

## INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

### I. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for student participation in and the District's conducting of interscholastic athletic activities.

### II. SCOPE

This policy applies to Shelby County Schools students, eligible Home School students in grades 6-12, and Shelby County Schools athletic programs. The provisions to this policy relative to youth sports-related injuries/concussions apply to each elementary, middle/junior high, and high school within Shelby County Schools.

### III. POLICY STATEMENT

#### Participation

School interscholastic athletic programs must place the highest priority on academic achievement and character development. Participation in interscholastic athletics as an extracurricular activity provides students with important skills and habits that can assist in character development and academic proficiency; such as, team building, leadership, self-discipline, healthy competition, integrity and physical fitness. Shelby County Schools, therefore, requires school athletic personnel to monitor the academic progress of student athletes by encouraging them to complete their school assignments on time, reviewing their academic progress and providing them with information to obtain academic support, when necessary.

Shelby County Schools considers participation in interscholastic athletics a privilege afforded to students by the District. Therefore, participation in interscholastic athletics is not protected by due process appeals procedures related to student discipline that are afforded to all students under state law or Board Policy. Student athletes shall be subject to athletic sanctions, up to and including dismissal from participation in interscholastic athletics for negative or inappropriate behavior, at any time during a calendar year. The Superintendent shall develop conduct guidelines for

participation in interscholastic athletics. In addition, student athletes whose behavior also violates the Shelby County Schools Student Code of Conduct shall be subject to disciplinary actions outlined in the Code.

Shelby County Schools, district administrators, principals, athletic directors and coaches must follow state law (e.g., background check/fingerprint provisions for referees and officials - See policy 4053 Background Checks) and appropriate policies, rules and regulations established by SCS, the Athletic Policy Determining Committee (which governs the Shelby County Interscholastic Athletic Association), the Tennessee Secondary Schools Athletic Association (TSSAA) and the National College Athletics Association (NCAA). Additionally, principals shall be held responsible for the administration and control of the interscholastic athletic program within his/her school.

Shelby County Schools believes that male and female students should have an equal opportunity to participate in interscholastic athletic activities, including equality of opportunity in sports offerings, in equipment purchases and in educational opportunities.

### **Information Required to Participate**

Before being allowed to participate in the first practice session of a sport, the following information must be on file in the principal's office for each participant:

#### District Students

- Written evidence that the student has permission to participate. This must be signed by the parent or guardian.
- Written evidence that the student has passed a physical examination. This must be signed by a doctor of medicine, osteopathic physician, physician assistant, or certified nurse practitioner. Physical examinations must be given on or after MAY 1 and are then current for thirteen months or the entire upcoming school year.
- Written evidence that the student is covered by a family insurance policy. This statement must list the name of the company and be signed by the parent or guardian. If the student is not covered by a family policy, the student must have the special senior high football policy or the student insurance which covers all middle, ninth and senior high sports except senior high football.
- If an athlete goes to an athletic screening examination and is referred to another physician for further evaluation, the parents or guardian must provide the coach with written evidence that the student has passed a physical examination and the physician must address the condition for Athletic Program General Rules

and Regulations which the student was referred. The physician must also specify any accommodations that are needed or must be made.

### Home School Students

- In addition to the requirements above, Home School Students must comply with TSSAA Minimum Eligibility Requirements under the Home School Rule of the applicable TSSAA Handbook.

### **Verification of Age for Grades 6 through 12**

Verification of birth date is required for athletic eligibility in all sports for District and Home School students in Grades 6 through 12.

### **Grade Point Average**

Students desiring to participate in interscholastic athletic activities are encouraged to maintain, at minimum, a semester grade point average (GPA) of 2.0.

### **Provisions Relative to Youth Sports-Related Injuries/Concussions**

It is the policy of the Shelby County Schools to adopt and adhere to all relevant portions of Tennessee law (TCA 68-55-502); Tennessee Department of Health guidance/regulations; and the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association policy related to youth sports-related injuries/concussions.

All youth athletes who show signs, symptoms and behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the activity or competition for evaluation by a licensed health care professional, if available, and, if not, by the coach or other designated person. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Concussion Signs and Symptoms Checklist shall be utilized in determining whether a youth athlete suffered from a possible concussion.

A youth athlete who has been removed from play shall not return to the practice or competition during which the youth athlete suffered, or is suspected to have suffered, a concussion and not return to play or participate in any supervised team activities involving physical exertion, including games, competitions or practices, until the youth athlete is evaluated by a health care provider and receives written clearance from the health care provider for a full or graduated return to play. This shall not apply if there is a legitimate explanation other than a concussion for the signs, symptoms or behaviors observed.

## **Guidelines for Conducting Interscholastic Athletic Activities**

### **Hiring of Coaches**

Principals must make sure that TSSAA and SCS policies are followed if he/she thinks he/she may need a non-faculty coach. A letter from the principal to the Athletic Director must be sent requesting this assistance. The position will then be advertised. Next, the administrator responsible for student services (or Superintendent's designee) and the Athletic Director must approve this request. An application will have to be completed including fingerprinting and background check. Then, the TSSAA will have to approve the request. Until all these steps are followed, no non-faculty coach can be assigned. Please note that all new teachers hired in 2000 and thereafter who coach, will be required to attend the TSSAA coaches' certification program. Every coach is to finish his/her season once it is scheduled.

### **Safety/Sportsmanship**

Safety always must be the number one concern. Principals must make sure the "Heat Stress Guidelines" and "Lightning Guidelines" are followed, that each coach has an emergency plan ready in case of injuries, that no athlete is allowed to practice unless a current physical, parent permission and proof of insurance form is on file. Emergency cards are to be taken to all practices, scrimmages and games. Good sportsmanship is required. Coaches and players are to set examples of good sportsmanship at all times. Nothing else will be acceptable.

### **Scheduling of Athletic Events**

The principal is authorized to schedule events for his/her school subject to the approval of the Superintendent.

Athletic events must adhere to the following scheduling rules:

- All athletic practice must be held outside of school hours unless the specific practice is approved on an annual basis by the Board of Education and reflected in the minutes.
- There shall be no games or matches scheduled during examination week until examinations are completed.
- All practice session and games shall be under the supervision of qualified personnel.
- Middle school and high school coaching positions can be assigned to non-faculty if the position has been advertised and no full-time or retired employee

with a teaching license who meets the qualifications required for coaching the specific sport in question is available.

- All TSSAA regulations must be followed.
- All non-faculty coaches must be approved by the principal, the administrator responsible for student services (or Superintendent's designee) and the TSSAA.

## **Revenue Collection Rules and Procedures**

Whenever money is collected for admission to an athletic contest, a ticket must be given to the customer.

- A ticket reconciliation report is required for all events for which a fee is charged.
- The ticket reconciliation report and money must be given to the principal or principal designee for deposit within three (3) days of the event. However, it is recommended that money be deposited daily.
- For further details for paid admission and collections/deposits, please refer to the Tennessee Internal School Uniform Accounting Policy Manual, Section 5, pp. 5-5 and 5-6. A copy of the Manual should be located at each school's main office. It is also located on the State's website at <http://www.state.tn.us/education/fa/ed331936sec5.pdf>

## **Security Rule**

Each school must have an administrator or designee at every athletic contest. TSSAA and this policy require an administrator to be present at each varsity football, basketball and soccer contest. Each administrator or designee must identify himself/herself to all who are directing or supervising the contest. Also, an administrator and police officer(s) must be present at each middle school and ninth grade football and basketball contest. Principals of 7-12 schools are required to have police officers at all football and basketball contests. The employment of police officers and the number to be employed at all other athletic contests is also left to the discretion of the principal.

## **IV. RESPONSIBILITY**

A. Shelby County Schools shall adhere to the rules and regulations for student athletes that are adopted by the Tennessee Secondary Schools Athletic Association (TSSAA).

B. Shelby County Schools shall adhere to the rules and regulations for student athletes that are adopted by the Shelby County Interscholastic Athletic Association.

The Shelby County Interscholastic Athletic Association (SCIAA), governed by the Athletic Policy Determining Committee, is responsible for developing policies, rules and regulations governing the activities of students and coaches and for interpreting this policy, the rules and regulations to this policy, and the rules and regulations of the TSSAA.

C. The department responsible for student services is responsible for administering this policy, including maintaining all documentation of the completion of a concussion recognition and head injury safety education course program and signed concussion and head injury information sheets for a period of three (3) years.

D. Principals are responsible for overseeing interscholastic activities and scheduling athletic events at their schools and for providing secure and safe environments. Principals are also responsible for enforcing the nondiscrimination mandates of Title IX in accordance with the SCS Title IX Compliance Pamphlet.

E. The principal, school athletic director, and administrator responsible for coordinating athletics are responsible for ensuring that student athletes adhere to all ethical and other standards and that student athletes are disciplined for violations of the policy and its administrative rules and regulations.

F. The school athletic director is responsible for ensuring that student athletes and parents receive information on policies and rules and regulations governing participation in sports activities, including the rules and regulations of the NCAA. The athletic director is responsible for collecting and maintaining all related health service requirements, including. The school athletic director is also responsible for ensuring that the academic performance of student athletes is monitored during the entire school year and is responsible for ensuring that those students' progress reports and report card grades are reviewed.

G. School athletic directors and coaches are responsible for annually completing a concussion recognition and head injury safety education course program approved by the Tennessee Department of Health.

School athletic directors and coaches are responsible, on a yearly basis, for signing and returning a concussion and head injury information sheet to the Superintendent prior to initiating practice or competition for the year.

School athletic directors and coaches are also responsible for ensuring that, on a yearly basis, students and their parents review a concussion and head injury information sheet and that the parents of students under 18 years of age sign and

return the sheet prior to the youth athlete's initiating practice or competition. Student athletes 18 years of age or older must sign and return the concussion information sheet prior to initiating practice or competition.

H. Coaches are responsible for disseminating information to students on policies and regulations governing their participation in sports activities. Coaches are also responsible for monitoring the yearlong academic progress of student athletes and are responsible for reviewing the progress reports and report card grades for those students.

I. Parents are responsible for submitting appropriate medical records and permission forms authorizing their child to participate in an athletic activity.

J. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children maintain sportsmanlike conduct before, during and after athletic events.

K. All student athletes are responsible for maintaining high academic standards and sportsmanlike conduct before, during and after athletic events.

L. The Superintendent is responsible for ensuring that this policy is followed.

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Legal References:

1. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 U.S.C. §1681et. seq.)
2. Title 49, Chapter 12, Part 3 - Part Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children
3. Tennessee Internal School Uniform Accounting Policy Manual, Section 5, pp. 5-5 and 5-6.
4. TCA 68-55-502
5. TCA 49-5-413

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Cross References:

1. 6013 Participation in School Programs
2. SCIAA Guide for Student Athletes and Parents
3. NCAA Eligibility Rules and Regulations
4. TSSAA Handbook