



## **The Connecticut Interscholastic Conference**

**2021 Spring Sports Plan**

**Approved March 10, 2021**

**(Updated April 23, 2021)**

*This plan is a fluid document and will be updated as more data, health metrics, and sport specific information become available.*

This document is aligned with the [most recent guidance \(3-4-2021\) from the Connecticut State Department of Public Health \(DPH\)](#) and was reviewed by the CSMS Sports Medicine Committee.

The CIAC's rationale for these recommendations is based on its belief that maintaining a safe level of in-person instruction is the primary goal of our member schools and association. While prioritizing considerations that will sustain conditions for in-person learning, the CIAC strongly affirms that the value of structured physical activity is widely supported in research, especially when isolation experiences are increased. As such, when safe, the CIAC will provide the best sport experiences possible to our member schools.

All spring CIAC sports are classified by DPH as involving either intermittent direct contact (boys lacrosse, girls lacrosse, boys volleyball), infrequent direct contact (baseball, softball, track and field, doubles tennis), or are activities where the nature of play is such that athletes have no direct or rare contact (singles tennis, golf). The CT DPH recommends that intermittent and infrequent direct contact sports "should consider adopting masking wearing, cohorting, and rule changes" when outdoors.

*The CIAC emphasizes that this plan is fluid and in a perpetual state of evaluation. COVID health metrics and data in Connecticut will continue to be closely monitored and the appropriateness of holding youth sport and/or interscholastic athletic contests can change at any time. The CIAC will continue to consult with our stakeholders and will adjust offerings as appropriate, including the suspension of interscholastic athletics, should the health metrics direct that action.*

### **Informed Consent and Educational Materials**

A template for districts to provide informed consent and educational materials to parents can be found in Appendix III.

### **Quarantine Requirements (Per DPH 4/23/2020)**

Per DPH, "The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has published risk-based guidance and procedures for shortening the required quarantine period for individuals identified as close contacts of a known COVID-19 case.<sup>5</sup> As a result, DPH has revised its guidance as well to include options for reducing quarantine periods in some situations from the traditional 14 days (e.g. return to in-person learning). In addition, CDC has recently published new guidance<sup>6</sup> indicating that individuals who remain free from any COVID-19 symptoms and are either fully vaccinated (i.e. 14 days after their final vaccine dose) or have fully recovered from a known COVID-19 infection in the prior 90 days do not need to quarantine if they have been identified as a close contact of a known COVID-19 case.

Both CDC and DPH have made clear that the ability to end quarantine prior to 14 days is conditioned on a person's ability to continue with daily COVID-19 symptom screening and continuous mask use when outside of the home, as well as the necessity of avoiding gatherings with people who are not in their immediate household, who are over 65 years old, or who have medical conditions that place them at increased risk for COVID-19. As such, regardless of whether a shortened quarantine period allows individuals to engage in daily activities prior to completing a full 14-day post-contact period of separation, athletes, coaches, officials, and other participants should not be allowed to engage in athletic activities until at least 14 days after their quarantine period begins. However, CDC's determination of residual risk for infection after close contact does indicate that individuals ending quarantine after 10 days with a negative molecular (PCR) test within 48 hours prior to release (i.e. on day 8 or later) have a similar residual risk profile for infecting others as those individuals who would end quarantine after 14 days without testing. As such, ***quarantined athletes, coaches, officials, and other participants can be allowed to return to participation in athletics after completing 10 days of quarantine, provided a PCR test collected at day 8 or later is negative and no symptoms associated with COVID-19 were experienced throughout the entire quarantine period.***

The following guidance and protocols issued by the Connecticut State Department of Education and State Department of Public Health may be referenced when responding to specific COVID scenarios that may occur with school reopening for the 2020-2021 school year. That guidance and protocols can be found at: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/COVID19/Addendum-5-Interim-Guidance-for-Responding-to-COVID-19-Scenarios-in-CT-School-Districts.pdf>. If a student tests positive for COVID 19, the school/district must be notified immediately and local DPH must be contacted. The local DPH will direct the appropriate process.

## Guidance on Return-to-Play after COVID-19 Infection

*(\*Please note the following guidance was developed in consultation with the CSMS Sports Medicine Committee and is informed by AAP COVID-19 Interim Guidelines. While this guidance references a potential gradual return after 10-days, the DPH updated guidance to CIAC requires a 14-day period prior to any return of a COVID-19 quarantined student to athletics.)*

The following recommendations are informed by the AAP COVID-19 Interim Guidelines:

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-interim-guidance-return-to-sports/>

### **Returning to play after COVID positive test:**

COVID 19 can affect the heart and lungs of the person infected. One uncommon but serious complication of COVID 19 is a heart condition called myocarditis. Myocarditis is an inflammation of the heart muscle (myocardium). Myocarditis can affect the heart muscle and the heart's electrical system, reducing the heart's ability to pump and causing rapid, abnormal heart rhythms (arrhythmias) which can cause cardiac arrest. Exercise can increase the likelihood of permanent heart damage in myocarditis, and increase the possibility of arrhythmias and sudden cardiac death. Student athletes who have tested positive for COVID 19 should follow the guideline noted below to decrease risk of developing complications from COVID 19 infection.

### **What to do if a participant had COVID-19 or has it during the season?**

In a covid19 positive child who is either **asymptomatic** or **mildly symptomatic** (<4 days of fever >100.4°F, short duration of myalgia, chills, and lethargy) should not exercise until they are cleared by a licensed medical provider. The licensed medical provider will perform a history with emphasis on cardiopulmonary symptoms and complete physical examination. If this evaluation was completed and no contraindications to participation were identified, no further testing is warranted. The patient may then begin a gradual return to play after 10 days have passed from date of the positive test result and at least 24 hours without symptoms off-fever reducing medications. If the licensed medical provider identifies any new or concerning history or physical examination findings at this visit, appropriate further testing or consultation should be ordered and participation will not be allowed until that testing is completed and no contraindications to participation are identified. Written documentation of medical clearance for return to sport should be provided by the medical provider.

Children with **moderate** symptoms of COVID-19 (≥4 days of fever >100.4°F, myalgia, chills, or lethargy or were in a hospital not an intensive care unit), should not exercise until they are cleared by a licensed medical provider. In addition to a history and complete physical exam appropriate additional testing should be ordered as determined by examination. Consultation or referral to a cardiologist is recommended and they may request further, more extensive, testing. If cardiac evaluation is normal, gradual return to physical activity may be allowed after 10 days have passed from the date of the positive test result, and at least 10 days of symptom resolution has occurred off fever-reducing medicine. Written documentation of medical clearance for return to sport should be provided by the medical provider.

For patients with **severe** COVID-19 symptoms (ICU stay and/or on a ventilator) or **multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C)**, it is recommended they be restricted from exercise for a minimum of 3 months. The student athlete should be evaluated by a licensed medical provider for a history and complete physical examination. In addition, they should be referred to a cardiologist prior to resuming training or competition. In addition to the initial evaluation and work-up student athletes should have a coordinated evaluation at the time of returning to play for final clearance. Written documentation of medical clearance for return to sport should be provided by the medical provider.

A graduated return-to-play protocol can begin once an athlete has been cleared by a licensed medical provider (cardiologist for **moderate** to **severe** COVID-19 symptoms) and feels well when performing normal activities of daily living. The progression should be performed over the course of a 7-day minimum. Consideration for extending the progression should be given to student athletes who experienced **moderate** COVID-19 symptoms as outlined above. If

the student athlete experiences any symptoms of chest pain, palpitations, syncope, shortness of breath or exercise intolerance, during this return to play protocol, they should stop exercise and inform their medical provider.

**The following progression was adapted from Elliott N, et al, infographic, *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 2020:**

**Stage 1: Day 1 and Day 2 - (2 Days Minimum) - 15 minutes or less:** Light activity (walking, jogging, stationary bike), intensity no greater than 70% of maximum heart rate. NO resistance training.

**Stage 2: Day 3 - (1 Day Minimum) - 30 minutes or less:** Add simple movement activities (eg. running drills) - intensity no greater than 80% of maximum heart rate.

**Stage 3: Day 4 - (1 Day Minimum) - 45 minutes or less-** Progress to more complex training - intensity no greater than 80% maximum heart rate. May add light resistance training.

**Stage 4: Day 5 and Day 6 - (2 Days Minimum) - 60 minutes -**Normal training activity - intensity no greater than 80% maximum heart rate.

**Stage 5: Day 7 - Return to full activity/participation (i.e., - Contests/competitions).**

**CIAC Spring Consideration of DPH Guidance in Consultation with the CSMS Sport Medicine Committee**

In alignment with CT DPH guidance for spring sports, consideration of masking wearing and rule changes have led to the following COVID-19 mitigating strategies, which were developed in consultation with the CSMS Sports Medicine Committee and each representative CIAC sport committee.

The CSMS Sports Medicine Committee does not have any data to confirm the necessity or effectiveness of wearing masks while actively competing. Recent research reviewed by the CIAC supports that mask wearing, particularly in outdoor activities with intermittent or infrequent contact, may not be necessary [Watson et al., 2021 (<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.01.19.21250116v1.full.pdf>) & Jones et al., 2021 (<https://bjsm.bmj.com/content/bjsports/early/2021/02/10/bjsports-2020-103714.full.pdf>)].

The CIAC will utilize the same mask protocols in the spring as it did in the fall. Mask should be worn at all time when not actively competing. This includes coaches, players, officials, game workers, and spectators. Boys volleyball players, as an indoor sport, are required to wear a mask during active competition. This is aligned with the manner in which girls volleyball in the fall and winter indoor sports competed. Outdoor spring sports athletes are not required to wear a mask during active competition, however, may wear a mask if they so choose. Mask wear will be continuously reviewed with DPH and is subject to change.

Sport	Indoor/Outdoor	Masks During Active Competition	Masks When Not Actively Competing	Rule Changes
Baseball	Outdoor	Catcher only	Yes	See Baseball Section
Golf	Outdoor	No	Yes	See Golf Section
Boys Lacrosse	Outdoor	No	Yes	See Boys Lacrosse Section (face offs)
Girls Lacrosse	Outdoor	Faceoff Only	Yes	See Girls Lacrosse Section
Tennis	Outdoor	No	Yes	See Tennis Section
Track and Field	Outdoor	No	Yes	See Track and Field Section
Boys Volleyball	Indoor	Yes	Yes	See Boys Volleyball Section
Softball	Outdoor	Catcher Only	Yes	See Softball Section

**The following schedule identifies start dates and contest dates for each spring sport.**

A list of CIAC staff responsible for spring sport committees can be found in the CIAC handbook ([https://www.casciac.org/pdfs/ciachandbook\\_2021.pdf](https://www.casciac.org/pdfs/ciachandbook_2021.pdf)).

Sport	First Practice Date	First Contest Date	Max. Number of Regular Season Games	Max. Number of Games Per Week	Last Date to Count Tournament	Minimum Number of Games to Qualify	CIAC Tournament
Baseball	March 27 March 20— Pitchers and Catchers	April 10	20	3	May 27	10	Begin June 1 Finals June 11/12
Golf	March 27	April 10	16	3	June 2	8	All Classes June 7,8,9 Open TBA
Lacrosse	March 27	April 10	16	*2	May 26	8	Begin June 1 Finals June 12
Tennis	March 27	April 10	20	3	May 26	10	(Boys)Class May 28, 29 June 1, 2, 3 Open June 5, 7,8 (Girls) Class May 28, 29 June 1, 2, 3 Ind. June 5, 7, 8,9
Track	March 27	April 10	16	2	May 26	1	Class June 1,2,3 Open June 7 Decathlon TBA Heptathlon TBA
Boys Volleyball	March 27	April 10	20 3 of 20 may be non-counting multi-team tournaments	3	May 27	10	Begin June 1 Finals June 10
Softball	March 27	April 10	20	3	May27	10	Begin June 1 Finals June 11/12

\*Three (3) games can be scheduled in a week four times during the regular season.

Any equipment that is used throughout conditioning and the spring season must be maintained and sanitized in accordance with the ReOpen CT sector rules for sport:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DECD/Covid\\_Business\\_Recovery-Phase-2-1/CTReopens21\\_Sports\\_FitnessCenters3321.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DECD/Covid_Business_Recovery-Phase-2-1/CTReopens21_Sports_FitnessCenters3321.pdf)

All efforts should be made to schedule games within the state of Connecticut. In accordance with DECD sector rules, games vs. out-of-state schools may be considered to the extent that they are scheduled for the purpose of reducing travel based on geographic location and that such scheduling is allowed by the out-of-state school's interscholastic governing body and state rules.

Member schools may schedule league and/or non-league games in the spring season. Geographic location should be a primary consideration in scheduling. Tournaments are allowed in accordance with the governor's statement and multi-team events are not prohibited for intermittent, infrequent, and non-direct contact sports, per DPH March 5<sup>th</sup> guidance.

Student-athlete conditioning should be a priority when considering scheduling scrimmages and games. All sports teams and individual athletes must have a minimum of ten (10) physical/exertional practice days with their school before the date of the first scheduled competition. No team/athlete shall practice/compete with their school more than six (6) consecutive days to provide a day of rest. Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays may be used unless prohibited by local board

policy. Teams must have a minimum of three days of practice prior to holding a full team scrimmage. All scrimmages should be held with schools located geographically close to one another.

Teams with a winning percentage equal to or higher than the qualifying level in their sport that are unable to play the minimum number of games due to COVID-related reasons will be considered for inclusion in the state tournament on a case-by-case basis.

## **Baseball**

### General Guidelines:

1. Have hand sanitizer and wipes available at the field.
2. Have stations where hands can be washed or sanitizer can be used in each dugout.
3. Host should disinfect the bench/dugout prior to competition.
4. Everyone wears masks entering the ballfield/ athletic complex.
5. Host team will provide the game balls. Game balls will be sanitized as needed.
6. Athletic Directors/School Medical personnel should evaluate pre-existing health conditions.
7. Host schools should email visiting schools and umpires ground rules or other guidelines that must be followed at the host site.

### Guidelines for Coaches:

1. Coaches must wear masks on and off the field.
2. Coaches will not be permitted to enter the field of play to dispute a call.
3. In the pregame meeting maintain proper social distance between players and umpires.
4. Eliminate post-game handshakes.
5. No seeds, gum or spitting.

### Guidelines for Players:

1. No seeds, gum or spitting.
2. Players must clean and sanitize equipment after each use and game.
3. Catchers will be required to wear a close-fitting facemask on the field of play, to start the season. This will be re-evaluated throughout the season.
4. Social distancing on the bench and/or dugout must be implemented per DPH guidelines. Players must wear masks in the dugout.
5. No sharing of water bottles.
6. When social distancing is not possible during dead ball situations, players must wear masks, this includes meetings at the mound.
7. Eliminate post game handshakes.
8. Eliminate pre-game handshakes with coaches/umpires.
9. Carrying hand sanitizer is permissible.

### Guidelines for Umpires:

1. Bring personal hand sanitizer. Wash hands frequently
2. The umpires must wear a face mask on the field. (This will be re-evaluated throughout the season.)
3. Clean equipment after each game.
4. Must follow social distancing guidelines. Umpires will maintain proper social distance when talking to others (players, coaches, other umpires) at plate meeting.
5. No pre and post-game handshakes.

## Golf

1. COURSES All students and coaches must know and adhere to modifications in place at the golf courses.
2. FACE COVERINGS All event attendees including coaches, athletes, meet personnel, athletic trainers and spectators are required to wear face masks when social distancing cannot be maintained. Players may remove face masks when actively playing.
3. DISTANCING All players, coaches and non-playing team personnel must remain a minimum of 6 ft. distance at all times. No gatherings inside of club facilities should take place before, during or after the match unless seeking shelter from severe weather. Removal of face coverings is permitted during competition but must be returned to the face anytime players need to be within six feet of each other. Players should be especially cautious of small or narrow areas i.e. bridges or narrow walkways as well as travel from the green to the next tee
4. PRACTICE – Coaches are responsible for ensuring social distancing is maintained between players as much as possible. This includes additional spacing between athletes while stretching, warming up, chatting, changing drills, etc. Athletes must maintain spacing, and there should be no congregating of athletes while running drills. Workouts, when possible could be conducted in ‘pods’ of athletes, with the same 5-10 athletes always working out together. Ideally athletes should not move between pods for the entire season. This ensures more limited exposure if someone develops an infection. Records should be kept of who is in each group, each day.
5. BENCHES – No benches should be used during practice. Players’ items should be separated for personal items, at least 6 feet apart. Benches should be permitted only during matches with six feet of distancing required between participants.
6. PERSONAL ITEMS – It is recommended that each athlete bring their own gym bag for personal items OR use a compartment in their golf bag for personal items. All personal items should remain in the bag when not in use. Gym bags should be placed in a predetermined area 6 feet apart for the duration of practice. Bag items should include masks, hand sanitizer, towels, water bottles, warm-up clothing, tape, inhalers, additional shoes etc.. Players should bring re-sealable plastic bags.
7. TEAM HANDSHAKES – Athletes shall NOT exchange handshakes, fist bumps, elbow bumps etc. before, during or following practices and competitions.
8. PRE-AND POST MATCH – Only required team personnel should be involved in pre and post match meetings. Participants must maintain 6 ft. distance and wear face coverings.
9. EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES – There should be no shared equipment or supplies such as balls, tees, gloves etc.
10. COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES - Prior to each match, visiting coaches should send a list of participants to the home coach. The home coach should send a copy of the local rules to the opposing coach to eliminate the need for any handouts, other than scorecards.
11. SCORECARDS -
  - When directed to, each group of players will move to the 1st tee, remaining socially distanced. Scorecards and pencils will be handed out to players by the home coach who will wear protective gloves during the process. Each player will receive a scorecard as the Marker for another player’s score and should also note his/her own hole by hole score as well. At no time will players exchange score cards.
  - Single tee starts should be staggered, at a minimum of 10 minutes between groups to support social distancing.
  - Social distancing must be maintained throughout the round and all Covid-19 course regulations followed. Coaches are encouraged to travel throughout the golf course during the match to ensure that all participants are following all safety guidelines.
  - At the conclusion of each round, the Marker will put his/her signature on the scorecard that has been kept with the other player’s score. The Marker and the player will then report to a designated scoring area and hand the scorecard to one of the coaches who will be recording the scores. The player will then verbally confirm his/her score. Throughout this process, social distancing should be maintained, and face coverings should be worn. The coach will be wearing protective gloves to receive the scorecards.

## Boys Lacrosse

In support of the Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities, the NFHS Boys Lacrosse Rules Committee offers this document as guidance on how state associations can consider modifications to the NFHS Boys Lacrosse Rules Book. The modifications outlined in this document are meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging social distancing, limiting participation in administrative tasks to essential personnel and allowing for appropriate protective equipment.

1. **Boys Lacrosse Rules Book Modifications: The Field (1-2-7):** The Scorer's Table.
  - a. *Provide adequate spacing for 6-foot social distancing between individuals.*
2. **Boys Lacrosse Rules Book Modifications: The Field (1-2-8):** Players' and Coaches' box.
  - a. *Extend the players' box to 30 yards total in order to ensure proper social distancing.*
  - b. *Players Bench: Starts at the table area (40yd line) and extends to the goal line extended (10yd line).*
  - c. *Coaches box remains the same 15 yds (40yd line to 25yd line).*
3. **Boys Lacrosse Rules Book Modifications: Player Equipment (1-9-2):** Optional Equipment, Face Shields.
  - a. *Clear, molded, and non-rigid face shields approved by the helmet manufacturer are allowed.*
4. **Boys Lacrosse Rules Book Modifications: Players, Coaches, and Other Game Personal:** Overall Suggestion.
  - a. *Coaches and officials should attempt to maintain social distancing whenever possible during a game including stick checks, official's meetings, etc.*
5. **Boys Lacrosse Rules Book Modifications: Facing Off (4-3-1, 2, and 3):** Starting Play with Facing Off.
  - a. *See diagram and narrative below*

<p>1. Faceoff Official places the ball on the spot where the faceoff will take place at the centerline. Players will stand 6ft from ball on opposite sides of the centerline.</p>	
<p>2. The Official will back away 6-8ft from the ball. Official will verbally use "DOWN" command for players to step forward and take their positions. *Faceoff Players will not be allowed to place their knee on the ground. Players are required to have both feet on the ground. The top hand on the crosse will be underhanded. This will allow players to move quicker from the down position.</p> <p>*Modification – this is a technique now used in the NCAA for less contact, faster, quick faceoffs</p>	
<p>3. When the player's crosse are in position, **crosse head centered to ball, crosse match top to top, gloves and crosse off the centerline, crosse vertical to ground, showing tape, head and feet out of neutral zone, gloves touching ground, the Official will verbally use the "SET" command, so players do not move. The Official will immediately blow the whistle for the faceoff to start.</p> <p>**If these requirements are not met, the ball will be awarded to the offended team. If both teams offend,</p>	

the ball will be awarded according to the Alternate Possession rule (4-30)	
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6. **Boys Lacrosse Rules Book Modifications: Penalty Enforcement (7-10):** Procedure “Play-On”
  - a. *If there is a violation, blow the whistle quick and award ball if there is going to be a group together (officials discretion)*
  
7. **Points of Emphasis and Pre/Post Game Considerations:** WILL OCCUR ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF FIELD FROM BENCH/TABLE AREA. Each team will have a designated official on their sideline opposite the bench/table area. Officials will stand 6ft off the sideline, player will place crosse on sideline and step back 6ft. Official will retrieve crosse, measure crosse and place on sideline. Then the official will socially distance for the player to reclaim crosse. If multiple players from same team are having crosses measured, players will stand social distanced across the restraining line on their side of the field waiting their turn.

\*Note: Officials are required to wear masks pregame, halftime and postgame duties.

  - a. Pregame
    - i. Equipment inspections prior to the game – Stick checks.
    - ii. Masks for coaches and officials during coach meetings/certification.
    - iii. No line up. Coaches to relay information to their teams.
    - iv. Meeting with One faceoff player for each team at the centerline, Official and Players wear a mask, Players stand 6ft apart.
    - v. Meeting with Captains: One captain for each team at the centerline, official wears a mask, captains stay apart, official shows coin result to each captain.
    - vi. Officials must wear a mask when instructing table personnel. Table personnel must wear a mask.
    - vii. Minimize table personnel – official scorer and timekeeper, visiting team personnel should be at their team bench and not at the table. Extend the table if needed.
    - viii. Team bench areas should be more clearly marked to remind players of proper location.
  - b. Postgame
    - i. No handshakes.
    - ii. Teams stay in their team areas, no running onto the field for pile-on celebrations.

## **Girls Lacrosse**

In support of the Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities, the NFHS/USL Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee offers this document for state associations to consider whether any possible rules could be altered for the 2020-21 season. The considerations outlined in this document are meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging social distancing, limiting participation in administrative tasks to essential personnel and allowing for appropriate protective equipment.

### **1. Girls Lacrosse Rules Considerations**

- ***Pre-Game Meeting (3-5-3)***
  - Limit attendees to one coach one player from each team and lead official.
  - Ensure the pre-game meeting is away from sideline and all individuals maintain a social distance of 6 feet. Mask use by coach, player and official is required during the meeting.
  - Eliminate handshakes following pre-game meeting and at the conclusion of the game.

- **Equipment and protective clothing (2-4-1, 2-7-3, 2-9-5)**
  - Players and officials may wear gloves and long undergarments. Mask policy – refer to Face Coverings under Additional Considerations for Spring Sports Season in the CIAC 2021 Spring Sports Plan.
  - During the Draw the two centers and the umpire conducting the Draw will be required to wear a mask.
  - Umpires will not perform a pre-game stick check. Coaches are certifying they are legal at the coaches’ meeting. During the game, teams have two stick check requests they can utilize, if desired.
  
- **Table Personnel (3-6-1, 3-7-1)**
  - Limit to essential personnel only at the table. Statisticians or visiting scorer personnel are not essential. Home team scorer and timer are essential.
  
- **Substitution and Sideline Protocol (1-1-4h thru l, 4-7-3, 4-7-4)**
  - Ensure that players substituting, coaches, and the table personnel are maintaining social distancing.
  - Split sub box so that each team subs in from their own half of the sub box. (12 yards total – 5 yard area for each team with a 2 yard buffer at the 50 yard line).
  - Penalty area must be marked off with cones that allow social distancing between penalized players, substitutes, and the table personnel.
  - Players may be extended to end line on their side of the field.

## **Tennis (Boys and Girls)**

### General Guidelines

1. Hand sanitizer and wipes available at the courts.
2. The host should disinfect benches or seats at the site.
3. Everyone must wear masks when entering the court areas.
4. Host team will provide the tennis balls.
5. Athletic directors / school medical personnel should evaluate all pre-existing and current health conditions.
6. Refuse containers should be available on site.

### Guidelines for Coaches

1. Coaches must wear masks at all times.
2. Coaches must maintain social distance from all others.
3. No handshakes at any time.
4. No gum chewing, spitting or other unsanitary practices are permitted.
5. No pre- or post-game team meetings at the site.
6. Check with the host site ahead of time for any protocols that may apply to that facility.
7. Arrive at the assigned time and leave immediately upon the conclusion of your student-athletes competition.
8. Take individual water bottles, towels, etc.

### Guidelines for Players

1. No gum chewing, spitting or other unsanitary practices.
2. Clean and sanitize racquets before and after each match.
3. Clearly verbalize the score before each point.
4. Maintain social distancing when changing ends of the court and when taking a break. Crossover in a clockwise direction.
5. Do not shake hands after a match. Offer a verbal “good match” or a racquet tap at the end of a match.

6. Wear a mask at all times, except when active on the court.
7. Do not share water bottles, towels, or other items.
8. Be on time for matches and depart the court immediately after the match concludes.
9. Headbands, wristbands, and caps are recommended to avoid contact with the face.
10. Hand sanitizer is to be used after a match concludes.
11. When playing doubles, coordinate with partners to maintain physical distancing.
12. Players should remain positive and refrain from any outbursts, and loud exclamations.

### **Track and Field (Boys and Girls)**

Athletes may remove their mask during competition. Athletes must wear a mask after completing competition.

Each facility will provide schools with specific procedures while using the facility, which must be followed.

#### Guidelines for Student-Athletes

1. Each student is responsible for his/her own equipment.
2. Student-athletes must wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing), and individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout immediately upon returning home.
3. Students must come dressed appropriately to compete in all events. Sweats or other non-essential equipment will not be allowed at the start line.
4. Hand sanitizer will be utilized at all contests and practices.
5. Athletes must tell their coaches immediately when they are not feeling well.
6. Face coverings must be worn at all times, except during competition.
7. Each student-athlete must bring his/her own labeled water bottle.
8. Absolutely no spitting, nose blowing, or other similar action will be permitted in any capacity including or around garbage cans within the facility.

#### Guidelines for Coaches

1. Communicate to your district/school Covid-19 guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents, which should include wellness checks for each practice and competition.
2. Keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is needed.
3. Coaches will be allowed to assist their athletes in setting marks in the following events: pole vault, long jump, Triple jump, and high jump. Coaches must leave the area once competition begins.
4. Coaches must always wear face coverings.

#### Guidelines for Officials

1. Bring personal hand sanitizer. Wash hands frequently.
2. Follow social distancing guidelines
  - Pre- and post-meet conferences
  - Clerking at the start line
  - Tabulations and posting of results
3. Do not shake hands and follow pre- and post-game ceremony guidelines established by state associations.
4. Officials personnel must always wear face coverings. (This will be re-evaluated throughout the season.)

## Events Guidelines for All Meets:

1. Student-athletes are required to wear a facial covering when not actively competing.
2. Site personnel will enforce social distancing for all athletes and officials.
3. To limit contact, athletes will provide their own implements (that pass inspection) and retrieve their own implements after all throws when instructed by an official.
4. If athletes can't provide their own implements, then it is recommended that implements be sanitized between each use.
5. Long jump, triple jump will enforce social distancing for all athletes and officials.
6. High jump, pole vault will enforce social distancing for all athletes and officials.
7. The facility will set a measuring tape. The measuring tape will stay on the runway throughout the competition for long jump, triple jump, and pole vault.
8. Athletes who are on the same team may share equipment, which must be sanitized between use.
9. Athletes must sanitize properly after every event.

\*If traditional Invitational Meets are allowed, all of these guidelines will apply.

## **Softball**

### General Guidelines

1. Have hand sanitizer and wipes available at the field.
2. Have stations where hands can be washed or sanitizer can be used in each dugout.
3. Host should disinfect the bench/dugout prior to competition.
4. Everyone wears masks entering the ballfield/ athletic complex.
5. Spectator guidelines will be in accordance with your local DPH and district officials which will include the staggering of spectator seating and the number of spectators, which will be allowed.
6. Host team will provide the game balls. Game balls will be sanitized as needed.
7. Athletic Directors/School Medical personnel should evaluate pre-existing health conditions.
8. Host schools should email visiting schools and umpires ground rules or other guidelines that must be followed at the host site.

### Guidelines for Coaches

1. Coaches must wear masks on and off the field.
2. Coaches will not be permitted to enter the field of play to dispute a call.
3. In the pregame meeting and all other meetings, maintain proper social distance between coaches and umpires.
4. Eliminate pre-game and post-game handshakes.
5. No seeds, gum or spitting.
6. No post game team meetings are permitted on the playing field.
7. Only one coach is permitted during the conference. If a coach visits the pitcher, all other players should stay outside the pitching circle.

### Guidelines for Players

1. No seeds, gum or spitting.
2. Players must clean and sanitize equipment after each use and game.
3. Catchers will be required to wear a close-fitting facemask on the field of play, to start the season. This will be re-evaluated throughout the season.
4. Social distancing on the bench and/or dugout must be implemented per DPH guidelines. Players must wear masks in the dugout.
5. No sharing of water bottles and no communal water jugs.
6. When social distancing is not possible during dead ball situations, players must wear masks, this includes meetings in the circle.
7. Eliminate post game handshakes.

8. Carrying hand sanitizer is permissible.

#### Guidelines for Officials

1. Bring personal hand sanitizer. Wash hands frequently
2. Umpires must wear a solid color face mask with no design on the field. (Will be re-evaluated throughout the season.)
3. Clean equipment after each game.
4. Must follow social distancing guidelines. Umpires will maintain proper social distance when talking to others at all times, (players, coaches, other umpires).
5. No pre and post-game handshakes.
6. Plate umpire may stand deeper than normal to call balls and strikes.

#### **Boys Volleyball**

The successful completion of this season rests with the underlying premise that students, and school personnel remain healthy. To that end, it is imperative that coaches stress with their athletes, the importance of remaining healthy and stemming the spread of COVID-19 through social distancing, wearing masks, washing hands and face, and by following all the guidelines established by their school and team. Coaches should stress the importance of good health practices while they are with the team and when they are at home and in school. This season depends on students remaining healthy and that requires diligence at all times.

\*The CIAC guidelines take precedence. The purpose of this guide is to clarify sport specific guidelines.

#### REGULAR SEASON

1. \*\*\*\* It is important for the schools to communicate with each other prior to the match. Coaches should discuss:
  - a. The home team spectator policy (who, if anyone, is allowed in the gym as a spectator)
  - b. Bench space
  - c. Gym entrance
  - d. Space to put bags, clothing, etc.
  - e. Locker and rest room availability
  - f. Game balls (who will provide game balls and practice balls; and how will they be sanitized?)
2. Sportsmanship standards remain in place as detailed in the "CIAC Class Act" program and the tournament packet for all regular season and post season contests.
  - a. Officials and teams should refrain from shaking hands and maintain a distance.
  - b. If someone is in violation of social distancing norms, that person should be reported to the coach or the most senior supervisor from the home school.
3. Players should come to the match and leave in uniform. Understand that there will not be locker availability to change before or after the match.
4. "PRE-MATCH PROTOCOL" as detailed in the CIAC Volleyball Tournament packet shall remain the same with the following exceptions:
  - a. Only one team should warm-up at a time during each team's 6-minute period. The other team should remain off the court and at the bench area during their opponent's warm-up time. No ball use while the other team is warming up.
  - b. Each team should bring their own set of volleyballs and keep them separate from the other team's volleyballs.
5. The "COACHES MANUAL FOR CIAC VOLLEYBALL CONTESTS" as defined in the CIAC Volleyball Tournament Packet will remain in place with the following exceptions:
  - a. During the national anthem, only the 6 starters and the libero will stand together at the end line. After the National Anthem, the R1 signals the starting players to enter their court. Starters will move down the right side line as normal but instead of going to the net will traverse the 10 ft. line greeting opponents with a hand wave and/or respectful verbal greeting. (This eliminates the handshake greeting at the net.)

- b. During the pregame conference one coach from each team, the first referee and the second referee only will participate. (Students will not participate in the pregame conference.) The conference will be held at center court with one coach and one referee positioned on each side of the net. All four individuals maintain a social distance of 3 to 6 feet. The official will toss the coin and the visiting coach will call heads or tails to determine the first serve.
- c. Coaches will not submit rosters at the pre-match conference. Rosters will be submitted directly to the officials' table before the 11-minute mark on the countdown clock.
- d. Teams will not switch benches between sets. Home team selects the bench and side of court they want to play.
- e. Limit bench personnel to observe social distancing of 3 to 6 feet. (Students who are not in the match and don't fit on the bench should stand or sit in rows behind the bench, maintaining 3 to 6 feet apart.
- f. SUBSTITUTION PROCEDURES (2-1-7, 10-2-1, 10-2-3, 10-2-4): Maintain social distancing of 3 to 6 feet between the second referee and the player and substitute by encouraging substitutions to occur within the substitution zone closer to the attack line.
- g. OFFICIALS TABLE (3-4) Limit to essential personnel, wearing face coverings, which includes home team scorer, libero tracker and timer with a recommended distance of 3 to 6 feet between individuals if possible. Visiting team personnel (scorer, statisticians, etc.) are not deemed essential personnel and will need to find an alternative location. The visiting score keeper can help the home score keeper but must remain on the visitor bench.
  - i. Hand sanitizer and wipes should be available at the score table.
- h. At the end of the match, players go to their end line as normal but *no hand shaking*.
- i. Minimizing officials handling game balls - the R2 at the start of the set will roll the ball to the 1st server. During substitutions, time-outs, or other stoppage of play, players will place the ball on their service line until ready to restart game play. [Handling the game balls will be at the discretion of officials.]
- j. \*\*\*\* There will be no line judges for the 2021 season.
- k. EQUIPMENT AND ACCESSORIES
  - i. Cloth face coverings must be worn by ALL players and coaches, at ALL times, at ALL practices and matches.
  - ii. Gloves are permissible. (4-1-1) Rule 4-2. (Medical nitrile, form-fitting gloves are recommended.)
  - iii. Score tables, game balls, antennas, and officials stand hand contact areas should be sanitized before the contest.
  - iv. The home team should have a plan to sanitize the balls as well as they reasonably can.
  - v. Eliminate the use of flags and use hand signals when adult lines judges are used.
- l. LEGAL UNIFORM:
  - i. Long sleeves are permissible. (4-2-1),
  - ii. Long pants are permissible. [4-2-1i (1)],
  - iii. Under garments are permissible, but must be unadorned and of a single, solid color similar in color to the predominant color of the uniform top or bottom. [4-2-1h (3), 4-2-1i (2)]
- m. 30 SECOND TIMEOUT
  - i. For the 2021 season only, teams are allowed one (1) 30-second timeout for each set. This is an additional timeout for each set for each team.
  - ii. The purpose of the 30-second timeout is to give teams a chance to catch their breath, when needed, given that they are required to wear a mask during competition. Coaches are urged to use the 30-second time out for this purpose and not as part of strategy.
  - iii. Coaches or captains can request the time out from the officials by tapping their shoulders and immediately indicating to the officials that it is a 30-second timeout.
  - iv. During the 30-second timeout players can leave the floor and get a drink. Substitutions can take place following the normal process. Students who are not in the game must remain seated on the bench or remain in place if they are in the stands or behind the bench to maintain social distancing.

- v. Officials are going to diligently monitor the players and may delay the serve between points to make sure the students are breathing OK.

### **Additional Considerations for a Spring Sports Season**

**Spectator/Fan Attendance** – Any allowance for spectators/fans should align with DECD sector rules. The CIAC supports the plans established by school districts that direct the presence of adults on campus at this time. Notwithstanding the above, permissible spectator/fan attendance will be governed by local districts' current operating plan.

**Gathering Limitations** – During practice/conditioning, athletes should remain grouped in smaller cohorts for purposes of spread mitigation and contact tracing strategy. When not directly participating in practices or contests, care should be taken to maintain a minimum distance of 6 feet between individuals. Consider using tape or paint as a guide for athletes and coaches. Vulnerable individuals should not supervise or participate in any workouts.

**Facilities** - Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities. Prior to an individual or groups of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within that facility should be wiped down and sanitized (chairs, furniture in meeting rooms, weight room equipment, bathrooms, athletic training room tables, etc.). Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place. Consider strategies to prevent groups from gathering at entrances/exits to facilities to limit crossover and contact, including staggering starting/ending times.

**Screening** - All staff and students are required to self-screen for any observable illness, including cough or respiratory distress, and to confirm temperature below 100 degrees Fahrenheit. The coach or activity supervisor must confirm self-screening by all activity participants upon arrival. Records of self-screening for each person should be recorded and stored (see sample Appendix II). Officials, medical staff, and media should self-screen prior to attending an event. Any person with COVID symptoms must notify school personnel, be removed from participation, self-isolate, and contact his/her primary care provider or other health-care professional.

**Face Coverings** – The CSMS Sports Medicine Committee does not have any data to confirm the necessity or effectiveness of wearing masks while actively competing. Recent research reviewed by the CIAC supports that mask wearing, particularly in outdoor activities with intermittent or infrequent contact, may not be necessary [Watson et al., 2021 (<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.01.19.21250116v1.full.pdf>) & Jones et al., 2021 (<https://bjsm.bmj.com/content/bjsports/early/2021/02/10/bjsports-2020-103714.full.pdf>)]. The CIAC will utilize the same mask protocols in the spring as it did in the fall. Mask should be worn at all time when not actively competing. This includes coaches, players, officials, game workers, and spectators. Boys volleyball players, as an indoor sport, are required to wear a mask during active competition. This is aligned with the manner in which girls volleyball in the fall and winter indoor sports competed. Outdoor spring sports athletes are not required to wear a mask during active competition, however, may wear a mask if they so choose. Artificial noisemakers such as an air horn or a timer system with an alarm can be used to signal in place of a traditional whistle. (2020 NFHS Guidance for Opening up High School Athletics and Activities, 2020) Face coverings will be continuously reviewed with DPH and is subject to change.

**Hygiene Practices** - Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer, especially after touching frequently used items or surfaces. Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place. Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow. Avoid touching your face. Appropriate clothing/shoes should always be worn to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment/surfaces. Athletes must be encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning to home. There should be no shared athletic towels, clothing, or shoes between students. Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces as much as possible. Athletes should take their equipment home with them and disinfect that equipment each night. Athletes should arrive at practice and games prepared to participate without the need to use a locker room, to the extent possible.

**Hydration/Food** - All students must bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared. Food should not be shared. Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) should not be utilized, except for water bottle refill stations.

**Weight Rooms** – Weight room use and maintenance should follow DECD sector rules for gyms and fitness facilities: [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DECD/Covid\\_Business\\_Recovery-Phase-2-1/CTReopens21\\_Sports\\_FitnessCenters3321.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DECD/Covid_Business_Recovery-Phase-2-1/CTReopens21_Sports_FitnessCenters3321.pdf)

**Locker Rooms** – Locker rooms should be used as little as possible. Sanitation of locker rooms should follow CDC guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html>). Ventilation in locker rooms is critical to providing a safe environment. Schools should explore efforts that may increase ventilation and decrease exposure to wet environments in locker room settings. When locker rooms are used, consideration of greater social distance (12 feet) should be applied. To minimize exposure, a schedule should be developed when locker rooms are used. When students must use a locker room to change for a practice or game, supervision should be provided to ensure social distancing is maintained and masks are worn. Capacity limits of locker rooms should be established to limit the number of athletes using a facility at any one time and to optimize social distancing.

Indoor sports such as volleyball should encourage visiting teams to arrive in uniform to limit the use of locker rooms. However, a designated bathroom or locker room should be provided for the visiting team. Schools should follow CDC sanitation guidelines to clean that designated area after the contest.

**Athletic Training Rooms** – Athletic training rooms are essential to providing care to our student-athletes. Athletic trainers will work with athletic directors to establish protocols for the training room, including a schedule for visits by athletes.

**Preparticipation Physical Exams** - In accordance with CIAC bylaws, sport physicals are valid for 13 months. In collaborating with the Connecticut State Medical Society, Sports Medicine Committee, we feel it is appropriate to extend the validation of physicals to 15-months for spring sport athletes, due to the high demand of medical appointments. Yearly sport physicals to assess injury risk and receive health guidance from doctors are critically important. Again, the coronavirus is a health pandemic and students should receive a physical within the 13-month standard when possible.

**COVID-19 Advisory Committee** - CIAC recommends continuation of the established COVID-19 advisory committee within each school/organization which meets regularly before and during each athletic season. The purpose of these committees is to maintain constant communication among leadership, address concerns as they arise, and stay informed on COVID-19 best practices around athletics. Recommended members include school physician, athletic trainer, school nurse, athletic director, one coach (appointed by the athletic director), building principal (or designee), and superintendent (or designee). (See Appendix I)

**Contact Tracing** - As student/youth-athletes return to physical activity, a system of contact tracing and notification should be established in the event that a participant tests positive for COVID-19. In the event that a student/youth athlete tests positive for COVID-19, administration and the local department of health must be immediately notified. The school, athletic team, and student(s) must follow the direction of the local department of health.

**Transportation** - “Schools must consider social distancing requirements when scheduling contests and events for the fall. Social distancing (as required by state or local health department) will need to be maintained during transportation (2020 NFHS Guidance for Opening up High School Athletics and Activities, 2020)” and should follow transportation guidelines issued by the Connecticut State Department of Education (<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/COVID-19/CTReopeningSchools.pdf>) and established by local school districts. The CIAC believes that regional play and modified sub-varsity experiences will assist in elevating some transportation issues and make it more feasible for parents to transport their child.

**Game Officials** – Officials should come contests dressed for contests whenever possible.

**Appendix I**

**COVID-19 Advisory Committee**

**Building Principal (or designee):**

**School Physician:**

**Athletic Trainer:**

**Superintendent (or designee):**

**Athletic Director:**

**School Nurse:**

**Coach:**



## Appendix III

**FORM LAST UPDATED: March 9, 2021**

### **IMPORTANT NOTES TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS:**

- ***This document may need to be updated if CDC, DPH, and/or other guidance evolves between now and the start of, or during, the 2021 spring sports season.***
- ***School districts may decide as a business judgment whether they wish to include a waiver of claims. Optional waiver language is included below in bolded, italicized text and gray shading.***
- ***DPH has previously recommended that families receive educational materials reflecting current American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) risk messaging regarding cardiovascular risks associated with COVID-19 infection. While this Notice includes some information regarding these risks, school districts may wish to augment the educational materials provided to families regarding such risks. Such additional educational materials could be included as an attachment to this Notice.***

### **NOTICE OF RISKS, INFORMED CONSENT[, AND WAIVER] REGARDING INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS DURING COVID-19**

Given the current pandemic health emergency related to the highly contagious novel coronavirus (“COVID-19”), and following the recommendations of the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) for the continued operation of sports activities for interscholastic youth sports, the **[DISTRICT]** Board of Education (the “Board”) and the **[DISTRICT]** Public Schools (together, the “District”) invites students to participate in District-sponsored interscholastic sports during the 2021 spring season under certain conditions and consistent with all applicable rules, regulations, federal and state orders and guidance, and guidance from public health officials related to COVID-19. This Notice of Risks, Informed Consent, **[and Waiver]** (the “Notice”) relates to students’ optional and voluntary participation in the 2021 spring season of **[SPORT]** (“Spring Sports”), which participation is expected to begin on or around **[DATE]** and continue until on or around **[DATE]**. The parents or legal guardians (“Parents”) of participating students (“Student” or “Students”) and the Student must sign this Notice and return it to **[CONTACT/OFFICE]** by **[DATE]**.

### **INFORMATION ABOUT COVID-19**

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person, primarily through respiratory droplets. Recent data suggest that there can be transmission of COVID-19 through respiratory droplets of those with mild (or no) symptoms or those who do not feel ill. COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild (or no) symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include, among other symptoms, fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, headache, congestion or runny nose, muscle or body aches, sore throat, new loss of smell or taste,

nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. The estimated incubation period is between 2 and 14 days. It is important to note that some people become infected and do not develop any symptoms or feel unwell.

COVID-19 is a new disease and there are limited data and information about the impact of many underlying medical conditions on the risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Severe illness from COVID-19 is defined as hospitalization, admission to the intensive care unit (ICU), intubation or mechanical ventilation, or death.

Among adults, the risk for severe illness from COVID-19 increases with age, with older adults at highest risk. Additionally, adults of any age with the following conditions **are at increased risk** of severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19: [cancer](#); [chronic kidney disease](#); [COPD \(chronic obstructive pulmonary disease\)](#); Down Syndrome; [heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies](#); [immunocompromised state \(weakened immune system\) from solid organ transplant](#); [obesity \(body mass index \[BMI\] of 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or higher but < 40 kg/m<sup>2</sup>\)](#); [severe obesity \(BMI ≥ 40 kg/m<sup>2</sup>\)](#); [pregnancy](#); [sickle cell disease](#); [smoking](#); and [type 2 diabetes mellitus](#). Adults of any age with other medical conditions not listed here **might be at increased risk** for severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19. As more data become available, additional risk factors for severe COVID-19 may be identified.

While fewer children have been sick with COVID-19 compared to adults, children can be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, can get sick from COVID-19, and can spread the virus that causes COVID-19 to others. Children, like adults, who have COVID-19 but have no symptoms can still spread the virus to others. Most children with COVID-19 have mild symptoms or have no symptoms at all. However, some children can get severely ill from COVID-19 and might require hospitalization, intensive care, or a ventilator to help them breathe. In rare cases, they might die. Babies under one year old and children with certain underlying medical conditions might be at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Children with the following conditions, among others not listed here, might be at increased risk for severe illness: asthma or chronic lung disease; diabetes; genetic, neurologic, or metabolic conditions; sickle cell disease; heart disease since birth; immunosuppression (weakened immune system due to certain medical conditions or being on medications that weaken the immune system); medical complexity (children with multiple chronic conditions that affect many parts of the body, or are dependent on technology and other significant supports for daily life); and obesity. The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and partners are investigating a** rare but serious medical condition associated with COVID-19 in children called Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C). It is not yet known what causes MIS-C and who is at increased risk for developing it.

Importantly, there are now authorized and recommended vaccines to prevent COVID-19 in the United States, and the CDC recommends getting an authorized COVID-19 vaccine when it is available. However, there is currently a limited supply of these vaccines and many people will not have been vaccinated by the time Spring Sports begins. In addition, multiple variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 have been documented in the United States and globally during this pandemic. Finally, although COVID-19 vaccines are effective at preventing illness, scientists are still learning how well vaccines prevent people from spreading the virus that causes COVID-19 to others. After exposure, people can be infected with or “carry” the virus that causes COVID-19 but not feel sick or have any symptoms. For this reason, even after vaccination, the CDC recommends that we continue taking precautionary measures to help prevent getting sick as we learn more about how COVID-19 vaccines work in real-world conditions. **The CDC advises, among other precautionary measures, that everyone**

**two years and older should wear masks in public; stay at least six feet away from others who do not live with them;** avoid crowds; avoid indoor spaces that do not offer fresh air from the outdoors as much as possible, and if indoors, bring in fresh air by opening windows and doors, if possible; **wash their hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not readily available; cover coughs and sneezes; clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily; monitor their health daily; and stay home and isolate from others when sick.

**Additional information regarding COVID-19 is available on the following websites or upon request from the District:**

- CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
- DPH website at <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus>
- *[District policies located at WEBSITE]*

Although the District has implemented certain preventative measures consistent with applicable rules, regulations, federal and state orders and guidance, and guidance from public health officials related to COVID-19, the District cannot ensure that Students participating in Spring Sports and/or their families or others in the Student's household will not become infected with COVID-19. Moreover, the District cannot protect against exposure to or infection by COVID-19 that occurs due to the actions, omissions, and/or negligence of students or others, including District staff members.

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE OPERATION OF SPORTS ACTIVITIES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Due to the rapid increases in community cases in the weeks leading up to the holidays, DPH and the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) recommended a "pause" on team sports activities effective November 23, 2020 through January 19, 2021. As of January 8, 2021, DPH continued to recommend a cautious approach to any restart of athletic activities. In its Updated Guidance for the Operations of Interscholastic, Youth and other Amateur Sport Activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic, effective March 19, 2021 through May 27, 2021, DPH has offered revised guidance for the continued operation of sports activities in the interest of primary prevention of COVID-19 disease (the "Spring Guidance"). The Spring Guidance advises that DPH and DECD will continue to monitor pandemic metrics and will issue updated guidance for the spring sports season on or around May 17, 2021.

#### ***Operation of Sports***

The Spring Guidance notes that there is a risk, to both participants and their families, of the spread of COVID-19 within and among athletic teams during practice and play. The Spring Guidance further notes that, due to quarantine and isolation requirements if an individual is a close contact or infected with COVID-19, there are additional potential ramifications of operating sports activities,

including compromising the ability of school districts to continue to offer in-person learning opportunities and the ability of adults and parents to attend work, for an extended period of time.

The Spring Guidance notes that, because of the environment in which activities take place (e.g., indoors vs. outdoors), community COVID-19 transmission rates, and other factors, certain sports are more likely to promote exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19 through respiratory droplets. Sports organizations are advised to pay specific attention to these risks when making a determination whether or not to engage in activities in the coming months, to inform players and parents of the risks of participation, and to be aware of any additional restrictions or requirements from local health departments or other local agencies.

The Spring Guidance notes that the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) recently revised its guidance to recommend consideration of several factors in assessing the potential for COVID-19 transmission related to high school athletics. The Spring Guidance also acknowledges that the CDC recommends consideration of many variables in assessing the potential risks for COVID-19 spread. Both the NFHS and CDC recommend considering the overall risk of participation in athletic activities to be a continuum represented by many different variables, some of which can be mitigated to affect the overall risk profile of a particular sport or activity, rather than rigid risk categories for individual sports. The NFHS and CDC further recommend that athletic organizers pay special attention to COVID-19 case and test positivity rates locally and in the surrounding communities, which may be indicative of increased risk associated with group activities, including athletics.

The Spring Guidance identifies the following risk considerations that can affect the level of risk that may be involved in any particular athletic activity or event: frequency of contact, duration of contact, intensity of contact, environment, size of teams, and type of activity. (For additional information about each of these considerations and the spectrum of risk associated with each such variable, please review the Spring Guidance.) In addition, DPH identifies specific sports that by their design and nature of play involve (1) **frequent face-to-face direct contact with high exertion** (e.g., traditional football, martial arts sparring/grappling, rugby, and wrestling); (2) **intermittent direct contact and/or contact with more moderate exertion** (e.g., basketball, cheerleading, crew, dance teams, field hockey, 7 v. 7/flag/touch football, ice hockey, lacrosse, soccer, ultimate frisbee, and volleyball); (3) **infrequent direct contact and/or contact with low exertion among participants** (e.g., baseball, cross country, fencing, softball, track and field, and tennis (doubles)); and (4) **infrequent direct contact and/or contact with low exertion** (e.g., cheer/dance (specifically during tumbling runs and acrobatics), individual dance routines, golf, gymnastics, swimming/diving, and tennis (singles)).

### **Mitigation Strategies**

The Spring Guidance advises that the ability to operationalize and ensure compliance with appropriate mitigation strategies is an important factor that should be considered and applied to decision-making for various sports. The Spring Guidance further advises that youth sports organizers discuss any changes to the way sports will be operated, and “if organizations or participant families feel that the implementation of, and consistent compliance with, the COVID-19 protective measures presented in this guidance document are impractical, unadvisable, or undesirable for any reason, then

participation in those activities by individual participants, or the organization as a whole, continue to be postponed until the requirements for the use of mitigation strategies changes.” In addition, Athletic Directors should make it clear to coaches and participant families that **cooperation with contact tracing is a requirement of participation with their athletic organization.**

Regarding mask-wearing, the Spring Guidance states: “Any athletic activities occurring indoors, as well as those occurring outdoors that involve frequent close contact between participants, require the use of a mask that completely covers the nose and mouth, and that is worn directly on the face (i.e. not attached to a helmet or other equipment), at all times, including during active play.” This mask-wearing requirement applies to all participants, coaches, officials, spectators, and any other individuals associated with athletic events. As noted below, the Spring Guidance offers specific recommendations and considerations regarding mask-wearing that differ according to the risk levels associated with individual sports and activities.

The Spring Guidance also advises that individuals required to quarantine due to close contact with a known COVID-19 case must not gather with other athletes for engagement in team sports prior to completion of a full 14-day quarantine requirement, notwithstanding any guidance to the contrary regarding the shortening of required quarantine periods.

Finally, DPH recommends in the Spring Guidance that certain strategies be used in addition to all routine and broadly applied COVID-19 risk mitigation strategies based on the risk levels associated with individual sports and activities (described above). Such strategies include, for example, mask-wearing, cohorting, rule changes, and enhanced communication and education. For a complete list of DPH’s recommendations based on the risk level of various sports, please carefully review the Spring Guidance.

### ***Return-to-Play after COVID-19 Infection***

The Spring Guidance notes that there is the potential, and documented cases, of severe disease complications in people of all ages. Long-term health effects and impacts on organ systems function resulting from even mild or asymptomatic COVID-19 disease is still unknown, although there have been some studies implicating blood clotting and cardiac effects as potentially under-recognized longer-term sequelae. As such, DPH recommends that health screening and clearance requirements for allowing athletes to begin a phased return to activities after COVID-19 infection should incorporate the AAP’s guidance for return-to-play and include specific cardiac evaluations. In addition, DPH has previously recommended that parents and athletes be informed of the cardiovascular risks associated with COVID-19 infection and provide informed consent based on knowledge of such risks. For additional information about the cardiovascular and other risks associated with COVID-19 infection, and current guidance from the AAP regarding returning to sports, please carefully review the AAP’s “COVID-19 Interim Guidance: Return to Sports,” available at <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-interim-guidance-return-to-sports/>.

For DPH's guidance regarding, among other relevant matters, (1) risk categorization for various sports; (2) recommended COVID-19 mitigation strategies; (3) mask wearing, (4) quarantine requirements, and (5) return-to-play after COVID-19 infection, please carefully review in its entirety the Spring Guidance, available at [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DPH/Communications/Covid19/DPH-Youth-and-Amateur-Sports-COVID19\\_UPDATED\\_Mar\\_2021\\_v52.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DPH/Communications/Covid19/DPH-Youth-and-Amateur-Sports-COVID19_UPDATED_Mar_2021_v52.pdf).

### INFORMED CONSENT **[AND WAIVER]**

We, \_\_\_\_\_ **[PARENTS AND STUDENT NAMES]**, understand that the Student has the opportunity to participate in Spring Sports. We understand that Spring Sports will take place **[both on and off]** District grounds and will be provided consistent with current applicable health and safety guidance from federal, state, and local authorities. We understand that the choice to have the Student participate in Spring Sports is voluntary. Before the Student will be permitted to participate in Spring Sports, the District requires that we read the information in this Notice (including the information contained in the websites cited herein) and sign below to ensure that we are informed of and understand the risks related to COVID-19 associated with participating in Spring Sports.

**In signing below, the Parents attest that we are the parent/guardian of the above-named Student, and the Parents and Student attest that we have read the Notice and the websites cited herein and understand the risks related to COVID-19 associated with participating in Spring Sports. We further understand that there are cardiovascular and other health and safety risks associated with returning to athletic activities after COVID-19 infection. We also acknowledge that the health and safety risks posed by COVID-19 cannot be completely eliminated, despite the implementation of reasonable and age-appropriate precautions and protocols. We further understand that DPH and NFHS have identified various factors relevant to determining the level of risk of the potential for COVID-19 transmission involved in any sport or athletic activity and that there is increased potential for spread of potentially infectious respiratory droplets among players engaged in repeated face-to-face contact with exertion. We further understand that there may be risks to the Student associated with adhering to certain mitigation strategies recommended and/or required by DPH and required by the District, such as wearing a face covering mask that completely covers the nose and mouth, including during active play. Finally, given the unknown nature of COVID-19, we understand that it is not possible to list each and every specific risk associated with COVID-19 and that neither the District nor public health officials can guarantee that any student participating in Spring Sports or other in-person activities will not come into contact with someone infected by COVID-19 and/or contract such illness.**

By opting to allow the Student to participate in Spring Sports, we agree that the Parents and the Student will abide by any such health and safety protocols that the District may require, such as requiring students to wear face covering masks that completely cover the nose and mouth (including during active play) and adhering to any quarantine periods required by the District. We understand that promoting public health is a shared responsibility and that every member of the District community must do his/her part to minimize risks.

In consideration for being allowed to participate in Spring Sports, we fully **ASSUME ALL RISKS**, inherent and otherwise, whether or not described above, in connection with the Student's participation in Spring Sports, **[OPTIONAL WAIVER LANGUAGE:** and waive the right to initiate and/or pursue in any manner any and all lawsuits and any other claims in any forum against the Board, its board members, officers, employees, agents, contractors, and/or the District, and assigns (the "Released Parties") for any injury or harm connected to the Student's participation in Spring Sports. These agreements of assumption of risks and waiver do **NOT** apply if (1) the liability, damage, loss or injury is **CAUSED SOLELY BY THE NEGLIGENCE** of the Released Parties and do not include the negligence or any other act or omission by any other person or entity (such as the Student, the Parents, other student athletes, other third parties or independent vendors/contractors); or (2) the liability, damage, loss or injury is **CAUSED BY THE RECKLESS, WANTON or INTENTIONAL MISCONDUCT** of a Released Party.] These agreements of assumption of risks [and waiver] will be construed in accordance with Connecticut law.

**WE HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE NOTICE ABOVE (INCLUDING THE INFORMATION ABOUT COVID-19 AND THE OPERATION OF SPORTS ACTIVITIES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC) AND CONSENT TO THE STUDENT PARTICIPATING IN SPRING SPORTS DURING THE 2021 SPRING SEASON.**

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Parent/Legal Guardian signature

Date

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Parent/Legal Guardian signature

Date

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Student signature

Date