

## PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Participation Policies for Middle School Activities and Interscholastic Athletics

**Introduction:** Extracurricular activities, co-curricular requirements, and interscholastic athletics are very important components of the total school program. These activities provide students with opportunities that supplement the classroom experience and engage the student in challenging and creative experiences. Participation in school activities is a privilege. The school administration may declare a student ineligible to participate in total or part based on inappropriate conduct whether or not that conduct occurs during the school day, evenings, or weekends. Inappropriate conduct may include violations in the Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) Code of Behavior, rules and agreements between the students and their coaches, sponsors, or teachers; a school's local behavior guidelines, Virginia High School League (VHSL) Rules, and PWCS regulations and policies.

Coaches and sponsors will provide this activity participation guide annually to all participants of their teams or groups. It will be the responsibility of the coach or sponsor to review these guidelines with parents and students in their pre-season meetings. After receiving this document, parents and students will sign the emergency permission card acknowledging that they have received, read, and will follow the rules and guidelines governing participation in PWCS athletics and activities.

The Activities Guide for Students and Parents is a condensed guide with information necessary to effectively understand and participate in the activities program in Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS).

The information provided in this guide is representative of the rules and policies that govern athletic/activity participation in PWCS as provided by the Virginia High School League (VHSL) rules and PWCS policies and regulations.

Additional questions can be answered by contacting the school's administration or refer to the School Division's Web site at [www.pwcs.edu](http://www.pwcs.edu) and view the Student's Code of Behavior and Policies and Regulations sites. For more information, contact the supervisor of Student Activities at 703.791.7353.

#### ATHLETIC/ACTIVITY ELIGIBILITY

##### ENROLLMENT

The student shall be officially enrolled in the school of attendance as required by Virginia School laws and be a *regular Bona Fide student* in order to participate in school's activities. A *regular* student is considered a full-time student who is in regular attendance and is carrying a schedule of subjects which, if successfully completed, will render him/her scholastically eligible for the ensuing semester. The student shall have been regularly enrolled no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the semester in at least five classes.

##### ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

Students must be academically eligible to represent a school in any athletic and/or after-school activities. A student is determined to be academically ineligible if, in a nine-week grading period, he/she receives two or more F's. The student is ineligible to participate in the following nine-week grading period. Academic eligibility will carry over from the fourth grading period to the first grading period of the next school year. Rising sixth-grade students start the school year with a "clean slate"; however, the student can be declared ineligible to participate in the nine-weeks following a grading period if criteria are not met. The student may meet eligibility at the interim and be eligible to try out for a sport in the next season if the proper criteria are met.

##### CONDUCT ELIGIBILITY

A student is determined to be conduct ineligible as determined by two or more U's in the preceding nine-week grading period, the student is ineligible to participate in the following nine-week grading period. Conduct eligibility will not carry over from the fourth grading period to the first grading period of the next school year. The new school year starts with a "clean slate"; however, the student is ineligible to participate in the nine weeks following a grading period if criteria are not met. The student

may meet eligibility at the interim and be eligible to try out for a sport in the next season if the proper criteria are met.

### **AGE**

A student shall not have reached the age of fifteen on or before the first day of September of the school year in which he/she wishes to compete.

## **STUDENT PARTICIPATION**

### **CONCUSSION POLICY AND EDUCATION**

All middle school students and their parent/guardian are required to complete annual concussion training according to PWCS Policy 759 *before* the student may participate in the season. In order to participate in any extracurricular athletic activity, each student and the student's parent or guardian shall review, on an annual basis (every 12 months), information on concussions provided by the School Division. (Refer to Regulation 759-1)

*As there are sufficient differences in the way concussions will be handled at the middle school and high school levels, a parent having students in both middle and high schools are required to attend both a middle and a high school presentation.*

Concussion training is offered two ways for students and their parent/guardian:

#### **Face-to-Face Training**

Middle school students who are trying out for a sport for their first time in middle school or who are new to PWCS must attend face-to-face concussion training at their respective school with their parent/guardian.

#### **Online Training**

Parents and students who have already attended a face-to-face training may take this year's mandatory concussion training online. Rising sixth-grade and ninth-grade students and students new to PWCS are not eligible for the online training.

After having reviewed materials describing the short- and long-term health effects of concussions, each student and the student's parent or guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging attendance at a face-to-face concussion presentation or completion of the online training, and an understanding of the information presented.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Each student is required to attend school and classes regularly. Any student who is absent the day of any activity may not participate in that event. On the day of an event (game or practice), a student must attend school for at least one half of the instructional day to equal three and one half hours. In the case of extenuating circumstances, the school administration may waive the rule.

### **ACTIVITY INSURANCE AND PARENTAL PERMISSION**

Each candidate for an interscholastic athletic team must provide proof of parental permission. Parents are strongly encouraged to have insurance covering possible accident or injury in school-sponsored games, practice sessions, and travel to and from contests. Such coverage may be provided through the purchase of Student Accident Insurance, offered by PWCS Risk Management or by submitting proof of similar or superior coverage. Schools do not provide insurance for participating students.

(The football insurance option available through the School Division, if selected, will cover students participating in football *only*. Insurance for school time and other sports must be purchased separately.)

### **EQUIPMENT RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the responsibility of the student/athlete to maintain and return all equipment and uniforms issued to them. Parents will be financially responsible for any equipment or uniforms that are lost, damaged, stolen, or misplaced during the time the student/athlete is responsible for them. The price of replacing these items shall be the actual cost to the school for purchasing new replacement items. Until any charges for lost equipment have been paid, the student will be placed on the school's obligations list.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

All students who are traveling to and from a school sponsored activity shall use school approved transportation. Students may *not* ride home from an away game site with anyone except the parent or legal guardian. Release of a student to a parent or legal guardian is left to the school's discretion.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT AND SPORTSMANSHIP**

## **SPORTSMANSHIP**

Admission to interscholastic events in Prince William County entitles spectators to enjoy a competitive exhibition of skills in an educational setting. We ask that spectators give the student athletes positive encouragement and support. Inappropriate and unacceptable behavior may lead to the removal of the spectator(s). PWCS encourages an atmosphere of sportsmanship and support for all athletes. (Refer to Regulations 648-7 and 648-7.1)

## **BULLYING/HAZING**

Bullying consists of any words or actions that harm or threaten another person's body, property, self-esteem, or group acceptance. This includes all oral, written, electronic, or non-verbal forms of ridicule, harassment, and intimidation. Hazing in any form shall not be tolerated and may result in dismissal from the organization. (Refer to Regulation 733.01-1)

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE, TOBACCO, AND WEAPONS POLICY**

Students involved in the possession, use or attempted use, receipt or attempted receipt, purchase or attempted purchase, distribution or attempted distribution of drugs (illegal, prescription, and/or over-the-counter), alcohol, inhalant intoxicants, look-alikes, placebos, or paraphernalia or who are under the influence of same on school property, or at school-related activities, are subject to suspension and/or expulsion from school and shall be removed from the extracurricular activity for the remainder of the season. Students found in possession or in use of illegal weapons on any school property, going to or from school, or at any school-related activity, regardless of where that activity takes place, shall also face removal from the extracurricular activity for the remainder of the season. The use of tobacco products shall result in disciplinary action ranging from a conference to suspension to dismissal from the organization. (Refer to Regulations 735.2 and 775.1)

## **ENERGY DRINKS**

In an effort to support safe participation, PWCS does not support the use of energy drinks by athletes. Athletes are prohibited from the use of energy drinks for any reason, especially for the purpose of rehydration before or after exercise. Fluid replacement drinks or drinks used to replenish body fluid after exercise are defined as drinks that replace energy and electrolytes to assist the body in recovering from exercise. Fluid replacement drinks are not classified as energy drinks. Some common examples of fluid replacement drinks are Gatorade and Powerade.

The penalty for violation of this rule will be established by the athletic departments at each of the individual middle schools.

## **STUDENT MEMBERSHIP**

### **AWARDS**

The minimum criteria for awarding a school activity certificate or other similar award must include:

1. The participant completing the season in good standing; and
2. The participant fulfilling all team related obligations.

The coach may establish additional requirements with the approval of the activities director and principal.

### **OUTSIDE TEAM MEMBERSHIP**

Outside team participation shall not conflict with the practice or contest schedule of the school. Any such absence shall be considered unexcused. Students selected for a school team shall have the expectation of participation in school-sponsored interscholastic athletics as a priority over participation in outside teams. Consequences for non-participation in PWCS activities are possible and will occur.

### **OUT-OF-SEASON PRACTICE**

Middle school athletic teams are not permitted Out-of-Season activities. Participation in activities outside of the school by dance teams and cheer squads will be determined by the school administration. Middle school athletes may not participate in out-of-season activities at a high school.

### **RECRUITING STATEMENT**

No PWCS middle or high school coach or personnel shall discuss or otherwise promote transfers or change in residence or residence arrangements with any student, parent, or other person of influence or knowingly permit such activity to take place for the purpose of facilitating activity participation.

**MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOLS**  
**Rules and Regulations Governing Participation**  
**On Athletic Teams and Extracurricular Activities**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Extracurricular Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

The student activities program is voluntary and extracurricular. Participation in middle/high school activities is a privilege and not a right. With this privilege, it is the responsibility of the participant to uphold the standards established by the school. These standards are based on the fundamental premise that the participant is in a position of school leadership and he/she should represent the activity, the school, and the community in the highest manner.

All activity participants are responsible for appropriate conduct as defined in the Prince William County Public Schools *Code of Behavior* and the rules established by their organization's constitution during the entire term of the activity. Any violations may be accompanied by, but are not restricted to, the following disciplinary actions:

- A conference;
- Suspension from the game(s) or practice(s);
- Two game suspension;
- Suspension from next eligible event;
- Suspension for a minimum of 30 calendar days from all school activities, including practice;
- Dismissal from organization; and
- Dismissal from all activities for a period of one year following the date of the conviction.

**Appeal Procedure:** Disciplinary action will be taken only after the student has had the opportunity to answer charges of the violations, including the right to bring his/her own witnesses, before the activity sponsor. Appeals may be made to the principal of the middle/high school with a further appeal to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee. Since participation in activities is a privilege and not a right, students who are suspended may not participate during the period of the appeal.

**BY SIGNING THE EMERGENCY PERMISSION FORM FOR ATHLETICS, YOU ARE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED, READ, AND WILL ADHERE TO THE RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING PARTICIPATION ON ATHLETIC TEAMS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.**

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