

## 2025-26 TSSAA Handbook

### DEFINITIONS

**Athletic Program** – All aspects of the member school's program of interscholastic athletic competition in the sports listed in Article I, Section 4, of the TSSAA Bylaws.

**Athletic Record** – A student has an "athletic record" if the student has played in an interscholastic contest at the varsity, junior varsity, ninth grade, or any other level, on behalf of a TSSAA member school or a school that is a member of a state athletic association holding membership in the National Federation.

**Bona Fide Change of Residence** – A move from one community to another that justifies a change of schools. Where a family **unit** continues to maintain a previous residence for the residential purposes of that family **unit** or any of its members, the move is not one that justifies a change of schools for purposes of the TSSAA Bylaws.

**Coach** – Anyone who instructs or supervises student-athletes in practices or contests.

**Cooperative Program (High School Division)** – Two member schools forming a single team in a sport in which at least one of the schools does not have a team and has not had a team for the previous two (2) years.

**Cooperative Program (Middle School Division)** – Two or more member schools forming a single team in a sport in which at least one of the schools does not have a team.

**De Novo** – Heard anew. Where a decision by the Executive Director is appealed "*de novo*" to the Board of Control, the Board of Control is not in any way bound, restricted, or limited by the findings or conclusions of the Executive Director and may render whatever decision it deems appropriate based on its own review of the facts and circumstances.

**Enrolled (High School Division)** – A student is considered "enrolled" at a school, for purposes of these Bylaws, when the student has (a) completed all paperwork required for attendance at the school; (b) paid all deposits and tuition due where applicable; and (c) either (i) attended classes for three days; (ii) engaged in three or more days of football, girls volleyball, cross country, golf, or girls soccer practice during the period on or after the TSSAA first official day of practice; or (iii) participated in an athletic contest in any Fall sport. A student may not be considered to be enrolled in more than one school at any time.

**Enrolled (Middle School Division)** – A student is considered "enrolled" at a school, for purposes of these Bylaws, when the student has (a) completed all paperwork required for attendance at the school; (b) paid all deposits and tuition due where applicable; and (c) either (i) attended classes for three days; (ii) engaged in three or more days of fall sports practice during the period on or after the Monday of the week of August 1; or (iii) participated in an athletic contest in any sport. A student may not be considered to be enrolled in more than one school at any time.

**Family Unit** – All individuals living together in the same residence.

**Guardian** – An adult with whom the student has lived for twelve (12) or more consecutive months. For purposes of TSSAA Bylaws, official appointment by a court is not required to establish guardianship; however, no person may be considered a guardian for purposes of these Bylaws unless the student has lived with that person for twelve (12) or more consecutive months, regardless of whether that person has been appointed as a guardian by a court.

**Junior Varsity (High School Division)** – Any level of play below the varsity level, whether denominated as junior varsity, b-team, freshman, ninth grade or otherwise.

**Junior Varsity (Middle School Division)** – Any level of play below the varsity level, whether denominated as junior varsity, b-team, or otherwise.

**Last Participation Date** – the date of the last interscholastic athletic contest in which the student participated.

**Limited Member** – A school that has all the privileges and responsibilities of membership but does not participate in the tournament series in any sport.

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**Non-Traditional Students** - Non-traditional students include those students attending:

- a public virtual school recognized by the Tennessee Department of Education
- a legally-registered independent homeschool student
- a homeschool student enrolled in a church-related umbrella school
- a homeschool student enrolled in an online accredited school

**Parent** – The birth mother and biological father of a student; the person(s) to whom a proper jurisdiction grants adoption of the student; or a step-parent with whom the student regularly resides.

**Practice** – Any interaction between a coach and student-athlete(s) where instruction, teaching, coaching, etc., is occurring. Happenstance communications between coach and student-athlete(s), in circumstances where attendance by the student-athlete is neither expected nor required, are not considered to be practice. Such communications may not, however, be used to circumvent the requirement in open facilities that a coach act in a supervisory capacity only. In addition, try-outs are considered practice.

**Principal** – The chief on-site administrative official of the member school, whether known as “principal,” “head of school,” “executive principal,” or by some other title.

**Regular Attendance (High School Division)** – A student is considered to be in “regular attendance” at a school when the student is enrolled at the school; is taking at, or under arrangements approved by the member school, a minimum of five (5) full courses or the equivalent for which credit toward high school graduation will be granted by the member school upon the student’s completing and passing the courses; and is satisfying the requirements of the school or school system for class attendance applicable to students generally.

**Regular Attendance (Middle School Division)** – A student is considered to be in “regular attendance” at a school when the student is enrolled at the school; is taking at, or under arrangements approved by the member school, a minimum of five (5) full courses or the equivalent for which credit toward **academic promotion** will be granted by the member school upon the student’s completing and passing the courses; and is satisfying the requirements of the school or school system for class attendance applicable to students generally.

**School Team** – An entity comprised of one or more students in a school, under the control and conduct of the school, which represents the school in interscholastic athletic competition.

**Special Olympics Athlete** – A student participating in Unified Sports who has been identified by an agency or professional as having one or more of the following conditions: intellectual disability, cognitive delay as measured by a formal assessment, or significant learning or vocational problems due to cognitive delay that require or have required specially designed instruction.

**Territory** – For a public school, the “territory” of the school is the geographic boundaries and bus routes of the area served by that school as established by the local board of education. For a system-wide public school, magnet school or charter school, the “territory” of the school is the geographic boundaries of the school system. For a non-public school the “territory” of the school is the area within a twenty (20) mile radius from the school.

**Tournament Competition** – The TSSAA-sponsored championship tournament series.

**Transfer Student** – A transfer student is any student changing schools for any reason other than having completed the highest, or terminal, grade at another school. A student who must change schools because he/she has completed the highest grade at his/her previous school is not considered a transfer student and is eligible to participate in athletics at any school he/she attends, without further approval, provided he/she satisfies the residence requirement above.

**Unified Partner** – A student participating in Unified Sports who has no intellectual disability or cognitive delay. Unified Partners are paired with Unified Athletes to participate on Unified Sports teams. Unified Partners are not eligible to participate in the TSSAA postseason at the state level on the school team for the sanctioned sport in which they are participating in the Unified competition.

**Unified Sports** – Special Olympics Unified Sports® is an inclusive sports program that combines an approximately equal number of Special Olympics athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities) and partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities) on a team for training and competition.