HF2591
Frequently Asked Questions
Preliminary Guidance

Eighth Grade Students Playing High School Sports

Q1: May eighth grade students participate in interscholastic athletic contests or competitions?
A1: *Yes. As per **281-36.1(280)**, if the board of directors of a school district, the authorities in charge of nonpublic school, or the governing board of a charter school adopt a local policy to allow it.*

Q2: In what sports may eighth graders participate in high school interscholastic athletic contests or competitions?
A2: *This is a local decision.*

Q3: At what level (freshman, sophomore, JV, varsity) may eighth grade students participate in interscholastic high school athletic contests or competitions?
A3: *This is a local decision.*

Q4: May eighth grade students participate in both high school interscholastic athletic contests and competitions, and also participate in the same sport for an eighth-grade team?
A4: *No. As per **281-36.1(280)**, "An eighth-grade student who participates pursuant to this policy shall not also participate in the same sports season for an eighth-grade team."*

Even if a junior high season is different from the high school season, the eighth-grade student may only participate on the junior high team or the high school team, not both.

Q5: Must eighth grade students meet academic requirements in order to participate in high school interscholastic athletic contests or competitions?
A5: *No. This is similar to current eighth-grade student participation in summer baseball and softball. There are no academic requirements for those eight grade students.*

Q6: May a school district, non-public school, or charter school implement academic requirements as a condition for eighth grade students to participate in high school interscholastic athletic contests or competitions?
A6: *Yes. This is a local decision.*

Q7: May a school district, non-public school, or charter school limit the number of eighth grade students permitted to participate in high school interscholastic athletic contests or competitions?
A7: *Yes. This is a local decision.*

Q8: How many semesters of eligibility does a student have if he/she participates in high school interscholastic athletic contests or competitions as an eighth-grade student?

A8: *As per **36.8(2)"e,"** "A student who meets all other qualifications may be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics for a maximum of eight consecutive semesters upon entering ninth grade for the first time, including students who participated during eighth grade."*

If an eighth-grade student participates in high school athletic contests or competitions, he/she still has eight semesters of eligibility once he/she enters ninth grade.

Q9: Is an eighth-grade student required to present a pre-participation physical form in order to participate in high school interscholastic athletic contests or competitions?

A9: *Yes. And, as per **36.7(1)**, the determination by the person conducting the examination that the student may safely engage in athletic competition will consider, "the nature of the athletic competition and the student's health and development."*

Q10: At what school may an eighth-grade student participate in high school interscholastic athletic contests or competitions?

A10: *An eighth-grade student may participate only at a school where the student is otherwise eligible to participate under applicable enrollment, attendance, and eligibility rules and where the local board or governing authority has adopted a policy allowing eighth-grade participation. Examples:*

Public School District

An eighth-grade student who resides in a district in which the Board of Directors adopts a policy to allow eighth graders to participate in high school interscholastic athletic contests or competitions may participate in the high school in that district. If the district has multiple high schools, the district will determine which high school the student may participate.

Cooperative Sharing Agreement

An eighth grade student who attends a school in which the district Board Directors, the authorities in charge of nonpublic school, or the governing board of a charter school adopts a policy to allow eighth graders to participate in high school interscholastic athletic contests or competitions, and whose district is in a cooperative sharing agreement with a district, non-public school, or charter school that also adopts a policy to allow eighth graders to participate in high school interscholastic athletic contests or competitions, may participate as part of the cooperative sharing agreement.

Non-Public School or Charter School Continuation

If an eighth-grade student attends a non-public school or charter school and a high school with the same governing body has adopted a policy to allow eighth graders to participate in high school interscholastic athletic contests or competitions, the eighth-grade student may participate in high school interscholastic athletic contests or competitions at that school.

District of Residence
If the high school with the same governing body as the non-public or charter school does not offer the interscholastic sport and is not in a cooperative sharing agreement with another school, the eighth-grade student may participate in his/her district of residence.

If an eighth-grade student attends a non-public school or charter school and has no high school with the same governing body, the eighth-grade student may participate in high school interscholastic athletic contests or competitions in his/her district of residence.

Q11: If an eighth-grade student who participates in high school interscholastic athletic contests or competitions enters ninth grade at a school different than the school he/she participated as an eighth-grade student, is he/she immediately eligible to participate in varsity interscholastic athletic contests or competitions?
A11: *No. The student would be ineligible to participate in varsity athletics for a period of 140 calendar days.*

Q12: May an eighth-grade student who attends a school in a state other than Iowa participate in an Iowa high school interscholastic athletic contest or competition?
A12: *No.*

Q13: May a coach of a high school program coach an eighth-grade student out of season during the school year if the school district, non-public school, or charter school allows eighth grade students to participate in interscholastic athletic contests or competitions?
A13: *No.*

Q14: May seventh grade students now participate in high school interscholastic baseball or softball contests or competitions following the completion of their seventh-grade year?
A14: *No.*

Q15: Will sixth grade students now be permitted to participate in Junior High/Middle School athletics?
A15: *No.*

Q16: Will eighth grade students be counted in the Basic Educational Data Survey (BEDS) for the purposes of classification?
A16: *No.*

Q17: If a district adopts a policy allowing eighth-grade participation, is a coach required to place an eighth-grade student on a high school team?

A17: *No. Adoption of a policy permits participation but does not guarantee team membership, playing time, or placement at a particular level.*

Q18: May a school district allow eighth-grade participation in some sports but not others?

A18: *Yes. This is a local decision.*

Ineligibility Days

Q1: What is the period of ineligibility from varsity competition for a student who transfers or open enrolls to a different school?

A1: *One hundred and forty (140) calendar days.*

Q2: When does the period of ineligibility from varsity competition begin for a student who transfers or open enrolls to a different school?

A2: ***Winter/Spring/Summer Sports***
The first day the student is physically present to attend classes in the school.

Fall Sports
The Monday of the first week in which competition is permitted in the sport in which the student participates.

Q3: When calculating a student's period of varsity ineligibility for students who transfer or open enroll to another school, are summer days counted?

A3: *Only if the student was physically present to attend classes in the school* ***prior to the end of the school year.***

Q4: How will the ineligibility days of students who transferred or open enrolled to a different school prior to August 1, 2026, be counted?

A4: *School administrators should count one hundred and forty calendar days from the day the student was physically present to attend classes in the school he/she transferred or open enrolled to.*

If the student transferred or open enrolled after the end of the school year, ***and the student plays a fall sport****, the one hundred and forty days are counted, beginning with the Monday of the first week of competition in that sport.*