



Regulations Simplified: Changing Schools and the Transfer Rule

THIS IS A SUMMARY: ALWAYS CONSULT THE SCHOOL ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

Once a student who is enrolled in grades 9 -12 changes schools, that student is not eligible for sports in the new school UNLESS they meet one of the 15 exceptions which generally have to do with a residential change or a school's status changing. Below are **brief summaries** of the 15 exceptions (these are not the full rule). There are many situations which are NOT exceptions and the transfer student is not eligible (see bottom of this page).

EIGHT RESIDENCY EXCEPTIONS

1. Student moves with the people he/she was living] with previously (full & complete)
2. Not living with parents' moves back in with them. +
3. Ward of the Court, placed with foster parents.
4. Foreign Exchange student moves in with host family who reside in district. 2 semesters/3 trimesters only.
5. Married student moves into school district.
8. Student moves with or to **divorced** parent **(ETF) +**
12. An 18 year old moves without parents **(ETF) +**
13. A student resides in a boarding school **(ETF)+**

FIVE SCHOOL STATUS EXCEPTIONS

6. School ceases to operate, not merged
7. School is reorganized or consolidated
9. School Board orders safety or enrollment shift transfers
11. Achieved highest grade available in former school
15. New school established, enrolled on first day

TWO STUDENT STATUS EXCEPTIONS

10. Incoming 1st time 9th grader.
14. Expelled student returns under pre-existing criteria

+Four Exceptions (2, 8, 12 & 13) are allowed once in grades 9-12.

(ETF) = Educational Transfer Form is only used for these 3 exceptions (8, 12 & 13). Form must be completed by both school principals and returned signed by the MHSAA before the student participates in a game or scrimmage. There is an allowance for students whose parents never married to use this form (check with the school AD).

How long is a transfer student not eligible? A student who does not meet one of these exceptions is not eligible for at least half a year. A student who changes schools in the first half the year (enrolled before the 4th Friday after Labor Day) becomes eligible on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. A student who changes schools in the 2nd half of the year (enrolled before the 4th Friday of February) becomes eligible August 1 for fall sports.

Transferring after a season begins: A student who transfers and meets an exception, such as changing residences, is eligible for MHSAA tournaments only if they are enrolled prior to October 1 for fall sports, February 1 for winter sports tournaments and May 1 for spring sports tournaments.

Two special considerations – Executive Committee waivers through school Athletic Director:

90 Days - For those who just miss being enrolled in the new school by the above 4th Friday. With Executive Committee approval the period of ineligibility can be reduced to 90 scheduled school days of enrollment (not days when practice is held in August) - but only for those who just miss the 4th Friday by a brief number of days.

Sub Varsity – The school may request a sub varsity waiver for a 9th or 10th grade transfer student who never played in a high school game or scrimmage in an MHSAA tournament sport. Only for grades 9 and 10 with no prior high school sports and only with Executive Committee advance approval.

Changes of residency must be full and complete (Exception 1) (As defined by MHSAA Interpretations) Students who change residence may be eligible immediately if the residential change was full and complete. Residential changes which grant immediate eligibility are intended to be somewhat permanent. All the people the student lived with previously must move, and the previous residence must be disposed of (vacant, sold, rented to non-family). Other documentation must also be provided to the school including a changed driver's license.

Changes of residency must be from one public school district to another public school district. Multi-High School Districts such as Detroit, Grand Rapids and Lansing consider each school attendance area as a separate district for the purposes of the transfer rule. Transfer students into district wide schools are not eligible immediately at such schools; sit out period required.

A student who changes schools under a residency exception is eligible at:

The same school (they don't have to change schools), the public school of their new district or attendance area or the closest Non-Public School or Charter School to their new residence.

Common situations where a student changing schools is NOT eligible: Returning to a school of residence after choosing to attend elsewhere or school of choice; guardianship; under 18 and moving in with a relative or friend but not moving with the people the student previously lived with, financial considerations including tuition problems.