

Frequently Asked Questions for Student-Athletes and Their Parents

(Some of the questions and answers may apply to middle school students as well)

1. After what date is a physical accepted for the current school year?

A physical must be taken on or after May 1st to be valid for the current school year. For example, a physical taken on or after May 1, 2010, will be valid for the 2010-2011 school year. This applies to middle school student-athletes and members of the middle schools' Cross Country club as well.

2. My child had a physical with the last calendar year; however, it was not completed on or after May 1st and my insurance carrier will not approve another physical. Are any exceptions made in this situation? Where can I get a physical?

The Nebraska School Activities Association set the criteria which all participating schools must follow. Every effort is made to share this information with parents. Unfortunately, no exceptions can be made. You may contact your school's activities director or the district office for activities for information on where to get a sports physical.

3. What paperwork is required to participate in interscholastic athletics?

The Nebraska School Activities Association and Millard Public Schools requires that some paperwork be completed and signed by the appropriate people before a student is permitted to participate in interscholastic athletics. The required paperwork included the following:

- a. Paperwork Requirements for Athletic Participation- must be signed by the parent/guardian and student-athlete.
- b. Interscholastic Emergency Information Card- must be signed by the parent/guardian.
- c. Parent Permission Form- must be signed by the parent/guardian and student-athlete
- d. Athletic Pre-Participation Clearance Form- must be signed by the doctor who provides the sport physical.
- e. As mentioned above, all athletes are required to have a valid sport physical prior to the athlete's first sport of the school year.

Our schools also provide additional handouts and forms that we ask our students and parents to read.

4. What is the difference between interscholastic athletics and activities and intramural athletics and activities?

Interscholastic athletics and activities are programs in which the competition takes place between different schools. Intramural athletics and activities are programs in which all of the activity takes place within the school--- the students do not play against the students from other schools. Both our high schools and middle schools offer intramural activities. You need to contact your high school for information about its intramural activities. Our middle schools offer intramural volleyball and basketball for any interested 6th, 7th, or 8th grade student.

5. Are athletic participation fees charged to students in order for those students to participate in interscholastic athletics?

Yes, Millard Public Schools does have an athletic participation fee policy. At the high schools each student-athlete must pay a \$60.00 fee to participate in interscholastic athletics. At our middle schools the fee is determined by the sport in which the student-athlete participates. For those students who play football, there is a \$40.00 fee. For those students who play basketball, volleyball, wrestling, and track, there is a \$30.00 fee for each sport. At our middle schools there is also a \$25.00 fee for each intramural sport in which the student participates. These fees are used by the schools to support the athletic program. They help to offset equipment and uniform costs, game officials' fees, team transportation costs, and other costs associated with the operation of athletic programs. Students who qualify for and are registered for the free and reduced price lunch program may be able to request a waiver for the athletic fees. The parents of these students should contact the activities directors at their school for additional information.

6. Can my son or daughter compete on their school team and a club team at the same time?

The Nebraska School Activities Association has stated that "Any student who participates in any athletic contest other than as a representative of his/her high school during the season of the sport involved becomes ineligible to represent his/her school in that sport for one or more contests or the remainder of the season." There is currently an exception for students who compete on the school swimming and diving team. Please check with your school's activities director for the conditions in which this exception is permitted.

This NSAA guideline does not apply to middle school students at this time.

7. Can my son or daughter attend a private school or be home schooled and participate on a school's athletic team?

No, only students currently enrolled in a Millard school as a full-time student are eligible to participate. The Nebraska School Activities Association has stated that exempt-school or home-school students, unless enrolled in a minimum of twenty credit hours of schoolwork in the member high school, are not eligible to represent a member school in NSAA activities, regardless of the level of participation or competition.

Students wishing to compete on interscholastic athletic teams or in interscholastic activities at the middle school level must be enrolled at that middle school.

8. Can my son or daughter attend Horizon High School and/or a career academy program and play sports?

It is possible to attend Horizon High School and/or be enrolled in a career academy program and play sports. Please check with your school's activities director to ensure that your student meets all eligibility requirements.

9. Who should I contact if I have a concern with my child's coach, practice times, etc.?

All concerns should be directed first to the coach and then to the school's activities director. We urge you to contact them as most of the time the concern can be resolved quickly and to all parties' satisfaction. Please read the "Letter from the District Director of Activities and Athletics."

10. Can my middle school child participate in open gym or work outs in the weight room of the high school they will be attending?

Only currently enrolled students of the high school are allowed to participate in open gyms/weight room activities during the school year as well as open gyms/weight room activities for the high school team during the summer. High school summer camps that are advertised for age limits and/or grade limits may be open to middle school and elementary school students. Please review the age and/or grade limits provided on the camp fliers.

11. If my child transfers to another school, is my child immediately eligible to participate in the athletic program?

Maybe yes, maybe no! The answer to this question may be complex depending upon the circumstances of the transfer. For a specific answer when a child changes schools with no change in domicile, please contact your school's activities director.

12. Does Millard Public Schools provide accident insurance for my child while participating in extracurricular athletics?

Millard Public Schools does not carry an accident policy to cover injuries sustained in interscholastic athletics. Accident insurance is the responsibility of the parents or guardians and accident insurance is an eligibility requirement for athletic participation in the district. Student insurance may be purchased for a fee and the forms for this purchase are available at your middle school or high school.

13. Can my child participate in extracurricular activities and athletics if my child was absent on game day or the day of a performance?

Classroom attendance on the day of a performance, contest, or game is required. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by site administration prior to the performance, contest, or game. This is interpreted to mean that the student will attend all classes unless previously excused by a site administrator. Illness, staying home to rest, or sleeping in are examples of unexcused absences for extracurricular participation. Students not attending classes on a Friday prior to a Saturday performance contest, or game must be cleared by a site administrator prior to participation in the Saturday performance, contest, or game. Please contact your school's activities director if you have questions about this policy.

Middle school students must be attending classes prior to 12 noon on the day of the performance, contest, or game in order to participate. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by a site administrator.

14. What does my child need to do to earn a letter?

School awards and lettering are determined by the school that your child attends. The criteria to earn a letter at one high school may not be same as the other high schools in the district. Please check with your school's activities office on information regarding the criteria that a student-athlete must meet to earn a letter.

15. How do I voice a concern regarding my child's participation?

If you have a concern to discuss with the coach, please contact the coach to set up an appointment.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches include:

- Treatment of your child, mentally and physically
- Ways to help your child improve
- Concerns about your child's behavior

Communication that coaches expect from parents includes:

- Concerns expressed directly to the coach
- Notification of any scheduled conflict well in advance
- Specific concerns regarding a coach's philosophy and/or expectations

Issues that are not appropriate to bring up in discussions with coaches include:

- Playing time of student-athletes
- Team strategy
- Game strategy
- Other student-athletes

Coaches may choose to mention the above, but we encourage our coaches and parents to focus on the behavior and performance of your student-athlete as well as to not mention the above items during discussions with parents. The athletic experience may offer some of the most rewarding moments in a student's life. However, it is important to remember that there may be times when things will not go the way that you and your child wish. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be the best for all students involved. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings based upon emotion usually do not promote resolution.

What can a parent do if the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution? Call and set up an appointment with your school's activities director to discuss the situation. At this meeting the appropriate next step can be determined. Please read the "Letter from the District Director of Activities and Athletics."

16. What equipment and clothing will the student need to provide in order to participate in interscholastic athletic programs?

Students will need to provide their own elastic waist shorts, t-shirts, socks, towels, and cold weather attire as needed. Various sports also have other specific equipment and/or clothing that each student will need to provide. Check with your school's activities director for the sport specific equipment and/or clothing that each student needs to provide for participation in that sport.

QUESTIONS SPECIFICALLY FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

1. Who may try-out for middle school interscholastic athletic sports?

Try-outs are held for football, volleyball, and basketball. These try-outs are open to 7th and 8th grade students. Those students not selected to the A-team for football do get to play against teams from other schools whose players have similar skills and abilities. The basketball teams offer C-teams for those students who are not selected to play with the A-team or B-team.

2. How are the football teams determined at the middle school level?

Athletes may try-out for the A-team regardless of weight during the first three days of practice. Those not selected for the A-team are then divided into teams of similar ability.

3. Why don't the middle school teams play as many games as other youth programs such as the YMCA, KWAA, or MAA?

The governing body for middle school interscholastic athletics is the Nebraska School Activities Association. Game limits are determined by the membership of the NSAA; however, state law (Rule 10) has declared the maximum number of games that a middle team may play. Currently Rule 10 states that middle school football teams may play a maximum of four games. The other interscholastic teams may play a maximum of 8 games.

4. Is cross country considered an interscholastic sport in the middle schools?

At this time cross country is not considered an interscholastic sport in Millard Public Schools at the middle school level. Cross country is offered as school club. Students who choose to join the Cross Country Club at their middle school are required to have a sport physical before they are allowed to participate with the club, but members of the Cross Country club are not charged a participation fee to join this club. Students and parents should know that state law (Rule 10) does not permit 6th graders who are members of their schools' Cross Country Club to compete in sport activities against other schools as members of their Cross Country Club. Please talk with your school's activities director to find out what needs to happen when our Cross Country clubs are involved in activities that involved other schools.

5. What does Rule 10 say about middle school interscholastic athletic programs?

Rule 10 basically states two things that govern middle school interscholastic athletic programs that apply to Millard Public Schools (and many other school districts in Nebraska): 1) students who have not reached the 7th grade level may not participate in any interscholastic athletic contests against other schools, and 2) that 7th and 8th grade students who participate on school interscholastic athletic teams may not play more than four football games or eight games in all other interscholastic athletic sports. If you have questions regarding the exact phrasing for Rule 10, please call the District Director of Activities and Athletics.

6. My child will be 15 years old prior to August 2. Can my child participate in the middle school sports program?

The rules of the NSAA do not permit a middle school student who turns 15 on or before August 1 to compete on a middle school sports team. However, that student may be eligible to participate on a high school team. If your student does choose to participate on a high school team while attending a middle school, please note that the high school eligibility period for the student will begin at that time. Please talk with the activities director at the high school where your student will attend for more details and what must be done to ensure the student's athletic eligibility at the high school.