



2021-2022

MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

Introduction:

The Minnesota State High School League is focused on providing safe and healthy opportunities and experiences for the students and adults who participate in our activities. Keeping all participants (students, coaches, officials and others) healthy is critical and important. As the governing organization for interscholastic high school programs and competitions, the Minnesota State High School League provides the following requirements and recommendations for MSHSL member schools as they implement COVID-19 plans at the local level.

Please Note: MSHSL Member Schools or venues in which contests are held may have additional requirements for health and safety. All students, coaches, officials, spectators and other personnel must comply with these requirements.

COVID Positive Requirements:

Days 0-5: Individuals may not participate in practice or contests.

Days 6-10: If a school has adopted the CDC's 12/27/21 guidance allowing for a return on day 6, individuals may **participate in practices and contests** on days 6-10 when allowed by the school.

- To **participate in practices and contests** on days 6-10 the individual must have lessening symptoms and be fever-free for at least 24 hours.
 - During days 6-10, individuals must wear a well-fitting mask at all times, avoid travel and avoid being around people who are high risk. No mask is required if the participant has a negative *PCR/NAAT test* or *antigen test*.

Day 11 and Beyond: To **participate in practices and contests and games without a mask on day 11 and beyond:**

- The individual must have had no fever for at least 24 hours, without using medicine that lowers fever, and,
- It has been at least 10 days since they first experienced symptoms or tested positive, and,
- The symptoms of cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms are better.

(Day 0 is the first day of symptoms or a positive viral test. Day 1 is the first full day after the symptoms developed or the test specimen was collected.)

Due to the risks involved in the wearing of masks in certain activities, students must not engage in the following until they are able to be mask-free:

- Synchronized Swimming
- Pole Vault

FAQs

Who is included in this guidance?

- “Individuals” includes student participants, student managers, and coaches of any MSHSL-governed activity or sport.

How are days counted?

- Day 0 is the first day of symptoms or a positive viral test. Day 1 is the first full day after the symptoms developed or the test specimen was collected.

Can MSHSL member schools employ measures that are more restrictive than the CDC, MDH or the MSHSL?

- Individual schools and/or districts may have more restrictive guidance. This guidance may include more extensive isolations, additional language for quarantine of close contacts or restrictions on participation in certain activities while wearing a mask.

How is MSHSL guidance created?

- The responsibility of the MSHSL is to provide guidance for students, coaches and officials in over 500 schools and 50 activities. This includes practices, travel and interscholastic competition and requires MSHSL staff to develop guidance that is consistent and best serves all schools. MSHSL guidance is created based on recommendations of its Sports Medicine Advisory Committee who interpret guidance from the CDC, MDH and MDE. Additionally, member schools, through their administrators, provide extensive input to the League.

Recommendations:

Use layered prevention strategies--multiple preventative strategies--to minimize the risk of viral transmission.

- **Protocol for close contacts:**
 - Fully vaccinated close contacts or documented COVID infection within 90 days do not need to quarantine but should wear a mask for 10 days when not actively training/competing.
 - Non vaccinated close contacts should quarantine at home for 5 days (no activities participation), followed by masking for 5 days. Activity participation without a mask during days 6 through 10, if PCR/NAAT test or antigen test is negative
 - Close contact or symptomatic individuals should test on day 5.
- **Vaccines**
 - Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), the Center for Disease Control (CDC) the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) and the MSHSL, in alignment, strongly recommend vaccination for all students, staff and others that are eligible for vaccination.
- **Masks**
 - Universal indoor masking for all students, staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status is strongly recommended.
 - Masks/face coverings are strongly recommended and encouraged in activities when individuals are not active in participation or competition.
 - The wearing of masks indoors is also of great benefit in limiting the spread of other respiratory infections.
- **Physical Distancing**
 - Maintain at least six feet of distance between people whenever possible and limit the amount of time of possible exposure to another individual. This includes participants, coaches, and spectators in both indoor and outdoor settings.
- **Cohorts/Pods**
 - Keeping participants in smaller pods that practice and compete together is recommended.
- **Return to Participation**

- It is highly recommended that any student-participant who has tested positive for COVID-19 follow the [“Graduated Return to Sport Protocol”](#) that is provided by the Minnesota State High School League and the MSHSL Sports Medicine Advisory Committee.
- **Screening**
 - Participants, 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 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) It is recommended to test at least once per week.
 - Testing teams regularly will provide the greatest opportunity to address positive cases and keep COVID-19 from spreading.
- **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.
 - When showers are not available for post-practice or post-competition, the use of soap and water wipes is strongly recommended as an alternative. This is especially important when physical contact has been part of practice or competition.
 - 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 strongly encouraged.

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

- Staying home when sick with symptoms of COVID-19 is essential. Testing for those with symptoms is highly recommended.

Use of indoor spaces:

- When indoor spaces are used, keep participants in small groups using cohorts/pods.
- Increasing and maintaining air circulation is strongly recommended.
- The size of the indoor space should accommodate the size of the cohort/pod and allow for physical distancing.
- The use of showers is acceptable if physical distancing can be observed.
- The amount of time in small, enclosed spaces should be kept to an absolute minimum.

Practice:

- Develop cohorts or practice pods which are smaller in size and consistent in members.
- Avoid large groupings of participants at all practices and games to the extent possible.
- Stagger start times for practices and team meetings.
- Non-essential personnel or spectators are not recommended at practices.

Interscholastic scrimmages/competitions:

- Spectators should be separated from the playing surface. The recommended distance is 12 feet.
 - Spectators should not be on the playing surface until the officials have left the visual confines of and the teams have had the opportunity to exit the playing surface.
- Pre- and post-game practices should not include physical contact. This includes eliminating handshakes at either time and any other physical contact between opposing teams. No-touch methods for practicing good sportsmanship should be employed.
- Facilities/Venues/Schools should share site-specific requirements for competitions with contest participants and guests. This includes opposing teams and officials.
- Competition with out-of-state schools is not recommended and the distance between two schools in different states should be limited to 50 miles between the competing schools.
- Team introductions may take place using methods that maintain physical distancing.
- Physical distancing should be used when addressing contest officials with questions or seeking interpretations.
- Minimize game personnel to essential staff only.

- Non-contest exhibitions or performances are not recommended.

Off-court and off-field activities:

- 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 holding them outdoors or in large venues and employing masking and physical distancing.

Transportation:

- Physical distancing while transporting is recommended.

Resources:

- [Quarantine and Isolation](#) CDC (3/30/22)
- [Best Practice Recommendations for COVID-19 Prevention in Schools for the 2021-22 School Year](#) MDH (3/10/22)
- [Requirement for Face Masks on Public Transportation Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs](#) CDC (2/25/22)
- [Reportable Disease Rule \(Communicable Disease Reporting Rule\)](#) Minnesota Administrative Rules CHAPTER 4605, COMMUNICABLE DISEASES
- [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#) CDC (1/13/22)