

**DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

SERIES 600: EDUCATION PROGRAMS

POLICY 679.2

EXEMPTIONS FROM PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASS

All physically able students are required to enroll in physical education in each semester they are enrolled in school.

If a parent files a statement signed by a licensed physician that a student is not “physically able” to participate in physical education, then the student is exempt from physical education.

A pupil is not required to enroll in physical education courses if the pupil’s parent files a written statement with the school principal that the course conflicts with the pupil’s religious beliefs, pursuant to Iowa Code section 256.11(6).

A high school principal has the discretion to grant excusals from physical education to students in the 12th grade in three instances, if requested by a parent or guardian in writing. A principal may not grant any of these excusals until the principal has received a written request from a student’s parent or guardian. These excusals are to be considered on a student-by student basis. They are not to be granted on a “blanket” or “en masse” basis.

Off-campus educational Program

If a 12th grade student is enrolled in a cooperative, work study, or other educational program authorized by the school requiring the student’s absence from the school premises during the school day, the principal may excuse the student from the physical education requirement. It is only available for students who divide their time between two locations.

Academic Course Not Otherwise Available

If a 12th grade student seeks to enroll in “academic courses otherwise not available to the student,” the student’s parent or guardian may request, in writing, excusal from physical education. This matter is within the principal’s discretion. To qualify under this excusal provision, it is not necessary that the course at issue be a core course or a graduation requirement. The course may be an elective. It cannot be granted for an additional study hall or early release.

Organized and Supervised Athletic Program

If a 12th grade student is participating in an organized and supervised athletic program which requires at least as much participation per week as one-eighth unit of physical education, the student’s principal may excuse the student from physical education.

Only when participation in an organized and supervised athletic program (which might be participation in one or more sports during a semester) equals 900 minutes (at least one-eighth unit per semester) during a semester may a senior be excused from physical education for that semester.

For purposes of this section, an organized and supervised athletic program is one that is sponsored by a school and employs licensed and appropriately endorsed staff. To qualify as organized and supervised athletic programs, for example, cheerleading squads, dance squads, and show choirs must be supervised by employees with coaching endorsements.

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Discretionary Excusals Available to Students in Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Grades

Academic Course Otherwise Not Available

If a ninth through eleventh grade student seeks to enroll in courses not otherwise available to the student, the student's parent or guardian may request excusal from physical education, in writing, if the local board determines that the students from the school may be excused from physical education. This excusal requires action by the nonpublic school board before it is available.

Under this excusal provision, it is not necessary that the course at issue be a core course or a graduation requirement, it may be an elective. It must be an academic course.

Organized and Supervised Athletic Program

If a ninth, tenth, or eleventh grade student is participating in an organized and supervised athletic program, which requires at least as much participation per week as one eighth unit of physical education at some time during the semester, trimester or quarter in a school year, the student's principal may excuse the student from physical education for one quarter, trimester or semester **per year**. The activity must equal or exceed nine hundred minutes per semester.

Unlike the similar excusal granted to seniors, it requires involvement of the student's guidance counselor. This is to ensure the child's multiple academic and developmental needs are met and that the child and parents are aware of the positive and negative consequences of excusal from physical education.