerequisite to participation in any team or individual activity. Students who are determined to be ineligible at the onset of the season will not be able to participate in any games or contests. If a student becomes academically eligible after a grading period and the sports season is already in progress, the student may become a member of a team based on the coach's recommendation.

### **EQUIPMENT**

An athlete must return school equipment in the condition it was received, with reasonable wear and tear, within 5 school days of the last contest. Athletes must reimburse the Nordonía Board of Education for lost or damaged equipment prior to receiving any athletic awards. An athlete must fulfill obligations from a previous season before he/she will be permitted to begin participation in any other athletic activities.

Any student athlete who quits a team during the course of the season is responsible for all uniforms and/or equipment issued to him/her. The uniforms and/or equipment must be returned to the head coach of that specific team prior to the conclusion of that sport season. Failure to do so will result in the student athlete in question being charged the replacement cost of all uniforms and/or equipment that he/she was issued. Should a student athlete reconsider his/her decision to quit a team, they may not rejoin that team without the expressed permission of the head coach and Athletic Director.

### **ATTENDANCE**

An athlete is expected to attend all team activities unless excused by the coach prior to the absence. Unexcused absences will result in the disciplinary action described in the Code of Conduct. Extended excused absences may result in the loss of playing time. The coach will keep a written record of excused and unexcused absences and inform the parent and Athletic Director when the athlete's actions result in denial of participation.

### **COMPLIANCE**

An athlete must comply with the rules of the Suburban League, the Ohio High School Athletic Association, and the Nordonía Board of Education approved Student Code of Conduct.

## **OHSAA BYLAWS/ELIGIBILITY**

### **Section 1. Eligibility**

- 4-1-1 Each student shall meet all requirements in this bylaw to be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletic competition. Notwithstanding any provision of this Bylaw 4 to the contrary, if a student has met all of the substantive eligibility requirements of this Bylaw 4 but is declared ineligible due solely to an administrative error on the part of the school/school personnel, the commissioner's office may, in its absolute and sole discretion, restore eligibility to that student (prospectively and retroactively), provided it can be shown that the student's actions or failure to act did not contribute in any way to the administrative error that caused the declaration of ineligibility in the first place. notwithstanding the restoration of eligibility, the school may be subject to additional penalties as prescribed in Bylaw 11.  
**Note:** The authority to correct administrative errors is limited to correcting student eligibility issues as codified within Bylaw 4 – Student Eligibility.
- 4-1-2 If a student participates in an athletic contest and his or her eligibility has been established by falsified information (includes but is not limited to: name, address, transcripts, birth certificate, etc.) the student shall be ineligible in Ohio for a maximum of one year from the date the penalty is imposed.
- 4-1-3 A student is a member of an interscholastic squad when the student participates in an interscholastic contest. Such status as a squad member continues until the start of the next school season in that sport. An athletic contest involving participants from another school or any non-interscholastic or any organized adult team is a game, preview or a scrimmage.

### **Section 2. Age Limitation**

- 4-2-1 If a student enrolled in high school attains the age of 19 before August 1, the student shall be ineligible to participate in high school interscholastic athletics for the school year commencing in that calendar year.
- Exception 1:** If the student is a “child with a disability” as that term is defined at 42 U.S.C. Section 12102 (ADA) and the Regulations promulgated thereunder, and the student's specific disability has contributed significantly to the student's inability to meet the requirements of this bylaw, that student may be declared eligible by the Commissioner's office if, in the sole discretion of the Commissioner's office, the Commissioner's office determines that: **(criteria A-D below Exception 2)**
- Exception 2:** If a student has repeated any grade from Kindergarten through grade 3 at the recommendation of the student's teachers or other educational professionals and for purely academic reasons and, as a result repeated any of these grades, the student cannot meet the age limitations of this by-law in the student's senior year of high school, the Commissioner's office may declare the student eligible notwithstanding this bylaw 4-2-1 if, in the sole discretion of the Commissioner's office, the following criteria can be met:

- A) the student does not pose a safety risk to himself/herself or others; and
- B) the student does not enjoy any advantages in terms of physical maturity, mental maturity or athletic maturity over other student-athletes; and
- C) the student's participation does not affect the principles of competitive equity; and
- D) there is no evidence of "red-shirting" or other indicia of academic dishonesty.

4-2-2 If a student enrolled in grade 7 or 8 attains the age of 15 before August 1, the student shall be ineligible to participate in 7 & 8th grade interscholastic athletics for the school year commencing in that calendar year.

**Exception 1:** If the student is a "child with a disability" as that term is defined at 42 U.S.C. Section 12102 (ADA) and the Regulations promulgated there under, and the student's specific disability has contributed significantly to the student's inability to meet the requirements of this bylaw, that student may be declared eligible by the Commissioner's office if, in the sole discretion of the Commissioner's office, the following criteria can be met:

- A) the student does not pose a safety risk to himself/herself or others; and
- B) the student does not enjoy any advantages in terms of physical maturity, mental maturity or athletic maturity over other student-athletes; and
- C) the student's participation does not affect the principles of competitive equity; and
- D) there is no evidence of "red-shirting" or other indicia of academic dishonesty.

**Exception 2:** if a student has repeated any grade from kindergarten through grade 3 at the recommendation of the student's teachers or other educational professionals and for purely academic reasons and, as a result of repeating any of these grades, the student cannot meet the age limitations of this bylaw in the student's eighth grade year with the 7th & 8th grade school, the commissioner's office may declare the student eligible notwithstanding this bylaw 4-2-2 if, in the sole discretion of the commissioner's office, the following criteria can be met:

- A) the student does not pose a safety risk to himself/herself or others; and
- B) the student does not enjoy any advantages in terms of physical maturity, mental maturity or athletic maturity over other student-athletes of her/his grade level; and
- C) the student's participation does not affect the principles of competitive equity; and
- D) there is no evidence of "red-shirting" or other indicia of academic dishonesty.

4-2-3 A student shall become eligible for high school athletics when the student attains the fifteenth birthday before August 1, or when the student attains ninth grade standing. The student is eligible at the school where the student is expected to enroll at the ninth grade level.

4-2-4 In determining the age of a student, the date of birth as recorded in the school records shall be considered as final, except that when birth records, filed within six years after date of birth, are available in the State

Bureau of Vital Statistics or a comparable governmental agency, it shall be used. If this information is not available and if the school records do not agree, the earliest date of birth shall be considered the valid date of birth.

- 4-2-5 Family Bibles, physician's statements, parent's affidavits, baptismal certificates etc., will not be accepted in lieu of birth certificates. Amendments to birth certificates filed after six years from date of birth will not be considered.

### **Section 3. Enrollment and Attendance**

- 4-3-1 All students participating in a school sponsored sport must be enrolled in and attending full-time in accordance with all duly adopted Board of Education or similar governing board policies of that school.

**EXCEPTION 1:** A student enrolled in the ninth grade separate from the high school (grade 10-12) are eligible to participate with the school squad of the high school the student will be as signed to attend.

**EXCEPTION 2:** A student enrolled in a joint vocational school is eligible at the high school where the students' records are maintained.

**EXCEPTION 3:** A student enrolled in a member school who receives his/her education through a community school established under Chapter 3314 of the Revised Code that is sponsored by the city, local or exempted village school district in which the student is entitled to attend school pursuant to Section 3313.64 or 3313.65 of the Revised Code, is eligible to participate at the member public school that is operated by the school district sponsoring the community school, provided the student is enrolled and attending pursuant to Board of Education policy.

**EXCEPTION 4:** A student enrolled full time in a postsecondary institution is eligible to participate at the high school where the student's records are maintained, provided the student is receiving high school credit for a minimum of five one credit courses in the postsecondary institution.

**EXCEPTION 5:** A student enrolled in an alternative school that is sponsored by a Board of Education or similar governing board is eligible to participate at the member school where the student would be entitled to attend provided the alternative school does not sponsor interscholastic athletics and the student is counted on the EMIS report for the member high school.

**EXCEPTION 6:** A student who is home schooled and is enrolled in a member school in accordance with the partial enrollment policy of a Board of Education or similar governing board may be eligible at the school where the student is enrolled and attending. Such partial enrollment policy requires that at least one of the courses be taken at the school's physical location.

**Note:** A student entering a member school from a home school must do so at the beginning of the school year after having been home schooled for at least one calendar year. Failure to meet the one-year provision requires the student to be enrolled for a minimum of one grading period before the student can be declared eligible.

**EXCEPTION 7:** A student enrolled in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) school that is established under Chapter 3326 of the Revised Code is eligible to participate at the member school where the student would be entitled to attend, provided the STEM school does not sponsor interscholastic athletics and the student is counted on the EMIS report for the member high school.

4-3-2 Enrollment and attendance in a member school shall be deemed continuous until such date when a student has been officially withdrawn from the school in accordance with that school's policies.

4-3-3 After a student completes the eighth grade, or is otherwise eligible for high school athletics pursuant to Bylaw 4-2-3, the student shall be eligible for a period not to exceed eight semesters taken in order of attendance, whether the student participates or not. A student in grade 7 or 8 who attains the age of 15 before August 1 shall be eligible only at the high school level for a period not to exceed eight semesters taken in order of attendance, whether the student participates or not.

**EXCEPTION 1: The Commissioner or the Board of Directors may permit** a student who completes the eighth semester of eligibility during the season of a sport to complete the sports season of the sport in which the student is participating provided the student is enrolled in school. If such extension is granted, the student is ineligible for further interscholastic participation when the sports season, regular and tournament, has ended.

**EXCEPTION 2:** If the student is a "child with a disability" as that term is defined at 42 U.S.C. Section 12102 (ADA) and the Regulations promulgated there under, and the student's specific disability has contributed significantly to the student's inability to meet the requirements of this bylaw, that **student may be declared eligible by the Commissioner's office** if, in the sole discretion of the Commissioner's office, the Commissioner's office determines that:

- A) The student does not pose a safety risk to himself/herself or others; and
- B) The student does not enjoy advantages in terms of physical maturity, mental maturity or athletic maturity over other student-athletes; and
- C) The student's participation does not affect the principles of competitive equity; and
- D) There is no evidence of "red-shirting" or other indicia of academic dishonesty.

4-3-4 A student who is enrolled 15 or more school days in any semester, or who participates in an interscholastic contest prior to or during a semester, shall have that semester count as one semester of eligibility. **EXCEPTION:** The Commissioner may, in the exercise of the Commissioner's sole discretion, disregard a particular semester of

“enrollment” if extenuating circumstances of such enrollment are presented and are shown to have existed through no fault of the student-athlete.

**Note 1:** A student who does not attend school in a semester due to a suspension or an expulsion shall have that semester(s) count in the total of eight that are permitted.

**Note 2:** A student who does not attend school due to enrollment in a post secondary institution that is not part of the Postsecondary Enrollment Option Part B (dual credit for both high school and postsecondary school) shall have that semester(s) count in the total of eight that are permitted.

**Note 3:** A student who does not attend any school for a semester(s) due to truancy shall have that semester(s) count in the total of eight that are permitted.

**Note 4:** A student who does not attend any school for a semester(s) due to withdrawal shall have that semester(s) count in the total of eight that are permitted.

- 4-3-5 A student is considered a graduate when the student has completed the work required for graduation and is declared a graduate by the Board of Education or a similar governing board in another state/ country. Notwithstanding the age and semester bylaws, such student is no longer eligible for interscholastic sports except for participation in the remaining contests of that semester.

#### **Section 4. Scholarship**

- 4-4-1 In order to be eligible in grades 9-12, a student must be currently enrolled and must have been enrolled in school the immediately preceding grading period. For the purpose of this Bylaw 4, Section r, the term “grading period” is defined as the school’s Board-adopted Calendar (e.g., six week , nine week, 12 week or semester) and does not mean an interim marking period. Furthermore, during the preceding grading period, the student must have received passing grades in a minimum of five one-credit courses or the equivalent, each of which counts toward graduation. For the purpose of this bylaw, the term “immediately preceding grading period” refers to the grading period of the school which immediately precedes the grading period in question.

**EXCEPTION 1:** The Commissioner’s office may waive this requirement of the senior student’s having passed five one-credit courses in the preceding grading period in the following circumstances:

- 1) Student has accumulated a sufficient number of credits to have graduated in the preceding semester;
- 2) Student maintains a grade point average in the top 10% of the class;
- 3) Student can demonstrate that the underlying purposes of this bylaw have been otherwise fulfilled. This means that the student is not purposely choosing to select fewer than five courses in which to be enrolled in the preceding grading period.

**EXCEPTION 2:** The Commissioner may waive the enrollment requirements of Bylaw 4-4-1 (Scholarship) provided the student has been with drawn or removed from the school because of circumstances due to personal accident, illness or family hardship. **An appeal for such a waiver must come from the Principal of the school and be in writing. The appeal for waiver shall contain documents with school and medical supporting evidence.**

**EXCEPTION 3:** If a student's failure to meet the requirements of this bylaw are due to an "incomplete" given in one or more courses which the student was taking during the grading period in question, **the student may have his/her eligibility restored by the Commissioner's Office once the "incomplete" has been changed to a passing letter grade provided:**

- (A) the failure to complete the required course work during the grading period was due to calamity day(s), family tragedy, or illness or accident as verified by a physician; and
  - (B) the "incomplete" was given in accordance with Board of Education/other governing board adopted policies and procedures and is applicable to all students in the school; and
  - (C) the previously scheduled work and/or exams is/are completed within the time period provided in Board policy for completing work required to convert an "incomplete" into a letter grade; and
  - (D) there is no evidence that the "incomplete" was given in order to afford the student extended time in order to provide the student tutoring or other educational services simply to avoid a failing grade.
- NOTE: This exception only applies where an "incomplete" has been issued and not a letter grade that is subsequently changed as a result of the extended time/additional work.**

- 4-4-2 If, either through the due process procedure or the direct mediation process established by the Ohio Department of Education in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, it is determined that a school has failed to provide all of the support services as identified in the student's IEP as necessary for the student to receive a "free and appropriate public education," AND the Commissioner's office determines that this failure to provide these necessary services caused the student to fail to meet the requirements of Bylaw 4-1-1, the student may be declared eligible by the Commissioner's office upon the student's successful completion of the appropriate compensatory education as ordered by the Independent Hearing Officer (I.H.O.) or through the mediation process.
- 4-4-3 The eligibility or ineligibility of a student continues until the start of the fifth day of the next grading period, at which time the grades from the immediately preceding grading period become effective. For the purposes of this bylaw, "school day" includes faculty in-service days, calamity days and regular school attendance days but not holidays or school breaks.

**EXCEPTION 1:** Eligibility or ineligibility for the first grading period commences with the start of the fall sports season.

**EXCEPTION 2:** A student coming off the "ineligible status" may become eligible 24 hours after the mandatory grade reporting date (a date established by Board policy which cannot be the same day as the end of the grading period) established by the Board of Education or other similar governing body for that school's district, provided said grade reporting date is applicable to all students in that district.

- 4-4-4 A student enrolled in the first grading period after advancement from the eighth grade must have passed a minimum of five of all subjects carried the preceding grading period in which the student was enrolled.
- 4-4-5 A student enrolling in the seventh grade for the first time will be eligible for the first grading period regardless of previous academic achievement. Thereafter, in order to be eligible, a student in grade 7 or 8 must be currently enrolled and must have been enrolled in school the immediately preceding grading period and received passing grades during that grading period in a minimum of five of those subjects in which the student received grades.
- 4-4-6 The primary responsibility for verifying eligibility rests with the receiving school. Eligibility shall be verified by reviewing school records or written verification from the sending school.
- 4-4-7 Summer school and other educational options may not be used to substitute for failure to meet the academic standards specified in Bylaw 4 during the last grading period of the school year.

### **Section 5. Conduct, Character, Discipline**

- 4-5-1 In matters pertaining to personal conduct in which athletic contests and their related activities are not involved, the school itself is to be the sole judge as to whether the student may participate in athletics.
- 4-5-2 In matters pertaining to personal conduct in which athletic contests and their related activities are involved, the Principal and game officials shall file a report and the Commissioner's office shall have jurisdiction to determine additional penalties including whether or not the student may participate in athletics.
- 4-5-3 Physical attacks on any official shall be reported to the Association office immediately by the officials involved. The Commissioner's office shall conduct an investigation and determine the penalties involved.
- 4-5-4 Any students who are ejected or disqualified from an athletic contest in any sport for unsporting conduct or a flagrant violation shall be immediately placed under the direct supervision of a school official.
- 4-5-5 Any student suspended or expelled from a member school shall be ineligible for interscholastic athletics at any member school for the duration of the suspension or expulsion. For the purpose of this bylaw, suspension refers to the denial of attendance at school for a period of not more than 10 days. Expulsion refers to the involuntary removal of a student for more than 10 days.

### **Section 6. Residence**

- 4-6-1 The districts for all public schools are established by the State Board of Education and defined for athletic purposes. In addition, school districts with multiple high schools may establish attendance zones within those districts. In determining one's residence for purposes of these Bylaws, the following criteria shall apply: (a) where the parents and family members sleep the majority of the time, (b) where the mail is received, (c) where the meals are prepared and eaten, (d) where the parents are registered to vote, and (e) where important family activities take place during significant parts of each day. **Note:** It shall not be considered a "bona fide" change of residence as prescribed in Bylaw 4-7-2, Exception 1, or Bylaw 4-7-4 (1) if the parents of a transfer student vacate the residence prior to one year from the date that the student's transfer is approved, and the student remains in the school into which the transfer was approved.

- 4-6-2 A student who is a “child with a disability” as that term is defined at 42 U.S.C. Section 12102 (ADA) and the Regulations promulgated thereunder who is enrolled in a Special Education program at a school outside of the district of residence of parents is eligible at the school where the student attends classes or the school located in the district of residence of the parents, PROVIDED each of the following is met: (a) the student’s parents reside in Ohio; (b) the school district in which the parents reside does not provide the required programs to meet the student’s special education needs; and c) there is a contractual agreement specifying the responsibility for educating a “child with disabilities” between the respective school boards or between the parents and the school the student with the disability will attend.
- 4-6-3 A student whose parents reside outside the state of Ohio but within the United States will be ineligible for interscholastic athletics in a member school. (See Bylaw 4-8-1 for eligibility requirements for students whose parents live outside the United States). **NOTE:** A biological or adoptive parent must reside in Ohio.

**EXCEPTION 1:** The Commissioner’s office may declare a student who is the subject of a custody order issued by a court of proper jurisdiction conferring custody upon a grandparent, aunt, uncle or sibling who resides in Ohio, if, in the sole discretion of the Commissioner’s office determines that the purpose of this change in custody was not for athletic reasons, but purely for the best interest of the student in terms of the student’s mental, physical and educational well-being. **Note:** Upon enrollment of a student whose parents live outside the state of Ohio but within the United States, or if the parents move outside the state of Ohio prior to or during the student’s high school career, the principal of that school in which the student is being enrolled shall notify the Commissioner’s office of said enrollment, and the facts and circumstances regarding any change of custody so that the Commissioner’s office can make an informed decision regarding the student’s qualifications under this exception.

**EXCEPTION 2:** A student who has attended a minimum of 15 days in the eleventh grade when the parents move outside the state of Ohio may be declared eligible for the twelfth grade provided the student maintains continuous enrollment in the Ohio school.

**EXCEPTION 3:** A student who enrolls at first grade level in a school consisting of grades 1-12 and who maintains continuous enrollment shall be eligible for interscholastic athletics in grades 7-12 in that school regardless of place or state of residence of parents.

**EXCEPTION 4:** A student who resides within the boundaries of a parochial school system consisting of grades 1-12 that has multiple sites organized into elementary schools (1-8) and secondary schools (9-12), and who has enrolled by fourth grade level of an elementary school in that system and has maintained continuous enrollment in that school system through grade 8, shall be eligible for interscholastic athletics in grades 9-12 providing the secondary school attended by the student is the school designated by the school system for the continuance of the students’ educational program.

**EXCEPTION 5:** A student who resides within the boundaries of a public school district in a neighboring state: and who attends an Ohio public school system under an arrangement through which the entire grade of the out-of-

state student attends the Ohio public school system; and for whom the tuition or cost of education for said out-of-state student is paid by the neighboring state's school district of residence; and who will be eligible to receive a high school diploma from an Ohio public school system shall be eligible for interscholastic athletics in grades 7-12 at the schools designated by the Ohio school system for attendance by the students from the neighboring state.

**EXCEPTION 6:** A student who is enrolled in a member school that provides housing for the student and accepts the role of the parent in loco parentis.

**EXCEPTION 7:** A student who has been enrolled in an Ohio school pursuant to the Interstate Compact of Educational Opportunities for Military Children may be declared eligible at a member school upon submission of a special power of attorney, relative to the custody or guardianship of a child of a military family and executed under applicable law. **The student shall be ineligible until ruled eligible by the Commissioner's office.**

**EXCEPTION 8:** A student who is a citizen of the United States may be declared eligible for interscholastic athletics in the event that the student's parents are deported from the United States as long as the student maintains continuous enrollment in an Ohio school. The student is not eligible until declared eligible by the Commissioner's office upon submission of the appropriate documents.

**EXCEPTION 9:** A student may be declared eligible for interscholastic athletics when the student's parents are citizens of the United States who reside outside the United States. The student is not eligible until declared eligible by the Commissioner's office upon submission of the appropriate documents.

## **Section 7. Transfers**

4-7-1 The transfer bylaws apply to all students enrolled in grades 9-12 who are transferring high schools whether the schools are public and non-public, member or non-member or whether the high schools are within the same school system or district.

4-7-2 A student is considered to have transferred whenever enrollment is changed from one school to another school, or whenever the student participates in a practice, scrimmage or contest with a school-sponsored squad of a school in which the student has not been enrolled. If a student transfers after the fifth day of the student's ninth grade year or after having established eligibility prior to the start of school by playing in a contest (scrimmage, preview or regular season/tournament contest), the student will be ineligible for one year from the date of enrollment in the school to which the student transferred. With respect to inter-district transfers, one or more of the following exceptions may apply:

**EXCEPTION 1:** – If, as a result of a bona fide legal change of residence made by BOTH PARENTS, the student is compelled to transfer from one public school district to another public school district, the Commissioner's Office may restore athletic eligibility at the new school provided the Commissioner's Office is satisfied that the transfer was not athletically motivated. The requirement that "both parents" make the move be waived by the Commissioner's Office if the marriage of the parents has

been or is in the process of being terminated or if the parents were never married. An Affidavit of Bona Fide Residence in the form requested by the Commissioner's Office, must be submitted along with any request for the application of this exception.

**Note:** Please refer to Bylaw 4-6-1 for a definition of bona fide residence. Also, the student and the student's parents must reside in this new residence for a period of one year from the date on which this exception was applied to a given student. The school district will have a continuing duty to monitor compliance with the residency requirements during this one year period of time. Exception one permits the choice of a public high school in the parents' new district of residence or any non-public high school.

**EXCEPTION 2:** If, as a result of a legal change of custody as between a student's parents, the student is compelled to transfer from one school district to another school district, the Commissioner's Office may restore athletic eligibility at the new school, provided the Commissioner's Office is satisfied that the transfer and accompanying change of custody/guardianship was not athletically motivated. If custody or guardianship of a student is changed to a non-parent as a result of allegations of abuse, neglect or delinquency, and the Commissioner's Office is satisfied that this change was not athletically motivated, the Commissioner's Office may restore athletic eligibility at the new school.

**Note:** By operation of statute, there cannot be a legal change of custody so long as a Shared Parenting Plan as defined in ORC §3109.04 is in effect. In order for there to be a change in custody, the Shared Parenting Plan must be terminated. Exception two permits the choice of a public high school in the legal custodian's public school district of residence or any non-public high school.

**EXCEPTION 3:** If the high school, which is either the high school in a single high school public school district or a non-public high school, in which the student is enrolled closes or discontinues its high school program after grade nine, the student may enroll in any school and be immediately eligible insofar as transfer is concerned.

**EXCEPTION 4:** If the bona fide residence of the student's parents is annexed to a different school district or consolidated within a school district, the student may be ruled eligible upon transfer to a school in the annexed or consolidated district subject to modification by formal action by the Boards of Education concerned. A copy of such action by Boards of Education must be on file in the Association office before the Commissioner's office can rule the student eligible.

**EXCEPTION 5:** If a student transfers into the public high school located in the public school district in which the student's parents maintained a bona fide legal residence for at least 90 days prior to the transfer, the commissioner's office may restore eligibility at the new high school provided the Exception Five (5) Form has been accurately completed and submitted to the commissioner's office. This Exception does not apply to transfers that occur as a result of the student's moving between parents who have a "Shared Parenting Agreement" as defined in ORC §3109.04 or in the case of parents who were never married.

Furthermore, this Exception shall not be used to regain eligibility in transfers between schools within the same multiple high school district.

If the parents' district of residence is a multiple high school public school district, the student shall be eligible only at the public high school which is located in the attendance zone within which the parents' residence is located. notwithstanding the fact that a "magnet" school or similar school sponsored by the multiple high school district may consider all residents within the district to be located in the attendance zone of that magnet school, a student may not use this exception to transfer into the magnet school if the transfer occurs after the student's sophomore year (or second year) of high school. if the district has no defined attendance zones, the student shall be eligible at the high school that is closest to the parents' residence as determined by [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com) or such other navigational system as approved by the Board of Directors.

**This exception may be used one time only.**

**EXCEPTION 6:** A student may return to a non-public education by transferring from the public high school located in the district of residence of the parents to a non-public high school and have his/her eligibility restored at the discretion of the Commissioner's office provided the following conditions have been met:

1. That the transfer from the non-public high school to the public high school was not done for athletic reasons but for purely academic reasons or family circumstances beyond the control of the student and/or his/her parents; and
2. The student has been continuously enrolled in the same system of non-public education (e.g. Catholic Conference of Ohio, Ohio Association of Independent Schools, Association of Christian School International or other category as denoted by the State Department of Education) beginning in the 6th grade and continuing thereafter through and including the eighth grade and either:
  - A) The student began grade nine in a high school within the same non-public system and shall transfer back to the same non-public high school or
  - B) The student began grade nine in the public school located in the residential district of the parents and the transfer back to a high school within the same non-public school system in which the student was enrolled from grades 6-8 shall occur prior to the start of the student's tenth grade year.
3. The student has been ruled eligible by the Commissioner's office.

**EXCEPTION 7:** A student who does not live in the same school district as parents or legal guardian and who is financially self-supporting may be ruled eligible upon approval of the Commissioner at a school in the district where the student resides. The Commissioner is empowered to establish requirements for the student to be determined to be self-supporting. These requirements shall be established for each school year by May 15th of the preceding year. Self-support documentation must be submitted for approval every 30 days. The student is ineligible until ruled eligible by the Commissioner. **Note:** Living with and/or being employed by a relative does not qualify for self-support under this exception.

**EXCEPTION 8:** A student transferred to the State School for the Blind or State School for the Deaf shall be eligible upon enrollment.

**EXCEPTION 9:** The Commissioner shall have the discretionary power To waive the Residence requirements in only those cases of students Whose parents live outside the school district and whose contracted domicile is not available for their habitation. The students are ineligible until ruled eligible by the Commissioner.

**EXCEPTION 10:** During the period of time, and only If, a school district ceases to sponsor its entire interscholastic athletic programs, a student from that district may transfer to any other school district/ system and have his/her eligibility restored upon application to the Commissioner's office. Furthermore, if the district from which such student transferred resumes with its sponsorship of interscholastic programs and the student wishes to transfer back to transfer back to the district from which he/she transferred, he/she may do so and have his/her eligibility restored in accordance with Exception 6 of Bylaw 4-7-2, and not withstanding Bylaw 4-7-3, provided the transfer back occurs prior to the start of the next school year following the school year in which resumption of sponsorship of interscholastic programs occurred.

In consideration of all applications for the restoration of eligibility pursuant to this Exception, the Commissioner's office shall give due consideration to all factors relating to the transfer and particularly the timing of the transfer in relation to the effective date on which sponsorship of interscholastic athletics ceases and/or resumes.

No student transferring under this provision shall be eligible until declared so by the Commissioner's office.

**EXCEPTION 11:** A student returning from a domestic exchange program with whom the member school has partnered may be declared eligible insofar as the transfer bylaw is concerned if all of the following conditions have been met:

A) The domestic exchange program exists primarily for academic and educational learning experiences; and

B) The student receives credits that apply towards the student's graduation in the Ohio member school for the student's work in this domestic exchange program; and

C) In the event the student did participate in interscholastic athletics while enrolled in this domestic exchange program, the student's athletic participation was secondary to his/her academic and educational reasons for participation in this program; and

D) The domestic exchange program has, in its curriculum guide, a structured beginning and end to the program itself; and

E) The student shall be ineligible until declared eligible by the Commissioner's office upon submission of the designated OHSAA approval form.

- 4-7-3 If a transfer takes place during the season in which the student has participated in a regular season interscholastic contest in a sport, the student is ineligible in that sport for the remainder of that sport's season in the school into which the student has transferred. A student may not use any of the exceptions to Bylaw 4-7-2 or 4-7-4 to circumvent this bylaw except if the parents make a bona fide move into a new public school district as referenced in Exception 1 of Bylaw 4-7-2 AND the school building into which the student transfers is more than 50 miles from the school building from which the student transfers as determined by [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com), or such other navigational system as adopted by the Board of Directors at its August meeting, using the most direct route. For purposes of this Bylaw, "sport season" shall be determined by the sports regulations for that sport, beginning with the first date on which coaching may begin and concluding on the date when the season ends.
- 4-7-4 The superintendent or person delegated by the superintendent of either a non-public or public school system may transfer students within the system without jeopardizing their eligibility only in the following circumstances:
- 1) The parent(s) or legal custodian of the student have made a bona fide move from one attendance zone into a new attendance zone within the school district and such move entitles the student to attend another district high school OR
  - 2) There has been a court-ordered change of legal custody from one individual to another individual living within a new attendance zone within the school district and the student shall live with the new custodian in the new attendance zone OR
  - 3) The school closes or there was a mistake made in the student's initial placement
  - 4) The student is a child with a disability whose program as prescribed by the student's I.E.P. has been changed to another high school
  - 5) The student transfers pursuant to state or federal statutes addressing unsafe schools or academically poor performing schools, and the student can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the superintendent that the transfer is for purely academic reasons and not athletic reasons.
- Such transfers are eligible only after approval by the Commissioner's office.
- 4-7-5 Notwithstanding the provision of sections 4-7-2 and 4-7-3, if a student transfers pursuant to state or federal statutes addressing unsafe schools or academically poor performing schools, and the student can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Commissioner's office that the transfer is for purely academic reasons and not athletic reasons, the Commissioner's office may declare such transferring student eligible upon application to the Commissioner's office. The student is not eligible until declared eligible by the Commissioner's office. **Note:** The student shall be entitled to one transfer only under the provisions set forth in this bylaw. In addition, this bylaw shall not be used to establish eligibility at another high school if the student transfers into and then back out of the poor performing school in an attempt to circumvent the transfer bylaw.

4-7-6 If a student transfers to a high school within the **same public school** district within which the school from where the student transferred is a part, the student may have his/her eligibility restored by the Commissioner's office provided the following conditions have been met:

1) The student has been reassigned to the high school by the School District as a result of redistricting or a specific change of program the details of which shall be clearly stipulated in writing to the commissioner's office; and

2) The transfer takes place to the beginning of the school year; and

3) The District petitions the Commissioner's office for the restoration of eligibility for the student no later than 15 school days after the beginning of the school year; and

4) The student is ruled eligible by the Commissioner's office.

4-7-7 If a student transfers to a high school located within the jurisdiction of a non-public multiple high school system (e.g. Catholic Conference of Ohio, Ohio Association of Independent Schools, Association of Christian School International or other category as denoted by the State Department of Education) from another high school within that same system, the student may have his/her eligibility restored by the Commissioner's office provided the following conditions have been met:

1) The student has been reassigned to the high school by the superintendent or other administrative authority of that school system as a result of a specific change of academic program the details of which shall be clearly stipulated in writing to the commissioner's office; or a material change in economic circumstances so as to create a hardship; or a material change in transportation circumstances so as to create a hardship; and

2) The transfer takes place to the beginning of the school year; and

3) The Superintendent or other administrative authority of the system petitions the Commissioner's office for the restoration of eligibility for the student verifying in detail the specific reason for the transfer in accordance with item #1 and certifying that the transfer is not made for athletic reasons no later than 15 school days after the beginning of the school year; and

4) The student is ruled eligible by the Commissioner's office.

4-7-8 In order for a transfer student to be eligible for OHSAA tournament competition at a school, the student's name must be listed on the eligibility certificate submitted at the tournament level in the sport.

### **Section 8. International and Exchange Students**

4-8-1 An international student is a student from a country or province outside the United States. International students are ineligible for interscholastic athletics in Ohio unless they can meet one of the exceptions below.

**EXCEPTION 1:** An international student may be declared eligible if the student's parents have made a bona fide change of residence into Ohio and the International student is enrolled and attending an Ohio member school. The student is ineligible until declared eligible by the Commissioner's office.

**EXCEPTION 2:** The international student who is a participant in a recognized visitor exchange program may be eligible for interscholastic athletics subject to the restrictions and conditions set forth below:

- a. The international student may be eligible for a maximum of one school year which is the first year of enrollment at the Ohio member school.
- b. The international student has not previously participated in any other visitor exchange program in the United States. If the international student has participated in another visitor exchange program in Ohio or any other state, the period of participation in that other program shall count against the one year maximum eligibility set forth in (a) above.
- c. The international student is in this country pursuant to a J-1 Visa. No other visa type, passport or other documentation shall qualify the student for eligibility under this exception.
- d. There shall be no evidence of a district placement for athletic purposes into a specific member school in Ohio.
- e. No more than five (5) international students from the same visitor exchange program, in one member school, shall be permitted to be eligible.
- f. The member school at which the international student wishes to be declared eligible for international athletic participation must submit the appropriate forms to the Commissioner's office, and the student and school must cooperate with the Commissioner's office in determining that all other requirements for eligibility have been satisfied.

The international student described in this Exception 2 shall be ineligible until declared eligible by the Commissioner's office upon submission of the appropriate form.

**EXCEPTION 3:** An international student may be declared eligible for interscholastic athletics upon the submission of a court approved document certifying the student's adoption by a legal resident of the school district in which the student is attending. The student is not eligible until declared eligible by the Commissioner's office upon submission of the appropriate court documents.

- 4-8-2 An Ohio student returning from an international exchange program may resume interscholastic competition in the same Ohio member school from which the student left at the point of interruption of the student's Ohio education provided the student meets all requirements relative to age, semesters of eligibility as well as preceding grading period scholastic requirements upon return to the member high school. Such a student is ineligible until ruled eligible by the Commissioner's office.

### Section 9. Recruiting

4-9-1 A student is considered a prospective athlete after enrolling in the seventh grade, or the grade corresponding to the seventh grade for a student from a foreign country. Any attempt to recruit a prospective student-athlete for athletic purposes shall be strictly prohibited.

4-9-2 For purposes of this Bylaw section 9, the term “recruit” shall mean the Use of influence by any person connected or not connected with the school to secure the transfer of a prospective student-athlete.

**EXCEPTION1:** It is permissible for coaches and other school employees of a public school system to have contact with seventh and eighth grade students currently enrolled in that public school district; however, coaches and other school employees in a multi-high school public school district may have contact with only those students in grades seven and eight who are assigned by that district to attend that high school where the coach or school employee works.

**EXCEPTION 2:** It is permissible for coaches and other school employees of a non-public school system to have contact with seventh and eighth grade students currently enrolled in a nonpublic school of the same type (Catholic Conference of Ohio, Ohio Association of Independent Schools, Association of Christian Schools international or other category as denoted by the State Department of Education) provided the boundaries of that non-public school system are clearly defined and on file with the Ohio High School Athletic Association and the contact is restricted to students enrolled within that defined boundary.

4-9-3 “Mass marketing,” though a form of recruiting students, may be permitted under this bylaw by any and all member high schools provided the mass marketing complies with the following forms:

1. Must involve the entire high school program and all of its elements and shall not be solely or primarily for the school’s athletic program or programs.
2. If a mass mailing or electronic transmission is utilized, the mailing/ transmission may not be directed to a specific individual or individuals by name.
3. Conducting an open house for all prospective students, which shall be held on the campus of the member high school, is permissible provided all elements of the school program are presented.
4. Inviting prospective student to campus for activities that are related to all aspects of the school’s educational offerings and not solely for athletic purposes is permissible provided the prohibition in item #2 is not violated.
5. Using the school web site or other forms of media such as billboards, newspaper advertisements, etc. to advertise all aspects of the school’s educational offerings and not solely athletics information is permissible.
6. providing athletic camp brochures that advertise athletic camps available to a general population is permissible as long as no direct mailing to specific individuals is conducted. (See #2)

7. The only time in which it is permissible to invite students and/or their parents to a high school contest or another athletic related event such as a banquet or recognition ceremony is when the invitation is extended to an entire group or team, such as a school's 7th or 8th grade team or a non-interscholastic group such as a C.Y.O. program in a specific sport, AND the participation is mutually agreed upon by the administration of both schools/organizations.

- 4-9-4** Forms of recruiting that are prohibited by this bylaw include but are not limited to:
1. Using direct mailings or electronic communication to send information to a specific individual or individuals by name.
  2. Meetings with, functions for or marketing to a select athletic group or individual/individuals, i.e., eighth grade team or individual sports participant for the purpose of influencing enrollment at the high school.
  3. Any coach or group of coaches having any contact with prospective student-athletes, except as permitted in Bylaw 4-9-3, who are not presently enrolled in the school's educational program, or their parents, prior to written acceptance notification, which cannot occur prior to January 2. **Note:** For the purposes of this section of Bylaw 4, the description of "coaches" as stated in Bylaw 6-1-1 and 6-1-2 shall be applicable. Furthermore, the mere fact that a coach may also have another job title with his/her employer does not relieve that individual from this prohibition.
  4. Interscholastic coaches answering athletic questions from prospective student-athletes and/or their parents and describing their programs except within the school in accordance with approved administrative policies and procedures (i.e. via admissions offices) and consistent with the provisions set forth in Bylaw 4-9-3. **Note:** When an admissions officer is also a member of a coaching staff, that admissions officer shall have no contact with prospective enrollees except as specified within these bylaws as permissible for coaching staff members.
  5. Member schools distributing athletic publications or advertising solely for athletics. All athletic materials must be accompanied by general school information prior to student registration.
  6. Providing favors or inducements, such as T-shirts or caps, to prospective student-athletes or their parents.
    - a) Exception: A small token, such as a "goodie bag" containing an item or items, the value of which cannot exceed \$25 and which cannot be related to the school's athletic program, may be given to prospective students who "shadow" or visit a member school in contemplation of enrollment.
  7. Providing financial aid or scholarships to a student-athlete on the basis of athletic ability.
- 4-9-5** Prior to enrollment, a student-athlete may visit a public or non-public school in contemplation of transfer, as long as that contemplated transfer is consistent with Board of Education or similar governing board policy formally adopted by that school district and arrangements for the visit are made through the principal and/or school administrator designated by the Board of Education or similar governing board.

- 4-9-6 All questions relating to enrollment, attendance or the athletic program shall be handled through the school administration or the admissions office. High school coaches may answer athletic questions from prospective student-athletes and/or their parents and describe their programs only within the school in accordance with approved administrative policies and procedures (i.e. via admissions offices).
- 4-9-7 Any violation of the recruiting prohibitions as set forth in this bylaw shall cause the recruited student-athlete to be ineligible upon enrollment. Furthermore, the school into which the recruited student-athlete enrolls or the school the recruiting attempts were intended to benefit shall be subject to sanctions as set forth in Bylaw 11. If a coach has been found to have violated these recruiting prohibitions by the commissioner's office, and is employed/approved to coach in the ensuing school year by another member school in the same sport in which the violations occurred, the school where the coach is employed/approved to coach shall be ineligible for OHSAA tournament competition in that sport for a minimum of one year.

#### **Section 10. Amateur**

- 4-10-1 A student who represents a school in an interscholastic sport shall be an amateur in that sport. An amateur athlete is one who participates in the activities of his/her sport for the purpose of deriving the physical, mental and social benefits organized sports competition has to offer and not for any present or future pecuniary or commercial gains. Since the student is considered an integral member of the student body, a clear line of distinction between educationally based athletics and professional sports must exist and be maintained at all times. It shall be the shared responsibility of school personnel, the athletes and their parents to maintain this clear line of distinction.
- 4-10-2 An athlete forfeits amateur status, and thus interscholastic athletic eligibility, if any of the following standards of amateurism are violated:
- a) competing for money or other remuneration. Allowable travel, meals and lodging expenses may be accepted provided that these expenses are not conditioned on the individual's or team's place finish or performance or given on an incentive basis. In addition, receipt of expenses in excess of the same reasonable amount for permissible expenses given to all individuals or team members involved in the competition is not permitted;
  - b) capitalizing on the athlete's fame by receiving money, merchandise or services of value. An athlete "capitalizes" on his/her "athletic fame" by accepting money, merchandise or services of value based in whole or in part upon the notoriety the athlete received through his/her athletic skills and achievements. This includes using the athlete's skill, directly or indirectly, for pay in any form in that sport. "pay" includes, but is not limited to, any direct or indirect remuneration, gratuity or other economic benefit in either the present or future, or any division or split of surplus (bonuses, games' receipts, etc.). Scholarships to institutions of higher education are specifically exempted;

- c) Receiving, from a sponsor, actual and necessary expenses or any form of compensation to participate in athletics practice or competition while not representing a member school. A "sponsor" is a person or entity that undertakes certain responsibilities (such as underwriting, promoting, endorsing or financing) in connection with an athlete or event and who/which is neither (1) a nonprofessional organization or governing body of an amateur sport which is sponsoring the tournament or event, (2) a member school or organization connected with the member school through duly recognized action of the member school's Board of Education (or similar governing body) or (3) any person who is not a "legal stranger" to the athlete. A "legal stranger" is a person who is neither the biological parent nor is the legal guardian or custodian of the athlete nor one who has no legal obligation to support the athlete. Any practice for which reasonable and necessary expenses are received must be conducted in a continuous time period preceding the competition except for a practice session conducted by a national team, under the auspices of a United States (USA) national Governing Body, which may be interrupted for specific periods of time preceding the competition;
- d) Signing a contract or making a commitment of any kind to play professional athletics, regardless of its legal enforceability or any payment received. This prohibits signing a contract during the interscholastic athletics season that is dated after the completion of the athlete's interscholastic athletic eligibility;
- e) Receiving, directly or indirectly, a salary, reimbursement of expenses, merchandise or services or any other form of financial assistance or benefits from a professional sports organization based upon athletics skills or participation.
- EXCEPTION:** An athlete may receive reimbursement of expenses as per item (a) for a professional tryout;
- f) competing with any professional athletics team, even if no pay or remuneration for expenses was received; or
- g) Entering into an agreement with a sports or marketing agent (O.R.C. §§4771.01 et seq.).

- 4-10-3 The following activities do not jeopardize amateur status:
- a) Accepting a fee for instructing, supervising or officiating in an organized youth sports program or recreation, playground or camp activities;
- b) Receiving school-sponsored membership or participation fees in youth serving agencies, athletic clubs, community recreation centers, instructional programs or camps, etc. provided such fees are paid directly to the agency;
- c) Receiving an award, playing equipment or prize of monetary value which does not exceed the awards amount authorized by the Association;
- d) Receiving all non-monetary benefits and awards provided to members of an Olympic team beyond actual and necessary expenses, including entertainment, equipment, clothing, long distance telephone service, internet access, and any other item or service for which it can be demonstrated that the same benefit is available to all members of the nation's Olympic team or the specific sport Olympic team in question;
- e) Accepting funds that are administered by the United States Olympic committee pursuant to its operation Gold program; or
- f) participating in member school, charitable or educational promotions or fund-raising activities that involve the use of athletic ability by student-athletes to obtain funds (e.g., swim-a-thons, lift-a-thons, shoot-a-thons) from donors, provided the student-athletes receive no compensation or prizes for their participation.

g) Accepting scholarship funds that are administered by a national governing body, e.g. the United States Bowling Congress' Scholarship program, provided such funds are paid directly to a postsecondary institution and the funds are not available until after the student has graduated from high school.

4-10-4 A high school student who loses amateur status/athletic eligibility may apply to the Association for reinstatement in the interscholastic program. Such appeals shall be handled by the commissioner in accordance with the bylaws. If a student-athlete in one sport violates a provision of the amateur bylaw as detailed above, the student-athlete may represent the member school in a different sport.

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