

# **Policy for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

## **Purpose**

It is the policy of the IHSA to provide students with disabilities full and equal opportunities to be integrated in IHSA interscholastic sports and activities whenever possible. IHSA recognizes and adopts the definition of disability as provided within the Americans with Disabilities Act. The IHSA will not discriminate against students with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities.

## **Procedure for Requesting an Accommodation**

Students who need accommodations are encouraged to work with their member schools to complete and submit the Request for Accommodation Form. A disability is an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity. Disability includes, but is not limited to, physical impairments, mental impairments, visual impairments, hearing impairments, intellectual impairments, learning disabilities. A request for an accommodation should be submitted prior to the start of the applicable athletic or activity season, or as soon as is practically possible in light of the accommodation being sought.

The IHSA recognizes that it cannot anticipate all potential accommodations necessary and that providing accommodations to students with disabilities will require an individualized review and assessment. Accordingly, a request for an accommodation shall be considered on a case-by-case basis. The IHSA will engage in an interactive process to the extent necessary for each request for accommodation. The IHSA may work with the student, his/her parent or guardian, coaches or other staff from the student's member school, or outside consultants, if necessary, in the interactive process. A request should be in writing, but a request can be made in an alternative format such as an audio recording or video. All requests for accommodations shall be sent to the Assistant Executive Director of the IHSA, Kraig Garber, who is the ADA Coordinator for the IHSA.

## **Process for Submitting a Request**

The process for submitting a request for an accommodation (available at: [www.ihsa.org](http://www.ihsa.org)) is as follows:

- The student, his/her parent/guardian and/or his/her member high school are responsible for completion of Part 1 of the Request for Accommodation.
- The Request for Accommodation should be submitted prior to the start of the applicable athletic or activity season, or as soon as is practically possible, in light of the accommodation being sought.
- The student and his/her parent/guardian are responsible for obtaining the school principal's or athletic director's completion of Part 2.
- The request can be submitted by email to the IHSA, fax or mail. The request is deemed submitted on the date emailed or faxed, or, if mailed, three days after the postmark.

Once the IHSA receives a request for an accommodation, the following activity will occur:

- After receiving the request, the ADA Coordinator will conduct a review, which can be informal, but will be interactive to the extent necessary. The student, his/her parent/guardian, and personnel from the student's school shall be given the opportunity to submit additional evidence or engage in discussions with the ADA Coordinator and/or the Executive Director, as they may deem necessary. The IHSA reserves the right to request more information, including medical records, to better understand the request being sought. Furthermore, the IHSA will consult with outside consultants as necessary. The interactive process can be done by telephone, videoconference, or in-person.
- The Executive Director will complete Part 3 of the Request for Accommodation and will provide a letter explaining the accommodation within 10 days after the request for accommodation is submitted to the IHSA. If a request for accommodation is denied by the Executive Director, the student, parent/guardian and/or member school may pursue an appeal pursuant to Section 1.460 of the IHSA Constitution, by submitting a written request for a hearing to the Board of Directors.

### **Illustrations of Policy**

It has been the practice of the IHSA to grant many requests for accommodations. Some requests for accommodations are complex and require significant analysis, while other requests for accommodations are rather common. The below illustrations include requests for accommodations that the IHSA commonly receives. They are meant to serve as a guide and by no means serve as a substitute for the need to request an accommodation.

1. Q: If a student with a disability is unable to walk for long periods of time, will the student be able to use a motorized golf cart during golf competitions?  
A: Yes, the IHSA routinely grants student athletes with disabilities requesting use of a motorized cart during competition in golf.
2. Q: A student athlete with a visual impairment would like to compete in golf, but needs assistance in determining the target, determining the yardage necessary to hit the golf ball and assistance in locating the golf ball. Can this student use a distance measuring device or a spotter?  
A: Yes. The IHSA does allow the use of a distance measuring device consistent with the USGA Rules of Golf. The IHSA will also allow a student with visual impairment to utilize a spotter as necessary to assist the student athlete in locating the target, reading the distance measuring device and locating the golf ball.
3. Q: A student athlete with a hearing impairment needs assistance regarding the instructions in track and field prior to and at the start of the events; will an interpreter be allowed?  
A: The IHSA will allow either the student athlete's coach or an interpreter to interpret instructions to the student athlete and provide necessary cues for the student athlete to start the event.

4. Q: Can a cross country runner with visual impairment use a guide runner during competition?

A: It is the practice of the IHSA to allow the use of a guide runner during competition. The IHSA has guidelines specific to the use of the guide runner located on the IHSA website.
5. Q: Can a student with a hearing impairment use an interpreter and transcriber to compete in the IHSA journalism competition?

A: Yes. The IHSA has granted the request for the use of an interpreter and transcriber for a student with hearing impairment in the IHSA journalism competition.
6. Q: Can a student athlete with cancer wear a headband that exceeds the size of headband allowed by the rules of play?

A: It is the practice of the IHSA to grant accommodations whenever possible for such requests.
7. Q: Will IHSA grant a request of a student athlete with a prosthesis to compete in a sport?

A: The use of prosthesis is a common request for accommodation, and IHSA will conduct an individualized review of each request for accommodation. When conducting a review, IHSA will consider when the safety of the student athlete and/or other student athletes may be compromised through the use of the prosthesis or whether the prosthesis would provide the student athlete an unfair advantage due to the prosthesis. All efforts will be made to provide an accommodation if possible.
8. Q: If a student is enrolled in less than twenty-five credit hours of high school work per week because of the student's disability, is that student able to participate in IHSA sports and activities?

A: The student must submit a Request for Accommodation Form seeking a waiver of the scholastic standing requirements in By-Law 3.020. The IHSA will make the necessary individual assessment in analyzing the request for accommodation.