

The Great Public Schools Association of Queensland

ELIGIBILITY BY-LAWS

Effective July 2026

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Spirit of Fellowship



Introduction to the Great Public Schools Student Eligibility

The GPS Association and its Member Schools are committed to ensuring fair, safe and consistent participation in GPS sport and activities. These By-Laws establish the eligibility requirements for students participating in GPS competitions and championships.

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Executive Officer
The Great Public Schools Association of Queensland

Previous amendments

Name	Effective	Approved date
GPS Eligibility Bylaw	1 July 2026	10 August 2026
GPS Eligibility Bylaw	1 January 2026	24 October 2025
GPS Eligibility Bylaw	1 January 2021	22 February 2021
Student Eligibility in Firsts Team and Championship Events	8 August 2016	8 August 2016
Student Eligibility in Firsts Team and Championship Events	19 October 2015	19 October 2015

TABLE OF CONTENT

OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES	4
PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION.....	4
1 ADMINISTRATION	4
2 GENERAL ELIGIBILITY	4
3 Age Eligibility.....	4
4 DEFINITIONS	4
5 YEAR LEVEL PARTICIPATION.....	5
6 PARTICIPATION IN FIXTURES	5
7 FLAGSHIP COMPETITION ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTRATION	5
8 RECRUITMENT.....	6
9 TRANSFER BETWEEN MEMBER SCHOOLS	6
10 CHANGE IN STATUS	6
11 EXEMPTIONS.....	6
12 BREACHES.....	6
13 GPS SPIRIT RULES	7
PART 2: APPENDICES	8
APPENDIX A - SPORT & ACTIVITY OFFERINGS.....	8
APPENDIX B - TEAMS/ AGE DIVISIONS/ GRADES.....	9
APPENDIX C – SUMMARY OF SPORT-SPECIFIC EXCEPTIONS	10

OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

The objectives of these By-Laws are to:

- Promote fair, equitable and meaningful participation in GPS Sport and Activities.
- Preserve the integrity of GPS Premiership Competitions and Championships.
- Encourage the long-term development of students within their Member School communities and discourage recruitment primarily for competitive advantage in GPS competitions.
- Provide flexibility to accommodate genuine changes in family, educational or personal circumstances.
- Establish clear, consistent and administratively practical eligibility requirements for Member Schools.
- Support safe participation through appropriate age, year-level and competition structures.

PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

1 ADMINISTRATION

- 1.1 The Principal/ Headmaster at the GPS Member School is responsible for ensuring compliance with these By-Laws.
- 1.2 Each Member School may appoint a Designated Representative.
- 1.3 Authorised forms must be signed by the Principal/Headmaster or Designated Representative.

2 GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1 A Member School must ensure every participant is eligible under these By-Laws.

3 AGE ELIGIBILITY

- 3.1 A student is not eligible to participate in any GPS Sport, Activity, Premiership Competition or Championship in the year of their nineteenth (19th) birthday, or if they have turned nineteen (19) prior to the commencement of the competition year.
- 3.2 The Management Committee may grant an exemption to this requirement in accordance with Clause 10.

4 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 In these By-Laws, unless otherwise expressly stated, words used mean the following:
 - **Enrollment Date**, concerning a student, means the date on which the student commences full-time academic attendance at a Member School according to the usual terms and conditions of that Member School's standard enrolment agreement.
 - **First/ Senior A/ Premier Teams** means the highest grade team at the school in Basketball, Chess, Cricket, Debating, Football, Rowing, Rugby, Tennis, and Volleyball.
 - **Full Fee Student** means a student enrolled in a Member School according to the usual terms and conditions of the Member School's standard enrollment agreement and the enrolment no merit entry, scholarship, discount, concession, or any other financial or bursary assistance applies.
 - **Flagship Team** means the highest-ranked team fielded by a school in a specific sport or activity contributing to the Premiership. Often referred to as "Firsts/ Senior A/ Premier/ Championship Team"
 - **GPS Association** means The Great Public Schools' Association of Queensland Inc. and includes any committee established under the GPS Association constitution.
 - **GPS Championships** means competitions conducted for male students enrolled at a Member School across all age divisions in Cross Country, Rowing, Swimming and Track & Field.
 - **Management Committee** is the governing body of the GPS Association, comprising representatives from each member school. Members typically include school Principals or Headmasters.
 - **Member School** means a school that is a member of the GPS Association as per the Constitution.
 - **New to School Student** is a student aged between 10 and 18 years in grades 5-12 (which includes Full Fee Student or Scholarship Student).
 - **Open Team** means a team competing in an Open division below the Flagship Team (for example, 2nds, 3rds, 4ths and subsequent teams) and is comprised of Year 12 students only.
 - **Parent** a caregiver, including any legal guardians of a Member School Student.
 - **Premiership Competitions** refers to matches involving Firsts/ Senior A/ Premier/ Championship Teams.
 - **Scholarship Student** A student who is not a Full Fee Student; whose fees are waived or assisted by the school, a supporter group or any third party or other concessions are given, such as bursary or merit entry.
 - **Year-Level Team** means a team comprised of students enrolled in the same school year, such as Year 11, Year 10, Year 9, Year 8, Year 7, Year 6 or Year 5 teams.

5 YEAR LEVEL PARTICIPATION

- 5.1 Students must compete in the year level, age division or competition category applicable to their enrolment year and age as prescribed in these By-Laws.
- 5.2 Unless otherwise expressly provided for in these By-Laws, a student is not eligible to compete in a higher or lower year level, age division or grade than that determined by their enrolled year level or birth year.
- 5.3 Open Teams (e.g. 2nds, 3rds, etc.) must consist of Year 12 students only.
- 5.4 The following exceptions apply:
 - a. Tennis Open 2nd Team may consist of students from Years 7–12.
 - b. Rugby competitions may permit participation in accordance with the Rugby Australia Age Dispensation Policy and any GPS-approved size-for-age arrangements; and
 - c. Exceptional circumstances approved in writing by the GPS Executive Officer or their representative.
- 5.5 Approval granted under clause 4.4(c) applies only to the specific student, competition and period approved by the GPS Executive Officer.

6 PARTICIPATION IN FIXTURES

- 6.1 Unless otherwise expressly provided for in these By-Laws or the relevant GPS Sport and Activity Rules, a student may participate in only one (1) official GPS fixture, match, race, event or competition per round.
- 6.2 A student who participates in more than one (1) fixture, match, race, event or competition in the same round shall be considered ineligible for all additional fixtures, matches, races or events in that round unless specifically authorised by these By-Laws.
- 6.3 Flagship Teams, Championships and any approved exceptions must comply with the requirements outlined in the relevant Sport and Activity Rules.
- 6.4 Breaches of this clause will be dealt with under Clause 11.

7 FLAGSHIP COMPETITION ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTRATION

It is the responsibility of each member school to ensure that all enrolled students and their parents are aware of the regulations and policies governing GPS Competitions, including eligibility requirements and the Code of Conduct.

7.1 Student Eligibility

A student is eligible for a Flagship Team if:

Student Type	Eligibility Requirement
Full Fee Student (Years 11–12)	Enrolled on or before the first school day of Year 11
Scholarship Student (Years 11–12)	Enrolled on or before the first school day of the competition year
Full Fee Student (Years 5–10)	Enrolled on or before the first school day of the term preceding the competition
Scholarship Student (Years 5–10)	Enrolled on or before the first school day of the competition year

7.2 Registration Requirements

Five days before the commencement of a competition, each Member School must submit their proposed Flagship squad list:

- Eligible student registrations;
- Date of birth;
- Year level;
- Enrolment date;

Any amendments must be submitted before the student competes.

The GPS Executive Officer is responsible for providing this information to the GPS Management Committee before any competitions.

7.3 Failure to Register

Failure to submit required registrations may result in the school being unable to compete until the registration is completed.

7.4 Breaches of this clause will be dealt with under Clause 11.

8 RECRUITMENT

- 8.1 Member School must not entice, solicit or recruit, or attempt or assist another person to entice, solicit or recruit a student enrolled at another Member School away from that school.
- 8.2 A Member School (**First School**) must ensure that none of its employees, agents, or representatives approaches or contacts a Parent of a student enrolled at another Member School to procure the student's enrolment at the First School.
- 8.3 Breaches of this clause will be dealt with under Clause 11.

9 TRANSFER BETWEEN MEMBER SCHOOLS

- 9.1 When a family approaches a Member School to enrol their child who is already enrolled in another Member School, the Head of the school approached will inform the Head of the other school and the GPS Executive Officer within 14 days out of professional courtesy.
- 9.2 It is the responsibility of the Head of the school being approached to take a request for exemption to the GPS Executive Officer
- 9.3 The GPS Association must maintain a confidential register that records all students' transfers in Years 10, 11, and 12. It must ensure that the register is accessible by the Headmaster or Principal of each Member School.

10 CHANGE IN STATUS

- 10.1 Should a Full Fee Student become a Scholarship Student, the Student's Member School must respect the student and comply with the By-Laws' provisions relating to Scholarship Students from the date the change takes effect.
- 10.2 Should a Scholarship Student become a Full Fee Student, the Student's Member School must comply with the provisions in these By-Laws relating to Full Fee Students from the date the change takes effect.

11 EXEMPTIONS

- 11.1 The Management Committee will grant exemptions from the By-Law upon request from a Member School.
- 11.2 The Management Committee may only grant an exemption if it is satisfied (in its sole discretion) that extraordinary circumstances exist to justify the exemption:

Exemption Category	May Be Considered
Student transfer between GPS schools	Yes – Management Committee
Indigenous scholarship transfer	Yes – Management Committee
Late commencement	Yes – Management Committee
Change in fee status	Yes – Management Committee
Exceptional personal circumstances	Yes – Management Committee
Year Level / Age Division Variation	Yes – GPS Executive Officer

- 11.3 Applications for exemptions will be considered for 19-Year-Old students to participate in general GPS Competitions on the following grounds:
 - I. Genuine extenuating circumstances where to refuse an exemption would be unfair or unreasonable to the student
- 11.4 The Management Committee or GPS Office shall have no authority to speak to parents. The Member School is to communicate with the student/ parents.
- 11.5 A Member School that makes an Exemption Request must communicate the outcome of that request to any students or parents of the Member School directly affected by that outcome.
- 11.6 A decision of the Management Committee to grant an exemption under this clause is final. There is no appeal from the decision of the Management Committee.

12 BREACHES

- 12.1 Breaches or suspected breaches of these By-Laws must be reported to the GPS Association by Member Schools
- 12.2 Upon receipt of a report, the matter will be referred to the Management Committee, who must investigate the matter and determine whether a breach of the By-Laws has occurred.
- 12.3 In considering the matter, the Management Committee must consider all relevant circumstances, including any views expressed by a Member School or Student whose interests may be directly affected by the suspected breach of these By-Laws.

12.4 Member Schools found to have allowed an ineligible student to participate, or a student not included on an approved squad list, shall forfeit any affected fixture, match, race, event or competition and any points shall be adjusted accordingly.

12.5 If the Management Committee finds that a breach of other areas of this By-Laws has occurred, it may take such action as it considers appropriate including any of the following action:

- a. issue a censure notice;
- b. forfeit the relevant fixture;
- c. deduct competition points; or
- d. disqualify a student or Member School from competing in the GPS Flagship Teams (or any part thereof) for a period not exceeding two years

12.6 A decision of the Management Committee under this clause is final.

13 GPS SPIRIT RULES

13.1 The Member Schools acknowledge and agree that the integrity of the GPS Premiership Competition and GPS Championships is a shared responsibility, and aim to ensure that support groups, "Old Boy" associations, commercial and philanthropic partners of Member Schools, and any other relevant stakeholders all act to support the spirit of these By-Laws and the objects of the GPS Association.

PART 2: APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - SPORT & ACTIVITY OFFERINGS

The GPS Sport and Activities offerings are as per the below.

These offerings may be adjusted from time to time at the GPS Executive Officer's discretion with approval from the GPS Management Committee.

Term	Activity	Yr 5	Yr 6	Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11	Y 12
One	Cricket	Yrs 5 - 12							
	Swimming	10&U - 12&U		13&U - Open					
	Volleyball	Yrs 5 - 12							
	Debating	Yrs 5 - 12							
	Rowing			Yr 7&8 cox only Single invitational meet for yr 8		Yr 9 - 12			
	Yr 7 Choir only								
Music Showcase			Yrs 8 - 12						
Two	Football	Yrs 5 - 12							
	Tennis	Yrs 5 - 12							
	Cross Country	10&U - 12&U			13&U - Open				
Three	Basketball	Yrs 5 - 12							
	Rugby	11&U – U18							
	Chess	Yrs 5 - 12							
Four	Track & Field	10&U - 12&U			13&U - Open				

APPENDIX B - TEAMS/ AGE DIVISIONS/ GRADES

1. Fixture Sports/ Activities
 - a. Refer specifically to clause 4 and 5 relating to general age and participation eligibility.
 - b. Interpretation of Team Structures
 - A Flagship Team is the highest-ranked team representing a Member School in a sport or activity.
 - Open Teams (e.g. 2nds, 3rds, 4ths) are Year 12 teams ranked according to playing ability.
 - Year-level teams (e.g. Year 11, Year 10, Year 9, etc) consist of students enrolled in that year level.
 - Tennis is exempt, with the 2nd Team permitted to consist of students from Years 7–12.
 - Rugby competitions are age-based and are governed by the Rugby Australia Age Dispensation Policy. Students are to compete in their prescribed age group unless an approved dispensation has been granted by Rugby Australia or the GPS Executive Officer.
2. Championships
 - a. Competitors shall compete in one age group only (except for "All Age" Open event). The students first event on the day determines their age division for the Championship
 - b. GPS Championships are conducted for male students of GPS Member Schools and are contested in age divisions as outlined below.
 - c. Year 5 and 6 students cannot compete in the (13 Years & Under – Open) Championship
 - d. Year 7 Students who meet the criteria to compete in the 12 Years & Under age group can compete in the (10 Years & Under – 12 Years & Under) event. A Year 7 Student may only compete in one event (eg. Carnival or Championship).
 - e. For Swimming Championships Competition, competitors may only swim in three (3) individual events and one relay.
 - f. For Track & Field Championships, there is no restriction on the number of events in which a competitor can compete.

3. Offerings

Sport / Activity	Team Structure	Eligible Years	Flagship Team
Basketball	Open 1sts, Open Teams, Year Groups	Years 5–12	YEARS 7–12
Chess	Open 1sts, Open Teams, Year Groups	Years 5–12	YEARS 7–12
Cricket	Open 1sts, Open Teams, Year Groups	Years 5–12	YEARS 7–12
Debating	Open Senior A Team, Year Groups	Years 5–12	YEARS 7–12
Football	Open 1sts, Open Teams, Year Groups	Years 5–12	YEARS 7–12
Tennis	Open 1sts, Open Teams*, Year Groups	Years 5–12	YEARS 7–12
Volleyball	Open 1sts, Open Teams, Year Groups	Years 5–12	YEARS 7–12
Rugby	U11, U12, U13, U14, U15, U16, U18	Age Based	RA AGE DISPENSATION POLICY
Music	Choir, Concert Band, Big Band, Symphony Orchestra	Years 8–12 (Yr 7 Choir only)	N/A
Cross Country	Boys 10U,11U,12U (Yr 5-7)	Age Based	N/A
Cross Country	Boys 13U,14U,15U,16U, Open (Yr 7-12)	Age Based	YEARS 7–12
Rowing	1st VIII, Open Crews, Year Crews	Years 9–12 (Yr 7-8 Coxswains only)	YEARS 10–12 *Yr 7-9 can coxswain
Swimming	Boys 10U,11U,12U (Yr 5-7)	Age Based	N/A
Swimming	Boys 13U,14U,15U,16U, Open (Yr 7-12)	Age Based	YEARS 7–12
Track & Field	Boys 10U,11U,12U (Yr 5-7)	Age Based	N/A
Track & Field	Boys 13U,14U,15U,16U, Open (Yr 7-12)	Age Based	YEARS 7–12

NB: Players are eligible for participation in Rugby divisions if they meet the RA Age Dispensation Policy requirements.

APPENDIX C – SUMMARY OF SPORT-SPECIFIC EXCEPTIONS

Appendix C is a summary of sport-specific participation exceptions. Where any inconsistency exists, the relevant Sport and Activity By-Law shall prevail.

1. GPS Participation eligibility is governed by the GPS Eligibility By-Law.
2. A student may participate in only one fixture per round unless an exception is expressly provided for in these Sport Rules.
3. Where an exception is provided, participation in a second fixture is limited strictly to the circumstances outlined in these Rules.

Sport/ Activity	General Participation Exception	Flagship exception
Basketball	Not permitted	Up to five nominated 1st V players may participate in a fixture earlier in the same round. Allowing the 1 st to be their 2 nd fixture for the day.
Chess	Not permitted	Not permitted
Cricket	Not permitted	An approved substitute into the 1st XI may participate in a second fixture earlier in the same round.
Debating	Not permitted	Not permitted
Football	In cases of a legitimate, match-stopping injury, a replacement player may have participate in a fixture earlier in the same round. A player who has played in a higher year level or division is not permitted to participate in a lower year level or division in any circumstances.	A substitute in the 1st XI may participate in a fixture earlier in the same round. Allowing the 1 st to be their 2 nd fixture for the day.
Rugby	No player who has started in a higher age group or division is permitted to participate (start or reserve) in a lower grade or division in the same round. A Teams (U11 to U16) In the case of a legitimate, match-stopping injury, a replacement from the immediate team below in that age group may replace the player provided he has not played in any other team that same day. Open Teams (2nd XV and below) & B Divisions (U11 to U16) No player is permitted to play in a second fixture in the same round.	Replacements for the 1st XV team must have played at least half of either the U16A or 2nd XV match on that day. If a suitable replacement from the U16A or 2nd XV is not available due to injury, the next best player may be from the U16B or 3rd XV division. In instances where the 1st XV match is a standalone match, fresh replacements are permitted.
Tennis	Not permitted	Not permitted.
Volleyball	Not permitted	Up to five nominated 1st VI players may participate in a second fixture earlier in the same round. Allowing the 1 st to be their 2 nd fixture for the day.
Rowing	N/A	N/A
Swimming	N/A	N/A
Cross Country	N/A	N/A
Track & Field	N/A	N/A