

Central Okanagan Public Schools Sports Guidelines (September 7, 2021)

When uncertain as to which document to follow, we ask coaches and staff to refer to the [Central Okanagan Public Schools Communicable Disease Plan](#) posted on our district website. The following Sports Guidelines is intended to provide additional information for coaches, players, and families. In addition, the School District is a member of **British Columbia School Sports (BCSS)** [BCSS Aug 26th Covid-19 Guidelines](#) and we also follow their guidelines.

BCSS has stated on August 26, 2021 that:

“School sport may operate in accordance with local, regional, and provincial health recommendations and orders on gatherings and events.” Currently, there are no provincial-wide restrictions on the types of activities, contests/competitions, or training a school can do. Nor are there requirements or restrictions with regards to physical distancing or cohorts. We are still subject to the province-wide order gathering and events that limit spectators to 50% of the normal seated capacity. Otherwise, school sport may proceed as normal, with training and competition.

*At this time, there are regional restrictions in place for the Interior Health Authority, (IH) which is primarily BCSS Zones Thompson-Okanagan, and Kootenay. However, in a recent change, the health authority has exempted youth sport (including school sport) from this order, and instead introduced restrictions on spectators and event sizes for sport. **Indoor sports are allowed 50 spectators and outdoor sports are allowed 100 spectators.** These IH guidelines have changed frequently, demonstrating that throughout the year, orders may be announced, changed or rescinded regionally or provincially. BCSS and our member schools will be required to adapt in real-time. BCSS will ensure our members are informed and educated when changes are introduced. It is important to note that school sport and community sport are now being treated equally, so any restrictions put in place through these orders are not school-specific, but for all sport and recreation activities.*

“Masks are worn by staff, other adults and students in Grades 4-12 indoors. Students are NOT required to wear masks during high-intensity sport activities. Mask use during these activities is left to students’ personal choice. Schools are encouraged to move high-intensity sport activities outdoors whenever possible.” This means that students are required to wear masks in the school, during instructional and non-instructional time. This includes making their way to the field of play. Once on the field of play, for high-intensity activities, the mask may be removed at the student’s discretion. For low-intensity activities, certain sports such as golf, or periods of low intensity during practice (i.e. stationary skill work, light warm-up, static stretching etc.) masks are required. Coaches and other support staff must wear masks at all times. Low-intensity activities can be identified as those that allow the participant to easily carry a conversation, whereas high-intensity activities, elevate heart rate, respiration rate and generally make carrying a conversation difficult.

Please note that BC School Sports will be providing an updated return to play document asap.

Athletic Travel

When planning athletic field studies, staff should follow existing District policies and procedures as well as the guidance in this document. Additional measures specific to field studies should be taken, including for transportation (e.g. school bus transportation, public transit and carpooling). See guidance in the transportation section in this document.

Schools must ensure that volunteers providing supervision are trained in and strictly adhere to required health and safety guidelines. Alignment with relevant local, regional, provincial and federal public health recommendations and Orders, including for international travel. Schools should consider guidance provided for overnight camps from [BCCDC](#) and the [BC Camps Association](#) when planning overnight trips that include group accommodation.

After reviewing several of these documents, the following is a highlight of some of the guidelines:

Hotel Accommodation Recommendations:

- 1 person per bed
- Masks do not need to be worn while in the room
- Strong recommendation that the same athletes room together during the entire season
- All common areas inside the hotel require a mask to be worn

Team Travel and Vaccine Status

- Vaccine status cannot determine entry onto a school team
- Coach is not allowed to ask for an athlete's vaccine status
- Coaches should encourage each athlete to download the BC services card onto their phone and follow all the prompts for it to be activated. Plus, when the BC Vaccine card is activated, we encourage all athletes and coaching staff to download that info onto their phone.
- Third party organizations may require athletes over the age of 12 to show that they are fully vaccinated to enter and use their establishment; therefore, only fully vaccinated student will be able to attend those establishments such as:
 - Hotels
 - Restaurants
 - University tournaments
 - Bus companies
 - Other third-party organizations that host tournaments
- In the case of the above, the unvaccinated athlete will not travel with the team as they cannot be left unsupervised while the team is at these establishments.
- In the event that the team is staying at an establishment that requires fully vaccinated individuals to be able to use their facilities, the athlete's family is responsible to get the athlete to and from the venue as well as look after their lodging and food while attending the event.

Parent Meeting

Each team should hold a parent meeting and keep a record of attendance. During the meeting, the [Central Okanagan Public Schools Communicable Disease Plan](#) and these Sports Guidelines should be reviewed as well as practice, budget, game and travel expectations for the season.

Transportation

Carpooling:

Schools should adhere to the following guidelines and share them with staff and families regarding carpooling arrangements (personal or school related)

- spread out occupants as much as possible
- set the vehicle's ventilation to bring in fresh outside air
- open windows when weather allows
- Non-medical masks must be worn by vehicle occupants
- Ensure high-touch points such as steering wheel, seat belts, driving controls, gear leaver, windows, keys, and door handles are cleaned regularly.
- Sanitize hands before and after the trip.

Indoor Guidelines: (Volleyball, Swimming, Gymnastics)

- Proper Hand Hygiene must be practiced when entering the school or sport site
- Mask must be worn in all common areas such as:
 - Entry ways
 - Hallways
 - Washrooms
 - Changing rooms
 - Gym or sport staging area
 - While on the bench
- **Scheduling Note:**
 - Teams must allow other teams that just competed to vacate a gym before they enter for their game (affects teams with a later scheduled game)
- **50 SPECTATORS** (total for the venue regardless of number of games being played) at this time- **HOME TEAM HEAD COACH WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICING SPECTATOR POLICY**
- Coaches and other support staff must always wear masks
- For low-intensity activities or periods of low intensity during practice (e.g. stationary skill work, light warm-up, static stretching etc.) masks are required.
- Once entering the field of play, for high-intensity activities, the mask may be removed at the student's discretion.

Outdoor Guidelines (Field Hockey, Football, Soccer, Cross Country)

- Proper Hand Hygiene must be practiced when entering the sporting venue
- Coaches and other support staff do not need to wear masks while outside (it is a personal choice)
- BC School Sports recommends the following:
 - Players wear masks when making their way on to the field of play and when on the bench
 - Coaches and other support staff consider wearing masks
- **100 SPECTATORS** at this time: **HOME TEAM HEAD COACH WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICING SPECTATOR POLICY**

IMPORTANT: Not following these guidelines could result in the suspension of your team from further play this season.