

*Eligibility Guidebook for
Administrators and Parents*



ARKANSAS ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION

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Building Citizenship Through Activities Participation

INDEX

Athletic Eligibility Guide for Public School Students	Page 3
Athletic Eligibility Guide for Non-Public School Students	Page 6
Athletic Eligibility Guide for Charter Schools	Page 8
Athletic Eligibility Guide for Home School Students	Page 10
Arkansas Act 1469	Page 11
Arkansas Act 592	Page 12
Arkansas Act 453	Page 13
Eligibility Check List	Page 14
Procedure for Appeals	Page 15

AAA Statement

Participation in competitive interscholastic activities as a part of a school's educational program is a privilege and not a right. The eligibility rules of this association are designed to promote the educational values derived from participation in interscholastic activities, prevent exploitation of youth by special interest groups, and to ensure that interscholastic activities shall remain an integral part of the educational program.

Students wishing to participate in interscholastic activities shall have the opportunity to become eligible for these activities when they meet ALL eligibility rules. They will remain eligible for the opportunity to participate provided they do not: (1) exceed any limitations, (2) fail to meet any minimums, or (3) violate any other rules of the association. They may, however, regain their opportunity to participate at a later date by correcting any deficiencies that caused the ineligibility.

Athletic Eligibility Guide for Public School Students

(This guide is meant to be a resource. The official document regarding ALL eligibility guidelines is the AAA Handbook. If an administrator has questions concerning the eligibility of a student athlete, please call the Arkansas Activities Association. If a parent has questions concerning the eligibility of their student, please contact your student's school administrator.)

Age

A junior high student is not eligible for junior high competition if the student's 16th birthday is on or before September 1. In the year a student in junior high becomes too old for junior high participation, the student may be allowed to participate for the senior high if all other eligibility rules are met.

A senior high student is not eligible for interscholastic participation if the student's 19th birthday is on or before September 1.

Public School

A student's eligibility for interscholastic athletics shall be in the public school district of the parent's domicile.

- Only one domicile is recognized for eligibility purposes.
- If parents are divorced or legally separated by a court of law, eligibility shall be in the public school district of the parent that has primary legal custody.
- If parents have joint custody, eligibility shall be in the public school district where the student attended the first day of school.
"Guardianship" is not recognized for eligibility purposes.
- Legal adoption is recognized for eligibility purposes.
- A student meets the domicile rule after attending a member school for 365 days.
- A student can return to the public school district of his/her parents residence within the first 11 days of either semester and become eligible as long as the student has not played the same sport in the same season.

Transfers From Public School to Public School (Charter Schools are Considered Public Schools)

A student shall meet the domicile requirement if the student receives a legal transfer (school board to school board) from one public school to another. Board to board transfers must take place by July 1 before a student enters grades 7-10.

Students transferring after July 1 prior to entering the 10th grade year shall not be eligible for one calendar year (365 days) unless there is a bona fide move from one public school district into the public school district that the student will be attending.

Transfers From Non-Member School to Public School

A student attending a non-member school (including a home-schooled student) who returns to the public school district of his parents' domicile shall become eligible immediately after attending one day of classes.

School Choice

A student shall meet the domicile requirement under school choice if: (1) the student applies for school choice prior to July 1 (before a student enters grades 7 – 10) and receives approval and (2) Has a CSAP Form (Changing Schools/Athletic Participation Form) signed by the administration of both schools prior to interscholastic competition.

Students applying and receiving school choice approval after July 1 entering the 10th grade shall not be eligible for one calendar year (365 days) unless there is a bona fide move from one public school district into the public school district that the student will be attending.

Return to Resident District

A student who transfers back to the public school district of his parent's domicile within the first eleven days of the fall or the spring semester of that district shall become eligible after attending one day of classes if the student would not be in violation of the Same Sport Same Season rule. This rule does not apply to public charter schools.

Complete and Bona Fide Change of Domicile

Refer to the AAA Handbook.

Bona Fide Student

A student participating in interscholastic activities must be a bona fide student of the school; a bona fide student is one who has not graduated from a high school and who is enrolled in and regularly attending at least four academic courses in the high school. These courses shall be from those identified in the Arkansas Department of Education Standards of Accreditation.

Non-School Coach

A student transferring, moving, or for any reason attending a new school where the student's non-school coach is a school coach, or is anyone assisting in any capacity with the coaching or training of the school team, is presumed to be attending for athletic purposes if the student participated in athletics the previous year and will be ineligible for 365 days from the date of enrollment.

Foreign Student Eligibility, Foreign Student Residency, Legal Adoption, Parental Custody, Boarding School, Training School, Arkansas Virtual Academy

Refer to the AAA Handbook.

Semester Rule

Junior High – A student has six semesters of opportunity for eligibility. A student repeating either the seventh or eighth grade for any reason shall not have the opportunity for eligibility during the complete year that is repeated.

Senior High - A student is limited to eight consecutive semesters of opportunity for eligibility beginning with the student's first enrollment in the ninth grade (or earlier as defined in Rule 7. Age, Note).

Academic Eligibility

Refer to the AAA Handbook.

Physical Examinations

In any year that a student engages in interscholastic competition, the student shall be required to present to the coach verification of a physical examination prior to the beginning of practice which shall be valid for one calendar year.

Amateur Rule

Refer to the AAA Handbook.

Athletic Eligibility Guide for Non-Public School Students

(This guide is meant to be a resource. The official document regarding ALL eligibility guidelines is the AAA Handbook. If an administrator has questions concerning the eligibility of a student athlete, please call the Arkansas Activities Association. If a parent has questions concerning the eligibility of their student, please contact your student's school administrator.)

Age

A junior high student is not eligible for junior high competition if the student's 16th birthday is on or before September 1. In the year a student in junior high becomes too old for junior high participation, the student may be allowed to participate for the senior high if all other eligibility rules are met.

A senior high student is not eligible for interscholastic participation if the student's 19th birthday is on or before September 1.

Non-Public School

Students who enroll at a nonpublic school must do so by July 1 before entering the 7th grade to be immediately eligible for interscholastic athletic participation. When a nonpublic school does not offer enrollment for grades 7 and/or 8, the student may become immediately eligible by enrolling by July 1 prior to the lowest grade offered by that school provided the CSAP form is signed. Students enrolling in a nonpublic school after the period provided for immediate eligibility above shall be ineligible for 365 days.

After July 1 prior to entering the 7th grade year, a student whose parents live outside a 25-mile radius of a nonpublic school must make a bona fide move within a 25-mile radius of the school that the student will attend to become eligible.

Transfers From Public School to Nonpublic School

A student transferring from a public school to a nonpublic school may meet the domicile requirement and be immediately eligible for interscholastic athletic participation if the student enrolls by July 1 before entering the 7th grade. When a nonpublic school does not offer enrollment for grades 7 and/or 8, the student may become immediately eligible by enrolling by July 1 prior to the lowest grade offered by that school provided the CSAP form is signed. Students enrolling in a nonpublic school after the period provided for immediate eligibility above shall be ineligible for 365 days.

After July 1 prior to entering the 7th grade, a student whose parents live outside a 25-mile radius of a nonpublic school must make a bona fide move to within a 25-mile radius of the school that the student will attend to become eligible.

Transfers From Non-Public School to Nonpublic School

A student transferring from one nonpublic school to another nonpublic school may meet the domicile requirement and be immediately eligible for interscholastic athletic participation if the student enrolls by July 1 before entering the 7th grade. When a nonpublic school does not offer enrollment for grades 7 and/or 8, the student may become immediately eligible by enrolling by July 1 prior to the lowest grade offered by that school provided the CSAP form is signed. Students enrolling in a nonpublic school after the period provided for immediate eligibility above shall be ineligible for 365 days.

After July 1 prior to entering the 7th grade, a student whose parents live outside a 25-mile radius of a nonpublic school must make a bona fide move to within a 25-mile radius of the school that the student will attend to become eligible.

A student meets the domicile requirement upon transferring to a nonpublic member school if the student has attended one full year at the non-member school and if the transfer occurs by July 1 of that school year.

Transfers From Non-Member School to Non-Public School

A student meets the domicile requirement upon transferring to a nonpublic member school if the student has attended one full year at the non-member school and if the transfer occurs by July 1 of that school year.

Complete and Bona Fide Change of Domicile

Refer to the AAA Handbook.

Bona Fide Student

Student participating in interscholastic activities must be a bona fide student of the school; a bona fide student is one who has not graduated from a high school and who is enrolled in and regularly attending at least four academic courses in the high school. These courses shall be from those identified in the Arkansas Department of Education Standards of Accreditation.

Non-School Coach

A student transferring, moving, or for any reason attending a new school where the student's non-school coach is a school coach, or is anyone assisting in any capacity with the coaching or training of the school team, is presumed to be attending for athletic purposes if the student participated in athletics the previous year and will be ineligible for 363 days from the date of enrollment.

Foreign Student Eligibility, Foreign Student Residency, Legal Adoption, Parental Custody, Boarding School, Training School, Arkansas Virtual Academy

Refer to the AAA Handbook.

Semester Rule

Junior High – A student has six semesters of opportunity for eligibility. A student repeating either the seventh or eighth grade for any reason shall not have the opportunity for eligibility during the complete year that is repeated.

Senior High - A student is limited to eight consecutive semesters of opportunity for eligibility beginning with the student's first enrollment in the ninth grade (or earlier as defined in Rule 7. Age, Note).

Academic Eligibility

Refer to the AAA Handbook.

Physical Examinations

In any year that a student engages in interscholastic competition, the student shall be required to present to the coach verification of a physical examination prior to the beginning of practice which shall be valid for one calendar year.

Amateur Rule

Refer to the AAA Handbook.

Athletic Eligibility Guide for Charter Schools

(This guide is meant to be a resource. The official document regarding ALL eligibility guidelines is the AAA Handbook. If an administrator has questions concerning the eligibility of a student athlete, please call the Arkansas Activities Association. If a parent has questions concerning the eligibility of their student, please contact your student's school administrator.)

Age

A Junior high student is not eligible for junior high competition if the student's 16th birthday is on or before September 1. In the year a student in junior high becomes too old for junior high participation, the student may be allowed to participate for the senior high if all other eligibility rules are met.

A senior high student is not eligible for interscholastic participation if the student's 19th birthday is on or before September 1.

Transfer From Public School to Public School (Charter Schools are Considered Public Schools)

A student shall meet the domicile requirement if the student receives a legal transfer (school board to school board) from one public school to another. Board to board transfers must take place by July 1 before a student enters grades 7-10. Students transferring after July 1 prior to entering the 10th grade year shall not be eligible for one calendar year (365 days) unless there is a bona fide move from one public school district into the public school district that the student will be attending.

Return to Resident District

A student who transfers back to the public school district of his parent's domicile within the first eleven days of the fall or the spring semester of that district shall become eligible after attending one day of classes if the student would not be in violation of the Same Sport Same Season rule. This rule does not apply to public charter schools.

Complete and Bona Fide Change of Domicile

Refer to the AAA Handbook.

Bona Fide Student

A student participating in interscholastic activities must be a bona fide student of the school; a bona fide student is one who has not graduated from a high school and who is enrolled in and regularly attending at least four academic courses in the high school. These courses shall be from those identified in the Arkansas Department of Education Standards of Accreditation.

Non-School Coach

A student transferring, moving, or for any reason attending a new school where the student's non-school coach is a school coach, or is anyone assisting in any capacity with the coaching or training of the school team, is presumed to be attending for athletic purposes if the student participated in athletics the previous year and will be ineligible for 363 days from the date of enrollment.

Semester Rule

Junior High – A student has six semesters of opportunity for eligibility. A student repeating either the seventh or eighth grade for any reason shall not have the opportunity for eligibility during the complete year that is repeated.

Senior High - A student is limited to eight consecutive semesters of opportunity for eligibility beginning with the student's first enrollment in the ninth grade (or earlier as defined in Rule 7. Age, Note).

Academic Eligibility

Refer to the AAA Handbook.

Physical Examinations

In any year that a student engages in interscholastic competition, the student shall be required to present to the coach verification of a physical examination prior to the beginning of practice which shall be valid for one calendar year.

Amateur Rule

Refer to the AAA Handbook.

Athletic Eligibility Guide for Home School Students

(This guide is meant to be a resource. The official document regarding ALL eligibility guidelines is the AAA Handbook. If an administrator has questions concerning the eligibility of a student athlete, please call the Arkansas Activities Association. If a parent has questions concerning the eligibility of their student, please contact your student's school administrator.)

Age

A junior high student is not eligible for junior high competition if the student's 16th birthday is on or before September 1. In the year a student in junior high becomes too old for junior high participation, the student may be allowed to participate for the senior high if all other eligibility rules are met.

A senior high student is not eligible for interscholastic participation if the student's 19th birthday is on or before September 1.

Complete and Bona Fide Change of Domicile

Refer to the AAA Handbook.

Non-School Coach

A student transferring, moving, or for any reason attending a new school where the student's non-school coach is a school coach, or is anyone assisting in any capacity with the coaching or training of the school team, is presumed to be attending for athletic purposes if the student participated in athletics the previous year and will be ineligible for 363 days from the date of enrollment.

Semester Rule

Junior High – A student has six semesters of opportunity for eligibility. A student repeating either the seventh or eighth grade for any reason shall not have the opportunity for eligibility during the complete year that is repeated.

Senior High - A student is limited to eight consecutive semesters of opportunity for eligibility beginning with the student's first enrollment in the ninth grade (or earlier as defined in Rule 7. Age, Note).

Academic Eligibility

Refer to the AAA Handbook.

Physical Examinations

In any year that a student engages in interscholastic competition, the student shall be required to present to the coach verification of a physical examination prior to the beginning of practice which shall be valid for one calendar year.

Amateur Rule

Refer to the AAA Handbook.

ARKANSAS ACT 1469 of 2013

Participation of Home School students in interscholastic activities

- “Home-schooled student” means a student legally enrolled in an Arkansas home school.
- “Interscholastic activity” means an activity between schools subject to regulations of the Arkansas Activities Association that is:
 - ✓ Outside the regular curriculum of a school district, including without limitation an athletic activity, a fine arts program, or a special interest club or group
- “Resident school” is the school to which the student would be assigned by the resident school district.
- “Resident school district” means the school district in which the home-schooled student’s parent resides as determined under 6-18-202.
- A home-schooled student shall not participate in interscholastic activities at a public school other than the student’s resident school.
- A resident school district may permit a home-schooled student to participate in an interscholastic activity if:
 - ✓ The home-schooled student reports to the resident school district within the first eleven (11) days of the fall or spring semester of the resident school district; and
 - ✓ The home-schooled student or his or her parent advises the principal of the resident school in writing of the student’s request to participate in the interscholastic activity before the signup, tryout, or participation deadlines established for students enrolled in the resident school.
- The principal of the resident school shall permit a home-schooled student to pursue participation in an interscholastic activity of the resident school if the student or the student’s parent:
 - ✓ Before the signup, tryout, or participation deadlines established for the students enrolled in the resident school, provides to the principal a notice of the student’s desire to pursue participation; and
 - ✓ Informs the principal in the notice that the student has demonstrated academic eligibility by obtaining:
 - A minimum test score of the thirtieth percentile on the Stanford Achievement Test Series, Tenth Edition, or another nationally recognized norm-referenced test in the previous twelve (12) months; or
 - A minimum score on a test approved by the State Board of Education
- If a home-schooled student’s written request to participate in the interscholastic activity is approved under this section, the student:
 - ✓ Although not guaranteed participation in an interscholastic activity, shall have an equal opportunity to try out and participate in interscholastic activities without discrimination; and

- ✓ Shall not participate unless he or she meets the criteria for participation in the interscholastic activity that apply to students enrolled in the resident school district, including:
 - Tryout criteria;
 - Standards of behavior and codes of conduct; and
 - The academic criteria
 - Practice times;
 - Required drug testing;
 - Permission slips, waivers, and physical exams; and
 - Participation or activity fees
- A home-school student who participates in an interscholastic activity may be:
 - ✓ Required to be at school not more than one (1) period per school day; and
 - ✓ Transported by the resident school district to and from interscholastic activities as the resident school district transports other students who are enrolled in the resident school.
- A student who withdraws from an Arkansas Activities Association member school to be home-schooled shall not participate in interscholastic activity in the resident school district for a minimum of three hundred and sixty-five (365) days after the student withdraws from the member school.

ARKANSAS ACT 592 of 2017

A home school student may participate in interscholastic activities at a public school other than the home-schooled student's resident public school by mutual agreement between the resident public school and any other public school where the home schooled student wishes to participate.

- The home-schooled student may participate in an interscholastic activity that is not an athletic activity immediately upon being approved to participate.
- The home-schooled student must be enrolled in at least one (1) period per school day.
- The home-schooled student may participate in an interscholastic activity that is an athletic activity one (1) calendar year after being approved to participate.
- The home-schooled student may begin participating in an interscholastic activity that is an athletic activity immediately upon being approved to participate if the home-schooled student is approved to participate by July 1 of the school year the home-schooled student will be enrolled in the 7th grade.

ARKANSAS ACT 453 of 2017

A home-schooled student may participate in interscholastic activities at private schools if:

- The home-schooled student lives within a twenty-five miles radius of the private school.
- The home-schooled student is enrolled at the private school for at least one (1) period per school day.
- The home-schooled student may participate in an interscholastic activity that is not an athletic activity immediately upon being approved to participate.
- The home-schooled student may participate in an interscholastic activity that is an athletic activity one (1) calendar year after being approved to participate.
- The home-schooled student may begin participating in an interscholastic activity that is an athletic activity immediately upon being approved to participate if the home-schooled student is approved to participate by July 1 of the school year the home-schooled student will be enrolled in the 7th grade or a grade that is the lowest grade offered by the private school.

Eligibility Check List

A student must meet the criteria in rules 1 – 15 in order to be eligible for athletics.

- Rule 1. Domicile (Public Schools, Nonpublic Schools, Complete and Bona Fide Change of Domicile, Legal Attendance, Non-school Coach, Transfers, CSAP Forms, Return to Resident District)
- Rule 2. Eligibility in Other Situations (Foreign Students, Legal Adoption, Parental Custody, Boarding School, Training School, Arkansas Virtual Academy, School Board Actions, Providing Incorrect Domicile Information, Transfers Involving Nonpublic/Nonmember Schools)
- Rule 3. Recruitment
- Rule 4. Bona Fide Student
- Rule 5. Dropouts
- Rule 6. Semesters
- Rule 7. Age
- Rule 8. Amateur
- Rule 9. Tryouts
- Rule 10. Scholarship
- Rule 11. Ineligible in Another State
- Rule 12. Participation on Non-School Teams
- Rule 13. National Team, Olympic Development Programs, and International School Sport Federation.
- Rule 14. Physical Examination
- Rule 15. Hardship Exceptions

Procedure for Appeals

Rule 3. Procedure for Appeals: Any authorized representative of a member school or student/parent may appeal a decision, opinion or recommended order given by the Executive Director, either oral or written, and such appeal shall be made in writing by mail. An appeal on behalf of a student by the parents shall be filed through the school's authorized representative.

After receiving the written appeal, the Executive Director shall:

- A. Notify the president of the AAA of said appeal.
- B. And,
 - 1. If time is of the essence, the president shall, within a reasonable time, appoint a hearing subcommittee of the Board of Directors of not fewer than (5) members which shall convene for the purpose of conducting a hearing of the appeal with reasonable notice to the party(ies) involved.
 - 2. If time is not of the essence, the appeal shall be heard by the Board of Directors at a regular meeting. The procedure for notice of such hearing shall be the same as for a subcommittee hearing.
- C. Notice of the time and place of such hearing shall be served upon the appealing party(ies) by mail, fax, or e-mail. An administrator of the involved school should be present at the hearing. Legal counsel may represent the appealing parties provided the AAA Executive Director is notified at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled hearing.
- D. Within ten (10) working days after the conclusion of any hearing, the Executive Director shall notify all parties of the committee's or hearing officer's decision.
- E. Then,
 - 1. In the event the appealing parties are dissatisfied with the decision of the hearing subcommittee, an appeal to an independent hearing officer may be had by serving written notice of appeal to the Executive Director.
 - 2. The Executive Director shall contact a hearing officer and set a date, time and place for the hearing. Notice of the time and place shall follow the procedures established for the first appeal.
 - 3. After the hearing, the hearing officer shall render an expeditious written opinion as to whether the Executive Director, hearing subcommittee or the Board of Directors followed the rules of the association and the law in making a determination about the alleged violation or other basis for appeal.

4. In the event the appealing parties are dissatisfied with the decision of the subcommittee and hearing officer, an appeal to the Board of Directors may be had by serving a written notice of appeal to the Executive Director. Notice of the time and place of such a hearing shall follow the procedures established for the earlier appeals.
 5. In the event a majority of the original hearing subcommittee is dissatisfied with the opinion of the hearing officer, and if the Board of Directors has not previously heard the matter, the subcommittee may request a hearing before the Board of Directors to review the opinion of the hearing officer. A 75% majority agreement of the Board of Directors present at the hearing is required to reject an opinion of the hearing officer. Notice of the time and place of such a hearing shall follow the procedures established for the earlier appeals.
- F. Upon receipt of the notice of appeal to the Board of Directors by the appealing parties, or by request from the subcommittee, the Executive Director shall set the appeal for hearing, de novo, at its next meeting. The rules as set out above for a hearing before the Executive Director shall apply to hearings before the Board of Directors.
- G. The procedure for notifications of the appealing party(ies) shall be the same as for the previous appeal.
- H. The filing of a written objection and appeal from the decision of the Executive Director of an appeal from the decision of the hearing subcommittee or the opinion of the hearing officer shall not stay the order of the Executive Director. Such order may be stayed by the Board of Directors if, in the exercise of its judgment, the interest of justice would be served. A hearing subcommittee may stay the order of the Executive Director when acting instead of the Board of Directors and such action shall be considered at the next meeting of the Board of Directors.
- I. If the appeal to the Board of Directors as a whole requires a special called meeting, the appealing party(ies) shall be required to make such arrangements as are satisfactory to the Executive Director to secure the payment of the costs of the appeal including travel expenses of the Board of Directors and the cost of taking and transcribing a record thereof to be paid by the appealing party(ies) in the event the appeal to the Board of Directors is not successful.