



**Prince William County**  
**PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
*Providing A World-Class Education*

## PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Participation Policies for High 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 preseason 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 Health and Physical Education, Driver Education, JROTC, and Athletics at 703.791.7353.

### **ATHLETIC/ACTIVITY ELIGIBILITY**

#### **ENROLLMENT**

The student shall be officially enrolled as required by Virginia School laws and be a *regular Bona Fide student* as defined by the VHSL. 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.

#### **SCHOLARSHIP RULE**

The student shall be enrolled for the first and second semester in not fewer than five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation and have passed five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation the immediately preceding year or the immediately preceding semester.

#### **SEMESTER RULE**

The student shall not have been enrolled in the last four years of high school for a period of more than eight consecutive semesters, beginning with the semester in which he/she was enrolled for the first time in the ninth grade. The eight consecutive semesters shall be counted continuously from that point, regardless of whether or not he/she remains continuously enrolled in school.

#### **SCHOLARSHIP AND ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY**

A student must be enrolled in not fewer than five subjects offered for credit that can be used to meet graduation requirements and have passed five classes offered for credit from the previous semester. PWCS high school students participating in interscholastic athletics, cheerleading, marching band, dance, step, and drill team must pass five subjects and earn a "C" or better in two subjects at the end of the first semester and at the end of the school year. This regulation applies to practices as well as games. The student may not practice, participate, or accompany the team during the ineligible period. (Refer to Regulation 640.2 and 648-1)

#### **STUDENT TRANSFERS**

Any student that has enrolled in one high school and subsequently enrolls in another high school without a corresponding change of residence of his/her parent(s) or guardian will be ineligible for VHSL activities for 365 days. Parents of students who transfer may request in writing, a waiver by the Superintendent when the transfer is a result of a decision made by PWCS staff. All waiver requests will be reviewed for approval on a case-by-case basis.

#### **AGE**

A student shall not have reached the age of 19 on or before the first day of August of the school year in which he/she wishes to compete.

## **STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **CONCUSSION POLICY AND EDUCATION**

All high 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/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/guardian having children in both middle and high schools are required to attend both a middle and a high school presentation.*

Students and their parent/guardian have two ways to receive this concussion training:

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

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

#### **Online Training**

Parents and students who have already attended a face-to-face training may take the current 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/guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging attendance at a face-to-face concussion presentation or completion of the online training, and understanding of such information.

### **RETURN TO PLAY AFTER A CONCUSSION INJURY**

PWCS has established a ***RETURN TO PLAY*** protocol for all students who have received a concussion or brain trauma injury. The student-athlete shall be removed from play until asymptomatic and neurocognitive testing has been successfully completed. Once the athlete is both physically and cognitively asymptomatic, they can begin a progressive *Return to Play* protocol before returning to practice and full contact play. Detailed information on the protocol is available on the PWCS web site under resources for concussions.

### **ATTENDANCE**

All students are required to attend school and classes regularly. Any student who is absent the day of any activity cannot 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 a weekend interscholastic contest, attendance in school Friday applies to the above statement. In the case of extenuating circumstances, the school administration may waive this rule.

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

Every 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 Scholastic Accident Insurance or by providing 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, 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 shall 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 legal parent/guardian. Release of a student to a parent/guardian is left to the school's discretion.

### **PARTICIPATION IN OUT-OF-SEASON ACTIVITIES**

Out-of-Season activities are available to all students who attend the school providing the activity. It is recommended that all students participating have concussion training and have a completed physical in the last year.

### **STUDENT CONDUCT AND SPORTSMANSHIP**

The coach/sponsor, in cooperation with school administration, shall be responsible for deciding appropriate punishment for violations of rules and regulations governing participation on athletic teams and extracurricular activities.

### **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)

### **CONDUCT INELIGIBILITY**

If a student is declared ineligible for violations of the rules and regulations governing participation activities and transfers to another Prince William County Public School, that student will remain ineligible for the remainder of that school year.

### **PLAYER EJECTION**

Students ejected from a scheduled contest by an official of the contest may not participate on the next scheduled playing date, including post-season play of that activity. If the timing of the suspension occurs at the last scheduled game, the suspension will include the next scheduled games for the new sports season. If a player who is ejected for fighting, biting, aggressive physical contact, or uses/directs profanity toward a contest official, shall be ineligible for the team's next two contests.

### **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 high schools.

### **STUDENT MEMBERSHIP AWARDS**

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

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

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

### **TEAM MEMBERSHIP**

The coach of each sport is responsible for the determination and implementation of the criteria for team membership selection. Freshman, sophomores, and juniors are eligible for all levels of competitions. Seniors are not eligible for junior varsity competition in any sport with the exception of wrestling.

### **OUTSIDE TEAM MEMBERSHIP**

Outside team participation shall not conflict with the practice or contest schedule of the school including district, regional, and state championship play. Any such absence will be considered unexcused.

### **LIMITS OF PARTICIPATION**

A student who participates on both varsity and junior varsity teams may not play in a number of games that exceeds the maximum number allowed in that sport in a week or season. A student may not compete on both a varsity and junior varsity team on the same day.

### **ALL STAR GAMES**

Students who have completed their eligibility in a sport may participate in no more than one all-star game that sports season prior to graduation from high school.

### **RECRUITING STATEMENT**

Coach, school personnel, or anyone connected to an athletic program are not to use undue influence to discuss or otherwise promote transfers or change in residence or residence arrangements with any student, parent, or other person of influence with that student. No PWCS staff member should knowingly support or permit such activity for the purpose of facilitating activity participation to take place.

## 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;
- Dismissal from all activities for a period of one year following the date of the conviction;
- A fine from the Virginia High School League.

**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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Dr. Steven L. Walts



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*Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) does not discriminate in employment or in its educational programs and activities against qualified individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, age, marital status, veteran status, or disability. PWCS provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following individual(s) will handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies, including Section 504 and Title IX:*

*Associate Superintendent for Human Resources*

*Prince William County Public Schools*

*P.O. Box 389*

*Manassas, VA 20108*