



2021-2022

MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

Keeping all participants (students, coaches, officials and others) healthy and having opportunities to participate in education-based activities and athletics is critical and important. Below are recommendations for Minnesota State High School League member schools to consider as they develop COVID plans to be implemented at the local level.

Layering prevention strategies-using multiple preventative strategies is highly recommended:

- **Vaccines**
 - Minnesota Department of Health, in alignment with current scientific evidence and guidance from CDC, strongly recommends vaccination for all those ages 12 and older.
- **Masks**
 - Masks/face coverings are recommended and encouraged when individuals are not in active participation or competition.
 - Universal indoor masking for all students, staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status is recommended.
- **Physical Distancing**
 - Maintain at least three feet of distance between people when possible. This includes participants, coaches, and spectators.
- **Cohorts/Pods**
 - Keeping participants in smaller pods that practice and compete together is recommended.
- **Screening**
 - Student-athletes, coaches, and team personnel should confirm that they are symptom free. These confirmations should be aligned with the CDC's "Coronavirus Self-Checker" or current recommendations.
 - A record should be kept of all student-athletes and team personnel at each practice session to allow for contact tracing and for notification purposes.
- **Testing**
 - Students and staff who are not vaccinated should get tested regularly; particularly if involved in group activities, such as athletics or clubs. (CDC)
- **General Hygiene Practices**
 - Promote regular handwashing and/or use of hand sanitizer.
 - Participants should use individual water bottles.
 - Clean equipment and uniforms consistently and frequently.
 - High touch areas should be cleaned and disinfected frequently.

- Equipment should not be shared to the extent that it is possible. When equipment is shared it should be cleaned and disinfected frequently.
- No touch distribution and collection methods of equipment and other items are encouraged.

Staying home when sick, getting tested, and returning to school and participation

- Staying home when sick with symptoms of COVID is essential.
- Athletic programs should follow their schools' identified protocols for student-athletes or coaches who have tested positive, are experiencing symptoms consistent with a COVID-19 diagnosis or have had exposure to (close contact with) an individual who has been diagnosed with COVID.
- It is recommended that fully vaccinated people who have a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID be tested 3-5 days after exposure, regardless of whether they have symptoms. (CDC)
- People who test positive for COVID-19 should stay at home (isolation) until all three of these things are true:
 - They feel better. Their cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms are better; and,
 - It has been at least 10 days since they first experienced symptoms or tested positive: and,
 - They have had no fever for at least 24 hours, without using medicine that lowers fever.

Use of Indoor Spaces recommendations:

- It is recommended there be no use of school showers or locker rooms.
- Increasing and maintaining air circulation is recommended.
- When indoor spaces are used, keep participants in groups small using cohorts/pods.
- The size of the indoor space should accommodate the size of the cohort/pod and allow for physical distancing.

Practice recommendations:

- Develop cohorts or practice pods which are smaller in size and consistent in members.
- Avoid large grouping of student-athletes at the start and end of practice or during transitions.
- Stagger start times for practices and team meetings.
- Non-essential personnel or spectators are not recommended at practices.

Interscholastic Scrimmage/Competition recommendations:

- Follow the established host school guidelines and protocols.
- Competition with out of state schools is not recommended and should be limited to 50 miles between competing schools.
- Team introductions may take place; social distancing should be maintained.
- Physical distancing should be used when addressing contest officials with questions or seeking interpretations.
- Strategies to limit unnecessary contact are highly recommended. This would include suspending the post-game protocol of shaking hands. Encourage teams to show their appreciation for opponents in alternative ways.
- Team celebrations or congratulations should be no-touch and conducted with appropriate physical distancing.
- Separate the spectator pod and competitive pod by a 12-foot barrier.
- Minimize game personnel to essential staff only.
- Non-contest exhibitions or performances are not recommended.
- Team personnel should leave the venue as soon as possible.

Off-court and off-field activities recommendations:

- Off-court and off-field activities such as team meals, team bonding activities, etc. are not recommended. If held, they should be limited in size, duration and employ transmission mitigation strategies including masking, and physical distancing.

Transportation requirements and recommendations:

- **Mask use is required on any public transportation including school transportation. (CDC)**
- Physical distancing while transporting is recommended.

Sport Specific Recommendations:

Adapted Soccer	No additional recommendations
Cross Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spectators should not have access to athletes and should be restricted to areas outside of the course width.• When possible, design start area with boxes of 6' in width, with an empty 10' box between each school/team. If unable to accommodate in a straight line, consider use of a staggered/wave or interval start.• Team camps areas, if permitted, should be isolated from spectators or other non-essential personnel. Team camps should be only available to members of that specific team, and not a shared/common space.• If possible, set up a restricted area at the finish that maintains distance between spectators, athletes, and officials.• Spectators should not interfere with the "quick exit" of each athlete. Additional flagging or signage may be necessary to identify restricted spectator areas.• The use of an open finish corral is recommended to allow runners to immediately exit the finish area.
Football	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Players, coaches and other personnel shall maintain distancing from the chain crew and allow them to perform their duties.• Plastic shields covering the entire face (unless integrated into the face mask and attached to the helmet and clear without the presence of any tint) shall not be allowed during the contest.• The kicker should retrieve the kicking tee following kickoffs/free kicks.• Players should limit contact with tooth and mouth protectors. Tooth and mouth protectors should remain in place as much as possible.• All conferences/time outs shall take place near the team box area while maintaining physical distancing.
Soccer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Goalies are recommended to use hand sanitizer or water to moisten their gloves (instead of saliva).• Coaches are limited to regular team box, but box width for student-athletes and other bench personnel can be flexible to allow social distancing. (Rule 1-5-3)• Prolonged injuries – Teams may be dismissed to the benches. (Rule 12-8-1a)• Inclement weather – if a game has to be postponed due to lightning, when making the decision to wait 30 minutes or postpone to a later date (if the game is in the first half) or declare the competition complete (if the game is in the second half), administration and officials should work together to consider if student-athletes can be safely socially distanced while taking shelter. If taking shelter will put many participants in a tight indoor space (bus, practice shed, small hallway, etc.), officials and administration may choose to implement a contest-ending procedure prior to waiting 30 minutes.

Swimming and Diving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletes should not wear masks when swimming or diving. • Team seating: designate team seating area utilize both sides of the pool deck
Tennis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the established host school guidelines and protocols. • Designate team areas for competing schools. • When playing indoors, schools are responsible to adhere to current guidelines for use of indoor courts and comply with guidelines and regulations as established by club rules.
Volleyball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended that host school identify procedures for teams/players to safely switch sides between sets.

Resources:

[Best Practice Recommendations for COVID-19 Prevention in Schools for the 2021-22 School Year](#) MDH (7/28/21)

[Requirement for Face Masks on Public Transportation Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs](#) CDC (6/10/21)

[Reportable Disease Rule \(Communicable Disease Reporting Rule\)](#) Minnesota Administrative Rules CHAPTER 4605, COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

[Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#) CDC (7/5/21)