

Adopted: 8-28-2007

PAS Policy 550

Revised: 1-27-2014

Reviewed: 4-25-2022

STUDENT ACCELERATION TO HIGHER- LEVEL ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the promotion of middle school athletes to compete at a high school level.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

It is the general policy of Pipestone Area School District not to accelerate students from Middle School (grades 7-8) athletic programs to high school (grades 9-12) athletic programs. Participation by students on athletic teams representing the high school of Pipestone Area School will normally be limited to those students who regularly attend high school classes. Such teams constitute an integral part of the total education program and are primarily designed to serve the needs of the high school students. This represents a basic guideline for athletic participation in our school district. However, on rare occasions, a middle school athlete in the 7th or 8th grade may be so physically gifted that consideration should be given to allowing the student to leave their middle school team and compete at the high school level. Such a decision requires a thoughtful and critical look at:

- 1) The needs of the student athlete and concern for their physical, mental and emotional well-being.
- 2) The effect on the student athlete's current grade level team.
- 3) The displacement of student athlete's currently on the team of the proposed acceleration.

At the middle school, emphasis shall be placed on participation and skill development as compared to the philosophy of stronger competitiveness and playing to win at the high school level.

III. DEFINITIONS:

Grades 9-12 shall be considered as the high school program.

Grades 7-8 shall be considered the middle school programs considered for acceleration.

IV. EXCEPTION:

Some 9th grade or junior varsity sports may have limited participants. A 9th grade or junior varsity sport that has limited participants may temporarily accelerate middle school participants on an as needed basis. The varsity coach of the activity must submit

a written request of need to temporarily accelerate middle school participants to the Activities Director or High School Principal or in their absence the Superintendent in absence of the principal. These students would continue to play at their respective middle school level. This acceleration is intended to allow the district to field a team in a time when its current players are not available (because of injury, illness, etc.). The administrator will make a determination if the temporary acceleration is necessary. A permission form will be signed by the parents or guardians of the middle school athlete who is being accelerated. It must be turned in to the athletic director prior to the participation. The coach is responsible to verify that the permission has been signed and turned into the activities director.

V. PROCEDURE

1. A formal request from the coach to the activities director must be made to accelerate the athlete and must be in writing.
2. A meeting will then take place between the head coach of the sport involved, the principal and the activities director. The three will discuss any issues (academic, social, eligibility, physical abilities, etc.) and make a consensus decision.
3. A meeting with both parents if available will be held to discuss the advancement.
 - a. If the consensus decision was a “no” a meeting will be held with the parent(s) to explain the rationale for saying “no”.
 - b. If the consensus decision was a “yes” a meeting will be held with the parent(s) to explain the advantages and disadvantages of acceleration.
4. The coach will be responsible to have both custodial parents sign all documents. The documents signify a meeting took place and the parents agreed the student athlete would be accelerated.

VI. PROBLEM CLAUSE

Within the course of the season, if the move is not working for the student, a meeting can be initiated by either the parent or the coach with the activities director and the principal to discuss any problems. If it is deemed that the move has not been the correct thing for the student, the student can be assigned to return back to their original team. However, the student cannot play on their original team and a higher level team at the same time.

VII. REFERENCES

MSHSL Bylaws - 105, 302, 109, 303.4 and 105.00 Interpretations

Advantages of Acceleration:

1. Need to challenge the athletes by placing with and against better competition.
2. Opportunity to participate in increased number of contests.
3. The athlete may experience frustrations due to the disparity in skill level if they continue to play at present level.
4. More opportunities will exist for the athletes from the team the player left. A non-starter now may become a starter.
5. The competition for positions on the team they are moved to may be increased, which may improve intensity and skill development for everyone.
6. Athletes will be given an opportunity to advance their skill level in a team sport just as they can in an individual sport.

Disadvantages of Acceleration:

1. The parents and athletes of members of the team the athlete is moving to will feel they or their child is being displaced.
2. The athletes/parents from the team they are leaving and the team they are going to could disagree with the promotion causing socialization issues in school and the community for the accelerated athlete.
3. Athletes will sometimes feel they are not connected to any team.
4. The team the athlete is moving from loses a role model and an extra peer teacher to help that team develop better skills.
5. Expectations for the accelerated athlete may be greater by the coaches, parents and fans. These expectations may not be realized and thus a sense of failure may emerge.
6. An increased time commitment, longer season, split shifts at practice, transportation issues, etc. may negatively impact school work and home responsibilities.
7. The continuity of the grade level team and the team accelerated to could be high disrupted.
8. Acceleration may open the athlete up to scrutiny by parents, classmates and community members.
9. The injury and risk factor is increased due to participation against bigger, faster and stronger athletes.

I _____, agree that my child,
Name of Parent

_____ may be accelerated in _____ in
Name of Student Sport

accordance with Pipestone Area School's Athletic Acceleration Policy. I also realize this acceleration is permanent.. I have read the policy and realize that I can say no to this suggested action.

___ I want my child accelerated on a permanent basis.

___ I do not wish my child accelerated on a permanent basis.

Parent

Date

Head Varsity Coach

Date

Athletic Director

Date