

8th Grade Participation in High School Athletics

Purpose

This procedure establishes the process for 8th-grade student-athletes who wish to participate in high school athletics while ensuring that decisions are made in the best interest of the student-athlete academically, physically, socially, and emotionally. (This does not apply to Baseball/Softball; 7th graders becoming 8th Graders are not eligible to participate in Baseball/Softball)

Step 1: Physician Clearance Form

Physicians will have to sign off on the physician's form and check off what sports they are allowed to play.

Step 2: Coach Recommendation

An 8th-grade student may only be considered for participation in high school athletics if they are approached by the **Varsity Head Coach** of that sport.

The Varsity Head Coach and the Middle School Coach will first meet to discuss the student's readiness and determine whether pursuing high school participation is appropriate.

Step 3: Parent/Guardian Meeting

If both coaches agree to move forward, they will schedule a meeting with the student-athlete and their parent(s)/guardian(s).

During this meeting, the coaches will:

- Explain why they believe the student is ready for high school competition.
- Discuss the expectations and responsibilities associated with competing at the high school level.
- Answer any questions from the student or parent(s)/guardian(s).

The family will then decide whether to accept or decline the opportunity.

Step 4: Activities Director Notification

If the family accepts the opportunity, the Varsity Head Coach and Middle School Coach will notify the Activities Director (AD).

Collision Sports

For the following collision sports:

- Football

Can only play up to Junior Varsity Competitions

Contact Sports

For the following contact sports:

- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Wrestling

Non-Contact Sports

For the following non-contact sports:

- Cross Country
- Track & Field
- Golf
- Tennis
- Bowling

The request will be presented to the High School Athletics Review Committee.

The committee will consist of:

- Two School Health Professionals
- Four Coaches
- Activities Director

Any committee member who is directly involved in recommending the student for participation must abstain from voting.

The committee will review all relevant information, including:

- Physical readiness
- Skill level
- Safety considerations
- Emotional and social readiness
- Academic standing
- Overall best interest of the student-athlete

The committee will then vote on whether to recommend the student's participation in high school athletics.

Step 5: Principal Approval

For all students approved through the appropriate process, the building principal will make the final decision to approve or deny participation in high school athletics.

Step 6: Participation Agreement

If approved, the following individuals must sign a High School Participation Consent Form:

- Student-athlete
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
- Varsity Head Coach
- Middle School Coach
- Activities Director

Step 7: Iowa High School Scholarship Rule

Any 8th-grade student who participates in high school athletics will be subject to the **Iowa High School Scholarship Rule** and all eligibility requirements established by the Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) and/or Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union (IGHSAU), as applicable.

Students and parents acknowledge that participation at the high school level requires the student-athlete to maintain academic eligibility under the Iowa High School Scholarship Rule throughout the season.

Step 8: Final Commitment

A student-athlete may choose to return to middle school competition at any time **before competing in their first official high school contest**.

Once a student competes in an official high school contest, they become ineligible to return to middle school competition in that sport for the remainder of the season.

Sports Not Offered at the Middle School Level

If a non-contact high school sport is **not offered at the middle school level**, 8th Graders may try out for the High School team, and the coach will determine eligibility.

Additional Policy Statement

Participation in high school athletics as an 8th-grade student is a **privilege, not a right**, and approval is not guaranteed.

Each request will be considered on an individual basis using the procedures and criteria outlined in this policy. Approval for one student-athlete does not establish a precedent or guarantee approval for future students or future seasons.

The district reserves the right to approve or deny any request based on what is determined to be in the best interest of the student-athlete, the safety of all participants, and the overall athletic program.

This policy will be reviewed annually and may be revised at the discretion of the Activities Director Council and administration.

Appeal Process

Any decision can be appealed and must be appealed to the Council, which would then send a recommendation to the School Board.

The School Board would then vote on the appeal.