

OKALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC PROTOCOLS FOR RESIDENCY VERIFICATION

ENROLLMENT OF ATHLETES

To establish residency for enrollment purposes, a Student Athlete and/or family members are not permitted to sublease or be a guest in another person's residence if a parent/guardian resides at a different primary residence in Okaloosa or surrounding counties.

According to bylaws of the Florida High School Athletic Association ("FHSAA"), a student and/or parent/guardian may not falsify residency information to enroll at a school for athletic eligibility. Any student in violation of this rule may be deemed ineligible for up to one year by FHSAA.

Per Bylaw 9.2.1.3 of the FHSAA, a student who, through the actions of a court, is required to have multiple physical residences will establish his/her school residence which is either:

- The school where the student first attends classes **OR**
- The school where the student first participates in athletic activities on or after the official start date of that sport's season before he/she attends classes **OR**
- The school the student transfers to after previously attending another school (reference Bylaw 9.3.2)

ATHLETIC RESIDENCY VERIFICATION FOR 9TH GRADERS

For athletic eligibility, an incoming 9th grade student must:

- Live in the attendance zone of the school **OR**
- Be approved through Controlled Open Enrollment **OR**
- Be granted a Hardship Appeal

As part of the high school registration packet, incoming 9th graders must complete **MIS 6112 RESIDENCY VERIFICATION FORM FOR 9TH GRADE ATHLETES**. Athletic Directors will be responsible for verifying addresses using the **OCSD Residence Verification Flowchart**.

When needed, additional residency information may include:

- In-county deed, mortgage/HUD statement, monthly mortgage statement, or residential rental/lease agreement, covering the current year [**MUST BE ONE OF THE TWO**]
- Parent/legal guardian's driver's license, FL ID card, or Military ID with the registering address
- Electric bill
- Homeowner's insurance policy or bill for registering address dated within the last 30 days
- Mail from employment and /or financial institutions; including checking, savings, property tax record, credit card statements or investment account statement, dated within the last 30 days
- Mail from Federal, State, County or City government agencies to the registering address, dated within the last 30 days

- *A letter from a homeless shelter, transitional service provider, or a half-way house verifying that the parent/guardian resides at the given address, dated within the last 30 days (no other documentation needed)

Home visits to verify residency will be conducted for any incoming 9th grade student whose documentation is questionable or disputed by another school.

IN-COUNTY TRANSFER STUDENTS

Per FHSAA, a transfer student is one who changes schools after establishing his/her school residence each school year. A student establishes school residence by either attending classes or participating in Athletic Activities, whichever comes first for the student.

Athletic activities encompass all activities sponsored by the school on or after the official start date for that sport season. Activities include, but are not limited to, tryouts, conditioning, practices and interscholastic contests. FHSAA lists official start dates for each sport on their website.

In addition to the students who meet FHSAA's definition for a transfer student, the following procedures will also apply to OCSD high school students who transfer within the district during summer months.

Transfer student athletes who move to a verified residence in-zone, for a minimum of twelve months from the date of registration, and subsequently move out-of-zone, are eligible to remain at and participate in athletics at their current school through graduation. *i.e., A transfer student must live in a zone for a minimum of twelve months to be "grandfathered" into that school for athletics.*

Transfer student athletes who maintain a verified residency for fewer than twelve months from the date of registration, and subsequently move, are immediately ineligible for athletic participation at their current school at the time of move for one calendar year. *i.e., A transfer student who lives in a zone for less than twelve months and moves out of zone will not be allowed to continue playing sports at that school for one calendar year.*

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY OCSD HIGH SCHOOLS

1. When enrolling a student who is transferring from another OCSD High School or a surrounding county's school, the parent/guardian will complete **MIS 5424 Verification of Residency** (& **MIS 5425**, as appropriate). At the time of registration, appropriate documentation for the enrolling address must be provided by the parent/guardian.
2. Upon completion of MIS 5424, students who indicate participation in athletics at a previous school will be provided the **FHSAA GA4 (Affidavit of Compliance with the Policies on Athletic Recruiting & Non-Traditional Student Participation)** to be completed by the student and parent/guardian.
3. The registrar will provide the Athletic Director with the completed **FHSAA GA4** and a copy of **MIS 5424** with the **residency documentation items**.
4. The Athletic Director will determine the enrolling student's intent to participate in athletics. Per FHSAA, the **FHSAA EL6 (Notice of Transfer/Change of School)** must be initiated by the Principal of the school receiving the student by completing and submitting page 1 in Home Campus. Also in Home Campus, the sending Principal will complete and submit page 2. Upon completion, both Principals should discuss any potential concerns regarding the athletic eligibility of the transfer student.

5. If the documentation for residency is disputed, the Principal and Athletic Director of the receiving school will:
 - a. Meet with parent/guardian to obtain further documentation and explain the FHSAA policy regarding falsification of documents **AND**
 - b. Initiate a home visit by the Athletic Director or other School Administrator to verify residency. The report from the home visit will be reviewed by the HSAC to determine validity of residency documentation. HSAC may request an additional home visit by district personnel.
 - c. Home visits will be documented on **MIS 6113 RESIDENCY VERIFICATION FOR ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY**. Only observed and factual information should be documented.
 - d. If questions concerning residency arise during the school year, periodic home visits may be conducted.
 - e. For currently enrolled student athletes whose residency comes into question, follow the above procedures.
 - f. Athletic Directors and School Administrators are encouraged to conduct periodic home visits for transfer student athletes.

CONTROLLED OPEN ENROLLMENT

Under § 1002.31, Florida Statutes, the School Board allows a parent from any district in the state, whose child is not subject to a current expulsion or suspension, to enroll his or her child in and transport his or her child to any public school that has not reached capacity in the District, subject to the maximum class-size requirements.

A hardship appeal may be granted for cases in which the parent/guardian demonstrates hardship that significantly impacts the student's ability to succeed academically. The parent/guardian must complete the Hardship Appeal form and submit it to the principal of the school that they wish for their student to attend. The parent/guardian may be asked to provide documentation of any circumstances that led to the hardship request. Athletic participation should not be the sole reason for a hardship appeal.

The High School Athletic Committee (“HSAC”) will convene to review hardship requests from student athletes.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC COMMITTEE (“HSAC”)

The High School Athletic Committee is made up of representatives from the school district and each high school. Principals may bring any athletic concern to the attention of HSAC at any time. If there is an allegation warranting an investigation (falsification of documents, recruitment, etc.) the District Athletic Director or designee will work with the Principal and Athletic Director of the school to investigate the allegation. Once all information is gathered and reviewed, the HSAC will work to resolve the issue at the lowest level possible.

PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING ELIGIBILITY CONCERNS

A coach with a concern regarding the eligibility of a player should report the concern to his/her Athletic Director and Principal. The Principal and Athletic Director of the concerned school will contact the school of the -player. If there is no resolution, the District Athletic Director or designee will work with the Principal and Athletic Director of both schools to investigate the concern. An investigation may include a review of residency documentation, a home visit, or interviews of any person pertinent to the concern. Once the investigation is complete, the District Athletic Director may convene HSAC to review the concern.

This procedure should not be considered a directive to preclude notification to the FHSAA.

OCSD Residency Verification Flowchart

