

# **BLUE MOUNTAIN ATHLETICS HEALTH & SAFETY PLAN**



Updated 03/05/21

## INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to guide members of Blue Mountain Athletics on recommendations for the reopening of our athletic program during the COVID-19 Pandemic in accordance with Governor Wolf's Guidance for All Sports to Operate during the COVID-19 Disaster Emergency Document, which permits PK-12 schools under the PIAA to resume athletics in counties designated in the Yellow and Green phases of the Process to Reopen Pennsylvania.

The COVID-19 pandemic has sparked dramatic changes across all aspects of our daily lives. The combination of lifestyle modifications and potential comorbidities associated with COVID-19 also presents important, athlete specific health and safety risks as return to sport plans emerge. While it is clear that transition periods have a higher risk for catastrophic sport injury,<sup>1-6</sup> some of the factors that place athletes at higher risk during these periods may be amplified as a result of social distancing measures. These risk factors may also be amplified at various levels – so even athletes within the same team may have a spectrum of risk profiles. As plans for a return to organized sport begin, over 10 million high school and college athletes emerge from this unprecedented period, calling for healthcare providers and administrators to give greater consideration for how to reduce risk while re-introducing sport.

This document is developed based on the principles outlined in the document: *Return to Sports and Exercise during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Guidance for High School and Collegiate Athletic Programs*.

NOTE: This policy is intended to address return to physical activity considerations during, and immediately following physical distancing. This policy is not intended to: 1) provide a recovery plan specific for COVID-19 patients, 2) discuss administrative considerations and practices, 3) discuss cleaning procedures or personal protection practices, 4) provide a detailed discussion of screening, testing, isolating and contact tracing for sport programs. Please see the Blue Mountain web page for policy on these items.

This policy describes the best practice procedures for returning to sport and exercise following a period of prolonged physical distancing for students/athletes of Blue Mountain.

This document is designed specifically for the return to activity following physical distancing from the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, the topics in this document overrule all other policies and will end when the administration of Blue Mountain school district deems fit. This policy will be a living, working document, that is continually reviewed and updated as the organization and our community changes.

This policy applies to all stakeholders (e.g., athletic trainers, physicians, athletic administrators, coaches, strength and conditioning staff, school administrators, advisors) of Blue Mountain who are associated with athletics/extra-curricular.

## PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT

The primary point of contact for all questions related to COVID-19 in relation to athletics:

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## Adherence to Health and Safety Plans

### ■ Facility Considerations

- Create and maintain protocols to limit entrance and exit traffic.
- Review and implement CDC guidance on cleaning and disinfection (CDC - Cleaning and Disinfecting)
- Ensure custodial and environmental services are regular and/or increased to meet CDC guidelines.

### ■ Staff Training

- Staff will need to be trained specifically on the protocols outlined in this document and the practices adopted by their school. Consider virtual training. Social distancing is recommended until CDC, state

and local authorities declare otherwise.

- Reinforcement of safety protocols and requirements associated with but not limited to CPR/AED training and Emergency Action Plans.

## **Guide for Schools**

### ■ Health and Safety Actions

- Promote healthy hygiene practices such as hand washing and staff wearing a mask or face covering.
- Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation.
- Follow social distancing guidelines through increased spacing, small groups and limited mixing between groups according to recommendations.
- Develop and implement procedures to check for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Encourage anyone who is sick to stay home.

### ■ Require Sick Athletes and Staff to Stay Home

- Establish procedures to ensure athletes and staff that become sick onsite or arrive onsite sick are sent home as soon as possible.
- Create a plan to isolate those who are sick until they can leave. Plan to have areas where a sick person can be isolated from well athletes and staff until they can leave the school.

### ■ Plan for if Athletes or Staff Get Sick

- The school nurse will be notified and families will be advised to follow the Covid guidance's adopted by BMSD.

## **COVID Guidance for Families**

[COVID-19 Symptomatic K-12 Student or Staff Process Flow.pdf](#)

[BMSD Daily Symptom Checklist 11-19-20.pdf](#)

[Exclusion from and Return to School Requirements 11-19-2020.pdf](#)

[COVID-19 Patient Instructions for Self isolation- DOH.pdf](#)

[COVID-19-Quarantine-vs-Isolation.pdf](#)

### ■ Positive COVID-19 Case

- Consistent with applicable law and privacy policies, have coaches, staff, umpires/officials, and families of athletes (as feasible) self-report to the school if they have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days in accordance with health information sharing regulations for COVID-19, and other applicable laws and regulations.

- All those who had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 (within 48 hours prior to symptom onset) should be advised to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms and be advised to follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop. Individuals with close contacts should be excluded from practice for 14 days. Close contact is defined as having close (within 6ft) and prolonged ( $\geq 15$  minutes) contact with the COVID-19 patient.

- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting them (for outdoor areas, this includes surfaces or shared objects in the area, if applicable). ▪ Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfecting products, including storing them securely away from children. ▪ Use the school's notification system (e.g., letter) to inform health officials and close contacts of COVID-19 cases.

- Be prepared for possibility of temporary closures and team isolations in the event of recurrent outbreaks and its implications.

- Utilize system to notify staff, officials, families, and the public of facility closures and restrictions in place to limit COVID-19 exposure (e.g., limited hours of operation).

- Schools are not responsible for testing for COVID-19 but will encourage daily home self-screenings for symptoms of COVID-19.

## **Prior to Resuming Physical Activity**

#### ■ Pre-Participation Physical Examination Considerations

- Pre-participation physicals exams continue to be required for sports participation on an annual basis.
- Previous COVID-19 diagnosis should be noted and discussed with healthcare provider at the time of the exam.

#### ■ Returning to sports following COVID-19 diagnosis

- An individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19 may return when **ALL** four of the following criteria are met:
  - At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications
  - Individual has improvement of all symptoms
  - At least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared
  - Written documentation of clearance from a health care provider (MD, DO, NP, PA)

#### ■ Promote Wellness and Hygiene

- The potential for pre-symptomatic transmission is why the use of face coverings and social distancing, including the avoidance of congregate settings, is imperative to reduce COVID-19 spread.
- Staying Home when Appropriate
- Education and Promotion on Self Screening for Signs and Symptoms (CDC - If You Are Sick)
- Hand hygiene is essential. Schools need to promote frequent and effective, hand hygiene with ample hand sanitizer (>60% ethanol or >70% isopropanol) dispensers and areas with soap and water in many different locations. Hand washing or use of hand sanitizer should take place pre- and post-activity. Hand washing facilities or hand sanitizer should be made available during activity.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow.
- Activities that increase the risk of exposure to saliva must not be allowed; including chewing gum, spitting, licking fingers, and eating sunflower seeds.
- Avoid any unnecessary physical contact, such as high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, or hugs.
- No team huddles should take place.
- Face Coverings are required at all times. (except swimmers while active in the pool)
- Social distancing is still required until CDC, state and local authorities declare otherwise.

## Health Screening Procedure

1. Athletes and staff will be required to be screened when they arrive onsite where the sporting activity will occur. Athletes and staff must wear a mask or face covering at all times. Staff, such as but not limited to an administrator, athletic trainer, coach, and/or nurse should conduct the screening. A mask must be worn by person conducting the screening. Gloves shall be utilized by health care provider if any direct contact with person screened is required
2. The screening should include the following questions:
  - Today or in the past 24 hours have you had any of the following symptoms:
  - Do you have a household member or close contact, who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 2 weeks?
  - Have you been diagnosed or tested positive for COVID-19? If Yes, have you provided required written clearance from your health care provider to return to physical activity or work?
  - Temperature check with a thermometer is recommended.
  - Temperature threshold is greater than or equal to 100.0°F/37.7°C.
  - If temperature is above 100.0°F/37.7°C threshold, two additional measures should be taken to verify initial measure
  - Forehead thermometer/non-contact thermometer is preferable
  - Temperature check should take place in a temperature controlled environment whenever possible
  - Person screened should be well rested, e.g. no recent physical activity
3. If an athlete or staff has positive finding on their COVID-19 screening, the school's Illness Policy should be followed.
  - If parent or caregiver is not present, a predetermined staff member should escort them to a designated isolation room or area away from others and have them wear a mask or face covering. Designated school official will determine if individual should be directed to contact their health care provider for evaluation and potential COVID-19 testing. Those without a health care provider can be directed to a local COVID-19 hotline such as St. Luke's University Health Network 1-866-785-8537 Option 7 or Lehigh Valley Health Network 1-888-402-5846. The return of a positively screened individual should be in accordance with the school's Illness Policy.
  - CDC does not recommend isolation of contacts of a person being evaluated for COVID-19 until the diagnosis is confirmed.
4. Documentation of individuals screened must be maintained. Dependent on environment, a system may want to be developed with indicator to ensure clarity that all individuals have been screened (sticker, stamp, wristband, attendance log, etc.).
5. Utilize a notification procedure to communicate to appropriate administrators when there is a positive screen.

## Non-Essential Persons

- All federal, state, and local county guidelines in accordance with mass gatherings must be followed.
- Spectators are not essential to any workouts or practices and not recommended to attend. Indoor competition should be limited to essential personnel only (i.e. athletes, coaches, officials, event and medical staff). If spectators are allowed to attend outdoor events, attendees are required to comply with 6-foot social distancing and face covering orders as mandated by the state.
- If competitions take place while federal, state and local county guidelines recommend social distancing and use of masks/face coverings, spectators must comply with such guidelines.
- All sports-related gatherings must conform with the [Order of the Acting Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Amending the November 23, 2020 Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health for Mitigation and Enforcement](#) released by the Department of Health on March 1, 2021.

## Athletic Training Considerations

- Anyone who utilizes the athletic training room must wash hands or use hand sanitizer upon entry and exit.
- Athletic trainers must be practicing good hygiene and washing hands or using hand sanitizer.
- Athletic trainers must wear mask at all times until guidance from CDC is adjusted.
- Athletic Trainer should clean and disinfect according to CDC Reopening Guidance inclusive but not limited to treatment/taping tables after each patient, rehabilitation equipment, modality equipment, etc. A cleaning and disinfecting schedule should be created and maintained.
- While CDC, federal, state and local counties recommend social distancing, the number of athletes in the athletic training room must be limited to ensure have 6 feet of social distancing. All persons in the athletic training room should wear masks/face coverings. Only one athlete per treatment table should be permitted. Consider scheduling by appointment for the majority of athletes with the exception of acute and emergency cases.
- Emergency action plan adjustments may need to be considered during this time, e.g. lightning policy sheltering procedures.
- No whirlpool or cold/hot tubs use, with the exception of heat illness best practices.

[See PIAA document for Spring Guidelines](#)