

**South Fayette Township School District  
Athletic Department  
Resocialization of Athletics & Marching Band Procedures**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented all school districts with countless challenges. The COVID-19 virus is a highly contagious illness that primarily attacks the upper respiratory system. The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages. Research from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), among others, has found that while children do get infected by COVID-19, relatively few children with COVID-19 are hospitalized. However, some severe outcomes have been reported in children, and a child with a mild or even asymptomatic case of COVID-19 can spread the infection to others who may be far more vulnerable. While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of furthering the spread of COVID-19, the current science suggests there are many steps schools can take to reduce the risks to students, coaches/directors, staff and their families.

The South Fayette Township School District will take the necessary precautions and recommendations from federal, state, and local governments, CDC, Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), as well as the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) and Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) to safeguard the participants and staff of our athletic and marching band programs. The South Fayette Township School District realizes knowledge regarding COVID-19 is constantly changing, and new information and treatments may become available. The recommendations below will be adjusted as needed as new information becomes available in order to decrease the risk of exposure for our staff, students, and spectators.

Participating in interscholastic athletics and marching band at both the high school and middle school levels is a privilege, and it is important that the student-athletes and band members work with the coaches, directors, and staff to adhere to the safety guidelines established by the South Fayette Township School District. Failure to adhere to the safety guidelines may result in suspension of the student's ability to participate both in and out of season.

## **MANDATES**

The following is mandatory for **all phases** for Middle School and High School Athletics and Marching Band during the COVID-19 pandemic:

1. All students, coaches/directors, and staff will undergo a COVID-19 health self-screening prior to any practice, event, or team meeting. The purpose of the health screening is to check for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. A link to the self-screen tool is listed in the resource section of this document. Students will also undergo temperature checks prior to participation in any practice, event, or team meeting.

2. Promote healthy hygiene practices to limit the spread of COVID-19 including:
  - a. Hand washing (20 seconds with warm water and soap).
  - b. Students must wear a face covering (masks or face shields) at all times except when participating in a high intensity aerobic activity or playing a woodwind/brass instrument.
  - c. Coaching staff and other adult personnel must wear face coverings (masks or face shields) at all times, unless doing so jeopardizes their health.
  - d. Use hand sanitizer.
3. Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation in all facilities.
4. Encourage social distancing through increased spacing, small groups or “pods,” and limited mixing between groups when feasible.
5. Educate athletes, coaches/directors, and staff on health and safety protocols.
6. Require that anyone who is sick to stay home.
7. Follow the plan for a student or employee who gets sick.
8. Regularly communicate and monitor developments with local authorities, coaches, staff, and families regarding cases, exposures, and updates to policies and procedures.
9. Athletes, band members, and coaches/directors **MUST** provide their own water bottle for hydration. Water bottles must not be shared. Disposable cups will not be provided.
10. Personal protective equipment (PPE) will be used as needed and as situations warrant, or determined by local/state governments. These items include gloves, face masks, and eye protection.
11. Self-identify staff and students who may be at a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 due to underlying medical conditions such as:
  - Age 65 or older
  - Lung disease, moderate-severe asthma
  - Serious heart conditions
  - May be immunocompromised
  - Obesity
  - Diabetes
  - Kidney or liver disease

### **PHASE 1 (Pennsylvania Yellow Phase)**

- All school facilities must remain closed as per PA State Guidelines.
- Students and coaches/directors may communicate via online meetings (Zoom, Google Meet, etc.).
- Athletes are encouraged to participate in home workouts including strength and conditioning.
- Students and coaches/directors should follow all guidelines set forth by the local and state governments.

## **PHASE 2 (Pennsylvania Green Phase)**

### **Pre-workout Screening:**

- All coaches/directors and students will be self-screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to any workout or event.
- Temperature screenings will occur prior to participation in any practice, event, or team meeting.
- Attendance should be recorded for contact tracing reasons.
- If individuals participating in activities show symptoms, have a temperature of 100 degrees or higher, or are sick, they must be sent home.
- Any individual with suspected positive COVID-19 symptoms should not be allowed to take part in workouts/rehearsals/activities.
  - Students will need to contact parents/guardians for immediate pick-up.
  - Parents should contact their primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional for guidance.

### **Limitations on Gatherings:**

- Coaches/directors and students must maintain appropriate social distancing at all times possible, including in the field of play, in rehearsal halls, locker rooms, sidelines, dugouts, benches, and workout areas. During down time, students and coaches/directors/staff should not congregate.
- Gatherings shall not exceed 50% of the total occupancy permitted by law for the facility or no more than 250 total individuals (whichever is less), including coaches per field or court.
- Sports-related and band activities are limited to students, coaches, officials, and staff only. Spectators will not be permitted.
- The addition of visitors and spectators will be contingent upon future health conditions within the state and local communities.
- No locker room use for out of season workouts will be permitted. Locker room use will be minimized during in-season events.

### **Facilities Cleaning**

- Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic/rehearsal facilities and common areas to mitigate any communicable disease.
- Athletic Facilities should be cleaned prior to arrival and following workouts and team gatherings, with high touch areas cleaned more often.
- Weight room equipment should be wiped clean after each individual's use.
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times in the weight room to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment surfaces.
- Additional hand sanitizing stations will be provided during the defined PIAA season and as much as possible during out-of-season activities.

## **Physical Activity**

- Coaches/directors must review and consider the CDC guidance to modify practices and games to mitigate the risk of spreading the virus. This includes focusing on individual skill building versus competition and limiting contact in close contact sports.
- Personal items should not be shared. This includes clothing, towels, and pinnies.
- If equipment must be shared, all equipment should be properly disinfected often during practice and events, as deemed necessary.
- Hand sanitizer should be used periodically, as resources allow.
- Spotters for maximum weight lifts should be stationed at each end of the bar.

## **Hydration**

- All students, coaches, and officials must bring their own water and drinks to team activities.
- Team water coolers for sharing through disposable cups are not allowed.
- Fixed water fountains should not be used.

## **OTHER GUIDANCE:**

### **Primary Point of Contact**

- The South Fayette Township School District has designated Kara Miles(Lead Nurse) as the District's primary point of contact for all questions related to COVID-19.
- Contact information for Kara Miles is: [klmiles@southfayette.org](mailto:klmiles@southfayette.org) and 412-221-4542 ext. 333.

### **Transportation**

- Modifications for team transportation to and from athletic events may be necessary based on current PA Department of Education guidelines.
- This may include:
  - Reducing the number of students and coaches on a bus.
  - Using hand sanitizer upon boarding a bus or van.
  - Social distancing on a bus.
  - Wearing face coverings on a bus.
- These potential modifications will be determined by the school district, bus companies, PA Department of Education, state and local governments.
- Families have the option to provide their own transportation to and from events.

### **Social Distancing during Contests/Events/Activities**

- Sidelines/Bench Area
  - Appropriate social distancing will need to be maintained on sidelines, bench areas, and bleachers (marching band) during practices and events, as deemed necessary by the school, PIAA, state and local governments. Consider using markings (tape, paint, cones, etc.) as a guide for students and coaches/directors.

### **Who should be allowed at events?**

- Grouping of individuals into tiers from essential to non-essential:
  - Tier 1 (Essential) – Student athletes/band members, coaches/directors, contest officials, event staff, medical staff, security personnel.
  - Tier 2 (Preferred) – Media.
  - Tier 3 (Non-essential) – Spectators.
- Only Tier 1 and 2 personnel will be allowed to attend events until state and/or local governments lift restrictions on mass gatherings.
- Seating areas, including bleachers, must adhere to social distancing requirements of at least six feet of spacing for anyone not in the same household. To assist with proper social distancing, areas should be clearly marked. Adults should wear face coverings (masks or face shields) at all times.
- Once state and/or local governments lift restrictions on mass gatherings, caregivers or spectators will be prohibited to enter the field of play or bench areas.
- Changes to seating capacity and social distancing may be necessary for each venue facility and will be determined as more recommendations are released by the local/state government.

### **Overnight/Out of State Events/ Events in COVID-19 Hot Spots**

- The South Fayette Township School District will evaluate each event and follow all local/state government guidelines on a case by case basis.
- Every consideration must be taken as to not expose students to unnecessary or potential high risk exposure by traveling outside of the region.

### **Other Important Information**

- Activities that increase the risk of exposure to saliva must not be allowed including chewing gum, spitting, licking fingers, and eating sunflower seeds.
- Avoid shaking hands, fist bumps, or high fives before, during or after games and practices. Limit unnecessary physical contact with teammates, other athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators.
- If multiple events are to be held at the same facility, adequate time shall be scheduled between contests to allow for facilities to be cleaned and disinfected and to minimize interaction between athletes.
- Sports complexes with multiple fields may operate simultaneous games or practices on fields within a complex only if social distancing can be maintained.
- Establish protocols to limit entrance and exit traffic, designating specific entry to and exits from facilities with clear signage.
- Stagger pickup and dropoff times and locations for practice and events.
- Ensure that students are not congregating while awaiting pickup and to ensure congregation or crowding does not occur on dropoff.
- Parents dropping off and picking up students should remain outside of athletic/school facilities. Parents should not enter the facility.
- Concession stands or other food sales must adhere to state and local guidelines.
- When restarting competitions, start by limiting games, scrimmages, and matches to teams in the region first (PIAA District 7 and District 8 only). Can expand beyond regional play if COVID-19 cases continue to stay low.

## **Positive Cases and Coaches, Staff, or Athletes Showing COVID-19 Symptoms**

### **The signs and symptoms of COVID-19 may include:**

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore Throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. The symptoms may range from mild to severe.

### **What to do if you are sick?**

- If you are sick or think you are infected with the COVID-19 virus, STAY AT HOME.
  - It is essential that you take steps to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home or community.
  - If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, call your healthcare provider for medical advice.
- Notify the school immediately (principal, athletic director, school nurse, athletic trainer, and/or coach/director).
- It will be determined if others who may have been exposed (students, coaches/directors, staff) need to be notified, isolated, and/or monitored for symptoms.
- If a positive case of COVID-19 is diagnosed, contact tracing will be implemented with the assistance of local health professionals and the CDC and DOH.

### **What to do if a student or staff become ill with COVID-19 symptoms during practice, event, or during transportation to or from an event?**

- Make every effort to isolate the ill individual from others, until the student or staff member can leave the school or event.
- If a student, the parent/guardian will be contacted immediately, and arrangements will be made for the student to be picked up.
- The ill individual will be asked to contact their physician or appropriate healthcare professional for direction.
- The facility where the sick individual was present will need to be disinfected immediately.

### **Return of student or staff to athletics following a COVID-19 diagnosis?**

- Students, coaches/directors, and staff shall resume with extracurricular activities when CDC/ACHD guidelines for COVID-19 symptom resolution have been met.

**EDUCATION:**

- Staff, Coaches, Parents, and Students will be educated on the following (through posters, flyers, meetings, emails, phone calls, website postings):
  - COVID-19 signs and symptoms.
  - Proper ways to limit exposure to COVID-19 (hand washing, cough in your elbow, disinfecting touched surfaces, social distancing, etc.).
  - The content of this Return to Sport Guidelines Document.
  - Any pertinent COVID-19 information released by DOH, local governments, NFHS, and PIAA.

**Self-Screening Questions:**

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1G5Q5VsKmb0VEIbN4t80QThU5T\\_OPT4gYyo0qvMm-W4/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1G5Q5VsKmb0VEIbN4t80QThU5T_OPT4gYyo0qvMm-W4/edit?usp=sharing)

**RESOURCES:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>

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

<https://www.upmc.com/-/media/upmc/services/sports-medicine/documents/return-to-play/high-school-athlete-guidelines-pdf.pdf?la=en>

<https://www.governor.pa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/20200522-Department-of-Health-2020-Summer-Program-FAQ.pdf>

<https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812337/2020-nfhs-guidance-for-returning-to-high-school-marching-band-activities.pdf>