

## POLICY

SOMERSET COUNTY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION

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<b>Subject:</b>  Athletic Eligibility and Participation	<b>Date Approved:</b> October 16, 1984 January 17, 2006 March 17, 2009, May 18, 2010 April 18, 2017 March 20, 2018 <b>Date Effective:</b> August 17, 1999, January 1, 2005 May 30, 2006, March 17, 2009 May 18, 2010 April 18, 2017 March 20, 2018

### 1. PURPOSE

To develop guidelines and regulations for the implementation of the Athletic Eligibility requirements and the administration of the County-Wide Athletic Program.

### 2. DESCRIPTION

#### A. Rules and Regulations Relating to the Organization and Administration of Athletic Programs

- 1) All public secondary schools of Somerset County are members of the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association and the Bayside Conference, and are governed by their rules and regulations. It is the responsibility, however, of each county school system to supplement these regulations as needed.
- 2) The superintendent of schools is responsible for all phases of the school program. The administration of the interscholastic athletic program may be delegated however, by the superintendent to a supervisor who will work

cooperatively with the secondary school principals and the athletic directors. All decisions on athletic rules, regulations and policy changes shall be subject to the approval of the county superintendent of schools and the Board.

- 3) An athletic committee composed of the Supervisor of Athletics, who shall serve as chairperson, the principals of the senior high schools, the athletic directors of the senior high schools, and two coaches, (at least one-half of which shall be women), from each senior high school, shall review and study the policies for governing and the procedures for administering interscholastic athletics. Changes which are supported by the majority vote of this body are submitted to the superintendent of schools for approval

**B. Athletic Eligibility**

- 1) Somerset County Public Schools, as a member shall abide by the rules and regulations of the Maryland Public Secondary School Athletic Association (M.P.S.S.A.A.) And the Constitution, By-laws, and Policies of the Bayside Athletic Conference (B.A.C.).
- 2) Somerset County Public Schools will be governed by all other regulations and policies of the Bayside Athletic Conference as written, without change, in its handbook.
- 3) This Somerset County Policy on Athletic Eligibility supersedes, Articles I - This Somerset County Policy on Athletic Eligibility supersedes, Article I - Eligibility of the Bayside Athletic Conference policies. All items in this policy are either comparable to or more stringent than the present Bayside Athletic Conference policy.
  - a) To be eligible for participation in athletics in Somerset County Public Schools with no restrictions or limitations, a student must maintain a 2.0 Grade Point Average and receive no more than one E for the previous marking period. If a student receives an E for a marking period grade it must be brought up to passing on the following midterm report to remain eligible. If a student receives an E in any combination of classes two marking periods in a row he/she will be ineligible to participate until the next marking period. Fall eligibility will be based on the fourth marking period grades of the previous year. If a student receives an E on the fourth marking period report card they are eligible to participate in the fall but will become ineligible if they receive an E in any subject on the first midterm report.

1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter
<b>TO CONTINUE &amp; BE ELIGIBLE A STUDENT MUST HAVE:</b>			
2.0 GPA No More Than one E	2.0 GPA No More Than one E	2.0 GPA No More Than one E	2.0 GPA No More Than one E
If a student receives an E for a quarter it must be improved to passing at midterm to remain eligible. If a student receives an E in any combination of classes two marking periods in a row he/she will be ineligible to participate until the next marking period.			

- b) Students not finishing a school year or not meeting Fall eligibility requirements will not be eligible to compete in an athletic contest at the start of the next fall semester. Their first opportunity to compete will be upon the issuance of progress reports.
- c) Students may reestablish eligibility by successfully completing failed courses during the summer school. Students may also retake the two courses with the lowest grades for the 4<sup>th</sup> marking period to increase their GPA in order to reach the 2.0 GPA requirement. For the purposes of athletic eligibility, the final grade for summer school will be counted toward athletic GPA and for purposes of credit.

**C. Interpretation**

- 1) The eligibility period to be interpreted as beginning with the issuance of report cards to students to the next issuance of report cards.
- 2) Eligibility for transfer students will be determined by above criteria using the records from their sending school as evaluative data, and Bayside Conference eligibility forms.
- 3) Eligibility shall be based on grades received the previous marking period
- 4) Students failing one course for the fourth marking period may become eligible for the fall semester by taking and passing the failed course(s) in summer school.
- 5) A student must be in school all day in order to practice or participate in an extra curricular activity. Exception to this rule may be made by the principal of member school for extenuating circumstances.

**D. Eligibility Standards for School Conduct**

In addition to the M.P.S.S.A.A. and B.A.C. eligibility requirements and the Somerset County Public Schools Athletic Eligibility Policy, a student may also be declared ineligible to participate in interscholastic sports on any team by the principal of his or her school if he or she is guilty of improper conduct. This may include such offenses as suspension, truancy, disrespect toward school authority, theft, alcohol and/or drug abuse, academic dishonesty, or refusal to cooperate with established school policies, as otherwise provided in Board Policy 600-1.

**E. Student Transfer Eligibility**

A transfer student is eligible to participate in an interscholastic contest after he/she has fulfilled the eligibility requirements of the M.P.S.S.A.A., the B.A.C., and Somerset County Guidelines 1-7 below are met.

- 1) A transfer student is any student whose parental residence is not within the attendance zone of the school in which he or she enrolls.

- 2) All transfer students must have the written permission of the Superintendent of Schools to transfer prior to enrolling in the school or participation in any of the school's activities.
  - The parent must put his/her request for transfer in writing to the Superintendent.
  - Students transferring to a school in another attendance zone and in Somerset County, will be ineligible to participate in interscholastic sports for a period of 365 days from the date of the transfer.
- 3) Students may transfer to another school within Somerset County, in order to participate in a program not offered at the home school. If student does not participate in that specific sport, the student will be deemed ineligible and will remain at the transferred school for the remainder of that school year.
  - Students may also play other sports offered at the school immediately.
- 4) Transfer students may not participate on any athletic teams for 365 days from the date of transfer unless the purpose of their transfer is and has been declared to participate in a sport that is not offered at his or her home school.
  - a) Such transfers may only be made once in a student's high school career without jeopardizing his/ her sports eligibility.
  - b) Students must play all sports and remain through graduation at the transferred school.
  - c) Student transfers (attending a school outside of their attendance zone) requesting to return to their home school (for the start of the next school year) will not be held accountable to the 365 day restriction period.
  - d) Student transfers (attending a school outside of their attendance zone) requesting to return to their home school (prior to the end of the current school year) will be ineligible to participate in home school sports until the start of the next school year.
- 5) Some students may have separated custodial parents/guardians and may have actual or possible residence in two attendance zones. In this situation, the student may declare one school as his/her home school and may attend there and participate in all sports.
  - a) In the event that his/her enrollment must revert to the alternate school for reasons outside of his/her control, no athletic restrictions will be imposed once proper documentation has been submitted to the Superintendent of Schools. Lack of documentation will result in the 365 days of ineligibility from the date of transfer.
  - b) In the event that he/she decides to transfer to the alternate school, the Somerset County transfer policy will go into effect.
- 6) Legal custody as awarded by the courts must accompany any request for transfer for sports participation.

- 7) Informal transfers of guardianship as designated in informal Somerset County Public Schools forms, will result in application of the Somerset County Transfer Policy and family must show proof of entire family unit having relocated to new property in attendance area.
- 8) Students transferring from any other Maryland county or any private school will fall under the B.A.C. Guidelines. They must enroll in the high school which draws from their attendance area.
- 9) For Homeschoolers #8 applies to their attending SCPS and participating in extracurricular sports.

**F. Student Insurance Eligibility**

Every candidate for, and participant on, an interscholastic team must be insured against possible accident or injury in school-sponsored games, practice sessions, and during travel to and from athletic contests. Such coverage may be provided by the purchase of Scholastic Accident Insurance; otherwise, proof of similar or superior coverage must be presented. Insurance records shall be initialed by all coaches and filed in the athletic director's office.

**G. Coaches**

Coaches must meet the eligibility requirements of the Maryland Public Secondary School Athletic Association to be certified to coach an interscholastic sport in Somerset County. Coaching assignments are made by the principal of the high school on a one-year basis.

**H. Searches**

If designated in writing by the principal, a teacher may make a reasonable search of a student on a school-sponsored trip if the teacher has a reasonable belief that the student has in his or her possession an item, the possession of which is a criminal offense under the laws of this State or a violation of any other State law or a rule or regulation of the Board. The search shall be made in the presence of a third party. To qualify to conduct a search under this section, a faculty member must first receive training to conduct a search commensurate with the training received by the principal designating the teacher. All searches will be conducted in accordance with Somerset County Public School policy 600-40.

**I. Scheduling and Practice Regulations**

Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association rules and regulations governing interscholastic athletics apply only to the Public Schools of Maryland. Principals, athletic directors and coaches who schedule non-member schools should be thoroughly familiar with differences in rules and regulations and potential problems attendant thereto.

- 1) Practice and afternoon contests must not be scheduled until county-wide in-service teachers' activities have been completed.
- 2) The closing of schools because of inclement weather will automatically cancel all athletic contests and practice sessions that were scheduled for that day. (School premises and otherwise).
- 3) Teams may practice or have contests during school term vacation periods. When practicing during the holidays, student and family desires, work schedules, etc., shall be considered when requesting student attendance. Coaches should use discretion and realistic scheduling procedures during the holidays.
- 4) Holiday tournaments teams shall be allowed to participate in holiday tournaments. Tournaments scheduled at home during the holidays must comply with the following regulations:
  - a) Must be totaling self-supporting
  - b) Cannot be underwritten by any group or organization
  - c) A tournament must be approved by the principal, athletic director, supervisor of athletics and the superintendent of schools.
  - d) All personnel necessary to assist with the operation shall be reimbursed for time and services. (Custodian, maintenance, security personnel, etc.)
  - e) Tournaments shall not be named after individuals
  - f) Participation in tournaments. Before accepting an invitation to participate in a tournament, an athletic director must first receive permission from the principal of his/her school. He/she must then receive approval from the supervisor of athletics. It shall be the responsibility of the supervisor of athletics to deny participation in any tournament which does not have proper local, state or federation sanction.
  - g) Must be sanctioned by MPSSAA.

**J. Responsibility of Coaches**

Coaches shall remain at the school until the last player has departed unless the coach has arranged for a faculty member to assume responsibility in his/her absence.

Note: All members of teams shall leave practice at conclusion of formal practice session.

**K. Use of Officials**

Schools shall make every effort to use the services of competent, rated, and impartial officials for all interscholastic contests.

- 1) Approved sports. The following are approved county interscholastic sports:

Baseball	Basketball	Cross Country	Field Hockey	Tennis
Football	Golf	Soccer	Softball	Track

## 2) Intramural Sports Eligibility

Once a student has participated as a player in a particular interscholastic sport in a varsity, junior varsity, or freshman game, he/she may not thereafter participate in an organized intramural program in the same season unless he/she has been dropped from the varsity, junior varsity, or freshman squad for the remainder of the season.

- a) Each coach is responsible for knowing and understanding the rules as set forth in the M.P.S.S.A.A. handbook, the Bayside Conference, the "rules and regulations for interscholastic athletics in the Somerset County Public Schools", and the policies and procedures set forth by each individual school.
- b) Proceeding each season, each coach shall provide written communication with both students and parents concerning the specific rules governing each sport (training rules, practice hours, game day procedures, care of equipment, safety, discipline procedures, etc.(In addition, each coach should provide an opportunity for appropriate further contacts with students and parents regarding such rules.)
- c) A coach has the responsibility to administer appropriate forms of discipline for the infractions of athletics policies, rules, or regulations.

## L. Rules & Regulations Relating to the Transportation of Athletic Teams

- 1) The athletic director is responsible for initiating and organizing the transportation for all approved
- 2) The athletic director is responsible for initiating and organizing the transportation for all approved and schedule interscholastic sports contests
- 3) The athletic transportation must be approved by the principal
- 4) County transportation rules governing student conduct on the bus will be in effect while athletic teams are being transported
- 5) Participants may not board the bus along the routes of travel and they may not be dismissed from the bus on the return trip until they arrive back at the school. A parental waiver on file in the principal's office prior to team trip shall be the only exception.
- 6) All participants must travel with the team and the coaches to and from the site of an interscholastic contest unless special permission is granted for other arrangements by the principal prior to the trip.
- 7) A teacher(s) or coach(s) shall ride on each bus and shall be in charge of the students. A coach should always accompany the team unless an emergency requires supervision by other approved personnel.

- 8) Buses will be funded primarily to transport members of athletic teams. If, however, proper supervision is provided and space is available, cheerleaders may ride on the bus.
- 9) Bus drivers must be notified promptly whenever a game is postponed or canceled by the school athletic director. The athletic director shall be responsible for notifying the bus driver concerning rescheduled contests.

**M. Scholastic Athletics - Academy and Intermediate Schools**

- 1) The Board of Education supports the development of a strong athletic program at the intermediate and academy school level.
- 2) Emphasis of such competition shall be on positive learning experiences gained through visiting other schools, meeting students of other schools, and developing good habits in attitude and sportsmanship.
- 3) A maximum of ten games can be scheduled by each participating school in a school year. Details of scheduling and conducting games will be the responsibility of principal or their designees.
- 4) Competition will be restricted to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders.
- 5) Funding shall be the primary responsibility of each particular school.
- 6) The supervisor of athletics will oversee and be responsible for all aspects of the intermediate/academy school athletic program.