



## **AHSAA Medical Advisory's Points of Emphasis** **Athletic Activities for the 2021-22 School Year**

**MISSION:** To have athletic seasons as scheduled and have complete seasons through championship play for the 2021-22 school year; to educate our coaches and student-athletes how to safely live with the COVID-19 virus by following the ADPH, CDC, and ALSDE guidelines and fostering an educational athletic environment; to develop our student-athletes physically and safely, while maintaining a static environment; to provide the safest environment possible for students, coaches, officials, and fans while participating and attending athletic events.

**DISCLAIMER:** *The AHSAA and Medical Advisory Board offer this document as suggestions that member schools may consider when starting school and participating in high school athletics that will be in accordance with state or local directives. Information contained within this document is provided for general guidance only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional or medical advice. Please refer to federal, state, and local health agencies for professional and medical assistance.*

**Note:** The AHSAA and Medical Advisory Committee will continue to work with local, state, and federal agencies and monitor their guidelines to determine any potential modifications. As information and data are updated, the AHSAA will re-evaluate these points of emphasis and adjust accordingly.

The following Points of Emphasis are suggested for all AHSAA athletic activities for the 2021-22 school year.

### **Education**

- It is the responsibility of the local school (system) to follow all guidelines provided by the CDC, ADPH, ALSDE and local county/city health departments. *Before beginning any athletic activities, check your local government policy as their policies may be more restrictive.*
- Local school administration should provide coaches, student-athletes, and parents the supportive CDC, ALSDE, AHSAA and ADPH information regarding COVID-19 and discuss all safety and cleanliness expectations.

### **General Operational Points of Emphasis for Practice and Contests**

- Schools are encouraged to continue implementing strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and Delta variant. These strategies may include, but are not limited to, screening, cleaning, physical distancing, face coverings, hygiene, etc.

#### **Note:**

- Only school personnel, certified coaches, athletic trainers, and student-athletes should be present during practices. Non-essential personnel should not be present.
- Individuals having or experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms should follow CDC and ADPH guidelines listed at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) , [www.alabamapublichealth.gov](http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov). or [www.ahsaa.com](http://www.ahsaa.com).

### **Facilities**

- It is the expectation of AHSAA member schools that the host school will comply with all CDC, ADPH and local health agencies related to best practices for facilities and communicate these guidelines with the visiting school.

- Post visible signage encouraging anyone with COVID-19 symptoms not to enter an athletic event. (Examples of signage may be found at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))

### **Transportation**

- CDC's Order to wear masks while on public conveyances applies to all public transportation including school and charter buses. Regardless of the mask policy at school, passengers and drivers must wear masks on school buses, including on buses operated by public and private school systems, subject to the exclusions and exemptions in CDC's Order. Learn more at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/face-masks-public-transportation.html>

### **Gameday & Event Management**

- The host school shall be responsible for providing a clean environment for all visiting teams to dress and have pre-game meetings. When possible, the area should be large enough to maintain social distancing.
- The host school shall be responsible for providing a clean environment for contest officials and provide contest officials an area to enter and exit separate from fans when possible. When possible, the area should be large enough to maintain social distancing.
- When possible, team bench areas should be arranged to limit access to team personnel only.
- Pregame meetings between coaches, officials and players should be limited. Procedures for postgame gestures of sportsmanship should be discussed and agreed upon by both coaches during the pregame meeting. **[Shaking hands before or after a contest is the decision of the local schools but should be agreed upon PRIOR to the contest starting.]**
- **All decisions concerning facial coverings, social distancing, attendance at events, including numbers, student sections, stadium seating, etc., are under the guidance of home management and should be communicated to all visiting teams PRIOR to arrival. [If attendance restrictions are in place, those should be communicated to the visiting school and the AHSAA office at least one week in advance.]**
- Only essential personnel should be allowed in officials' space (meeting areas or tables), score tables, or press box areas.
- Any staff or student who experiences any symptoms of COVID-19 should follow all CDC and ADPH guidelines before working an event. [Symptomatic persons should avoid event entirely and be tested.]
- **Additional Mitigation Strategies**
  - Any student with a prior confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis should undergo an evaluation by his or her medical provider. Written medical clearance is recommended prior to participation. (*NFHS-AMSSM Guidance for Assessing Cardiac Issues in High Student-Athletes with COVID-19 Infection, July 9, 2020.*)
  - Any student who was isolated due to a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis and/or had symptoms of COVID-19 must complete a minimum five-day acclimatization period once released before returning to sport. A gradual return to activity is advised, and any athlete showing abnormal health issues should be evaluated and cleared by a physician prior to a return to sport activities.
  - Schools are encouraged to follow CDC and ADPH recommendations for staff and students who are identified by the COVID-19 POC as "Close Contacts." [*Back to School Guidance: 2021-2022, ADPH July 30, 2021, <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19/assets/cov-school-guidance-073021.pdf> ]*
  - As much as possible, practices, training, workouts, meetings, etc. should be held outdoors.