WIAA Transfer Rules and Waivers Quick Facts

The members of the WIAA have established seven Articles which outline requirements for student eligibility. This overview document focuses primarily on addressing some of the most common questions of the membership with respect to the transfer provisions of the Association.

WIAA Bylaws, which outline the provisions of membership in the Association, and the Rules of Eligibility appear in the WIAA Handbook. The reader should refer to that publication or confer with your school athletic director for more complete information. Your AD should always be your first contact for questions or concerns about school sports.

WIAA rules and regulations are established by membership vote. The Annual Meeting is held in the spring of the year when amendments are presented. The interpretation and enforcement of the rules and regulations are the responsibility of the WIAA executive office and Board of Control.

It is the responsibility of member schools to abide by the rules of the Association, to educate students, coaches, parents and others regarding the provisions of membership and Rules of Eligibility and to report to the WIAA all violations of Association provisions.

Student athlete eligibility for all levels of WIAA interscholastic competition is governed by WIAA Rules.

A full-time student may be afforded up to eight consecutive semesters of interscholastic eligibility upon entry into Grade 9. Transferring schools at any time may result in restrictions being imposed on eligibility, or in some cases a denial of eligibility.

I. THE TRANSFER RULE

"A student who transfers from any school into a member school after the sixth consecutive semester following entry into grade 9 shall be ineligible for competition at any level for one calendar year, but may practice, unless the transfer is made necessary by a total change in residence by parent(s)."

II. INTERPRETING THE RULE

- Open enrolled and/or tuition paying students entering 9th and/or 10th grade at the beginning of the school year and who are within the first four consecutive semesters of high school will be afforded unrestricted eligibility provided all other rules governing student eligibility are met.
- Open enrolled and/or tuition paying students entering 11th grade as transfer students are restricted to nonvarsity for one calendar year.
- Open enrolled and/or tuition paying students entering 12th grade as transfer students are ineligible to compete at any level for one calendar year, but may practice.
- 9th grade students who transfer after the beginning of the school year and with written consent from both schools directly involved may be provided non-varsity opportunities for the remainder of the school year. Restrictions are removed upon entering 10th grade.
- 10th or 11th grade students who transfer after the beginning of the school year and with written consent from both schools directly involved may be provided non-varsity opportunities for one calendar year (365 days beginning with first day of attendance at the new school).
- Schools are reminded that district policies with respect to intra-district transfer do not supercede WIAA transfer rules in situations involving post-sixth semester transfers. Intra-district transfers occurring after the sixth consecutive semester following entry into grade 9 result in the student being ineligible for competition at any level for one calendar year (365 days beginning with first day of attendance at the new school), but may practice.
- In the event of divorce or legal separation, whether pending or final, residence at the beginning of the school year shall determine eligibility for students entering 9th and/or 10th grade. In situations involving transfer after the sixth consecutive semester following entry into grade 9 the WIAA transfer rule prevails.
- For the purpose of this rule, attendance at one day of school and /or attendance at one athletic practice shall determine 'beginning of school year.'

Note: The WIAA's residence and transfer rules continue to retain a waiver provision, which may be provided at the request of a member school in situations where extenuating circumstances can be documented.

Section 5 – Waivers

A. The residence and transfer requirement may be waived according to the following provisions:

1) After a student has not participated and/or has had their eligibility administratively restricted for one calendar year because parents do not live within that school's attendance boundaries, he/she becomes automatically eligible under this Section regardless of parents residence and for as long as enrollment is continuous (uninterrupted) in that school. (Calendar year based on dates of withdrawal/entry from one school to next.)

2) The residence and transfer requirement may be waived, if requested in advance (of student participating at new school), by a member school on behalf of one of its students and upon presentation of documentation detailing extenuating circumstances. Such documentation must include communications from (a) parents, (b) person(s) with whom student is living within requesting school's attendance boundaries and (c) school officials within whose attendance boundaries parents reside. Depending upon the nature of extenuating circumstances, eligibility may be limited to nonvarsity competition except in situations involving transfer after a student's fourth consecutive semester following entry into grade 9.

3) In cases associated with Section 1, A, (2) and (4), Section 2, A, (1) and Section 3, A, (1) of this Article, first-time 9th grade students will be permitted one transfer upon appropriate petition to the Board of Control if the student has attended no more than three days of practice and/or has attended no more than three days of school.

III. Eligibility waivers include:

A. Age Waivers - Use form available on website, include video tape interview of Student (Ref. Rules of Eligibility, Article II, Section 1A-1)

Basis of consideration: Extenuating circumstances

B. Consecutive Semesters - No standard form (Ref. Rules of Eligibility, Article V, Section 1A-3d)

- Complete grade 9-12 transcript needed; 9-12 daily attendance record/summary
- Extenuating circumstances

C. Residence and Transfer - No standard form

Basis of consideration:
- Documented extenuating circumstances (unforeseeable/unknowable events: significant, forced/involuntary change that mitigates the rule)

Required documentation:
- EVTS form - exchanged between schools and WIAA - may serve as documentation from "sending" school.
- "Sending" family
- "Receiving" family
- Receiving/requesting school
- Supplemental documentation that can be helpful: medical, law enforcement/courts, foster care, HHS, military, e.g.

IV. Transfer Waiver Discussion

A. *My sister (single parent) sent her son to live with me and my family. My nephew is a senior. We think it's in his best interest to live with us. He wants to play sports, but was told he was not eligible. We are requesting a waiver so he can play.*

Dear Parent,

First, we mean no disrespect - only trying to help you understand how this process works. Understand, you have no status in this Association - we are a membership of "schools." A student has status in their school - our member schools have the authority to request the other members waive the rule - on behalf of one of their students. The only lens available for review/consideration of such a waiver request is documented extenuating circumstances. If a waiver is to be requested, it would need to come here through school administration and/or your AD.

Here is what we have offered to some others who've come with questions similar to yours. In addition you can find a considerable amount of Residence and Transfer Q/A on our web site (under the WIAA Info icon). The transfer student form must be faxed from District A - the sending school, to District B - the receiving school. The student's parents/guardians (the "sending parent" in this instance) is going to need to provide the school's AD their "story" in detail. You certainly will be asked to do the same - as the "receiving family." It may also be appropriate to have your nephew write us his story, too. You may also include a current transcript which clearly shows daily attendance from grade 9 to present.

The more details and specifics, the clearer the chronology - the easier it is to recognize a legitimate need - vs. a student who simply persisted in making bad choices.

Bring all your documentation to your school's AD. Your AD will review your story and if he/she finds it compelling, they will likely advance it to the WIAA's attention along with the request for relief on behalf of the student.

B. Subject: Transfer Student

I have a question on your transfer policy. I transferred from ABC High School to XYZ High School in January. I participated as a varsity swimmer this past fall. Can I participate in a spring sport, varsity or non-varsity or do I need to wait to participate in a WIAA sport?

First thing the AD at your new school will want to do is print the "Transfer Student Eligibility" form from our home page.

Your AD will fax that form over to your former HS. If your former school indicates "no reason to object," on that form, you can be allowed "non-varsity" eligibility immediately, if you are within your first six consecutive semesters following entry into 9th grade – with nothing further to do. If you are a 12th grader, you are not eligible to compete at any level, but may practice.

The transfer restrictions might be waived and varsity eligibility provided when there are "documented extenuating circumstances" which may have necessitated a change. Your new school would be responsible to collect the written story/explanation from you and your family and any other sources which might allow us to understand what has made the mid-year transfer necessary.

C. *Where does one find a 'residence waiver request'? I see the waiver of age requirement but not residence waiver on the website.*

Dear AD,

To begin: There is no residence waiver "form." Trying to identify what would be "universally" common and essential would be impossible since each situation is usually too/so diverse and documentation "wide ranging." You will find the "minimum" documentation required for consideration outlined in Handbook, pp. 33-34. Section 5-2, specifically.

The only "forms" you'd use in the process would be the Waiver Request Checklist and the Eligibility Verification of Transfer Student (EVTS) form, which you would include as part of the file. You will direct the "sending" and "receiving" family to write up a detailed and chronological "story" of what necessitates this change of residence. Documented extenuating circumstances is the "lens/perspective" the membership has put in place for considering such requests. It is entirely appropriate and fairly routine for the "families" to include (along with their story) documentation from a variety of possible sources, including the courts, letters from MDs/psychiatrists, school counselors, Social Services, police records, 911 transcript, newspaper reports, e.g., any source outside the family - documentation which validates/corroborates the family's story can be very helpful. From experience, when circumstances are truly extenuating there is almost always a volume of this sort of additional/supportive documentation which can be very helpful for a "stranger" trying to know another family's circumstance and shape an informed opinion of their plight. Your role is to guide and direct the family as to what's needed and to initiate the transfer student form with the sending school. When you receive the documentation/info from the family, review it (unless the nature of their concern is "SO" sensitive/personal/private that they would feel better bringing the documentation to you in a sealed envelope). If you review the documentation, find it credible/compelling and wish to forward it along with your request for residence waiver, that is your privilege as a member.

V. Conclusion

School principals, athletic directors, coaches and admissions personnel must always be thorough in identifying, interviewing and documenting a transfer student.

For more information on Residence and Transfer visit < www.wiaawi.org >. Under WIAA Info click on Rules Overview & Eligibility.

For more information on WIAA Constitution, Bylaws and Rules of Eligibility refer to the WIAA Senior High Handbook online, under WIAA Info – Publications.