

SAINT JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL
Athletics Health and Safety Plan



2020-2021
Athletics Health
and Safety Plan

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a number of unique challenges to sports worldwide. COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus that primarily attacks the upper respiratory system and can infect people of all ages. While data from the CDC and other entities indicates that while children are infected with COVID-19, few children are hospitalized. However, in rare occurrences, severe outcomes have been reported in children. A child who is even mildly symptomatic or asymptomatic can spread the virus to others. While it is not possible to eliminate COVID-19, scientific research does suggest that schools can take steps to help reduce the risk to students, coaches, and their families. To minimize the risk, *Saint Joseph High School* will take the necessary precautions based on recommendations from the federal, local, and state governments, Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), National Federation of State High School Associations, and the PIAA. *Saint Joseph High School* realizes that best practices regarding COVID-19 are in a constant state of change as new information and treatments become available. As new information becomes available and as we transition from summer conditioning to in season practice and play, the recommendations contained in this document will be updated to reflect current information in an effort to decrease risk of exposure for our students, staff, and families.

Participating in interscholastic athletics is a privilege at *Saint Joseph High School* and it is of the utmost importance that everyone involved; athletes, parents, coaches, and administrators work together to help adhere to the guidelines outlined in this document. It is the responsibility of the participating interscholastic student athletes, parents, coaches, and administrators to follow these guidelines while in season and out. Failure to follow these safety measures will jeopardize everyone's ability to participate.

These guidelines will be reviewed and updated if necessary, prior to the official start of August 24 of the Fall Sports Season.



GENERAL CONSIDERATION

- Social distancing should be practiced whenever possible (6 feet at a minimum). Practice social distancing in all common areas such as locker rooms, classrooms, meeting rooms, weight room, coaches' offices, gym, and athletic training rooms. - Coaching staff are limited to essential personnel only. A list of essential personnel will be given to the Athletic Director and Athletic Trainer. - Consider the capacity of rooms and the quality of ventilation in rooms and spaces.
- Smaller group meetings should be held in areas like the gym, a classroom or even outside on the field where proper social distancing can take place. - Large indoor gatherings are strongly discouraged. Virtual meetings should take place when possible. - Up to ten student-athletes may use the weight room at one time. - Team meals should be pre-packaged and be served "grab-and-go" style. Food provided athletes must adhere to the Guidance for Businesses in the Restaurant Industry.
- When at practice or competition, student-athletes, coaches, and other essential personnel should avoid handshakes, high-fives, fist pumps and all other forms of contact with one another.
- No outside groups or speakers should be permitted in the facilities.
- Student athletes should be six feet apart when not actively participating in a drill or physical activity.
- Activities that increase the risk of exposure to saliva droplets are not allowed, including but not limited to chewing gum, spitting, licking fingers, and eating sunflower seeds.
- If multiple games are held in the same facility, adequate time will be scheduled between contests to allow for facilities to be cleaned and disinfected, and to minimize interactions between athletes.
- Parent run concession stands and other food provided for athletes must adhere to the guidance for Businesses in the Restaurant Industry.



SANITATION

- ALL personal athletic equipment should be cleaned daily. It is recommended that student athletes take their equipment home daily for cleaning.
- Athletes CANNOT share gear and MUST use their issued equipment.
- If equipment must be shared, all equipment should be properly disinfected between users.
- Athletes must wear shirts and shoes at all times in the weight room and locker rooms to minimize sweat transmitting to equipment.
- Athletes reporting to the athletic training room for evaluation or treatments will be permitted to wear flip flops in and out of the facility only.
- Each athlete MUST have their OWN personally identified hydration container (i.e. water bottle) that is never shared.
- Hand sanitizers and wipes will be provided throughout the facilities and areas.
- Maintenance will set a daily cleaning and disinfecting schedule of all high traffic areas in the locker rooms and weight rooms.
- Student-athletes will shower at home.
- Student-athletes will use the 2nd floor Academic Commons restrooms until further notice.



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- Student-athletes, coaches and staff are required to wear masks when in all indoor spaces. This includes the athletic training room, coach’s office, gymnasium, and school building.
- During any “down time” situations, coaches and athletes should be wearing masks.
- Cloth face coverings are considered to be adequate (surgical or N95 masks are not necessary).
- The garment should cover the nose and mouth and allow for continued unlabored breathing.
 - A full list with references for mask specifications and maintenance is on the CDC website.
 - Wearing gloves has not been shown to decrease transmission of the virus. Current recommendations are for frequent handwashing and to avoid touching one’s face.



DAILY SCREENING

- Students-athletes, coaches, and other essential staff will be screened daily with no- touch temperature checks and a questionnaire.
- Attendance should be recorded for contact tracing reasons. – Screening questions will include:
 - Have you had any new onset cough or shortness of breath?
 - Have you had any known exposure to someone diagnosed with COVID-19?
 - Entrance only permitted if:
 - Forehead (temporal) scanner under 99.5°F
 - Oral thermometer reading <100 F
 - If a parent/guardian is dropping a student-athlete off for practice, it is strongly encouraged that the parent/guardian remain on campus in their vehicle until the student-athlete has passed their daily screening.



POSITIVE CASES AND COACHES, STAFF, OR STUDENT-ATHLETES SHOWING COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

- What are the signs and symptoms COVID-19?
 - Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. The symptoms may range from mild to severe (see CDC Fact Sheet Below).
 - Symptoms 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
- What to do if you are ill?
 - If you are ill 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).
 - It will be determined if others who may have been exposed (students, coaches, 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 becomes 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
- The athlete’s parent/guardian will be contacted immediately, and arrangements will be made for the student to be picked up
 - The ill individual or their parent/guardian will be asked to contact their physician or appropriate healthcare professional for direction
 - All affected facilities will need to be disinfected immediately.
- Return of student or staff to athletics following a COVID-19 diagnosis?
 - See the Saint Joseph High School Health and Safety Plan Decision Tree for details found on the SJHS website home page link “Information on COVID-19”.

ACCLIMATIZATION PHASES

PHASE ONE: The team should be broken into groups or pods of no more than 10 student-athletes. These groups should remain constant for the next two weeks. During this period, the students would be permitted to participate in non-contact workouts in their small groups. Conditioning practices should be broken into groups of 10, with a coach in charge of each group, emphasizing all social distancing practices.

PHASE TWO: After 14 days of small groups (10 or less) and a community disease load that is not rising, the teams of 10 may be merged into groups of no more than 50 student-athletes who can now practice together as a group. Social distancing should be maintained at all other times such as in the locker rooms.

PHASE THREE: After the four-week period is complete and the disease load in the community is declining, teams may then combine to the total group for full practices and competition. Social distancing protocols should remain in place at all other times.



STUDENT-ATHLETES' ACTIONS

Saint Joseph High School requires that its athletes assist in following these guidelines to help maintain a safe and healthy environment for all. Failure to adhere with these guidelines provided by the athletic department could result in the inability to participate in interscholastic athletics.

- Practice social distancing. - Mandatory PIAA pre-participation physical examinations will be required prior to the start of the fall sports season is August 24th for all fall sports.
- Access to the weight room and athletic training room will only be permitted in season PIAA sports. Exceptions are made for injuries or other emergencies.
- During any offseason workouts, no athlete will be allowed to maintain a locker in any athletic facility.
- In season athletes must maintain a clean and neat locker.
- Avoid touching your face as much as possible.
- Wash your clothes as often as possible, daily is preferred (No clothing should be left in any athletic facility overnight).
- No sharing of towels, razors, or any other personal hygiene items.
- Wash hands as frequently as possible and use hand sanitizer often when available.
- Bring a personal water bottle(s) with name on it to all practices and events. There will be no shareable water bottles available. Athletes who report without a water bottle will not be permitted to practice on that day.
- Athletes should arrive no earlier than 20 minutes prior to an out of season practice.



- Assist coaches and custodial in disinfecting of all athletic equipment used during a workout.
- Comply with the daily health screenings outlined in this document.

COACHES ACTIONS

- Coaches will model the behavior they expect of student-athletes. - Practice social distancing. - Coaches will screen and monitor athletes for symptoms prior to the start of all games and practices. This includes a daily temperature check. Results will be shared and held in the athletic training room or the athletic director's office. This will be a daily occurrence until the CDC or state/federal government mandates that they are no longer necessary. - Wear a protective mask as directed per CDC guidelines. If a member of a coaching staff has a pre-existing medical condition and cannot wear a mask they will need a recent doctor's note. Coaches must maintain recommended social distancing guidelines. - It is recommended that coaching staffs create pods or groups for students to attend offseason workouts. These groups must be submitted to the athletic director and athletic trainer in the event that contact tracing needs to be enacted.
- Coaches will submit a weekly schedule of staff members performing daily screening to the athletic trainer and athletic director.
- If a large team gathering is required, it is recommended to be done remotely via an electronic platform.
- Coaches will be responsible for monitoring the number of student-athletes in the locker rooms and gymnasium during the season in order to promote social distancing guidelines. This may include limiting access to the building before or after events.
- Coaches will be asked to help assist in the cleaning of all athletic equipment before, during, and after athletic practices, events, and workouts. - Washing and/or sanitizing hands regularly is strongly encouraged.



ATHLETIC TRAINERS' ACTIONS

- Follow guidance by the National Athletic Trainers' Association as it pertains to COVID- 19. This includes but is not limited to the following:
 - Limit athletes and coaches occupancy to the athletic training room to promote social distancing.
 - Athletic trainers are required to wear masks. If an athletic trainer has a pre-existing medical condition and cannot wear a mask, they will need a recent doctor's note. When practicable, they must maintain recommended social distancing guidelines.
 - Clean and disinfect all hard surfaces which include, but not limited to, training tables, taping stations, doorknobs, and other equipment that is utilized in the daily operations of the athletic training facility.
 - There will be no unsupervised admittance to the athletic training room.
 - Provide proper guidance to assist student-athletes on proper hand washing techniques and other preventive behaviors.



CUSTODIAL ACTIONS

- Practice Social Distancing. - Athletic facilities should be cleaned on a schedule developed in conjunction with the athletic director and athletic trainer. High touch areas should be cleaned as often as possible throughout the day. These areas include but are not limited to, door handles, restrooms, athletic training room, coaches' offices, locker rooms, concession stands, officials locker room, water fountains. - Post additional signage obtained by the athletic director and athletic trainer for all restrooms, locker rooms, and athletic training rooms on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (e.g. proper handwashing and hygiene practices).
- Ensure weekend custodial coverage to properly clean all athletic areas due to events occurring on Saturdays. - Provide additional hand sanitizer in locker rooms, athletic training rooms, coaches' offices, concession stands. - Provide additional cleaning supplies for the athletic training room and weight room. - Provide additional cleaning supplies for coaching staff to sanitize equipment before, during, and after athletic practices, games, or workouts. Whenever possible, equipment and other personal items should be separated and not shared. If equipment must be shared, all equipment should be properly disinfected between users.



COMPETITION AND TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS

- Competition and travel need to be considered and planned prior to the onset of the season.
- An open line of communication should be maintained between all medical providers in a conference.
- The athletic director and the team athletic trainer will be in contact with each opponent's administration prior to traveling to their facilities.
- There must be global agreement that all ill athletes will be held from participation no matter the circumstances.
- Member schools must be willing to share information regarding potential cases and exposures.
- Travel should be limited. - Travel teams should be in place. It is recommended that coaches submit travel rosters. - Social distancing should be maintained, including masking. - Preparations should be made for limited stops when in-route (pre-packaged meals).



ATHLETIC EVENT ATTENDANCE

- The *Saint Joseph High School* administration will continue to monitor and evaluate guidance provided as it relates to spectators attending high school athletic events. As stated below, the following people are grouped into tiers from essential to non-essential. This is to determine who will be allowed to attend an event until further guidance is received from state or local governments.
 - Tier 1 (Essential) – Athletes, coaches, officials, event staff, medical staff, security, administrators
 - Tier 2 (Preferred) – Media
 - Tier 3 (Non-Essential) – Spectators and parent groups.
- Only Tier 1 & Tier 2 personnel will be allowed to attend events until state or local governments lift restrictions of mass gatherings.
- Seating areas, including bleachers, will adhere to social distancing requirements of at least 6 feet for spacing for anyone not in the same household once spectators are permitted. To assist with this, areas will be properly and clearly marked. It is recommended that if adults must be in close proximity to one another, they should wear a face covering (i.e. facemask or shield).
- Once state or local governments lift restrictions on mass gatherings, caregivers or spectators will be prohibited to enter the field of play or bench areas. - It is strongly encouraged that parents/guardians do not attend athletic team practices. - Parents/guardians should arrive no more than 10 minutes prior to the scheduled end of the athletic event or practice for picking up their children.
 - Special considerations will be made in the event that a student-athlete suffers an injury or medical emergency during the athletic practice or event. These considerations will be made on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the athletic trainer, athletic director, and/or school nurse.



RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

- **Wearing Masks**
<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Stop-the-Spread.aspx>
- **COVID-19 (from Governor's office)**
<https://www.governor.pa.gov/covid-19/>
- **NFHS Guidance for Opening Up High School and Athletics/Activities**
https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812287/2020-nfhs-guidance-for-opening-up-high-school-athletics-and-activities-nfhs-smac-may-15_2020-final.pdf
- **Center for Disease Control – “What You Should Know About COVID-19 to Protect Yourself and Others”**
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- **UPMC Sports Medicine Guidelines**
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- **PIAA Guidelines**
<http://www.piaa.org/assets/web/documents/Press%20release%20-%20Wednesday%20June%2010%202020%20-%20RTP.pdf>





Participation Waiver for Communicable Diseases Including COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented athletics across the world with a myriad of challenges concerning this highly contagious illness that primarily attacks the upper respiratory system. 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 Saint Joseph High School will take necessary precautions and comply with guidelines from the federal, state, and local governments, CDC, PA DOH, as well as the NFHS and PIAA, to reduce the risks to students, coaches, and their families. As knowledge regarding COVID-19 is constantly changing, Saint Joseph High School reserves the right to adjust and implement precautionary methods as necessary to decrease the risk of exposure for our staff, students, and spectators. These precautions include but may not be limited to:

1. Health screenings prior to any practice, event, or team meeting with participation in the activities being limited and/or prohibited where an individual displays positive responses or symptoms.
2. Encourage social distancing and promote healthy hygiene practices such as mask/shield wearing, hand washing, using hand sanitizer, etc
3. Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation in all facilities.
4. Educate Athletes, Coaches, and Staff on health and safety protocols.
5. Require Athletes and Coaches to provide their own water bottle for hydration.

By signing this form, the undersigned voluntarily agree to the following Waiver and release of liability. The undersigned agree to release and discharge all claims for ourselves, our heirs, and as a parent or legal guardian for the Student named below, against *Saint Joseph High School*, CHSDOP, Inc., their Board of Directors, the Diocese of Pittsburgh, the Most Reverend David A. Zubik, Trustee, their successors, assigns, officers, agents, employees, and volunteers and will hold them harmless from any and all liability or demands for personal injury, psychological



injury, sickness, death, or claims resulting from personal injury or property damage, of any nature whatsoever which may be incurred by the Student or the undersigned relating to or as a result of the Student's participation in athletic programs, events , and activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The undersigned acknowledge that participating in athletic programs, events, and activities may include a possible exposure to a communicable disease including but not limited to MRSA, influenza, and COVID-19. The undersigned further acknowledge that they are aware of the risks associated with COVID-19 and that certain vulnerable individuals may have greater health risks associated with exposure to COVID-19, including individuals with serious underlying health conditions such as, but not limited to: high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, asthma, and those whose immune systems that are compromised by chemotherapy for cancer, and other conditions requiring such therapy. While recommendations and personal discipline may reduce the risks associated with participating in athletics during the COVID-19 pandemic, the risk of serious illness, medical complications and possible death does exist.

We knowingly and freely assume all such risks, both known and unknown, even if arising from the negligence of others, and assume full responsibility for Student's participation in athletics during the COVID-19 pandemic. We willingly agree to comply with the stated recommendations put forth by *Saint Joseph High School* to limit the exposure and spread of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases. We certify that the Student is in good physical condition or believe the Student to be in good physical condition and allow participation in this sport at our own risk.

Sport

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Signature of Student Athlete

Date

