



Unicoi County Schools
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Homeschool Student Participation in Athletic Competitions Policy

Policy Statement:

The Unicoi County Board of Education acknowledges the rights of homeschool students within our district to participate in athletic competitions organized by the district, provided they meet the established eligibility criteria and guidelines outlined herein. This policy aims to ensure fairness, inclusivity, and adherence to applicable regulations governing homeschool participation in interscholastic sports.

Applicability:

This policy applies to homeschool students in sixth through twelfth grades who wish to participate in athletic competitions organized by the district. It is designed to ensure consistent standards and procedures for homeschool participation across middle and high school levels within the district.

Eligibility Criteria:

1. **Declaration of Intent:** Homeschool students wishing to participate in athletic competitions organized by the district must submit a declaration of intent to participate in sports no later than August 1st of each academic year. This declaration shall be submitted to the Unicoi County Board of Education located at 100 Nolichucky Avenue, Erwin.
2. **Age and Grade Level:** Homeschool students must meet age and grade level eligibility requirements as per the rules and regulations governing interscholastic sports in the district.
3. **Academic Standing:** Homeschool students must maintain academic standing consistent with the district's eligibility requirements for student-athletes. They shall provide evidence of satisfactory academic progress, as determined by the Athletic Director, which may include standardized test scores, academic transcripts, or equivalent documentation.
4. **Residency:** Homeschool students participating in athletic competitions must be residents within the boundaries of Unicoi County.
5. **Physical Examination:** Homeschool students must undergo a comprehensive physical examination conducted by a licensed healthcare provider and submit the required medical clearance forms to the Athletic Director prior to participating in any athletic activities.
6. **Behavioral Standards:** Homeschool students participating in athletic competitions are expected to adhere to the same behavioral standards, codes of conduct, and disciplinary policies as their traditionally enrolled peers within the district.
7. **Insurance:** Homeschool students participating in athletic competitions must provide proof of adequate insurance coverage, which may include coverage for sports-related injuries, prior to engaging in athletic activities.

Procedures:

1. **Declaration Submission:** Homeschool students and their parents/guardians shall submit the declaration of intent to participate in sports to the Unicoi County Board of Education by the August 1st deadline.
2. **Verification of Eligibility:** The Athletic Director shall verify the eligibility of homeschool students based on the established criteria outlined in this policy.
3. **Notification of Acceptance:** Upon verification of eligibility, the Athletic Director will provide a list of the eligible homeschool athletes to all coaches.
4. **Limitations:** Homeschool students seeking to participate in competitive teams that require try-outs or have limited roster spots are not guaranteed placement solely based on their declaration of intent to participate. These teams may have specific selection criteria, including skill level, experience, and performance, which all participants, including homeschool students, must meet. While homeschool students are encouraged to try out for such teams, final selection decisions rest with the coaching staff in accordance with the team's established selection process. The district shall ensure transparency and fairness in the selection process for competitive teams, providing equal opportunities for all eligible participants, including homeschool students, to try out and demonstrate their abilities.
5. **Fees:** Homeschool students will not be imposed any additional fees other than those fees established for all members of the team. It is the expectation of all athletes that they participate in fundraising activities or the equivalent.
6. **Compliance Monitoring:** The Athletic Director/Coach shall monitor the compliance of homeschool students with the eligibility requirements throughout the academic year and take appropriate actions in case of non-compliance.
7. **Appeals Process:** Homeschool students or their parents/guardians may appeal decisions regarding eligibility or participation in athletic competitions through the established appeals process outlined by the district.

Compliance and Review:

This policy shall be reviewed periodically by the Unicoi County Board of Education to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant laws and regulations governing homeschool participation in athletic competitions. Any proposed revisions to this policy shall be subject to approval by the Unicoi County Board of Education.

The intent to participate form and accompanying documents can be found online at www.unicoischools.com.

Adoption Date:

This policy shall be adopted by the Unicoi County Board of Education on June 4, 2024 and shall take effect immediately thereafter.