

## **1.10 - CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY**

1.11 **Students gain eligibility** to practice or compete for the school in which they are enrolled after they have been certified by the principal of that school, after the eligibility forms have been processed by the GHSA office, and after the students have met the standards of:

1. academic requirements
2. age
3. semesters in high school
4. residence in the school's service area
5. transfer rules

Note: Students establishing eligibility as entering 9th graders are automatically eligible for the first semester.

## **1.20 - ENROLLMENT AND TEAM MEMBERSHIP**

1.21 To be eligible to participate and/or try-out for a sport or activity, a student must be enrolled full time in grades 9-12 inclusive at the school seeking eligibility for that student.

1. Enrollment is defined as follows:
  1. Fall Semester: when the student participates in a practice or contest before classes begin, or the student attends classes.
  2. Spring Semester: when the student attends classes.
  3. A student may be enrolled in only one (1) high school at a time.
2. The student must be in regular attendance.
3. The student must be taking courses that total at least 2.5 Carnegie Units that count toward graduation.

## **1.30 - AGE**

To be eligible to participate in interscholastic activities, a student must not have reached his 19th birthday prior to May 1st, preceding his year of participation.

## **1.40 - LIMITS OF PARTICIPATION**

1.41 Students must have a certificate of an **annual physical examination on file** at the school prior to participating in any athletic try-outs, practices, voluntary workouts or games that indicate the students are physically approved for participation.

1. Physical examinations will be good for twelve (12) months from the date of the exam.  
EXCEPTION: Any physical examination taken on or after April 1 in the preceding year will be accepted for the entire next GHSA school year.
2. The physical exam must be conducted by a licensed medical physician, doctor of Osteopathic medicine, nurse practitioner or a physician's assistant.
3. The exam must be signed by an M.D., D.O., or by a Physician's Assistant, or an Advance Practice Nurse who has been delegated that task by an M.D., or D.O.
4. The GHSA requires that member schools use the latest edition of the preparticipation physical evaluation form approved by the American Academy of Pediatrics, et. al., found on the GHSA web site.

1.44 Students in grade 9 and higher may participate on **both the varsity and one (1) sub-varsity team** in the same sport with the following limitations:

1. **Football** \_ a player may not participate in interscholastic competitions more than six (6) quarters per week, beginning with the varsity game. Violations of this participation rule will result in a mandatory fine and an automatic forfeiture of the game in which the student exceeded the limit. Additional penalties may be imposed by the Executive Director in extreme circumstances.
2. **Basketball** \_ a player may not participate in interscholastic competition more than five (5) quarters per calendar day.
3. **Soccer** \_ a player may not participate in interscholastic competition more than three (3) halves per calendar day.
4. All other sports - the combination of games, playdays, or weigh-ins (varsity and sub-varsity) in which the student participates may not be greater than the limit allotted to the varsity in that sport.

1.45 **Eighth grade students** may participate on a sub-varsity team of a high school provided they attend a feeder school of that high school.

1. Students in grade 8 are never eligible for a varsity event in any activity.
2. Eighth grade students who play on a high school team must meet all middle school requirements as put forth by the State Department of Education.
3. An eighth grade student who is declared ineligible at a middle school or retained for academic reasons, is considered to be ineligible for participation on a sub-varsity high school team.
4. Eighth grade students participating on a sub-varsity team may only participate in 60% of the number of games allotted to the varsity team in that sport.
5. Students below the eighth grade are not eligible to participate on any high school team.
6. Students enrolled in grade 8 in a middle school or junior high school which is a feeder school to the member high school may participate in Spring football practice. These students must be pre-enrolled at that member high school, and once pre-enrolled, the student has established eligibility at that high school.
7. Students enrolled in grade 8 in a middle school or junior high school which is a feeder school to the member high school may try out for cheerleader at the high school. Eighth grade students at a non-feeder school that has no system high school may participate in cheerleader tryouts at the member high school serving the student's area of residence. Such a student must be pre-enrolled at that member high school, and once pre-enrolled, the student has established eligibility at that high school.

1.47 **Girls may participate on boys' teams** when there is no girls' team offered in that sport by the school. Boys are not allowed to play on girls' teams even when there is no corresponding boys' sport. *A student's gender is determined by the gender noted on his/her certificate at birth.* NOTE: Cheerleading is a coed sport.

1.48 **Advisory Notice - Pregnant Students:** In response to the increasing number of pregnant students attending member schools, and the continued participation of these students in GHSA activities, the following advisory notice is being offered:

1. During the first 18 weeks of pregnancy, students, with written consent from a physician, may be allowed to participate in athletic activities except those activities in which a fall or other rapid deceleration is likely to occur.
2. Pregnant students should not be allowed to participate in any athletic activities after the 18th week of pregnancy.

## 1.50 - SCHOLASTIC STANDING / SCHOLARSHIP

1.51 To be eligible to participate, practice, and/or try out in interscholastic activities, a student must be **academically eligible**. A student is required to pass classes that carry at least 2.5 Carnegie Units counting toward graduation the semester immediately preceding participation.

Exception 1: First semester ninth grade students.

Exception 2: A cheerleader who is academically ineligible for the spring semester may try out if she is passing ALL classes at the time of the tryout. The window of opportunity to try out under these conditions is available only during the ten (10) days set aside for tryouts that the school chooses.

1. Passing in all GHSA member schools is a grade of seventy (70).
2. Students participating in junior varsity or "B" team competition must meet all scholastic requirements.
3. If an eligible student transfers from a school that uses a block-schedule format to a school using a traditional format (or vice versa) and that student cannot get a full schedule of classes with equivalent credit in the semester of the transfer, the school may petition the Executive Director for a waiver of this rule for the first semester after the transfer occurs.
4. For schools offering courses with yearlong grading, eligibility must be computed for each semester.
  1. At the end of the first semester, the school must determine that the student has a grade of 70% or higher in classes carrying at least 2.5 Carnegie Units.
  2. The second semester grade will be the grade given for the entire course and shall include the end- of-course test grade.
  3. Remediation programs designed to bring the student's first semester grade up to 70% or higher may be used (in accordance with GHSA guidelines) if the school allows such programs for all students.

1.52 Students gain or lose eligibility on the first day of the subsequent semester. The first day of the Fall semester shall be interpreted as the first date of practice for the first sport.

1. Exception: Students who successfully complete summer school to maintain eligibility become eligible the last day of summer school.
  1. Summer school is an extension of the previous semester and courses may be:
    - a. remedial in nature where a previously-taken course is repeated in its entirety with a new grade being given.
    - b. enrichment in nature where a new course is taken that results in new credit being earned.
  2. A maximum of two (2) Carnegie unit credits earned in summer school may be counted for eligibility purposes. NOTE: Additional credits may be earned in credit recovery programs or make-up programs.
  3. Summer school credits earned in non-accredited home study programs or non-accredited private schools may not be used to gain eligibility. Accreditation recognized under the rule shall be from the Georgia Accrediting Commission (GAC) or a regional accreditation agency (such as SACS) or the Georgia Private School Accreditation Council (GAPSAC).
  4. An independent study course taken in summer school must be regionally accredited and accepted by the school system for graduation credit.
2. Courses completed after the beginning of a new semester may not be used to gain eligibility for that semester. Example: night school classes, correspondence courses, etc.
3. Independent study courses taken during the school year must meet the criteria of 1.52 (a) 4.

1.53 Students must **accumulate Carnegie units towards** graduation according to the following criteria:

1. **First-year students** (entering 9th grade) are eligible academically. Second semester **first-year students** must have **passed courses carrying at least 2.5 Carnegie units** the previous semester in order to participate.
2. **Second-year students** must have **accumulated five (5) total Carnegie units** in the first year, **AND passed courses carrying at least 2.5 Carnegie units** in the previous semester.
3. **Third-year students** must have **accumulated eleven (11) Carnegie units** in the first and second years, **AND passed courses carrying at least 2.5 Carnegie units** in the previous semester.
4. **Fourth-year students** must have **accumulated seventeen (17) Carnegie units** in the first three years, **AND passed courses carrying at least 2.5 Carnegie units** in the previous semester.
5. Students may accumulate the required Carnegie units for participation during the school year and eligibility will be reinstated at the beginning of the next semester.

1.54 A **Dual Enrollment** program is defined as a program in which a fulltime student at a GHSA member high school takes one or more courses from a state public or private postsecondary institution and receives credit at the high school (toward graduation) and at the postsecondary institution.

1. Dual enrolled students shall take courses that are approved by the Georgia Department of Education.
2. Courses may be taken in a variety of formats (including distance learning and virtual courses) as long as the courses are approved.
3. Postsecondary semester hour credit shall be converted to high school unit credit as follows:
  1. 1-2 semester hours equates to .5 unit
  2. 3-5 semester hours equates to 1 unit
4. Postsecondary quarter hour credit shall be converted to high school unit credit as follows:
  1. 1-3 quarter hours equates to .5 unit
  2. 4-8 quarter hours equates to 1 unit

1.55 Students involved in approved Dual Enrollment programs shall be eligible to participate in GHSA activities provided that academic eligibility is maintained.

1. Courses taken each semester at the high school and/or postsecondary institution must total at least 2.5 units.
2. Courses passed the previous semester at the high school and/or postsecondary institution must total at least 2.5 units
3. Students will gain or lose eligibility on the first day of each semester at the high school and a college calendar that differs from the high school calendar may cause problems.
4. Students who withdraw or are dropped from a Dual Enrollment program and are returned to the high school only, may encounter eligibility problems.
5. Students involved in Joint Enrollment programs, Early College programs, or Gateway to College programs may not be eligible at their respective high schools.
6. A student who participates on an intercollegiate athletic team may not participate in any GHSA activity.

**1.56 Loss of Eligibility:** Students assigned to an **alternative school** or on **out-of-school suspension for disciplinary reasons, or adjudicated to YDC**, lose their eligibility. Suspension is considered to have ended when the student is physically readmitted to the classroom.

1.58 **Credit Recovery/Make-up Work:** Students who have academic deficiencies at the end of a semester may make up those deficiencies in programs that are available to any student in the school.

1. Credit recovery programs are short-term programs that involve a course that has been completed and a grade given. The student is given the opportunity to work on areas of deficiency.
2. Make-up programs occur when a course has not been completed and an "Incomplete" grade has been given. The student is given the opportunity to work on areas of deficiency.
3. Credit recovery and make-up work must be completed within fourteen (14) school days after the start of the next semester. The student is ineligible until such time as the work is completed and the required passing grade has been recorded. Exception: If the end-of-course test is not offered within 14 days of the beginning of the next semester, the student may be granted a reasonable extension by the GHSA.
4. The GHSA Executive Director shall be authorized to approve credit recovery or make-up work completed later than fourteen days after the start of the next semester if he finds that the:
  1. timeframe was not met due to circumstances outside the control of the student, his parent(s), and the school, AND
  2. work was completed as soon as reasonably possible, AND
  3. allowance for such a delay is offered on the same basis to all students in the school.
5. Credit recovery programs operated during the summer or in intersessions shall be completed within fourteen days of the beginning of the new semester. Students using those credits to gain eligibility are ineligible until the course is completed successfully. Credit recovery is used for remedial work only, and no new credit courses may be applied under this provision.
6. Students using credit recovery or make-up programs must have their eligibility submitted to the GHSA office on a "Form C."

1.62 A **transfer student** who has established eligibility at a former school in grades 9-12 shall be **immediately eligible** at the new school if:

1. The student moved simultaneously with the entire parental unit or persons he/she resided with at the former school, and the student and parent(s) or persons residing with the student live in the service area of the new school This is known as a **"bona fide move."**
  1. The student may choose the public or private school serving that area.
  2. It must be apparent that the parent(s) or the persons residing with the student and the student have relinquished the residence in the former service area and have occupied a residence in the new service area.
  3. Relinquishment of the former residence may be met by one of the following procedures: selling the residence; having the residence listed with a real estate agent for sale at a fair market value; having a contract with a buyer; having a lease agreement at a fair market value; or abandoning the house and shutting off unnecessary utilities. When a family claims multiple residences, the residence for which they apply for a homestead exemption will be declared the primary residence.
  4. The bona fide move is validated when the student's family maintains the new residence for at least one calendar year. A return to the previous residence within that year renders the student to be a migrant student. All hardship appeal processes are available.
2. The student was enrolled in a **private school or a magnet school** and has a **bona fide move** from one public school service area to another public school service area. A student in this situation may attend either the public school or a private school serving his area of residence.
3. If one of his/her parents or the custodial parent is a certified teacher or administrator teaching at the receiving school. This opportunity is available one time only at any given school.

4. The student has one of the following family-related situations that produces a **waiver of the bona fide move rule**:

1. There is a Superior Court or Juvenile Court awarded **change of permanent custody** and the student moves to the residence of the parent receiving custody.

(a) The student must attend the member school serving that area of residence.

(b) A copy of the court order must accompany the eligibility forms.

(c) NOTE: Temporary guardianship papers issued by a Probate Court are not valid for eligibility.

2. There is a Superior Court or Juvenile Court final order awarding permanent **joint custody** to the parents and the student moves to a residence of his or her parent outside the service area of the previous school.

(a) This waiver may be made one time during a calendar year.

(b) A copy of the court order must accompany the eligibility forms.

3. There is a **death of a custodial parent** and the student moves to live with the other natural parent in a new school service area.

NOTE: A copy of the death certificate shall be submitted with the eligibility papers.

4. There is a military transfer of one or both custodial parents that creates a change of residence that is not a bona fide move. NOTE: A copy of the deployment order shall be submitted with the eligibility form.

(h) Students who are U.S. citizens **returning from a foreign country** shall be eligible as long as they meet all other requirements of eligibility.

(i) **Students who are transferred from one school attendance area to another school attendance area by a mandate of the local board of education maintain their eligibility.**

(j) **Married students** setting up a household (domicile) shall be eligible in the school of their residence provided they meet all other requirements of eligibility.

1.63 A **"migrant student"** is a student who transfers into a GHSA school without a bona fide move or without one of the exceptions listed in by-law 1.62. The student may practice or compete at the sub-varsity level, but may not compete at the varsity level for one calendar year from the date of his entry into the new school.

1.64 A student who is not eligible because of GHSA rules at the former school, and then transfers to a new school, cannot regain eligibility by the transfer. Ineligible students cannot gain eligibility by being adjudicated to YDC and subsequently returning to their resident school with earned credit.

1.67 A **permissive transfer** is defined as an allowance by a local board of education for students and/or their parents to choose a school to attend without regard to the location of residence.

1. A student transferring from member school to member school on a permissive transfer is considered a migrant student.
2. A student transferring to or from a school housing a system-wide, singular academic or vocation program or a magnet program on a permissive transfer is considered a migrant student.
  1. The offering of an individual course or series of courses by one school in a system does not provide inherent justification to grant GHSA eligibility.
  2. Special options offered by a school system that allow students to attend a school outside their area of residence do not provide inherent justification to grant GHSA eligibility.
  3. Any such permissive transfer issue may be brought before the GHSA Hardship Committee.

3. Students transferring under the provisions of Federal or State academic accountability regulations must be processed through the normal hardship appeals process.
4. When a military base is located in two school districts, a student moving onto the base for the first time may choose to attend either school district, and that district will place the student appropriately. Any transfer after the initial move will be subject to standard eligibility regulations.

1.68 **Hardship Applications** may be filed to attempt to establish eligibility in the following situations:

1. A student who changes schools because of a **temporary custody transfer** from a parent to a guardian, or from one guardian to another (See Article IV, Section 5, in the GHSA Constitution).
2. A student whose transfer is based upon his being **emancipated**, homeless, a child from a broken home, a **ward of the DFACS**, or a **ward of a Court** (See Article IV, Section 5, in the GHSA Constitution).
3. In order for a hardship appeal based on a financial hardship to be approved, the new school must provide proof that the family attempted to address the financial problem at the previous school, and that the need-based financial aid was non-existent or insufficient to resolve the problem. Increases in tuition or other costs at a private school do not create an automatic reason to grant the appeal, because such fee increases are considered foreseeable and not unavoidable. Documentation of the financial problem is required.

1.69 When a new school opens, student eligibility shall be determined as follows:

1. When a school district mandates an attendance area for a new school for all grades enrolled at the new school, all students living within the mandated attendance area in those grades are immediately eligible. All students living outside the mandated attendance area who desire to attend the new school are considered migrant students and are ineligible for one year. Hardship appeals may be filed if conditions warrant.
2. When a school district mandates some students to attend the new school, allows some students to stay at their present school, and permits some students to transfer to the new school, the school shall set a deadline for students living in the attendance area of the new school to decide whether they will move to the new school, or stay at the present school. The decisions exercised at the deadline date are binding. Subsequent changes render the student to be a migrant student with the one-year period of ineligibility. Students who are granted permissive transfers to enroll at the new school from other schools within the system are considered to be migrant students. Hardship appeals may be filed if conditions warrant.

#### 1.70 - **RECRUITING/UNDUE INFLUENCE**

1.71 **Recruiting and Undue Influence** is **defined** as the use of influence by any person connected directly or indirectly with a GHSA school to induce a student of any age **to transfer** from one school to another, or **to enter** the ninth grade at a member school for athletic or literary competition purposes, whether or not the school presently attended by the student is a member of the GHSA.

1. The use of undue influence to secure OR retain a student for competitive purposes is prohibited, and shall lead to penalties being assessed against **either school**. NOTE: This violation may cause the student to forfeit eligibility for one year from the date of enrollment.
2. Evidence of undue influence includes, but is not limited to:
  1. personal contact initiated by coaches, boosters, or other school personnel in an attempt to persuade transfer
  2. gifts of money, jobs, supplies or clothing

3. free transportation
  4. free admission to contests
  5. an invitation to attend practices and/or games
  6. a social event (other than an official schoolwide Open House program) specifically geared for prospective athletes
  7. free tuition beyond the allowable standards found in by-law 1.82
  8. a coach asking a prospective student for contact information
3. Complaints or reports of violations of this rule will be investigated and handled on a case-by-case basis. If **coaches** are found to be in violation of the recruiting rule, a copy of the investigation will be forwarded to the Professional Standards Commission of the Department of Education.
  4. A school will be afforded an opportunity to demonstrate it could not reasonably be expected to be responsible for the actions of a booster who is found to have violated the recruiting/undue influence rules.

1.72 A student athlete transferring from one member school to another shall be ruled ineligible for one year because of "undue influence" if it is proven that:

1. The coach of the receiving school coached an out-of-school team or all-star team on which the athlete played prior to the transfer; OR
2. The coach at the receiving school acted as a private athletic instructor for the transferring athlete, regardless of whether the coach was paid for his services and/or expertise; OR
3. The student participated in a sports camp or clinic run by a member school and/or its coach(es).
4. The player who played for a coach at a former GHSA school followed that coach when he/she moved to another GHSA school. (This is not applicable to dependent children of the coach.)
5. The situations cited in this by-law are considered to be violations even if a bona fide move has occurred, and the hardship appeal procedures are available for the demonstration that undue influence has not occurred.

1.73 A booster shall be considered to be an extension of the school and must abide by all rules applied to coaches and other school personnel. The following persons or groups may be considered boosters: members of the school's Booster Club; alumni; parents; guardians; or relatives of a student or former student; financial donors; or donors of time and effort.