

ORDER OF HEALTH OFFICER August 18, 2020

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has declared the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus a pandemic;

WHEREAS, all states in the United States, including Montana, have experienced confirmed cases of COVID-19;

WHEREAS, the Yellowstone County Unified Health Command has activated response plans and protocols to prepare for cases of COVID-19 in Yellowstone County with tremendous success thus far;

WHEREAS, the Yellowstone County Unified Health Command has also worked to identify, contact, and as appropriate quarantine, monitor, and/or test individuals in Yellowstone County who have been potentially exposed to COVID-19 in coordination with the State of Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control;

WHEREAS, proactively implementing mitigation and containment measures to slow the spread of the virus is in the best interests of Yellowstone County and its people;

WHEREAS, safeguards have been implemented to mitigate the circumstances of this outbreak's impact on the services, personnel, equipment, supplies and facilities of Yellowstone County;

WHEREAS, on July 15, 2020 the Governor of the State of Montana issued an order requiring face coverings in certain situations where social distancing cannot be maintained;

WHEREAS, on August 12, 2020 the Governor clarified his order to include mandatory face coverings in schools and for school activities;

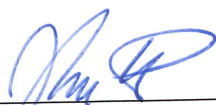
WHEREAS, upon significant discussion with County schools it has been determined that additional safeguards are necessary to attempt to reduce risk of exposure of students and staff during school-sanctioned activities;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 50-2-118 of the Montana Code Annotated, and upon request of local schools, a local health officer in carrying out the purpose of the public health system shall take steps to limit contact between people in order to protect the public health from imminent threats, and the Governor's Plan does so;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, pursuant to Title 50, Chapter 2, Part 1, and specifically Section 50-2-118 of the Montana Code Annotated:

Effective immediately, high school and middle school athletics and non-athletic activities shall be subject to conditions delineated in the Yellowstone County Plan for High School and Middle School Athletics and Associated Activities. The Plan shall be amended as necessary and COVID-19-related situations change. Amended plans shall be incorporated into this order and shall govern athletics and activities until rescission of this Order.

This Order is subject to the requirements for operations set forth by the Public Health Department for businesses and individuals any other Order, Directive or Guideline deemed necessary by the Public Health Officer.



JOHN FELTON

HEALTH OFFICER FOR CITY-COUNTY OF YELLOWSTONE, MONTANA

Yellowstone County Plan for High School and Middle School Athletics and Associated Activities
Effective August 18, 2020

Preamble

Following the Governor's current directives and orders related to COVID-19 and operation of schools during the 2020-2021 academic year, and so long as a State of Emergency is declared for Yellowstone County, RiverStone Health has developed this plan in conjunction with school districts in Yellowstone County.

Core principles and assumptions underpinning this plan include:

- Protecting the health and safety of our communities and mitigating the risks associated with COVID-19 are the top priorities.
- School-related activities, including athletics, events, and other activities associated with the athletic undertaking (e.g., pep band, cheerleading) support and enhance the academic, social, physical, and emotional development of students.
- With the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear that there are risks from holding athletic events / activities, and risks associated with canceling athletics and activities. Risk elimination is not possible. The aim of this plan is to mitigate and manage the entire range of risks attendant to athletics and activities, while candidly acknowledging that there likely will be cases of COVID-19 associated with such activities.
- Student participation is prioritized over the understandable and rational desire of parents, family members, friends, fellow students, and community members at large to be physically present at all events and activities.
- Responsibility for complying with this plan as well as applicable Yellowstone County Health Officer orders and Governor's directives rests with the school district sponsoring or hosting the activity.
- This plan will likely evolve over time as experience is gained with the operation of athletic events and activities during a pandemic and as the incidence and prevalence of COVID-19 shift over time.
- It is the consensus opinion of RiverStone Health (Yellowstone County's public health agency) and school districts within Yellowstone County that it is better to initiate activities under more stringent restrictions than to start with less stringent restrictions and be forced to increase restrictions. The goal is to be more restrictive as the school year begins, but to build in room for relaxation of the Yellowstone County Health Officer Order if COVID-19 data support doing so and school communities comply with the requirements established under this plan.

This plan is based on discussions from the August 4, 2020 meeting of Yellowstone County school district activities directors and/or superintendents with public health officials; the Montana High School Association (MHSA) Directive of July 27, the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) Reopening Guidance of July 2; the Governor's Plan for Reopening Safe and Healthy Schools of June 2020; and, the recent Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines.

It is recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic represents a rapidly evolving situation. Actions and interventions are subject to frequent change based on experience and clarity as to the science of the

SARS-coV-2 novel coronavirus. It is therefore fully anticipated that these requirements for the operation of athletics and activities will change over time.

Application

This plan applies to all middle school and high school athletic events and activities within the bounds of Yellowstone County, MT. Teams or schools from outside of Yellowstone County must comply with the requirements of this plan when they are participating in an activity within Yellowstone County, regardless of plans that might be more or less restrictive within their home jurisdictions.

Similarly, it is recognized that Yellowstone County schools participating in activities in other jurisdictions are subject to any requirements or restrictions established in those jurisdictions, regardless of whether this plan is more or less restrictive.

Under the terms of the Governor's directives, the "sponsor" of an event is responsible for ensuring compliance with applicable requirements issued by the Governor or the local Health Officer, including but not limited to the use of masks and the maintenance of appropriate physical distancing throughout the entirety of the event. For purposes of athletic events and activities, the School District of the home team is deemed to be the sponsor of the activity and is therefore responsible for ensuring compliance with the requirements by all in attendance, including both the home team and the visiting team. It is therefore incumbent upon the District of the home team to ensure that visiting teams from outside of Yellowstone County are aware of the terms of this plan and provide an indication that they will comply with them, prior to the activity or event.

The requirements of this plan are effective as of August 18, 2020 and remain in effect until modified by Order of the Yellowstone County Health Officer.

Requirements of the plan – athletic events

1. All athletic events will be for team, team staff (coaches, managers, medical, etc.) and game management (e.g., officials, timekeepers, etc.) only. No fans or other spectators will be permitted until further notice. This action is consistent with many professional sporting events across the nation, which are taking place in the absence of fans or spectators.
2. Locker rooms will be available for visiting teams according to home team stipulations on how many athletes the facility can handle while maintaining physical distancing at any one time. This will require the visiting team to plan for rotation of cohorts of athletes into the locker room with enough time to be on the field or court for the start of the competition as scheduled.
3. Home teams may need to provide the visiting team with additional meeting room space (e.g., classrooms, cafeterias, or gymnasiums) before and during activities and events, as required to allow team meetings in an appropriately physically distanced fashion.
4. All team personnel (including but not limited to coaches, managers, and trainers) and players will wear masks when they are not exercising in a strenuous manner. All personnel who are not actively engaged in athletic activity must wear masks or face coverings, including but not limited to: on the sidelines, during team discussions such as a timeout, during halftime, and breaks in play or practice. Each individual must have his/her own identified mask and masks must not be shared.

5. For indoor sports and to the extent possible by physical space, sideline chairs will be placed at least 6 feet apart, assigned to a specific team member, and a mask specific to that player at each chair so they are ready to be donned and doffed as needed during competition or practice. Masking is required while not engaging in strenuous activity (repeated for emphasis). A mask must be worn whenever a player is out of the game.
6. For outdoor sports and to the extent possible by physical space, players on the sidelines will stand or sit at least 6 feet apart while waiting to compete or practice. Masking is required while not engaging in strenuous activity (repeated for emphasis). For football, a mask must be worn whenever a player is out of the game for more than one play; helmets, including helmets with face shields, do not meet this requirement. For soccer, a mask must be worn whenever a player is out of the game. For golf, a mask must be worn anytime two or more players are not separated by at least 6 feet. For cross country, a mask must be worn when the participant is not running.
7. Given the critical importance of maintaining hydration, teams must provide water or other hydrating drinks. Individual, non-shared water bottles or non-shared disposable cups are to be used. Refilling should be assigned to a team support person who must wear gloves and a mask while refilling containers to reduce the risk of virus transmission to surfaces.
8. Each school must develop and implement processes to ensure that uniforms for both practice and games are washed and sanitized according to the school's defined sanitation procedure so that clean uniforms are ready for use at the next practice or game. This procedure will significantly reduce the risk that clothing that might have been contaminated during a practice or game does not become a means to transmit infectious virus.
9. Meals during travel for competition will be of the "boxed" variety to limit time waiting in line to order, reduce handling of meals by multiple people, and obviate the inherent physical distancing problems associated with dine-in meal services. In out-of-town communities, teams are encouraged to pre-order meals and use "grab and go" strategies.
10. Transportation to away games require athletes to sit on buses in assigned seats with the same seatmates and identical front to back order across the season to help limit exposure to other people on the bus, while aiding in contact tracing if necessary. In an effort to reduce the number of athletes subject to quarantine should one member become positive for COVID-19, coaches should make all reasonable efforts to reduce intermixing of groups. This can be accomplished by having the same small group of individuals practice drills together, use the weight room together, sit together on the bus, sit together for team meetings, room together during overnight trips, etc. All occupants are required to wear masks during the time they are in the transporting vehicle.
11. Students are required to ride the school-provided transport vehicle to the competition to ensure arrival with the team and allow for timely game preparations. To facilitate exit from the competition and if allowed by individual District policy, participants may ride with parents/guardians or designated coaches. This will decompress the bus on the return trip. Even if some students return home by alternative means, the assigned seating plan identified in #9 above must be maintained, subject to documented change only if riders can be separated by 6 feet or more.
12. The interior of each bus (e.g., seats, seat backs, windows, etc.) must be sanitized according to the bus operator's processes, after arrival at each site and prior to re-boarding for another segment of the travel.
13. If a student or coach becomes ill during travel, that person must not ride with the team, but instead be transported by self or a parent, guardian, family member, or designated school official in another vehicle so as not to expose the large number riding the team bus. If this

- transportation is provided by a designated school official, the ill student and any others in the vehicle should be spaced as widely as possible and all must be masked.
14. Any individuals associated with the team, including but not limited to coaches, medical personnel, cheer squads, District administrators, etc., who share rides in a vehicle other than on the team bus must be masked throughout the trip.
 15. Out of town travel should be eliminated to the extent possible, but if travel out of town requires overnight stay, students should be roomed with seatmates and/or those assigned seats in the immediate vicinity. Masks must be worn in all public spaces, as well as when outside and unable to maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance. Masks must be worn in indoor spaces and sleeping rooms at all times except when sleeping, showering, or completing other hygiene tasks for which a mask is not feasible (e.g., brushing teeth.)
 16. With the absence of spectators, concessions will not be offered.
 17. Team personnel and athletes will be screened before every practice or competition for symptoms of COVID-19, and queried about travel out of state and household members being tested for COVID-19. All team members and personnel will be asked the same screening questions and will be required to follow the same guidelines in acting on positive screening responses. In the interest of safety and to reduce the risk of infection of others, coaches are strongly encouraged to have a very low threshold for removing participants from games or practices for any symptoms associated with COVID-19. All schools will follow RiverStone Health's written guidelines for screening and actions taken in response to certain findings.
 18. If a team member or personnel tests positive for COVID-19, RiverStone Health will conduct and implement the isolation of the person testing positive and the case investigation that will result in identified close contacts being quarantined. For COVID-19, a [close contact](#) is defined as any individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/contact-tracing.html>)

Requirements of the plan: associated activities

1. Recognizing that some extra-curricular activities (for example and not by way of limitation, pep band and cheerleading) intersect with athletic events and participants in these endeavors practice, prepare, and perform, these activities will be allowed with physical distancing between participants and athletic team members.
2. No instrument "spit valves" are to be emptied on the floor or other hard surface used by multiple people at the same time.
3. Cheer / spirit squads may perform physically distanced cheers, and stunts are allowed only as allowed by MHSA guidelines.
4. Participants in associated activities shall be subject to the procedures as participants in athletic events described in items 17 and 18 above.

News media

Members of the media, including videographers preparing sports reels, are allowed to attend school athletic events for purposes of covering the event and reporting only (i.e., not as fans but in their professional capacity) subject to the following restrictions:

1. Members of the media must be masked at all times while at the event.

2. Members of the media must conduct interviews or film participants from a distance of at least 6 feet from the person(s) being interviewed or filmed.
3. Microphones or other audio recording devices must be sanitized after every interview.