



## Participation Guidelines for Middle School Activities and Interscholastic Athletics

**Introduction:** Extracurricular activities, co-curricular requirements, and interscholastic athletics are important components of the total school program. These activities provide students with opportunities that supplement the classroom experience and engage the student in challenging and creative experiences. Participation in school activities is a privilege. The school administration may declare a student ineligible to participate in total or part based on inappropriate conduct whether or not that conduct occurs during the school day, evenings, or weekends. Inappropriate conduct may include violations in the Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) Code of Behavior, rules, and agreements between the students and their coaches, sponsors, or teachers; a school's local behavior guidelines, Virginia High School League (VHSL) Rules, and PWCS regulations and policies.

Coaches and sponsors will provide this activity participation guide annually to all participants of their teams or groups. It will be the responsibility of the coach or sponsor to review these guidelines with parents and students in their pre-season meetings. After receiving this document, parents and students will sign the emergency permission card acknowledging that they have received, read, and will follow the rules and guidelines governing participation in PWCS athletics and activities.

The Activities Guide for Students and Parents is a condensed guide with information necessary to effectively understand and participate in the activities program in Prince William County Public Schools.

The information provided in this guide represents the rules and policies that govern athletic/activity participation in PWCS as supplied by the VHSL rules and PWCS policies and regulations.

Additional questions can be answered by contacting the school's administration or refer to the School Division's Web site at [www.pwcs.edu](http://www.pwcs.edu) and view the Student's Code of Behavior and Policies and Regulations sites. For more information, contact the supervisor of Student Activities at 703-791-7353.

### Athletic/Activity Eligibility

#### Enrollment

The student shall be officially enrolled in the school of attendance as required by Virginia School laws and be a regular Bona Fide student to participate in school activities. A regular student is considered a full-time student who is in regular attendance and is carrying a schedule of subjects that will render them scholastically eligible for the ensuing semester if successfully completed. The student shall have been regularly enrolled no later than the 15th day of the semester in at least five classes.

#### Academic Eligibility

Students must be academically eligible to represent a school in any athletic or after-school activities. A student is determined to be academically ineligible if they receive two or more F's in a nine-week grading period. The student is ineligible to participate in the following nine-week grading period. Academic eligibility will carry over from the fourth grading period to the first grading period of the next school year. Rising sixth-grade students start the school year with a "clean slate"; however, the student can be declared ineligible to participate in the nine weeks following a grading period if criteria are not met. The student may meet eligibility at the interim and be eligible to try out for a sport next season if the proper measures are met.

#### Age

A student shall not have reached the age of fifteen on or before the first day of September of the school year the student wishes to compete.

## **Student Participation**

### **Concussion Policy and Education**

All middle school students and their parent/guardian must complete annual concussion training according to PWCS Policy 759 before the student may participate in the season. To participate in any extracurricular athletic activity, each student and the student's parent or guardian shall review, on an annual basis (every 12 months), information on concussions provided by the School Division. (Refer to Regulation 759-1)

There are sufficient differences in the way concussions will be handled at the middle school, and high school levels, a parent having students in both middle and high schools are required to attend both a middle and a high school presentation.

### **Concussion Training**

Middle school students who are trying out for a sport for their first time in middle school or who are new to PWCS must attend face-to-face concussion training at their respective school with their parent/guardian.

### **Online Training**

After having reviewed materials describing the short- and long-term health effects of concussions, each student and the student's parent or guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging completion of the online training and an understanding of the information presented.

### **Attendance**

Each student is required to attend school and classes regularly. Any student who is absent on the day of any activity may not participate in that event. On the day of an event (game or practice), a student must attend school for at least one-half of the instructional day to equal three and one-half hours. In the case of extenuating circumstances, the school administration may waive the rule.

### **Activity Insurance and Parental Permission**

Each candidate for an interscholastic athletic team must provide proof of parental permission. Parents are strongly encouraged to have insurance covering possible accidents or injuries in school-sponsored games, practice sessions, and travel to and from contests. Such coverage may be provided through the purchase of Student Accident Insurance, offered by PWCS Risk Management, or by submitting proof of similar or superior coverage. Schools do not provide insurance for participating students. (The football insurance option available through the School Division, if selected, will cover students participating in football only. Insurance for school time and other sports must be purchased separately.)

### **Equipment Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of the student/athlete to maintain and return all equipment and uniforms issued to them. Parents will be financially responsible for any equipment or uniforms that are lost, damaged, stolen, or misplaced when the time the student/athlete is responsible for them. The price of replacing these items shall be the actual cost to the school for purchasing new replacement items. Until any charges for lost equipment have been paid, the student will be placed on the school's obligations list.

### **Transportation**

All students who are traveling to and from a school-sponsored activity shall use school-approved transportation. Students may not ride home from an away game site with anyone except the parent or legal guardian. The release of a student to a parent or legal guardian is left to the school's discretion.

## **Student Conduct and Sportsmanship**

### **Sportsmanship**

Admission to interscholastic events in Prince William County entitles spectators to enjoy a competitive exhibition of skills in an educational setting. We ask that spectators give the student-athletes positive encouragement and support. Inappropriate and unacceptable behavior may lead to the removal of the spectator(s). PWCS encourages an atmosphere of sportsmanship and support for all athletes. (Refer to Regulations 648-7 and 648-7.1)

### **Bullying/Hazing**

Bullying consists of any words or actions that harm or threaten another person's body, property, self-esteem, or group acceptance. These include all oral, written, electronic, or non-verbal forms of ridicule, harassment, and intimidation. Hazing in any form shall not be tolerated and may result in dismissal from the organization. (Refer to Regulation 733.01-1)

### **Substance Abuse, Tobacco, and Weapons Policy**

Students involved in the possession, use or attempted use, receipt or attempted receipt, purchase or attempted purchase, distribution or attempted distribution of drugs (illegal, prescription, and/or over-the-counter), alcohol, inhalant intoxicants, look-alike, placebos, or paraphernalia or who are under the influence of same on school property, or at school-related activities, are subject to suspension and/or expulsion from school and shall be removed from the extracurricular activity for the remainder of the season. Students found in possession or in use of illegal weapons on any school property, going to or from school, or at any school-related activity, regardless of where that activity takes place, shall also face removal from the extracurricular activity for the remainder of the season. The use of tobacco products shall result in disciplinary action ranging from a conference to suspension to dismissal from the organization. (Refer to Regulations 735.2 and 775.1)

### **Energy Drinks**

To support safe participation, PWCS does not support the use of energy drinks by athletes. Athletes are prohibited from using of energy drinks for any reason, especially for rehydration before or after exercise. Fluid replacement drinks or drinks used to replenish body fluid after exercise are defined as drinks that replace energy and electrolytes to assist the body in recovering from training. Fluid replacement drinks are not classified as energy drinks. Some common examples of fluid replacement drinks are Gatorade and Powerade.

The athletic departments will establish the penalty for violation of this rule at each of the individual middle schools.

## **Student Membership**

### **Awards**

The minimum criteria for awarding a school activity certificate or other similar awards must include:

- The participant completing the season in good standing; and
- The participant fulfilling all team-related obligations.

The coach may establish additional requirements with the approval of the activity's director and principal.

### **Outside Team Membership**

Outside team participation shall not conflict with the practice or contest schedule of the school. Any such absence shall be considered unexcused. Students selected for a school team expect participation in school-sponsored interscholastic athletics as a priority over participation in outside teams. Consequences for non-participation in PWCS activities are possible and will occur.

### **Out-of-Season Practice**

Middle school athletic teams are not permitted Out-of-Season activities. Participation in activities outside of the school by dance teams and cheer squads will be determined by the school administration. Middle school athletes may not participate in out-of-season activities at a high school.

### **Recruiting Statement**

No PWCS middle or high school coach or personnel shall discuss or otherwise promote transfers or change in residence or residence arrangements with any student, parent, or another person of influence or knowingly permit such activity to take place for the purpose of facilitating activity participation.

## SCHOOL BOARD

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*Occoquan District*      *Gainesville District*      *Woodbridge District*

Charlotte Flynn      Daania Sharifi  
*Student Representative*      *Student Representative*

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Dr. LaTanya D. McDade

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*Associate Superintendent for Middle Schools*

Mr. Al Ciarochi  
*Associate Superintendent for Support Services*

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*Associate Superintendent for Middle Schools*

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*Associate Superintendent for Finance and Risk Management*

Dr. Jennifer Coyne Cassata  
*Director of Accountability*



# Prince William County

**PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*Providing A World-Class Education*

P.O. BOX 389, MANASSAS, VA 20108 • 703-791-7200 • WWW.PWCS.EDU

*Prince William County Public Schools does not discriminate in employment nor in the provision of educational programs, services, and activities on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions including lactation, age, marital status, veteran status, disability, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law.*

*The following individuals will handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies, including Section 504 and Title IX:*

*Mailing Address*

*P.O. Box 389, Manassas, VA 20108*

**Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Civil Rights, Section 504**

**Compliance (Employees), Equal Employment Opportunity,**

**Americans with Disabilities Act, Grievance Procedures:**

*Equity and Employee Relations Office • 703-791-8764*

**Section 504 Compliance (Students):**

*Director of Special Education • 703-791-7287*

**Title IX Compliance:**

*Title IX Coordinator and Student Equity Office • 703-791-8595*

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):**

*FERPA Officer • 703-791-7445*