

COVID-19 Safety Protocols for
Middle School
&
High School Athletic Departments
2020/21 School Year



COVID-19 Protocols for Middle School & High School Athletic Departments

The following set of procedures has been developed using recommendations from multiple sources including the Centers for Disease Control and the Florida Department of Health. The protocols set forth have been reviewed by the local Department of Health and are meant as required guidelines for Middle School and High School Athletic Departments to follow to promote student health and wellness during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

All summer work-outs are voluntary. Student athletes must have all necessary FHSAA paperwork on file if they wish to participate.

- 1. The proper disinfecting/cleaning recommendations for Athletic Facilities (weight-rooms, locker rooms, gym area, etc) and the enforcement of proper student hygiene to reduce possible transmission of COVID-19 include the following protocols:**
 - a. Coaches will remind/require athletes to take home and wash athletic clothing on a daily basis. Locker-rooms and bleachers will not be utilized during summer practices/work-outs. No athlete should be permitted to practice/play in the same outfit on back to back days without proper washing of their athletic gear.
 - b. Coaches will remind student athletes of the importance of washing their hands with soap/water for at least 20 seconds at the beginning and end of each practice/game. Coaches will allow athletes to wash their hands whenever requested during practice/game.
 - c. Athletic facilities shall be cleaned and disinfected on a daily basis. This task can be accomplished through the combined efforts of the student athlete, coach, and the custodial staff. Student athletes should wipe down weight-room equipment after each use. Custodial staff should assist with the proper cleaning and disinfecting of athletic facilities.

Note: Coaches should monitor athletes and facilities to ensure that all health/cleaning protocols are being completed.

- 2. Social distancing guidelines for athletes and spectators include the possible reduction of the total number of people allowed in sporting events.**
 - a. The school administrator, with the assistance of the Athletic Director, will ensure that the appropriate level of social distancing is being enforced for both athletes and spectators.
 - b. Spectators should adhere to social distancing guidelines in all sporting venues including in the bleachers and concession stand area.
 - c. The number of spectators allowed into athletic events will be determined by guidelines established by the NFHS/FHSAA/CDC/DOH. Guidelines may change depending on the sport and athletic venue. The possibility of eliminating spectators altogether may be necessary under certain circumstances.

- d. While social distancing for athletes during game-time may not be practical with many sports (football & volleyball) it could be done with sport such as golf, swimming, and cross country. Social distancing during practice should be encouraged when practical.
- e. The number of athletic participants in a practice/game should follow current NFHS/CDC/DOH Guidelines depending the sport and location of venue (indoor/outdoor).

3. Proper health screening procedures for student athletes:

- a. Coaches are responsible for the daily health screening of student athletes. At the beginning of each practice or game, coaches will ask their athletes if anyone is feeling sick/unwell which includes having symptoms such as a fever, coughing or difficulty breathing. Additionally, coaches will temperature check all athletes. Students reporting any health issues will be provided a protective mask (PPE) and will be referred to the athletic trainer (the athletic director is the back-up). If the Athletic Trainer is not present, the coach follow guidelines outlined in the next subset.
- b. Students referred to the athletic trainer will be re-screened, which includes a mandatory temperature check and oxygenation screening. At a minimum, any athlete with active cold/flu like symptoms and a fever over 100.3 will not be permitted to participate. Athletes exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms should contact their primary care provider. **Athletes will need to remain at home and should follow CDC Guidelines for returning to school which includes: home isolation for ten days since symptoms first appeared and fever free for 72 hours without the assistance of fever reducing medication before being allowed to re-join their team sport.**
- c. Students diagnosed with COVID-19 will be excluded from school until they meet the CDC/DOH requirements necessary to return to school (and consequently sports). The Athletic Trainer will work with the school nurse and athletic director to officially clear COVID-19 positive athletes to return to daily sports. Athletes will need to provide the Athletic Trainer with medical documentation from their Health Care Provider clearing them to return to practice/game.
- d. If an athlete has tested positive for COVID-19, the coach should notify the other athletes about a possible exposure (after consulting with the Athletic Director).The coach **should NOT** share the sick athletes name with the other athletes and parents to ensure they do not violate privacy laws.
- e. The school nurse will provide the Athletic Trainer (with the Athletic Director as the back-up) with a confidential list of students who may need to be medically withheld from athletics. This includes but is not limited to athletes who are either COVID-19 positive, exhibiting flu like symptoms, or are suspected to have a different communicable disease. The Athletic Trainer will share this information with the Athletic Director and the appropriate coaches to ensure that student athletes are safely cleared to return to athletics. The Athletic

Trainer should communicate with the athletic director and school nurse on a daily basis.

- f. Coaches should understand the need to refrain from impressing upon student athletes to “suck it up and practice” instead of referring the student athlete to the athletic trainer. Student athletes who are sick need to be stay home and not worry about losing their position or playing time.
- g. Coaches will self-screen their temperature before all practices/games and follow CDC Guidelines for self-quarantine. Coach will notify the Athletic Director with any issues or concerns.

4. Hydration Recommendations:

- a. Student athletes should bring their own water bottles to practice/game. Water bottles must not be shared. Schools have the option to purchase water bottles for students. Hydration stations should not be utilized until restrictions are loosened based on current recommendations/guidelines from the Health Department.

Note: Athletic Directors may use recommendations from the National Federation of State High School Association’s Guidance Document for issues/concerns not covered in this manual. NFHS Guidance Document can be located at:

https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812287/2020-nfhs-guidance-for-opening-up-high-school-athletics-and-activities-nfhs-smac-may-15_2020-final.pdf

Note: Coaches need to complete their COVID-19 Daily Athletic Checklist during every practice or game. Checklists will be provided to the Athletic Director on a weekly basis.

Note: Middle School Assistant Principals will be responsible for all duties associated with the High School Athletic Director/Athletic Trainer.

Note: The athletic trainer/school nurse are the medical professionals at the school site. The athletic director and coaches should actively communicate with these individuals regarding student health and safety. The protocols listed above are not all inclusive, situations that are unique in nature should be steered towards these individuals.