08/11/14 – Middle School Students Repeating Options and Age Requirements for Interscholastic Participation

[August 11, 2014](http://khsaa.org/081114-middle-school-students-repeating-options-and-age-requirements-for-interscholastic-participation/) [Athletic Department Blog Updates](http://khsaa.org/category/sports-blogs/athletic-department-blog/)

The following is related SOLELY to interscholastic play for grades 5-8 students in grades 6 through 8 play.

Through the completion of the 2014-2015 school year, policies regarding the participation of repeating students at the levels of play below high school interscholastic athletics (below grade nine(9)) shall be determined by the school council pursuant to KRS 160.345 (2) (i).

Effective with the 2015-2016 school year, policies regarding the participation of repeating students at the levels of play below high school interscholastic athletics shall be implemented pursuant to 702 KAR 7:065 as follows:

* Beginning with the 2015-2016 school year and thereafter, require that no student enrolled initially in grade (5) through grade (8) during the 2015-2016 school year or thereafter who is repeating a grade for any reason be eligible to compete in interscholastic competition involving students enrolled in grades six (6) through eight (8) while repeating a grade;
* Beginning with the 2015-2016 school year, require that a student who turns:
	+ Fifteen (15) years of age prior to August 1 of the current school year shall not be eligible for interscholastic athletics in Kentucky in competition against students exclusively enrolled in grades eight (8) and below;
	+ Fourteen (14) years of age prior to August 1 of the current school year shall not be eligible for interscholastic athletics in Kentucky in competition against students exclusively enrolled in grades seven (7) and below; and
	+ Thirteen (13) years of age prior to August 1 of the current school year shall not be eligible for interscholastic athletics in Kentucky in competition against students exclusively enrolled in grades six (6) and below;

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS/UPDATE – MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS REGULATIONS- UPDATED AUGUST 11, 2014**

**Please refer to this blog for updates and responses to frequently asked questions to guide you throughout the year.  If you have an immediate question, please contact Associate Commissioner Butch Cope (bcope@khsaa.org) at the KHSAA.**

Authority and Jurisdiction

*What is Middle School as used in these regulations and rules?*Middle School is defined by competition conducted between grades 6 through 8 to align with assessment parameters and divisions.

*Can SBC or Local Board of Education enact a rule/policy that is either more restrictive or more lenient than the restrictions in the regulation?*A school based council or Local Board of Education MAY make policies MORE restrictive than the KHSAA policies.  A school based council or Local Board of Education MAY NOT make policies that are LESS restrictive or more permissive.

*How are rules created/revised that will be applied statewide?*The Commissioner appoints a Middle School Advisory Committee within the parameters of 702 KAR 7:065. This committee meets not less than annually to review the regulation, discuss policies, and consider any potential changes to the middle school section of the regulation. If any changes were proposed, the Committee forwards them to the Commissioner for presentation to the Kentucky Board of Education as part of an annual report required within the regulation. Following that presentation, any change accompanies the high school changes in the required regulatory review process including approval by the Administrative Regulation Review SubCommittee of the Kentucky General Assembly. These rules can also be changed by direct action of the Kentucky Board of Education, or by action approved through the Kentucky General Assembly.

*Who are the members of the Middle School Advisory Committee?*
The roster of members is found on the KHSAA website at <http://khsaa.org/current-members-middle-school-advisory-committee/>

*How is communication handled between, and to, the KHSAA and the middle schools?*
Current communication is through the Middle School Blogpost as well as e-mail notices to Superintendents and other Athletic Administrators.  The KHSAA is working to develop a database of schools, primarily from the listings at the Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Non-Public School Commission. Each school will be asked to designate a single individual for reporting and communication purposes. Initial communication will also be with the Superintendents of each local school district with the request that the information be forwarded to the appropriate personnel.

**Requirements/Recommendations for Eligibility**

*Repeating Students*
In 2014-15, athletic eligibility at the middle school level of a student repeating a grade is a local school district decision.

Beginning in 2015-16, students that are repeating a grade will not be eligible to participate in middle school athletics (competition for grades 6-8) for any reason.

*Age Restrictions*For 2014-15, there is no statewide age limit with regard to participation at the middle school level.  This could be a local district decision.

Beginning in 2015-16, the following limits have been approved through the regulatory process and will be in effect:

* A student that turns Fifteen (15) years of age prior to August 1 of the current school year shall not be eligible for interscholastic athletics in Kentucky in competition against students exclusively enrolled in grades eight (8) and below;
* A student that turns Fourteen (14) years of age prior to August 1 of the current school year shall not be eligible for interscholastic athletics in Kentucky in competition against students exclusively enrolled in grades seven (7) and below; and
* A student that turns Thirteen (13) years of age prior to August 1 of the current school year shall not be eligible for interscholastic athletics in Kentucky in competition against students exclusively enrolled in grades six (6) and below;

*Home School Students*Currently, there are no statewide regulations on home school students participating at the middle school level and any such restriction would be a local level decision.

*Students Enrolled at Other Schools, Including Schools that are not under the same Board of Education*
Currently, there are no statewide regulations that students are to be enrolled at a specific school or school system for participation at the middle school level and any such restriction would be a local level decision.

*If a student is “grandfathered” having “played up” at the high school level in one sport/sport activity, does that “grandfathered” status now permit the student to play a new sport/sport-activity at the high school level?*
No.  A student is grandfathered and remains eligible at the high school only in the sports/sport-activities that they participated in during the 2013-14 school year.

**Coaches**

*Are there any restrictions on middle school coaches being involved in coaching outside teams?*
Currently, there are no statewide regulations on coaching outside teams, and any restrictions with regard to middle school coaches coaching non-school teams would be a local level decision.

*Are there any restrictions on coaching outside levels within the same school system?*
Currently, there are no statewide regulations on other levels within the system, and any restrictions with regard to middle school coaches coaching other levels within the school system would be a local level decision.

*What are the requirements for Middle School Coaches?*
Coaches must adhere to the requirements of KRS 156.070 (2)(f) (age and graduation requirements, <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/statutes/statute.aspx?id=39992>); KRS 160.445 (sports safety course, <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/Statutes/statute.aspx?id=41871>) and KRS 160.380(4) and (6) (background checks, <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/Statutes/statute.aspx?id=40245>).

*Are middle school coaches required to be twenty-one years of age, whether they are paid or not?*
Yes, whether paid or unpaid, per KRS 156.070 (2) (f) (2).  It is not the jurisdiction of the KHSAA or the middle school advisory committee to waive this restriction.

*Are middle school coaches required to complete the Sports Safety Course as listed in KRS 160.445?*Yes.  The Sports Safety Course is available through the KHSAA website.  Since 2014-15 is a transitional year, Athletic Administrators should instruct their coaches the following:
Go to <http://khsaa.org/safety_course/index.php>.  Middle School coaches should click “Don’t Take for Credit”.  The “Take for Credit” option is for High School coaches that are in the KHSAA High School database.  Middle School coaches are advised to print out and keep on file the ending certificate to the course to verify completion. The KHSAA will be working to provide an automated means of monitoring this requirement for the middle schools in the state in the future.

*Do job openings for middle school coaches require posting, application periods, etc.?*
Currently, there are no statewide regulations on posting requirements for middle school coaching positions, and any requirements would be a local level decision but must be compliant with adopted local policies.

*When will the sports safety course be open to middle school coaches?*
Since 2009, the course has been public on the KHSAA website.  Coaches may take the course now.

**Officials**

*Are middle schools required to only use KHSAA licensed officials?*No. This is a local school/school system/conference/association group of schools decision. Licensed officials provide a means of vetting (including background checks) and training, but the use of only licensed officials is not addressed in statewide restrictions.

*Will assigning secretaries have to be used for assigning games (and paid)?*No. This is a local school/school system/conference/association group of schools decision.

*Will schools be able to continue hiring their own officials?*Yes. This is a local school/school system/conference/association group of schools decision.

*Will the Board of Control or the KHSAA set a standard pay rate for officials?*
Per 702 KAR 7:065, middle school athletics is not under the direction of the KHSAA Board of Control. The Middle School Advisory Committee has not recommended a standard pay rate for officials. This is a local school/school system/conference/association group of schools decision.

**Limitation of Seasons**

*Will there be restrictions on students playing on multiple levels of teams in the same sport (i.e. girls middle school basketball, followed by high school, followed by outside play, etc.)?*
It is important to remember that nothing about this regulation changes or supersedes KRS 156.070 (2)(c) which prohibits state or local rules related to 7th and 8th grade students playing on high school teams, and also prohibits a local board from adopting a rule that makes the athletes “choose” one level or the other.

In addition, all local schools must adopt a limit of seasons. That limit of seasons may not exceed the high school limit of seasons (KHSAA Bylaw 23) but is not required to use the same dates. For example, a locally adopted baseball season may not have more than four weeks of preseason practices, eight weeks of games, 36 total contests, 2 total scrimmages and three weeks of postseason play. The decisions related to the time of year, etc. are local decisions and not currently contained in statewide regulations.

*What about kids who leave my practice and go practice with an AAU team, how can we limit this?*There are no statewide rules that address this issue and this would be a local decision.  Currently, at the high school level, only football and basketball have any restrictions to play on outside teams during the school year.

*Will all sports be aligned to play in the same season?*
When a sport or sport-activity season is played at the middle school level remains a local decision. Many schools and systems are limited in the available time in gyms or fields. It was felt by both the original task force and the current Middle School Advisory Committee that this should be left to the local level, thereby allowing schools to address facilities issues on an individual basis.

*Who can teams play?*Schools (single schools or combined teams) may only compete in contests against schools, including combined elementary or middle school teams (including non-public schools/teams) that adhere to the provisions of 702 KAR 7:065(3).

**Requirements/Recommendations for Sports Medicine Coverage**

*Are middle school coaches required to monitor the Heat Index and adhere to the heat index protocols including cancelling practice/games, etc. in certain conditions?*
Yes. Details are on the KHSAA website.

*Are middle school wrestlers required to adhere to the NWCA descent chart and calculations in order to compete?*
Yes. Details are on the KHSAA website.

*Do the statewide rules regarding concussion management, including return to play, apply to middle school level play?*
Yes. Details are on the KHSAA website.

**Dead Period**

*Does the High School Dead Period apply to middle school athletics?*
No. The dead period is a High School rule. There is no statewide middle school rule related to the dead period, and the implementation of such a restriction would be a local level decision.

**Title IX**

*Will the KHSAA Title IX program apply to middle schools (annual reports)?*
No.  However, for any meetings conducted by the KHSAA related to Title IX or other resources, they will be shared with Middle School Administrators to help guide them with compliance.

*Will the KHSAA Title IX visits occur to review middle school facilities?*
No.  However, for any meetings conducted by the KHSAA related to Title IX or other resources, they will be shared with Middle School Administrators to help guide them with compliance.

*Will the KHSAA notify the middle school administrators when they are holding a meeting concerning Title IX?*
Yes.  It will be communicated via the KHSAA website as well as shared with the Educational Cooperative Meetings.

**Physical Exams/Insurance**
*Will middle school students be required to have a physical exam?*
Yes. Each student at the middle school level, prior to trying for a place on a middle school athletic team, shall provide an annual medical examination performed and signed by a physician, physician assistant, advanced practice registered nurse, or chiropractor (if performed within the chiropractic professional’s scope of practice), for each student seeking eligibility to participate in any school sport or sport-activity.

*When does the requirement of the physical exam have to be completed on the middle school form?*
Beginning the first day of the 2014-15 year, physicals will be required to be conducted and completed using middle school form MS01.

*Is there a specific middle school physical form?*
Yes. KHSAA Form MS01 is posted on the KHSAA website. Local schools/districts/associations/groups of schools may supplement that form with additional material but must use the MS01 for the physical examination.

*If a student plays middle school and high school athletics, are both middle school (Form MS01) physical form and the high school (Form GE04) required?*
Yes.  Both forms are needed since wording on the permission form is necessarily different.  The information on the physical part from doctor is the same, but the parent permission/information forms are different and likely always will be for legal reasons.  This part would have to be filled out separately for a student who played both middle and high school athletics.  You could attach one to the other (if middle school form is completed, one could attach the doctor’s part of the middle school form to the high school form) as a grandfathered student, 7th or 8th grader, who plays up to the high school level.

*Will the two forms eventually be combined for students that play both levels?*
No, not planned at this time.  Information cannot be combined for regulatory and legal reasons. Parent permission information is completely different and entry portion (years in school, etc.) are not valid at middle school level.

*Does this now require all students to get new physicals on the new form or when the physicals expire?*Beginning the first day of the 2014-15 school year, no other form is valid. Beginning in 2014-15, physicals must be completed on Form MS01.

*If we used the high school version of the physical part (doctor information), since we had been previously,  could that be attached to the new form where the parent gives permission?* No. MS01 is the only valid form for 2014-2015.

*Does the 6th grade physical that is required suffice for the middle school athletics physical?*
No.  The 6th grade physical that is required in no way covers the same elements as an athletic physical. An entirely new physical form (MS01) would be required to be completed.  It would be up to the approved individual that performed the physical if the requirements in MS01 required a new visit from the patient, or could be completed from existing patient records.

*Are middle school participants required to have insurance up to any medical maximum?*
No. There is no statewide middle school rule related to insurance minimum coverage, and the implementation of such a restriction or requirement would be a local level decision.

*Does the KHSAA Catastrophic Insurance policy apply to middle school students playing solely middle school athletics?*
No. This plan is solely provided to the dues paying member high schools, and covers only the students enrolled in those member schools participating within the restrictions of the KHSAA Handbook.

**Outside Entities**

*Are there requirements for groups that conduct events at the middle school level?*
Yes. Any outside group/organization conducting a school based event at the middle school level is required to submit specific information. This would apply to any entity to which a school, school board, booster club or other related entity issued payment for participation. In addition, the requirement would be in place for any event or entity designating the event as middle school in its promotional or organizational material.
The following is to be published and listed on the KHSAA website:
a) Annual financial reports of all sanctioned and approved events sponsored by the organization
b) Documentation of financial accountability including verification of federal status and tax documents including an annual IRS Form 990