

From the TSSAA Handbook, Pages 13-15

Article II Eligibility

Enrollment and Attendance: Section 1

To be eligible, students shall be regularly enrolled, in regular attendance, and carrying at least five full courses or the equivalent. A student is eligible to participate in football, volleyball, cross country, golf, and girls' soccer prior to the beginning of school if the student is enrolled at the school and meets all other eligibility requirements. A student shall not participate in athletics during any semester unless he/she is duly enrolled on or before the 20th day of the semester. This rule shall not apply to transfer students who have met the attendance requirements in the school last attended.

Academic Rules: Section 2

To be eligible to participate in athletic contests during any school year, the student must earn five credits the preceding school year if less than 24 credits are required for graduation or six credits the preceding school year if 24 or more credits are required for graduation. All credits must be earned by the first day of the beginning of the school year. Academic eligibility for a student is based on the requirements of the school the student was attending at the conclusion of the previous school year.

Students who are ineligible the first semester may gain eligibility the second semester by earning a passing grade in five classes or three blocks or the equivalent by the end of the first semester. These students will be eligible to participate in athletics when school resumes on or after January 1 of that school year.

Students on trimesters who are ineligible at the beginning of the school year may gain eligibility by earning a passing grade in five classes or three blocks or the equivalent by the end of the first trimester. These students will be eligible to participate in athletics when school resumes on or after January 1 of that school year.

If a student is forced to withdraw from school, or is prevented from enrolling in school, due to the student's illness, his/her accident, or his/her disability, the principal may request a ruling in regard to the student's eligibility, provided the student was eligible at the time the illness or accident forced the student to withdraw or prevented the student from enrolling in school. If ruled eligible, such a student shall be charged with a semester of attendance for athletic purposes for the semester of non-attendance or withdrawal.

A student who returns to a member school after attendance at a school of correction or alternative school may be eligible for athletic participation provided the school of correction or alternative school is accredited by the Tennessee State Department of Education and provided the student returns to the school attended before entering the school of correction or alternative school.

Academic Rules: Section 3

For athletic purposes the scholastic record filed in the office of the principal or superintendent at the end of a semester shall be final. Credits earned in a summer school accredited by the State Department of Education shall be recognized for eligibility purposes provided the student was enrolled during the spring semester immediately preceding the summer session and attended at least 40 days of that spring semester.

Academic Rules: Section 4

A student who drops out of school before the end of the semester shall be ineligible to participate in secondary school athletics until the student has been in school a semester and has passed in at least five full unit subjects or the equivalent. (To become eligible under this regulation, a student must attend school for at least 40 days of the semester, but in no case shall the eligibility become effective until the beginning of the succeeding semester.)

High School Graduate: Section 5

No student shall be eligible to participate in athletics after he/she has graduated from a secondary school. (A student who takes an accelerated course shall not lose his/her eligibility even though that student earns enough units to graduate provided he/she does not participate in a graduating exercise or accept a high school diploma, and provided the student has not attended a secondary school for eight semesters after enrolling in the ninth grade.)

Eight-Semester Rule: Section 6

A student, once enrolled in the 9th grade, has eight (8) semesters of athletic eligibility. Attendance of 40 school days of any semester shall be regarded as a "semester" under this rule regardless of athletic participation. If a student participates in athletics during a period of attendance of any number of days less than 40, he/she shall be charged with a semester of attendance. A student who registers for two or more ninth grade subjects after having completed one school year in the eighth grade shall be classified as a high school student for athletic purposes. The seventh and eighth semesters of athletic eligibility shall be consecutive.

Repeating Rule: Section 7

A student who repeats the sixth, seventh, or eighth grade and plays in an interscholastic contest (Varsity, JV, or any other level) while repeating shall be ineligible in all sports at all levels in the ninth grade.

Eighth Grade Participation: Section 8

An eighth grade student is eligible to participate for a member school if he/she is enrolled at the school. Students below the eighth grade are not eligible to practice or participate for a member school. Any student repeating the eighth grade shall not be eligible for high school participation during the year that the student is repeating the eighth grade. Participation as an eighth grader shall not reduce the number of semesters a student is allowed to participate after enrolling in the ninth grade.

Age Limit: Section 9

No student shall be eligible to participate in any athletic contest during any school year if he/she becomes 19 years of age on or before August 1. The age rule may be waived for the Tennessee School for the Blind when this school is competing with other schools for the blind provided such schools are permitted by their state associations to waive the age rule in competing with other schools for the blind.

Physical Examination and Parental Consent: Section 10

It is required that no student be permitted to participate in practice sessions or in athletic contests until there is on file with the principal a preparticipation medical evaluation form signed by a doctor of medicine, osteopathic physician, physician assistant, or certified nurse practitioner stating that the student has passed a physical examination, not prior to April 15, and that in their opinion the student is physically fit to participate in interscholastic athletics. In lieu of the form, the principal may accept a signed statement from the health care provider certifying that the student has passed a physical examination that encompasses all elements on the preparticipation medical evaluation form and attesting that in their opinion the student is physically fit to participate in interscholastic athletics. No student shall be required to submit to a physical exam if his/her parent(s) or legal guardian shall file with the principal a signed, written statement (affirmed under the penalties of perjury) declining such physical examination on grounds of sincerely held beliefs or practices. It is required that no student be permitted to participate in practice sessions or in athletic contests until there is on file a parental consent certificate signed by a parent or legal guardian stating that the student has the consent of his/her parent(s) or legal guardian to participate.