Lincoln County Schools Athletic Policies
Contract for Participation

Participation in athletics is a privilege, not a right. The athlete must earn this privilege through dedication, desire, and discipline. Without the pursuit of those, the athlete can in no way do justice to himself or the school. The athlete must discipline himself to be a good citizen and student in order to achieve athletic excellence. The Lincoln County Schools believes that a tradition of winning is established and maintained based upon these principles. In order for a determined course of action for the pursuit of athletic achievement and the character training of young persons, the following procedures must be understood and agreed to between the school, the student athlete, and the parents.

- The student must meet the eligibility regulations as established by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and the specific conference of the participating school. This opportunity is available to students in grades 6-12; with the exception that 6th grade students can participate in all sports except football.

- **Attendance:**

1. A student must have been in attendance for at least 85 percent of the previous semester at an approved high school. Any student must be in membership to be able to make up days missed while in membership (days missed while not in membership may not be made up for athletic eligibility). For a regular 90-day semester, a student may not miss more than 13.5 days and be in compliance with this rule.

2. A student must, at the time of any game in which he or she participates, be a regularly enrolled member of the school’s student body. For purposes of this policy, “regularly enrolled” is defined as enrolled for at least one half of the “minimum load” for his or her particular school.

3. The student must be enrolled within the first 15 days and in regular attendance for the present semester to be eligible for athletics. A student whose family has moved into a school district shall immediately assume the same status in the new district as that from which he moved.

4. A student who is not in attendance for 85% of the prior semester can file a hardship request to the Superintendent or designee. The hardship may only be submitted if the student had a doctor’s note for more than half of their absences. A committee will be created to examine the request and a final decision will be given to the principal and athletic director within 10 days of the request.

**Criminal Arrest/Conviction:**

Except for minor traffic violations, any student charged with a felony, a class A1, class 1 or
class 2 misdemeanor is ineligible to participate until such time as the charge is disposed of by
the court by either dismissing the case or finding the student “not guilty.” During the pendency
of the criminal matter, the student may request a review of the evidence surrounding the
charge. The request for review must be filed with the principal. This review will be conducted
by a five-member committee consisting of an administrative team selected by the
Superintendent or designee. The team will consist of administrators outside of the school in
which the student attends. The committee shall determine whether there exists mitigating
circumstances or other good cause to allow the student to participate in athletics while the
charge is pending. The committee must render a decision within 10 days after the filing of the
appeal. During the 10-day period, the student is ineligible to participate in practice or athletic
events. If the student is convicted, pleads “no contest” or enters into a deferred prosecution
to a felony charge, the student will be prohibited from participating in athletics for the
remainder of his/her high school career. If the student is convicted, pleads “no contest” or
enters a deferred prosecution to a lesser charge than a felony specified in this section, the
student is ineligible to participate in athletics for a minimum of 90 days. If the student enters
into a deferred prosecution, for any charge specified in this section, and the charges are later
dismissed as part of the deferred prosecution agreement, the student is then eligible to
participate in athletics. If the student has a second conviction (or any combination of a
conviction, plea of no contest or deferred prosecution) the student shall be ineligible to
participate in athletics for a period of one (1) year. For the third conviction (or any combination
of a conviction, plea of no contest or deferred prosecution) the student shall be ineligible to
participate in athletics for the remainder of his/her high school career.

- In the case of a misdemeanor charge of a crime not addressed in the above section (typically a
  Class 3 misdemeanor), the principal, in consultation with the student’s coach and athletic
director, shall determine the eligibility and/or suspension of the student. A student may appeal
this decision to the five-member committee as set forth above. The committee shall determine
whether there exists mitigating circumstances or other good cause to allow the student to
participate in athletics. If a student is convicted, pleads no contest, or enters into a deferred
prosecution to any charge covered by this section, the student will be ineligible to participate
in athletics for a period of ninety (90) days. For the second conviction (or any combination of a
conviction, plea of no contest or deferred prosecution), the student shall be ineligible to
participate in athletics for a period of one (1) year. For the third conviction (or any combination
of a conviction, plea of no contest or deferred prosecution), the student shall be ineligible to
participate in athletics for the remainder of his/her high school career. This section does not
apply to minor traffic offenses.

For purposes of this policy, a minor traffic violation is defined as a moving violation that is a
Class 2 (or lower) misdemeanor unless the violation involves the use of drugs or alcohol while
operating a motor vehicle.

- Tobacco Use: A student in possession or use in violation of school policies will be subject to
  a one competition suspension and referral to SSMT.

- Controlled Substance, Narcotics, and Alcohol: A student who tests positive during a random
drug test will be subject to the consequences in 3623-R/4343-R. Any athlete that is caught
using or in possession of drugs or alcohol on campus will be disciplined according to policy
3623-R/4343-R under the consequences for testing positive for random drug tests. The first violation is a 90-day suspension from all athletics. The second violation is a 365-day suspension from all athletics. The third violation the student would no longer be able to participate in any athletics for the remainder of his or her career.

- **Athletic Team Designation**

  In high school, when possible, sports shall be designated as varsity and junior varsity. Student athlete cuts may be warranted depending on student athlete interest and skill. In middle school, there will not be a designation of a junior varsity middle school team or practice squad (except for 5th quarter in football). The number of student athletes per team at either the middle school or high school shall be determined in part by the coach, athletic director, and principal each year depending on individual school circumstances.

- **Participation in Practice & Game**: All team members of each sport will attend all scheduled practices, meetings and athletic events. If circumstances arise whereby the student cannot attend a practice meeting or athletic event, the coach must be notified prior to the practice, meeting, or athletic event missed by personal contact, phone call, or written statement from the parent or guardian. Any athlete who “cuts” practice, fails to appear for a game, fails to make scheduled team or individual meetings, or intentionally fails to attend school on game days or practice days may not be allowed to suit up for any athletic event for a period of time to be determined by the coach and athletic director and may be removed from the team. All athletes are required to attend class regularly. Athletes delinquent in class attendance are subject to disciplinary action. Lack of attendance in classes may result in failure of class work, resulting in ineligibility in athletics. The student/athlete must be in attendance at school for at least a “half” day to participate in athletic events for that day. However, if the student is out of school more than half a day due to an excused absence, the student will remain eligible to participate in that day’s practices and/or games. Each coach will clarify for participant’s team regulations regarding participation in practices and games at the beginning of the season.

- **Lettering & Awards**: The provisions or criteria to be met for earning a letter will be furnished to the athlete by the coach in that sport prior to the beginning of the season. In all cases, the athlete must finish the season in good standing with team to be eligible for any letter and/award.

- **Equipment**: Equipment issued to an athlete is his/her responsibility for return or replacement. If the equipment is neither returned in good condition, replaced or paid for, the letter/award shall not be awarded nor any further equipment issued to the participant for any sport.

- **General Behavior**: The guidelines in this contract, while specific, should not be considered limiting in nature. The principal has the authority to take disciplinary action on additional unanticipated behaviors, including violation of rules in the student handbook, which may affect eligibility to participate in an event and may result in removal from the team.

  1. A member of a team who commits any willful action which harms or discredits other team members and diminishes the image of the team and school will be subject to removal from the team.
2. The coach and/or principal may establish additional criteria for participation and eligibility provided they are clearly communicated to the student and parent and are part of this Contract for Participation.

3. Any student suspended for violation of school rules will not be able to participate in practice or competition during the period of suspension and may be subject to additional discipline or removal from the athletic team if school rule violations are deemed discrediting to other team members and diminish the image of the team.

4. A student transferring into another school is ineligible to participate in athletics for 365 days from the transfer.

Adopted: January 1987

Revised: August 1985; June 11, 2003; October 14, 2014; April 14, 2015; March 14, 2017