



**MHSAA International Student Eligibility Summary – Exception 4**  
See **2024-25 Handbook P. 40** for the Rule & P. **46-48** for Interpretations **81, 83-89**

**\*For J-1 or F-1 visa students enrolling for the first time in an MHSAA School**

To be immediately eligible, an International Student present in the U.S. on either a J-1 or F-1 visa, including incoming 9th graders must meet one of two conditions:

1. Meet a RESIDENCY EXCEPTION under the MHSAA transfer rule (1, 2, 3, 8, 12, or 13)
2. Be placed with a host family in a school District through an **Approved International Student Program (AISP)**.  
AISP programs generally include those that are CSJET-approved and a small number of schools that are also approved by the MHSAA after the application is made. *I AM → Administrator → “Current Links” → AISP Listings*

An AISP student is eligible at the public school of their residence or the closest nonpublic or charter school **for one year and then ineligible for a subsequent year (play one, wait one – no eligibility at any level)**. An AISP student who does not enroll at their school of residence or closest nonpublic or charter school has subvarsity eligibility only for their entire tenure after being ineligible for 90 scheduled school days. Incoming 9th-grade international students do not have immediate eligibility unless they meet conditions 1 or 2 above.

*\*NOTE:* An international student in the U.S. last year in a traditional school or a home school would **NOT BE ELIGIBLE** this year under “*play one, wait one*” – whether from an AISP program or not and whether the student participated in sports. After the year off under (“*play one, wait one*”), an AISP student could have eligibility remaining at any level in any sport if they do not change schools.

An AISP student who changes schools would be subject to the Sport Specific Transfer Rule based upon their participation during the “*play one year.*” These transfer students would not be eligible in sports played during that year but would, after the “*wait one year,*” be eligible in sports not played in the “*play one year.*” An AISP student who **does not change schools** has eligibility in the years following the “*wait one year*” in any sport. Non-AISP students have subvarsity eligibility for their entire tenure.

An International Student, including an incoming 9th-grade student, who did not meet conditions 1 or 2 above – not from an Approved Program or not meeting an Exception - is not eligible for varsity competition for up to 4 years. A school may choose to allow an International Student eligibility at the **subvarsity level** after having sat out until the 91st school day.

General Conclusion: AISP students have immediate eligibility at any level for one year (“*play one, wait one*”), then no sports at any level for the next year. **Non-AISP** students may only have subvarsity eligibility for all their tenure once sitting out the first half year (90 scheduled school days).

International Students must be eligible in all other ways, including the 8-semester maximum rule, being an undergraduate, and having a sports physical dated on or after **April 15** of the previous school year.

“Direct Placement” is defined as “*placement in which the student has chosen a particular host family and or school rather than being “matched” randomly by the exchange organization.*” Approval must be obtained for these students to confirm that a specific school or host family was not chosen for athletic reasons. See also **Undue Influence & Links Rule**.

**Note:** International students who, when they **first enroll** in any secondary school in the U.S. and **are not required by law to have a J1 or F-1 visa** are subject to the transfer rule, just as are all other students (Interpretation 85). If an International student’s status changes in a subsequent year, **their eligibility is based on their status when they first enroll**. This is a summary; see exact Handbook regulations and interpretations and consult the school AD or MHSAA staff.

**NOT ALL EXCHANGE OR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ARE IMMEDIATELY ELIGIBLE...**

- |   |                              |       |                             |
|---|------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Is the international student on a J1 or F1 Visa?.....  | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | ..... | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Is this the 1st year for the student at YOUR school?.....  | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | ..... | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Is this the student’s 1st year in the U.S.?.....   | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | ..... | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. The student has NOT graduated/received a diploma?<br>(even from their school in their home country)?.....              | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | ..... | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Is the student placed by an APPROVED program?.....   | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | ..... | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Check CSJET approval list: <a href="http://www.mhsaa.com">www.mhsaa.com</a> → I AM → Administrator → AISP Listings</i> |                              |       |                             |
| 6. Is the student randomly placed in your school?.....  | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | ..... | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |

**If you answered “NO” to ANY of the above questions, contact the MHSAA immediately before the international/exchange student is allowed to participate in ANY scrimmage or contest, as it could result in the forfeiture of any contest the student participates in.**