

MINISTRY PAPER

Addressing the Unethical Recruitment of Students to High Schools based on Prowess in Sports

INTRODUCTION

Members are being asked to note that the Ministry of Education, (MoE), intends to stymie the unethical practice of some high schools recruiting students primarily for sporting activities without due consideration for their academic development. As such, the MoE, in association with the Inter-Secondary Schools Sports Association (ISSA), has developed a Policy Framework for the transfer of student athletes.

BACKGROUND

The primary goal of a school is the formal education of students. This involves the development of their knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to maximise their potential in further educational pursuits or acquiring gainful employment.

Whilst academics should be the central focus, the school in preparing students to become useful citizens, must promote the holistic development of students –that is, spiritual, physical, social and cultural. Preparation is done through the main curriculum and in the co-curricular activities of the school.

Whilst both the Ministry of Education and ISSA support the use of Sports as a useful tool in the development of our students, we do not condone the transfer of athletes between schools for economic gain to students and/or their parents/guardians.

POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR TRANSFER OF STUDENT ATHLETES

In order to deter the practice of “buying athletes” the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Inter-Secondary School Sports Association (ISSA), has established the following policy framework to chart the way forward:

1. The transfer of a student for any reason must follow the normal procedures as determined by the Education Regulations (28). Principals of both sending and receiving schools, along with the parent, must sign consent forms before presentation to the Ministry of Education for approval of the request to transfer a student. In considering the request for transfer of a student athlete, the Ministry of Education will determine if the student’s academic standard will enable him/her to cope with the curriculum of the receiving school. Before granting approval the Ministry of Education will insist that adequate arrangements are in place to ensure the academic advancement of the student athlete in the receiving school.
2. The transfer of students between schools must not involve economic gain to the student, parent or guardian. Scholarship proceeds must approximate the cost of providing and accessing the child’s education and not result in profiteering.
3. Students’ academic advancement must not be compromised by their involvement in sports or any other co-curricular activity. Schools must comply with the current ISSA requirement that a student must attain an 80 percent attendance record and a minimum

grade of 45 percent in four subjects during the preceding term to be eligible to participate in an ISSA event.

4. ISSA will continue to impose a mandatory one year wait period, but will add the option of additional waiting periods and/or school bans where there are proven breaches in the transfer process. ISSA's rules of exceptions outlined below are applicable.

Rules of Exceptions:

The following shall be the circumstances for which an exception will be made:

- a) A student who completes 5th Form in a member school that does not have a 6th Form and transfers to another in order to undertake 6th Form work leading to an external examination.
- b) A student who fails to be accepted to 6th Form in his/her own school but is accepted to the 6th Form of another.
- c) A student who, after mutual agreement between both Principals, transfer to the 6th Form of another.

Students meeting the foregoing criteria shall be eligible for 6th Form provided that they have attained passes (Grades 1 – 3) in a minimum of four (4) subjects at the CSEC level.

5. The Ministry and ISSA will develop and apply appropriate sanctions to schools that breach the rules governing the transfer of student athletes.
6. ISSA will establish a clearinghouse by August 1, 2015 where all transferred student/athletes must be approved/cleared before participation in ISSA activities. The clearinghouse will, amongst other things, examine all documentation related to a transferred student/athlete and investigate any discrepancies reported or identified.

CONSULTATIONS

In formulating the policy framework, consultations were had with various groups, including parents, school administrators and ISSA. Further consultations will be had with the various groups cited herein as well as students to finalize the policy. The Ministry of Education will place under constant review the required academic standard that students should attain for eligibility to participate in inter-school sports.

CONCLUSION

Consequent on the foregoing, Members are asked to note that the Ministry of Education has commenced discussions with the relevant parties in an attempt to attain equity and fair play in sports education at the secondary level.



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