



**Official Rules and Guidelines of the  
Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association  
2022-2023**

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# ARTICLE I

## Vision, Mission, and Anti-Discrimination

**Section 1 –Vision.** The Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association (VISAA) will develop a nationally recognized community of student-athletes with unparalleled competitive opportunities for participation and development of character.

**Section 2 –Mission.** The VISAA will provide accredited member schools the resources and competitive environment in education-based programs that establish a foundation for excellence founded on integrity, sportsmanship, and leadership.

**Section 3 –Anti-Discrimination Statement.** The VISAA supports a community of inclusion that respects the dignity of the individual in the areas of age, gender, religion, ability, socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, culture, and sexual orientation. The VISAA is committed to operating all events, including those at third-party venues, in an atmosphere that is inclusive, supportive, and safe for all participants. The VISAA is committed to conducting events that protect student-athlete well-being and safeguard the experience of students, coaches, fans, and campus communities.

**Section 4 –Requirements for Third-Party Venues.** In light of the VISAA's anti-discrimination statement, every third-party venue that hosts a VISAA Event (as defined below) must agree in writing to deliver and maintain an environment that is safe, healthy, free of discrimination and solicitation, and respects the dignity of all persons. In addition, the third-party venue must provide a copy of its non-discrimination policy (or comparable policy) that demonstrates how it will comply with the requirement to provide an environment that is safe, healthy, free of discrimination and solicitation, and respects the dignity of all persons.

## ARTICLE II

### Membership

**Section 1 –Membership Eligibility.** All non-public schools located within the Commonwealth of Virginia are eligible for membership, however, membership is not automatic. Membership is contingent on compliance with the following membership requirements.

**Section 2 –Membership Requirements.** In order to be considered for membership, a school must:

- demonstrate full accreditation by an approved accrediting agency recognized by the Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE);
- complete an application for membership;
- pay the appropriate required annual dues; and
- demonstrate the school’s commitment to the vision and mission of VISAA by agreement to follow the rules and guidelines of the organization.

For purposes of determining eligibility for applicants, the VISAA will take into account prior adherence to or violations of VISAA rules and guidelines.

**Section 3 –Membership Term.** VISAA membership is effective for one school year only, and an independent school’s eligibility for membership in the VISAA is reevaluated by the Executive Committee each year as part of the annual application process.

**Section 4 –Annual Meeting.** The annual meeting of VISAA member schools will be held each year on such dates and at times and places designated by notice to VISAA member schools. The annual meeting is normally held in October or November in Richmond, Virginia. At least one representative from each VISAA member school should attend the annual meeting.

# ARTICLE III

## Governing Body

### Section 1 –Executive Committee.

**A. General.** The business and affairs of the VISAA shall be managed and controlled by the Executive Committee of the VISAA (Executive Committee).

**B. Terms.** The number of Executive Committee members, their terms of service, and election to fill vacancies shall be governed in accordance with the VISAA Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws. The Executive Committee shall consist of four classes of members for the purpose of arranging terms of service. Terms of service are arranged in order to provide a pool of experienced Executive Committee members present at any given VISAA meeting. Each class of members is elected for a four-year term of service.

### C. Classification of Members of the Executive Committee.

- The regional members of the Executive Committee – Eastern Region (Class I), Central Region (Class II), Western Region (Class III) and Northern Region (Class IV) – are elected sequentially so that one class is elected each year.

- Each VISAA member school is entitled to three votes in the election of representatives from the school's region, which must be cast one vote per nominee. Each region will elect three representatives consisting of two athletic directors or assistant athletic directors (or one athletic director and one assistant athletic director) and one Head of School or Assistant Head of School or another full-time school representative in a comparable position of authority. At least one of the two athletic directors or assistant athletic directors shall be female; provided; however, that if no female athletic director or assistant athletic director is nominated for election in the applicable region, the two athletic directors or assistant athletic directors (or

combination of one athletic director and one assistant athletic director) may be male. The 12 regional representatives thus elected will comprise the Executive Committee.

**D. Officers.** The Executive Committee shall appoint the following officers annually:

- Executive Committee Chairman.
- Executive Director.
- Assistant Executive Director.
- Secretary; and
- Financial Chair.

The Executive Committee may appoint such other officers and agents with such powers and duties as it shall deem necessary.

**E. Responsibilities.** The responsibilities of the officers shall include:

- organizing the work of the VISAA Executive Committee;
- preparing the agenda for regular and special called meetings, and
- executing any other matters relative to the business of the Executive Committee as directed by the Executive Committee.

**F. Schedule of Meetings of the Executive Committee.** The regular meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held three times annually during the school year in the months of September, January and May on such dates and at times and places designated by proper notice to the members of the Executive Committee.

**G. Special Meetings.** Special or other meetings of the Executive Committee may be held at places and at times fixed by resolution of the Executive Committee, or upon call of the Chairman of the Executive Committee or a majority of the members of the Executive Committee.

**Section 2 –Regions.** VISAA is divided into four regions. The regions are identified as Eastern, Central, Western and Northern.

**Section 3 –Executive Committee Regional Meetings.** Each of the four regional divisions of the VISAA shall hold at least one regional meeting annually during the school year, preferably in the spring. The regional meetings are open to school representatives from all athletic conferences or other member schools of the region. The purpose of the regional meeting is to receive information from schools in the region. All information considered pertinent should be requested to be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Executive Committee meeting. Regional meetings shall be chaired by the VISAA Executive Director or his or her designee.

**Section 4 –Committees for Competition.**

- The VISAA shall establish Competition Committees or recognize previously established Competition Committees for the purpose of establishing state championship competition in the various sports.
- The Executive Committee shall designate a Director of Sports Committees (or similar title). His or her duties and responsibilities should include, among other things, coordinating all activities of the Competition Committees and assigning representatives from the Executive Committee to serve as the Executive Committee’s liaisons to Competition Committees after consultation with the Executive Director and the Executive Committee Chairman.
- All Competition Committees should be made up of representatives of the four regions of the state, include at least one Athletic Director, one member of the Executive Committee and be chaired by a full-time employee of a VISAA member school.
- Each Competition Committee should establish written criteria for serving on the committee. The Competition Committee should specify the length of terms of service and rotation of members on the committee.

- Each Competition Committee shall submit this information to the Executive Committee.
- Regular polls shall be conducted by each Competition Committee for sports that use polls for selecting teams (or determining team seeding) for VISAA championship events.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **School Division Classifications**

**Section 1 –Classification.** VISAA member schools will be classified into the following divisions depending upon the number of boys or girls enrolled in grades 9-12 for the two year cycle, 2022-2024

- Boys Division: number of boys in grades 9-12 for basketball which has 4 divisions:

Division I- 180 and higher

Division II- 179-91

Division III- 90-46

Division IV- 45 and below

- Boys Division: number of boys in grades 9-12 for the sports of baseball, cross country, and soccer that have 3 divisions:

Division I- 180 and above

Division II- 179-91

Division III- 90 and below

- Boys Division: number of boys in grades 9-12 for the sports of football and golf that have 3 divisions:

Division I- 200 and above

Division II- 199-100

Division III- 99 and below

o Boys and Girls Division: number of boys and girls in grades 9-12 for the sports which have 2 divisions:

Division I- 161 and higher

Division II- 160 and below

o Girls Division: number of girls in grades 9-12 for the sports of basketball and volleyball that have 4 divisions:

Division I- 161 and higher

Division II- 160-76

Division III- 75- 47

Division IV- 46 and below

o Girls Division: number of girls in grades 9-12 for cross country which has 3 divisions:

Division I- 161 and higher

Division II- 160-76

Division III- 75 and below

o Girls Division: number of girls in grades 9-12 for soccer which has 3 divisions:

Division I- 125 and higher

Division II- 124-66

Division III- 65 and below

o Girls Division: number of girls in grades 9-12 for softball which has 3 divisions:

Division I- 165 and higher

Division II- 164-80

Division III- 79 and below

**Any appeal of division classification must be submitted by August 15.**

**Section 2 –Divisional Classification.** A two-year cycle will be used for all sports for determining divisions. Divisions will be based on enrollment numbers for boys and girls provided on the VISAA membership applications submitted in September of the school year prior to the commencement of the new cycle (e.g., for the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years, enrollment numbers as provided on VISAA membership applications submitted in September of the 2021-22 school year).

**Section 3 –Classification Election.** Schools may elect to play in a higher division in one or more sports. Any election under Section 3 must be made at the beginning of a two-year cycle and is effective for that two-year cycle.

**Section 4 –Appeal of Classifications; Addition of Third Division.**

VISAA member schools and the Competition Committees may appeal to the Executive Committee to adjust divisional classifications or add a third division. Any such appeal must be made by August 1 of the school year in which such adjustment is to be effective and in accordance with Section 5 of Article X hereof. In order to add a third division, there must be 60 or more teams participating in the sport, unless the sport had three divisions before 2008.

# ARTICLE V

## Eligibility Rules

A student who does not satisfy the rules set forth in this Article V is not allowed to participate in any regular-season competition between VISAA member schools or any VISAA championship event (defined as a VISAA Event).

**Section 1 –Academic Requirement.** The student must be a regular bonafide student in good standing at the VISAA school that he or she represents and must be enrolled and in attendance at that school at least 30 days prior to the date of the commencement of the VISAA championship in which he or she proposes to participate to be eligible for such VISAA championship. For purposes hereof, the term “regular bonafide student” shall mean a full-time student taking an average of four hours of classroom instruction per day or at least five academic classes per semester/grade reporting period and working toward graduation requirements at the school he or she represents. For purposes hereof, the term “school” shall mean a private, preparatory, parochial or other nonpublic schools that is accredited by an accrediting agency approved by the VCPE and that does not derive its financial support from state or local government agencies.

*[Note: Distance learning courses may be applied toward a student’s full-time standing at the school he or she represents provided that all of the following criteria are met:*

1. The class must be taken on the school’s campus under the supervision of the school’s faculty.
2. Tuition for the class must be paid to and collected by the school.
3. The class must fall outside the school’s course offerings (i.e., not a replacement for an existing course offering).

4. The course must be able to be applied toward the school's graduation requirements (may be an elective, but must appear on the student's transcript).

*Note: The foregoing does not replace or alter the NCAA's Initial-Eligibility Standards.]*

**Section 2 –Age Requirement.** The student shall not have reached the age of 19 on or before August 1 of the school year in which he or she wishes to compete. (This rule is not subject to appeal)

**Section 3 –Grade Level Requirement.** Students in grades 8-12 are eligible for VISAA Events. Students below the 8th-grade level are ineligible for VISAA Events.

**Section 4 –Reclassification of a Student.** A student wishing to repeat a grade (or reclassify) must do so for non-athletic reasons and in compliance with all conference requirements, as applicable. The change in grade status must be reflected in all school records and publications as soon as practicable following the date of reclassification. A student may not complete the graduation requirements of a school for any diploma category and receive athletic eligibility in the following year.

**Section 5 –Conference Requirement.** Any student or school team ruled ineligible by a conference is considered ineligible for VISAA Events. A conference's determination of eligibility under its rules is not appealable to the Appeals Committee of the Executive Committee or the Executive Committee.

**Section 6 –Senior Status Requirement.** Attending academic classes while classified as a senior at any school marks the student's last year of eligibility for VISAA Events. A student who has been classified as a senior at any school, who then transfers to a VISAA member school or another VISAA member school, is eligible for VISAA Events during that transfer

year only. The student may not gain additional eligibility thereafter. Post-graduates are ineligible for VISAA Events.

**Section 7 –Non-Conference School Participation.** Schools not participating in a VISAA recognized conference may apply to participate in VISAA championship events if they participate in at least 50% of their athletic contests with VISAA member schools. Non-conference schools must comply with all VISAA tournament dates and times and VISAA eligibility requirements.

**Section 8 –Multi-Sport Participation.** In order for a student to participate in more than one school sport in a season, the student must be a regular member of both teams participating in practice for both sports and participating in at least two scheduled contests for both teams during the regular season.

**Section 9 –Gender.** If a school maintains separate teams in the same sport for girls and boys during the school year, regardless of the sports season, girls may not compete on boys' teams, and boys may not compete on girls' teams. If a school maintains only a boys' team in a sport, girls may compete on the boys' team. Boys may not participate on a girls' team in any sport. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the Executive Committee determines that boys' opportunities for participation in athletics have been limited in the past, boys may participate on a girls' team, unless the sport involved is a contact sport.

**Section 10 –Penalties for Violations.** A violation of these eligibility rules may result in one or more sanctions, as decided by the Executive Committee in its sole discretion. These sanctions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- forfeiture of any VISAA team or individual championships of which the ineligible student was a member.

- forfeiture of all games played by the school team of which the ineligible student was a member against VISAA opponents or by the school team declared ineligible by its conference.
- forfeiture of any VISAA team championship by the school or team declared ineligible by its conference; and
- ineligibility for VISAA championship competition in the sport in which the violation occurred during the school year in which the violation occurred and possibly for the following school year.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Recruitment or Inducement**

The Mission of the VISAA is to provide accredited member schools the resources and competitive environment in education-based programs that establish a foundation for excellence founded on integrity, sportsmanship, and leadership. The Executive Committee believes that recruitment or inducing any student to attend such school for athletic purposes is in violation of this Mission. Recruitment of any student for athletic purposes is not permitted.

**Section 1 –General Rule.** A VISAA member school (and persons affiliated with such member school) shall not recruit or induce a student to attend their school based primarily on the enhancement of the competitive level of the school athletic teams.

Coaches, teachers, administrators, other school employees, or persons affiliated with a VISAA member school shall not initiate contact with any student-athlete for the purpose of encouraging the student to attend their school primarily for athletic purposes. This rule should not be interpreted as a restriction of the school’s regular student recruitment programs (e.g., the use of newspaper advertisements, direct mail or email campaigns, media presentations, and open houses).

If a student and his or her guardian have made contact with the school's admissions office and indicated their interest in the school, coaches or other school representatives may approach the student about all school programs.

**Section 2 –Student Transfers.** If a student transfers from one VISAA member school to another during the current school year and wishes to participate in VISAA Events, a statement of release must be signed by the heads of both schools.

**Section 3 –Financial Aid.** Any VISAA member school having a financial aid program based on demonstrated need must have in place a written policy/procedure approved by the school governing board for calculating and documenting awards. Financial aid may not be awarded based on athletic participation.

Merit-based aid programs must be made available to all students who meet the qualifications.

Any financial aid or merit award offered to a prospective student may not exceed the typical amount awarded to any student of similar need/qualifications regardless of athletic participation.

**Section 4 –Specific Examples.** Inappropriate contact and inducement include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The student is asked by a member of the school faculty, a coach, or member of a “booster club” to transfer from one school to another.
- Special privileges are given to parents and/or students.
- Financial aid is given for transportation, room, board or tuition outside of a regular financial aid package. For the purpose hereof, a regular financial aid package shall mean financial aid pursuant to a financial aid procedure/plan that:
  - o is in writing and on file in the school's administrative office;

- o has been approved by the school board or governing organization of the school;
  - o contains details qualifying the financial need criteria for aid;
  - o includes all students in the grade structure of the school;
  - o demonstrates through documentation the application and approval process of financial aid requests;
  - o shows evidence of including non-athletes in the award process of financial aid;
- providing any consideration not afforded to all students.

**Section 5 –Penalties for Violations.** A violation of these rules may result in one or more sanctions, as decided by the Executive Committee in its sole discretion. These sanctions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ineligibility of the student to participate in VISAA Events for one year;
- forfeiture of any VISAA team or individual championships of which the student was a member;
- forfeiture of all games played by the school team of which the student was a member against VISAA opponents; and
- ineligibility for VISAA championship competition during the following school year in any sport.

A second incident demonstrating blatant disregard of this rule may result in a VISAA member school's expulsion from the VISAA.

# ARTICLE VII

## Code of Conduct

VISAA member schools shall conduct themselves in such a manner that their actions promote the values and mission statement of the organization. Any VISAA member school that brings discredit to the VISAA, whether through its actions, behaviors, or otherwise, shall be subject to disciplinary action.

**Section 1 –Philosophy.** The VISAA believes that interscholastic athletics are an integral part of the total educational program. High standards of behavior, scholarship, and citizenship are important to a sound athletic program. Students volunteering to participate in athletics should assume the responsibilities and lead by example by demonstrating fairness, respect, and self-control. Athletes, coaches, officials, and fans shall at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable and sportsmanlike manner. Each person will be responsible for his or her words and actions at all VISAA Events and shall adhere to the Code of Conduct. VISAA member schools are strongly encouraged to include the Code of Conduct in their athletic handbooks.

**Section 2 –Sportsmanship Expectations.** Each athlete, coach, parent, spectator, official or other attendees, by participating in or attending a VISAA Event, agrees as follows:

- I will treat any coach, parent, spectator, player, official, or any other attendee with respect regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, religion, sex, or ability.
- I will not engage in unsportsmanlike conduct.
- I will not engage in any behavior which would endanger the health, safety, or well-being of any coach, parent, spectator, player, official, or other attendee.

- I will not use drugs, alcohol or tobacco while at any athletic event. I will not attend, coach, officiate or participate in an athletic event while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I will not use profanity.
- I will not engage in verbal or physical threats or abuse toward any coach, parent, spectator, player, official or any other attendee.
- I will not initiate a fight or scuffle with any coach, parent, spectator, player, official or other attendee.
- I will not argue with officials or otherwise indicate dislike or disdain for a decision.
- I will not make any degrading remarks about any official, coach, athlete or school.
- I will not detain or attempt to confront any official to request a ruling or explanation of actions taken by an official.
- I understand that conduct that leads to my removal from a VISAA Event may be considered a serious violation of the Code of Conduct and may result in discipline by the Executive Committee.
- I understand that, as a coach or as a school administrator, the removal of a team before the completion of the game may be considered a serious violation of the Code of Conduct.
- I hereby agree that, if I fail to adhere to the Code of Conduct while attending, coaching, officiating, or participating in a VISAA Event, I will be subject to disciplinary action by the Executive Committee.

**Section 3 –Penalties for Violations.** Any one or more of the following penalties may be imposed upon a school, coach, spectator, or athlete upon a violation of the Code of Conduct. Violations by parents, spectators, or other representatives of a VISAA member school may be assessed against that particular VISAA member school.

- Warning – A warning is an official notice that the conduct in question is a matter of record and any such act must not happen again.
- Probation – Probation is a more severe type of penalty and is for a specified time period. A team, individual, or coach on probation may participate in any VISAA Event. An additional violation by a team, individual, or coach on probation will result in suspension.
- Suspension – Suspension is a severe penalty that may be imposed for any VISAA Event. A suspended team, individual, or coach shall not participate in any VISAA Event. Suspension may result in termination of eligibility for all VISAA Events for the season (reinstatement may only be granted by the Executive Committee).

#### **Section 4 –Procedure.**

- The VISAA member school shall file a written report describing the Code of Conduct violation within 24 hours after the violation with the Executive Director and the chair of the VISAA member school's conference.
- The VISAA member school may file an appeal of the Code of Conduct violation in accordance with Section 5 of Article X hereof.
- If a team, athlete, or coach is to be suspended, suspension affects the next regularly scheduled game or playoff game.
- Any VISAA member school or coach that permits any suspended team, athlete or coach to participate in any VISAA Event in violation of a suspension will be subject to disciplinary action by the Executive Committee, which may include but is not limited to suspension from VISAA Events for a specified period of time.

#### **Section 5 –Statement to be Read at All VISAA Events.**

The following shall be read at all VISAA Events with a public address system:

“The Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association is committed to establishing and developing healthy environments for competition. We ask all spectators to remember to treat the officials and participating teams with respect. Cheer the strengths and victories of your team and do not denigrate the performance of your opponents, their fans, or the officials. We expect that all fans will act in an appropriate manner, and respect the opposition and the officials. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the premises. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.”

## ARTICLE VIII

### Ejections or Disqualifications

**Section 1 –General Rule.** Conduct that leads to an ejection or disqualification will be considered as serious unsportsmanlike conduct. These offenses are cumulative over the student’s high school season in which the first infraction occurs. The ejection or disqualification of a coach will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Committee.

*[Note: VISAA acknowledges that, in some areas of player safety, a player may be disqualified from a contest for a safety rule violation (e.g., jewelry violation or batting helmet violation after team warning). This type of situation may not carry any additional penalty. As in all cases, it will be reviewed by the Executive Committee.]*

## **Section 2 –Guidelines for a Player/Coach Ejection/Disqualification.**

- First Offense – If the disqualification is for unsportsmanlike or flagrant illegal conduct, an official warning, and a one-game suspension will be assessed. If the disqualification is for fighting, an official warning and a two-game suspension will be assessed.
- Second Offense – Suspension until reviewed, and a decision regarding the penalty to be assessed, if any, will be rendered by the Executive Committee.
- Third Offense – Termination of eligibility for all VISAA Events for the season (reinstatement may only be granted by the Executive Committee).

## **Section 3 –Ejection/Disqualification Procedure.**

- The VISAA member school shall file a written report describing the incident that led to the ejection or disqualification and the action taken or proposed to be taken by the school to resolve the violation. Any discipline of the player or coach after the incident must be reported within 24 hours to the Executive Director and the chair of the VISAA member school's conference.
- The VISAA member school may file an appeal of the ejection or disqualification. Any such appeal shall be made by the VISAA member school to the commissioner of officials that assigned the officials to the VISAA Event where the incident that led to the ejection or disqualification occurred. The determination of the commissioner of officials is not appealable to the Appeals Committee of the Executive Committee or the Executive Committee.
- If a player or coach is to be suspended, suspension affects the next regularly scheduled game or playoff game.
- Any VISAA member school or coach that permits a suspended coach or athlete to participate in any VISAA Event in violation of a suspension will be subject to disciplinary action by the Executive Committee, which may

include but is not limited to suspension from VISAA Events for a specified period of time.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Filming, Recording, or Dissemination Guidelines**

A VISAA member school that is not participating in a VISAA Event is prohibited from filming, recording, or disseminating (e.g., live streaming) that VISAA Event without the prior written consent of all teams participating in such VISAA Event. Filming, recording or dissemination of a VISAA Event without prior written consent shall be considered a Code of Conduct violation resulting in a possible suspension from VISAA championship events in the sport being played at the time of filming, recording, or dissemination.

The filming, recording, or disseminating of a VISAA Event that is being filmed, recorded, or disseminated by the VISAA or a third party designated by VISAA is prohibited. Under no circumstance shall a VISAA member school, representative thereof, or third party not approved by VISAA reproduce, distribute or otherwise disseminate any images or video of a VISAA Event without the express consent of VISAA.

*[Note: Notwithstanding the foregoing, a VISAA member school may film, record, or disseminate a home VISAA Event that is not being filmed, recorded, or disseminated by the VISAA or a third party designated by VISAA provided that it does not charge a fee for others to access or view the film, recording or dissemination.]*

# ARTICLE X

## Official Rules

**Section 1 –General Rule.** The official rules for all VISAA Events will be derived from the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) or NCAA rulebooks. VISAA will have jurisdiction over all VISAA Events in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**Section 2 –Exceptions.** The Executive Committee may allow exceptions to official rules in some instances.

### **Section 3 –Forfeits.**

- VISAA member schools are expected to honor scheduled VISAA Events, and forfeits are to be avoided. VISAA acknowledges, however, that there may be legitimate reasons that a scheduled VISAA Event may not be played. Examples of legitimate or justifiable reasons include weather-related emergencies and school crises.

- In the event there is a forfeit and one of the VISAA member schools involved believes that the forfeit was for an unjustified reason, the school may appeal to the Sports Committee for the sport in question for a review of the circumstances. Should the Sports Committee determine that the forfeit was unjustified, it shall submit its determination and recommended penalty for the unjustified forfeit to the Executive Committee, which shall determine, in its sole discretion, the penalty, if any, to be imposed on the VISAA member school that forfeited the VISAA Event. Should the sanctioned VISAA member school wish to appeal the determination of the Sports Committee, it may do so in accordance with Section 5 of Article X hereof.

*[Note: VISAA reminds all VISAA member schools that a forfeit could have a significant financial impact on the non-forfeiting VISAA member school.]*

**Section 4 –Enforcement of Rules.** Enforcement of all VISAA rules is the responsibility of each VISAA member school.

**Section 5 –Interpretations, Reports of Violations, and Appeals.**

*[Note: A VISAA member school may request an interpretation or report a violation of these rules or appeal any interpretation or application of these rules in accordance with this Section 5 of Article X. Before requesting an interpretation or reporting a violation of these rules, VISAA member schools should first determine or seek a determination from their conference as to the application of the conference’s rules to the facts and circumstances of the matter. As set forth in Section 4 of Article V above, any student or school team ruled ineligible by a VISAA recognized conference is considered ineligible for VISAA Events.*

*A conference’s determination of eligibility under its rules is not appealable to the Appeals Committee of the Executive Committee or the Executive Committee. In addition, the determination of the commissioner of officials of an ejection or disqualification is also not appealable to the Appeals Committee of the Executive Committee or the Executive Committee.]*

*Note: At its meeting on September 21,2020 the VISAA Executive Committee (EC) voted to eliminate the ability of a student-athlete to make an appeal with respect to his or her ineligibility under the age rule. Prior to the rule change, a student-athlete who did not meet the age eligibility rule, which states that a student-athlete turning 19 on or before August 1 is ineligible for competition, could seek eligibility by appealing to the EC Appeals Committee and, if that appeal was unsuccessful, to the full EC. After a thorough examination and discussion of the factors involved, the EC voted to make the age eligibility rule not subject to appeal.*

· A VISAA member school should report a violation of these rules to the Executive Director. A VISAA member school may request an interpretation

of these rules or appeal any interpretation or application of these rules to the Appeals Committee of the Executive Committee. Any such report, request, or appeal must be in writing and must set forth the specific reasons therefore and the facts in support thereof. Any request or appeal should include all supporting information to enable the Appeals Committee to make a fully informed decision.

Any questions or concerns regarding VISAA rules from individuals should be directed to the VISAA member school(s) involved. Neither the Executive Committee nor any VISAA officer shall respond to such questions or requests from individuals.

- The Appeals Committee shall consist of three Heads of School (or other school representatives in a comparable position of authority) from the Executive Committee, the Executive Director and the two Athletic Directors or Assistant Athletic Directors (or Athletic Director and Assistant Athletic Director) from the region of the request, report or appeal.
- Following a decision by the Appeals Committee, a VISAA member school may appeal the decision to the Executive Committee. Any such appeal must be in writing and must set forth the specific reasons for the appeal and the facts in support thereof. Such appeal should include all supporting information to enable the Executive Committee to make a fully informed decision. The VISAA member school seeking the appeal shall not vote as a representative on the Executive Committee with respect to that school's appeal. The decision by the Executive Committee with respect to such appeal shall be binding on all parties.

# ARTICLE XI

## Safety of Players, Coaches and Fans

**Section 1 –General Rule.** VISAA member schools are responsible to provide safety and security to all participants and attendees of VISAA Events.

**Section 2 –Weather-Related Policy.** Lightning policy requires that when thunder or flashes of lightning are observed all participants are to seek shelter and safety within a proper shelter. No contest shall be continued until 30 minutes of clear weather has been observed. Agreement is required from officials and each participating school to resume the contest.

### **Section 3 –Concussion Awareness and Management.**

- The VISAA follows the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) protocol for concussion awareness and management.
- Prior to the first practice for the applicable season, all coaches of VISAA fall, winter, and spring sports must take a recognized course providing both educational and prevention protocol for prevention regarding concussions as it relates to high school activities.
- It is strongly recommended that all athletes be baseline tested before the start of the season by a nationally recognized baseline test.
- No athlete should return to play (RTP) or practice on the same day of a concussion.
- Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate healthcare professional the day of a suspected concussion.
- Any athlete with a concussion should be medically cleared by an appropriate health care professional prior to resuming participation in classroom activities or in any practice or competition.

- After medical clearance, RTP and RTL should follow a stepwise protocol with provisions for delayed RTP and RTL based upon return of any signs and symptoms.

## **ARTICLE XII**

### **All-State Selections**

Competition Committees are responsible for all-state honor selections. Clear and concise evaluation criteria are to be written, submitted, and approved by the Executive Committee for the purpose of consistency in all-state selections. Students do not have to be selected for all-conference honors to qualify for all-state honors.

## **ARTICLE XIII**

### **Valid Expenses**

The VISAA gives concession rights to host member schools. The VISAA expects rent-free facilities from VISAA member schools. Tournament directors must submit a budget for VISAA championship tournaments to the VISAA that sets forth, among other things, estimated expenses for such events. Valid expenses include officials, security, janitorial services, gatekeepers, clock operators, announcers, timing devices, lighting expenses, and a certified athletic trainer or medical professional. Host schools must submit an expense form and net gate proceeds to the VISAA for all tournament games.

# ARTICLE XIV

## Tournament Guidelines

### Section 1 –General Rules.

A. There must be eight member schools participating in the sport from more than one conference in order to have a VISAA championship event. VISAA championship tournaments should include the top eight teams in each division. Any addition or exceptions to this requirement must be approved by the Executive Committee.

B. Tournament dates are established by the Sports Committee in consultation with the Sports Committee Chair and the Executive Director with consideration of weather and facility limitations and availability. Generally, eight-team tournaments will be held on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday; 12- team tournaments will be held on varying schedules that are sport appropriate. The Executive Director may make changes to scheduled play in the case of unforeseen or extraordinary circumstances, including inclement weather or other emergency situations.

C. Competition Committees seeking to change championship play-off requirements, tournament dates, or expansion of teams must submit a written request one year in advance of the effective date of the requested change. Competition Committees should communicate with the Executive Director to formulate requested changes of tournament formats.

**Section 2 –Tournament Locations.** Contest sites will be decided when playoff teams are selected and seeded. All sites must meet the requirements of the National High School Federation.

**Section 3 –Admission to VISAA Events.** Admission prices charged for VISAA championship events (e.g., playoff games, tournaments etc.) shall be approved in advance of the event by the Executive Committee. Regular

season VISAA contests costs are set by each athletic conference or school (if not in a conference).

**Section 4 –Opt-Out.** A VISAA member school may choose not to participate in any VISAA playoff if it so declares in the annual membership application form.

**Section 5 –Approval by Executive Committee.** Competition Committees may not determine a minimum number of games for tournament eligibility without Executive Committee approval.

**Section 6- Commitment to Participate.** Once a team has qualified for playoff competition the team must fulfill its obligation or have an absence approved by the Executive Committee. A team failing to fulfill a commitment to a tournament berth may be subject to a one-year suspension and may be ineligible for the following year's tournament.