

PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS—ACCESS TO PUBLIC SCHOOL COCURRICULAR, INTERSCHOLASTIC AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The Gorham School Committee recognizes that Maine law sets standards for eligibility for public school cocurricular, interscholastic and extracurricular activities by students enrolled in equivalent instruction programs in private schools.

For the purpose of this policy, “student enrolled in equivalent instruction program” means a student otherwise eligible to attend school in that school administrative unit, including a student who resides in the unorganized territory, when the student is enrolled in an equivalent instruction program in a private school that:

- A. Is recognized as an equivalent instruction alternative under 20-A MRSA § 5001-A(3)(1)(a) or (b) (i.e., a private school approved for attendance purposes under 20-A MRSA § 2901 or a private school recognized by the Department of Education as providing equivalent instruction); and
- B. Is not a member of an association that promotes, organizes or regulates statewide interscholastic activities in both public and private schools.

PARTICIPATION IN COCURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

“Cocurricular activities,” for the purpose of this policy, are activities that are sponsored by the school, are directly related to the curriculum and support achievement of the learning standards established by law, School Committee policy and or administrative action. Examples of such activities include the math club, science fairs and foreign language clubs.

A student enrolled in an equivalent instruction program as defined in this policy is eligible to participate in cocurricular activities sponsored by the Gorham School Department provided that:

- A. The student or his/her parent/guardian applies in writing to and receives written approval from the school principal/designee; and
- B. The student currently meets, and agrees to meet in the future, established behavioral, disciplinary, attendance and other rules applicable to all students.

The principal/designee has reasonable discretion to grant or withhold approval based on factors including: whether the activity is at capacity with enrolled students, additional costs that would be caused by the student’s participation, the student’s behavioral and academic record provided by the private school, safety, and any other factors that involve the best interests of the school. The principal/designee’s decision

shall not be subject to appeal or reconsideration unless it is in violation of the law or a School Committee policy.

PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

“Extracurricular activities,” for the purpose of this policy, are school-sponsored activities for which participants are selected by staff supervising the activities, including those teams, both athletic and academic, that participate in interscholastic competition.

A student enrolled in an equivalent instruction program as defined in this policy is eligible to try out for extracurricular and interscholastic activities sponsored by the Gorham School Department provided that the following requirements are met/satisfied:

- A. The student applies for and receives written approval from the principal/designee;
- B. The student agrees to abide by equivalent rules of participation as are applicable to regularly enrolled students participating in the activity and provides evidence that the rules of participation are being met.
- C. The student complies with the same physical examination, immunization, insurance, age, and semester eligibility requirements as regularly enrolled students participating in the activity. All required documentation must be made available upon request by the school unit.
- D. The student meets equivalent academic standards as those established for regularly enrolled students participating in the activity and provides evidence that the academic standards are being met.
- E. The student abides by the same transportation policy as regularly enrolled students participating in the activity.

The principal/designee will be responsible for approving or denying applications to try out for an extracurricular activity.

The criteria for selection of participants shall be determined by the staff members (coaches, advisors and their supervisors) responsible for the activities. Tryouts are by nature competitive. Eligibility to try out does not guarantee participation. Decisions resulting in non-selection of individual students shall not be subject to appeal or reconsideration unless they are in violation of law or School Committee policy.

VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY

To permit verification that the student has met eligibility requirements under this policy, the student’s parent (or the student, if 18 years old) must authorize the private school to provide to the principal all information necessary to determine whether the student meets the requirements.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

In order to maintain an efficient and orderly method for processing applications for participation, the School Committee authorizes the Superintendent/designee to develop procedures, as appropriate, for the principal/designee's use in determining whether students have met eligibility requirements and for granting or withholding approval of participation.

The Gorham School Department has no obligation to notify or provide information concerning eligibility for participation in school-sponsored cocurricular, interscholastic or extracurricular activities to students enrolled in equivalent instruction in private schools.

APPEALS

Appeals from administration and application of the School Committee policy are heard by the School Committee, whose decision is final and binding. Appeals that question the School Committee's policy compliance with legal requirements must be made to the Commissioner, whose decision is final and binding.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA §§ 2901, 5001-A, 5021-A(3)

Cross Reference: KE – Public Concerns and Complaints
IHJBA – Homeschooling, Participation in School Programs
IHBGB – Special Education Services for Students in Private
Schools

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