

SASKATCHEWAN HIGH SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

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TO: GRADE 9 AND 10 STUDENTS AND PARENTS

RE: SHSAA TRANSFER POLICY GUIDELINES

The Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association adopted a new transfer policy at its Annual General Meeting in June 2012. The revised transfer policy was presented to the SHSAA Membership at this meeting with the overall purpose aimed at ensuring that there remain a level playing field in the world of school sport. Added to this purpose, limiting school transfers without a corresponding family move is aimed at saving school programs that may tend to vanish as a result of student-athletes moving to neighboring schools. The observed effect of these transfers is that students who do remain at their home school are left without enough players to field a team, thus they choose to leave the activity due to the loss of key personnel. The other effect is that those who do remain at their home school are now on the bench or cut because students have transferred to their school and thus take their spots. The objective of school sport throughout the country and in the United States is to offer activities that will help teach and reinforce skills that will prepare our students for the next phase of their lives in addition to providing a skill set that will arm them with coping strategies preparing them for the pressures and obstacles that the adult world presents to our graduating students. School sport, often referred to as the 'Other Half of Education', offers the opportunity for our student-athletes to prepare for the real world pressures through the medium of sport. Although a small percentage of student athletes will participate at elite levels of sport or achieve an athletic scholarship, it is not the mandate or mission of school sport to prepare students for elite sport or athletic scholarships.

Over the past number of years, the Association has witnessed transfers of students from one school to another without a corresponding family move. There have been many factors for these transfers and in a number of cases, the moves have been predicated by, but not limited to, a desire for the student to seek a better athletic program, follow a particular group of athletes, follow a particular coach or they have been unduly influenced by individuals for reasons that are not the fabric of school sport philosophy.

The revised SHSAA Transfer Policy was approved at the 2012 AGM. The policy states that once a student has begun their Grade 10 classes at the school of their choice, they are establishing their home school. Their entrance into Grade 10 corresponds to the definition of the period of eligibility listed in the SHSAA Bylaws. These bylaws state that a student is eligible for three consecutive years at that school regardless of whether they participate in sport or not. Once this school of choice is declared, that becomes the school of athletic eligibility for that student. Should a student choose to transfer schools within this three year period of eligibility without a family move, they will be declared ineligible at their new school. This policy has revisions different from other jurisdictions across the continent. The first revision of the transfer policy is that a student that transfers without a corresponding family move will be ineligible at their new school ***in only the activities they participated at their former school the previous year.*** That means the student will be eligible in any other activity at their new school that they did not participate at their former school. The second revision is that ***they would be eligible the following year (2014-2015) in the activities they participated at their former school*** should they still have a year of eligibility left (this year's Grade 10's - Grade 10: 2012-2013; Grade 11: 2013-2014; Grade 12: 2014-2015).

In 2012-2013, the first year of implementation for this new policy, the policy was challenged. Due to the timing of the approval of this policy, there were a number of situations where transfers were already in progress before the policy was approved. The appeal board that ruled on some appeals noted that the new policy is indeed ***a sound policy*** and because the 2012-2013 school year was the first year of implementation, this year's Grade 10 class would be the only students that would be governed by the new policy.

The message that this year's Grade 9 students (Grade 10 in 2013-2014) must hear is that by enrolling in Grade 10 this August, they are establishing their school in terms of athletic eligibility. By policy, these students are free to choose any school they wish as they enter Grade 10 without penalty. When they do so, they are establishing their athletic eligibility. The message for this year's Grade 10 students (Grade 11 in 2013-2014) is that they are now governed by this new policy and that they have already established their school of athletic eligibility. Those Grade 10's that are thinking of changing schools must be aware that they will be ineligible to represent the new school in any of the SHSAA activities that they participated at their former school during the 2012-2013 school year. This is applicable only to those that do not have a corresponding complete family move.

Thank you for your understanding of school sport and the implementation of this new Transfer Policy.

Yours sincerely;

Kevin Vollet
Executive Director
SHSAA

C SHSAA Executive