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DATE: August 16, 2021  
TO: High School Students, Families, and Staff Members  
FROM: Jeff Lowell, District Athletics and Activities Director  
RE: High school athletics and activities update

Translated Versions of this update: [Chinese](#) | [Spanish](#)

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1. [Guidance for Sporting Activities](#)
2. [Guidance for Performing Arts](#)
3. [Guidance for Extracurricular Activities and Clubs](#)
4. [Heat Index and Air Quality](#)

On August 10, 2021, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) released updated guidance that included important information related to extracurricular K-12 sports, performing arts and other activities. Included in this letter is important information related to updated COVID-19 safety measures and other important safety information related to air quality and heat.

### **1. Guidance for Sporting Activities**

We are excited to report that the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA) remains committed to full high school sports seasons during the 2021-2022 school year. Each season will be offered to student athletes in a safe environment following all required mandates from the governor's office, the DOH, the WIAA, and other regulatory agencies as appropriate.

As updates to mandates are released, we review and determine how each may influence District programs. As we shared with everyone during the 2020-2021 school year, it is essential to remember that a school district cannot be less restrictive than any mandate that has been shared. A school district always has the authority to make decisions in the best interest of their students that may be more restrictive than what is included in a mandate from a regulatory agency.

Please review this summary of important updates to safety measures related to sporting activities as we begin fall sports.

- **Masking Requirements:**

- **Weight Rooms:** Universal masking is required by all athletes, coaches, athletic trainers, and support personnel when in weight rooms, regardless of vaccination status. Weight rooms are high-risk indoor settings. When using weight rooms, District staff and students will practice physical distancing to the degree possible.
- **Low and Moderate Contact Indoor Sports:** Masks are not required for athletes while competing in low-contact or moderate contact sports indoors, regardless of vaccination status. Masks are encouraged when practicing indoors. Universal masking is required indoors when not practicing or competing. Contact risk levels remain the same as during the 2020-2021 school year. A complete list of *contact risk levels for individual sports* are referenced in DOH's [Guidance for Sports and Fitness Activities](#).

- **High contact indoor sports:** Masks are not required for fully vaccinated athletes competing in high-contact indoor sports. Masks are not required for unvaccinated athletes competing in high-contact indoor sports if they participate in screening testing. Masks are encouraged when practicing indoors. Universal masking is required indoors when not practicing or competing. Contact risk levels remain the same as during the 2020-2021 school year. A complete list of *contact risk levels for individual sports are referenced in DOH's [Guidance for Sports and Fitness Activities](#).*
  - Indoor basketball, wrestling, and water polo are high-contact sports and require screening testing of unvaccinated individuals to participate. Additional information about screening testing will be sent to coaches and participants of these sports.
  - Cheer is a high aerosol-generating activity. Fully vaccinated cheerleaders do not have to wear a mask when practicing, performing, or competing. Unvaccinated cheerleaders do not have to wear a mask when practicing, performing, or competing if they participate in screening testing. Universal masking of cheerleaders is required indoors when not practicing, performing, or competing. Additional information about screening testing will be sent to cheer coaches and participants.
- **Outdoor Sports:** Masks are not required for outdoor sports of any contact level, but District programs will enforce masking in settings where unvaccinated athletes, coaches, athletic trainers and/or support personnel are in close proximity, such as standing on the sidelines, in a huddle, or sitting in a dugout.
- **Masking for staff:** All coaches, athletic trainers, and other support personnel involved with sporting activities must wear face coverings indoors in K-12 settings, regardless of vaccination status.
- **Spectators:** Masking is required universally for all spectators attending indoor K-12 sporting activities, regardless of vaccination status. At athletic contests the crowd should be seated in “family units” and those small groups should be spaced at least 3 feet apart.
- Travel Requirements
  - Participants, staff, and volunteers must follow CDC’s order for all riders and drivers on trips to wear a mask on buses or other public transportation, regardless of vaccination status.
  - Seat cohorts sit together on the bus and cohorts are separated by at least 3 feet to the degree possible.
  - Ventilation will be increased by opening windows as weather permits.
- Additionally, coaches will continue to adhere to safety measures implemented last year:
  - Taking attendance each day there is a practice or contest
  - Developing practice plans that utilize a ‘cohort’ model to minimize the number of close contacts within a program
  - Providing hand sanitizer to emphasize hand hygiene, both scheduled and as needed.
  - Utilizing cleaning supplies to disinfect frequently touched surfaces
  - Training, teaching, reminders, and reinforcement of all the above
  - No sharing water bottles, uniforms, towels, or snacks and no spitting (saliva, sunflower seeds, etc.).

## 2. Guidance for Performing Arts

The guidance also included updates for performing arts programs in K-12 schools. This letter includes guidance for those programs considered to be extracurricular.

- Performances
  - For performances, audience members should be seated in “family units” and those small groups should be spaced at least 3 feet apart.
  - All audience members must wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status.
  - Universal masking is required during performances for participants, including appropriate face coverings and bell covers on woodwind and brass instruments.
- Travel for Performing Arts
  - Participants, staff, and volunteers must follow CDC’s order for all riders and drivers on trips to wear a mask on buses or other public transportation, regardless of vaccination status.
  - Seat cohorts sit together on the bus and cohorts are separated by at least 3 feet to the degree possible.
  - Ventilation will be increased by opening windows as weather permits.

- Positive COVID tests
  - Any participant with a positive test must be excluded from the event and removed from the venue. See [Responding to Cases or Suspected Cases of COVID-19](#) for more information.
  - Unvaccinated students, teachers, or other support personnel identified as close contacts should quarantine immediately, even if they recently had a negative test.
  - Fully vaccinated students, teachers, or other support personnel identified as close contacts should be tested 3-5 days following a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and wear a mask for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result. They should isolate and follow appropriate guidance if they test positive. If they develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they should isolate themselves from others, be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, and tested for SARS-CoV2 if indicated.

### 3. **Guidance for Extracurricular Activities and Associated Student Body (ASB) Clubs**

During the 2021-2022 school year, extracurricular activities, and ASB clubs will need to adhere to the following guidance when planning activities.

- **Universal Masking:** Universal masking of all students, staff, volunteers is required indoors. Face coverings or masks are not required outdoors but are recommended in settings where students and attendees will be in sustained close proximity or if there is potential for crowding. Masking is also recommended for crowded outdoor events, such as festivals.
- **Physical Distancing:** Physical distancing of at least three feet is required indoors to the degree possible. For shows, exhibits etc., visitors or audience members should be seated or travel through exhibits in “family units” and those small groups should be spaced at least 3 feet apart. All students, audience members, judges, or other guests must wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status.
  - Any activity involving Performing Arts (e.g., talent show, international night, etc.) or Sports should follow the guidance provided in those sections.
- **Travel for Other Extracurricular Activities:**
  - Participants, staff, and volunteers must follow CDC’s order for all riders and drivers on trips to wear a mask on buses or other public transportation, regardless of vaccination status.
  - Seat cohorts sit together on the bus and cohorts are separated by at least 3 feet to the degree possible.
  - Ventilation will be increased by opening windows as weather permits.

### 4. **Heat Index and Air Quality**

**Heat Index:** In April 2020, the WIAA released update guidance for member schools related to Heat Index. A heat index is an index that combines air temperature and relative humidity to determine the human-perceived equivalent temperature; "how hot it feels." This guidance is an essential element of our safety protocols for all programs. Please know that the athletics and activities department is monitoring the heat index for this area on a regular basis and will work to implement recommended safety guidelines when necessary.

**Air Quality:** With concerns of air quality that arises around the state due to wildfires, the athletics and activities department also monitors air quality regularly to determine the safety of outdoor activities. As air quality reaches unhealthy levels, works with each school and program to implement recommended [safety guidelines](#). Air quality will be monitored by reviewing the [Washington State Department of Ecology Map](#).

This is the first of our departmental communications for the 2021-2022 school year. Throughout the year, we will continue to send updates to high school families regularly. After sending the updates, we will also post each one on the Athletics and Activities department page.

Participants and their families will continue to see more targeted communications from high school athletic departments and coaching staff about scheduled athletic seasons and activity opportunities at each school.

If you have additional questions, please contact the Athletics and Activities Department by email ([lowellj@bsd405.org](mailto:lowellj@bsd405.org) or [arnonea@bsd405.org](mailto:arnonea@bsd405.org)), phone (425-456-4010 or 425-456-4050) or [Let's Talk](#).

In partnership

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Lowell', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jeff Lowell, CAA

District Athletic and Activities Director, Title IX Coordinator

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<https://bsd405.org/departments/athletics-activities/>