

6th Grade Athletic Participation

West Bonner County School District may permit eligible 6th grade students to participate in select junior high athletic programs when approved by the District, applicable league, and school administration. The purpose of allowing 6th grade participation is to provide additional opportunities for student-athletes while maintaining a safe, educational, and developmentally appropriate athletic experience.

Sports Eligible for 6th Grade Participation

Eligible 6th grade students may participate in approved junior high sports with the following provisions:

Guaranteed Participation Sports

Because these sports do not have roster limitations, eligible 6th grade students who register by the established deadline shall be permitted to participate:

- Cross Country
- Wrestling
- Track and Field

Roster cuts and tryouts described below do not apply to these sports.

Roster-Limited Sports

For all other junior high sports, participation by 6th grade students is contingent upon available roster space and team needs. The head coach may establish roster limits and conduct evaluations or tryouts when necessary.

If the number of participants exceeds the available roster positions:

- Student-athletes may be selected based on safety, skill level, coachability, effort, and overall readiness.

- Coaches may reduce the roster to maintain an appropriate team size.
- If a 6th grade student is not selected, the parent or guardian may request a meeting with the head coach and Athletic Director to discuss the decision.
- When available, families may be directed to community or youth sports programs as an alternative opportunity for participation.

Football Exception

Due to safety considerations and district policy, **6th grade students are not eligible to participate in junior high football.** Participation in junior high football begins in the **7th grade.**

Coach's Authority and Student Readiness

Participation by a 6th grade student is subject to the determination of the head coach that the student is physically, emotionally, socially, and developmentally prepared to safely compete with 7th and 8th grade student-athletes.

The health, safety, and welfare of all participants shall be the primary consideration in all roster decisions.

Participation at the Junior High Level

Students participating as 6th graders understand that they are joining the junior high athletic program and will practice and compete with 7th and 8th grade students. Once participating at the junior high level, they will continue to compete within the junior high program until entering high school.

Academic, Attendance, and Conduct Expectations

All 6th grade participants are considered student-athletes and are expected to comply with all district, school, athletic department, and team rules.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Attendance requirements.
- Academic eligibility requirements established by the district.
- Behavior and citizenship expectations.
- Team rules established by the coaching staff.
- Student conduct policies, including electronic device and cell phone policies.
- Sportsmanship expectations at practices, contests, and school-sponsored activities.

Because elementary grading practices may differ from junior high grading systems, eligibility determinations may include consideration of attendance, behavior, academic progress, and other criteria established by school administration.

Home School and Non-Traditional Students

Home school and other eligible non-traditional students participating in junior high athletics are subject to the same athletic eligibility requirements, conduct standards, team rules, and disciplinary expectations as traditionally enrolled students.

Registration and Communication

Registration for 6th grade participation may begin once league calendars and season dates have been finalized. Families will be provided information regarding registration timelines, expectations, and any applicable tryout procedures prior to the start of the season.

Transportation

Transportation for away contests involving participating 6th grade students shall be coordinated in accordance with district transportation policies and procedures.

Administrative Authority

The District reserves the right to limit participation, establish roster sizes, modify procedures, or implement additional participation requirements as necessary to ensure student safety, maintain competitive balance, comply with league regulations, and support the educational mission of the athletic program.