

## **Guidelines for Return of High School Sponsored Team Sports**

These guidelines are intended for application in non-health care related places of employment. The foundation guidelines for businesses and employers remain the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

All organizations have to determine how best to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace as well as in their community. In order to reopen and successfully remain open for business, everyone individually and collectively must actively participate in the core recommendations:

1. Self-isolation – if you are sick, stay home,
2. Practice social distancing of at least six feet distance to the greatest extent possible,
3. Wash hands frequently (20 seconds with soap and water or use of a sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol),
4. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects (e.g., keyboards, phones) and surfaces (e.g., handrails, workstations, sinks) or remove unnecessary frequently touched surfaces (e.g., trash can lids),
5. Avoid touching of eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands,
6. Strongly consider wearing a cloth face covering when in public (do not use on children under two years old, people with difficulty breathing or people who cannot remove the mask themselves)
7. Cover mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze and throw used tissues away immediately after use,
8. Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices or other work tools and equipment when possible, or disinfect them before and after use,
9. Minimize the use of soft surfaces like cloth-covered chairs or area rugs that are more difficult to clean or disinfect.

### **Guidelines Specifically for High School Sports:**

#### **Prepared by the South Carolina High School League (SCHSL)**

In addition to the above referenced general guidelines, the recommendations below are designed to further reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19 during athletic workouts, training, or competition. Following these guidelines does not guarantee that transmission of the virus will not occur. Participating in organized sport comes with a risk of contracting COVID-19, other illnesses, or injuries.

Students, coaches, or staff who either 1) have pre-existing medical conditions that place them at higher risk of infection, or 2) those who do not want to risk contracting COVID-19 should refrain from participating in high school sports.

The SCHSL taskforce is proposing a three-phased approach to begin when group academic activities are permitted in the districts and/or schools. This document outlines the requirements of Phase 1. Future revisions will include Phases 2 and 3. Movement through these phases is contingent upon successfully meeting the challenges of each prior phase. The overarching goal of ALL phases is minimizing or eliminating the number of COVID-19 cases that can be attributed to time spent in organized sports activities. To be successful in moving forward through the phases, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT ALL PARTICIPANTS, COACHES AND STAFF CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THE RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES WHILE AWAY FROM SPORTING ACTIVITIES AS WELL.



**PHASE 1 Guidelines include all of those listed above, PLUS:**

1. Maintain minimum physical distancing of six feet between participants at all times.
2. Daily health screening of athletes, coaches, and staff by a health care professional or designated fulltime district/school employee. If an individual answer YES to any of these questions, then they cannot participate on that day.
  - a. Fever at 100.4 or higher in the past 72 hours?
  - b. Cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat or new loss of taste or smell, vomiting or diarrhea?
  - c. Contact with a person known to be infected with COVID-19 with the previous 14 days?
  - d. Compromised immune system or chronic diseases?
3. Temperature screening will be done on each athlete, coach and staff daily by a health care professional or designated fulltime district/school employee. If temperature is equal to or greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, then that individual will not be allowed to stay on site.
4. Face coverings that completely cover the nose and mouth are required for everyone.
  - a. Athletes
    - i. Must wear a face covering when not actively participating in the sports activity.
    - ii. Face covering or masks should be worn in sports where the covering is not inhibitory
    - iii. Face coverings should not be shared. Non-disposable face coverings should be cleaned and disinfected daily.
  - b. Coaches and Staff
    - i. Must wear a face covering at all times while on site.
5. Athletes, coaches and staff should come dressed for participation.
6. Use of locker rooms and/or offices is prohibited during Phase 1.
7. Bathroom access will be limited to every other stall, with no more people allowed inside than the number of stalls in use.
8. Alcohol based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol or adequate hand washing facilities should be provided for all participants.
9. Weight rooms, restrooms, meeting rooms and other multi-use facilities that include high touch surfaces should be sanitized frequently during each event. Shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected in between each user.
10. Individuals should bring a personal water bottle to each workout and not share this bottle with anyone. Disposable cups should be used for those that do not have access to their own water bottle. Use of communal water fountains is not recommended.
11. Personal contact should be avoided at all times. This includes, but is not limited to: huddles, high-fives, handshaking, fist-bumping, and chest-bumping.
12. Times for starting and ending workouts should be staggered among multiple sports teams to avoid having large numbers of athletes in the same location at the same time.

13. Signs must be posted at the front entrance to alert athletes, coaches and staff not to enter the facility if they have had known exposure to someone with Covid-19 in the past 14 days or have symptoms such as cough, sore throat, fever, shortness of breath, or loss of taste or smell.
14. Signs must be posted at all building entrances advising the public that they may wish to refrain from entering if they are 65 years of age or older or have underlying health conditions including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, severe obesity, asthma or weakened immunity.
15. No spitting of sunflower seeds, tobacco or sputum is allowed on site.
16. If spectators are permitted to attend, they should remain in an area that provides a reduced opportunity for transmission of any illness while providing an opportunity to observe. Maintain 6 ft. social distancing to the greatest extent possible. Face coverings should be worn in spectator area if at all possible.

### **Heat Stress & Acclimatization**

With the suspension of normal school activities, student athletes have obviously been limited in their ability to condition and workout. With the temperatures rising in South Carolina it is imperative that coaches ease into conditioning and workout activities to prevent incidents of exertional heat illness, sickle cell, heat syncope, and minimize acute musculoskeletal injuries. It is recommended that coaches prioritize strength and conditioning workouts over skill development upon returning. In addition to:

- Following the Wet Bulb Globe thermometer guidelines
- Having Emergency Action Plans in place for all activities.

### **Sports (Individual and Team)**

- Team competition is prohibited.
- Conditioning and Sports Specific Skill Development may occur if the following conditions are implemented, in addition to the General Guidelines:
  - Group size should be limited to 10 persons per facility including athletes, coaches and staff whenever in an indoor or outdoor space.
  - No balls or sports equipment for first 10 days of workouts or 14 calendar days to minimize common contact points. Beginning with 11<sup>th</sup> day of workouts or 15<sup>th</sup> calendar day, properly cleaned and sanitized balls and sports equipment may be used. Must maintain 6ft. social distancing.
  - When using weight rooms, practicing calisthenics, running, or other conditioning training where vigorous exercise occurs, proper spacing from others must be maintained by working out with 12 feet minimum between each person. (This may require closing or moving some equipment).
  - Stunting would not meet social distancing guidelines, therefore would not be allowed during Phase 1.

The above guidelines will be in place until further notice. The guidelines for Phase 2 and 3 will supersede the above-mentioned requirements. Phase 2 will include less restrictive measures such as allowing sports to conduct modified competition. Phase 3 will include returning to normal operations.

**Other Considerations:**

- Consider the use of a digital thermometer to check temperature athletes, coaches and staff. If a touch thermometer is used, it must be disinfected between individuals.
- Consider COVID-19 testing for any athlete, coach, and/or staff that fails the screening process not to return until tested negative or a note from a health care provider other than an athletic trainer.
- Athletic Training Rooms should only be used for immediate care or emergencies.
- Student Athletes should remain with their assigned groups during each workout and during daily workouts to limit the number of people they come in contact with.
- Appropriate time be given between use of facilities to allow for thorough sanitation of the facility and equipment.
- Use of communal water devices is not recommended and any non-disposable water bottles or cups should be sanitized thoroughly prior to re-use. Best practice is for athletes to bring their own water.
- Priority of facilities should be given to fall sports athletes if at all possible.
- Consideration should be given to the number of athletes, coaches and staff allowed on campus each day to ensure that the facility can be cleaned thoroughly, and risk of transmission is reduced. Building occupancy should not exceed 20% of the number of people allowed by the fire marshal.
- Create and request athletes, coaches and/or staff to sign “Assumption of Risk” form prior to participation.

**Definitions:**

**Facility:** Single Field, Single Gym, Weight Room, Single Classroom. Example: 2 gyms = 2 facilities

**Sports Equipment:** To include but not limited to: Balls, Sleds, Dummies, Chutes, Helmets, Bats, Gloves, Sticks, Rackets, Hurdles, Landing pits, etc.

**Social Distancing:** Minimum 6 ft. separation.

**Staff:** Student Assistants/helpers, Managers, Health Care Professionals, etc.

**Spectator:** Anyone who is not included in the 10 people involved in the workout.

**Note: Detailed guidelines for spectators are not addressed in these recommendations. Those guidelines should be addressed by Executive Order of the Governor and DHEC.**

