



Chesterfield County Public Schools

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## **High School Athletics Return to Play Measures Updated Feb. 4, 2021**

February Season 2 Practice  
School Start February 4

Introduction:

Extensive work has been accomplished by Coaches and staff during the out-of-season workouts that have prioritized student safety within the community health situation above all else. As we transition to the regular season for football in Season 2 with VHSL, it is essential to continue this level of support and monitoring with all involved with each school site program.

As was done with the first VHSL season (winter sports), CCPS will phase in guidance which allows for practices to begin while still requiring that certain measures are taken to help reduce spread between participants and active workers. Part of this guidance (expectations with mask use and distancing guidance, etc.) requires that Coaches communicate and emphasize the critical rules while continuously monitoring all processes to ensure these are followed by everyone.

With the start of the season, there is specific guidance that is in place as student-athletes transition to the return-to-play setting. Some of these items will adjust as each week progresses toward competitive team play. This document is specific to football which has an earlier start date from several other season 2 sports and, as such, also overlaps the continuing season 1 (winter) sports that are in season. (It also is also supplemental to the VHSL Phased and RTP guidance that has been previously shared.)

Several points that remain in place at all times include:

- 1-Do not allow athletes to mix with athletes from other sports (either staying to watch practices, walk through other team practices to get to locations, etc.)
- 2-Only pre-approved individuals should be at any practice or team session – there are no guest visitors to watch practices – and specific competition game spectator guidance will be forthcoming so please do not promise ANYONE that they will be admitted in advance of that updated guidance that will come out in February

3-After gathering input from the DSAs and Principals in CCPS, the decision has been made that there will be no scrimmages allowed between schools for football. The first inter-school activity (contest) allowed will be the actual first approved game.

4-Communication about expectations with health guidance (face coverings, distance, washing hands and cleaning personal items, etc.) need to be made clear to all parties at the very beginning and continuously throughout – this is everyone’s responsibility to make this a priority and to immediately act upon any individual not following the guidance

5-Rule number 1 for all: DO NOT even come on school grounds if you have a fever or are exhibiting symptoms in the pre-screening checklist

Focus on Football and February 4 Start Date:

#### Pre-Practice (Every Day)

- Coaches will have masks on at all times
- Athletes will have mask on at all times
- Athletes will walk out to the field house and remain under the supervision of staff while on school grounds.
- A coach will be outside the field house to take temperatures and ask Covid questions BEFORE the athlete enters the field house and gets their equipment. A record will be kept that indicates this has taken place and anyone exhibiting a fever of or over 100 degrees or other symptoms on the checklist will immediately be separated from the group and arrangements made with the parent for transportation home
- 10 kids at a time will go inside the field house (through the front door) and get dressed and wipe down equipment. Put on equipment and exit the field house through the side door. Any trash will be placed safely in the trashcan and not left in any other area
- A Coach will be inside the field house to ensure social distancing and mask wearing at all times.
- A coach will be by the side door to check that all have left and tell each student where they are to report and wait for practice to start on the practice field.
- A coach will be at the practice field and will ensure social distancing and mask wearing is followed until physical practice starts.
- This procedure will continue until all athletes have dressed and left for the practice field
- A coach will do a sweep of locker room, squirt sanitizer, and lock it up.
- Once the locker room is locked it will not be opened until the end of practice. If an athlete comes late, he will be told to go home.

#### Practice

- Coaches will wear their mask at all times
- Pod guidance will be updated by week. For football, with the first three practice days (Feb 4,5,6) we request that you keep athletes for initial workouts in 15 or under person pods that do not interchange on a given day at practice (at all times) – minimize contact drills in week one (objects as marker points with drills versus live bodies – this means players or coaches) NOTE: If unable to maintain a daily log of who is in a pod, contact tracing may require that the entire team is quarantined versus being able to assess a smaller group – These three days all athletes are to follow the VHSL guidance with helmet & shoes protocol (no additional pads)
- Starting Feb 8, practice allows for a shift to 22 person pods (you must keep names by pod each day) to allow for 11 person team units to be established within a pod; AS SOON AS POSSIBLE separate and attempt to not mix JV and Varsity practice groups on a given day – if the numerical

variable of 22 cannot be met (say there are 23 players only on the JV team) the Coach should explain the circumstance to the DSA to determine if an adjustment can be made\*

(\*Each school must review where they cannot establish this standard after they are aware of total numbers who have come out for the team – DSAs may not determine this ahead of the third day of practice and should consult with their principal about the rationale for this adjustment)

- **We will potentially revise this guidance near the end of the week of February 8<sup>th</sup> after gathering updated input on how practices have progressed and actual participation numbers by school can be submitted and evaluated by all principals**
- If not actively engaged in a specific drill, the athletes should be social distancing (6 feet minimum between them) and wearing a mask AT ALL TIMES they are not actively under the direct drilling instruction of a Coach
- Athletes can take mask off when involved actively in a specific drill as per above
- Athletes will provide their own water
- Coaches should maintain social distancing at all times
- Balls should be rotated in and out and cleaned throughout and at the end of practice.
- Any equipment used during practice needs to be sanitized throughout the practice and at the end of the practice.
- No shared personal equipment during practices. Example: no yellow pinnies shared as this would be considered personal equipment (unlike team tackling dummies)
- If sled and tackle dummies are used, follow process to sanitize like the shared footballs
- Back up water with cups will be provided. One coach is assigned to water distribution
- IF INDOORS due to weather, it is essential that numbers are also restricted and athletes spread out (and not gathered waiting instructions on a sideline) – DSAs will review their sites (aux gym v main gym, etc.) to provide specific guidance as to numbers allowed in a gym at one time and are responsible that this is followed – AGAIN NOTE – there is to be no cross-over with season 1 (winter) athletic practices or other active groups
- IF INDOOR practice is a walk through, stretching, or demonstration format all athletes must wear a mask at all times

#### After practice

- Coaches will wear masks at all times
- Athletes will have masks on at all times after practice
- Athletes will follow the same process as before practice
- Only 10 in field house at a time for the purpose of changing or turning back in equipment (should wear masks at all times in the field house)
- Coach at front door, in field house, side door to ensure Masks are on and social distancing and sanitation is being done.
- Coach will be stationed outside field house to monitor athletes leaving and maintaining social distancing and masks wearing
- Athletes will wipe down all personal equipment (shoulder pads/helmets)
- Athletes will take everything but shoulder pads and helmets home and sanitize them prior to the next practice.
- No personal belongings will be left in the field house
- Specific access to the training room with a protocol by site will be outlined in tandem with the VCU Trainer assigned to your school. This will include limiting numbers within any one area for treatment and that athletes must keep on their mask unless directed by the Trainer to remove it

during an examination – Again: there should be no mixing of athletes from different sports in the Training room area unless so designated by the Trainer

#### Additional Guidance specific to Competition Cheer

##### Tryouts:

During tryouts it is important to maintain groups of student-athletes in smaller pods (groups) and not have them mix with others. This pod format helps minimize potential contacts between those trying out for the team.

The process with developing these small tryout groups should be random as all students trying out for a squad should have a fair opportunity to make the team.

The recommended pod size should remain between 4-5 candidates during the tryout phase. If the numbers of individuals does not allow for a natural equal grouping of this number, the DSA needs to be made aware and a request for an adjustment to a sixth member must be approved by the DSA (example, 21 candidates might be broken into 3 groups of 5 and 1 group of 6).

Once a team is formed, the goal is still to attempt to maintain smaller group pods for the first weeks of practices versus full squad practices (goal of a 10 person maximum and not rotating students between each group).

##### Comp Cheer Practices

##### VHSL Rules:

- Participant should be appropriately spaced on the mat to ensure proper social distancing when practical
- It is recommended that cheerleaders wear face coverings unless they are engaged in tumbling routines or as they perform certain higher risk stunts

##### VHSL Recommendations:

- Coaches should be sure to follow stunt progressions with all cheerleaders
- Stunt groups should remain consistent, in the same “pods” for practices and / or performances
- Stunt groups should work together for no more than 10 minutes at a time, to minimize the time spent in close contact and allow proper hand sanitizing, etc.
- In the case of a “pod” member’s absence, that individual’s group is ground bound for that day, to reduce potential cross contamination between stunt groups. Do not substitute group members between the groups.
- Build in breaks during practices/performance for sanitation
- Consult your mat manufacturer regarding appropriately sanitizing your mats appropriately

##### CCPS:

- Coaches will wear mask at all times and remain distanced from athletes
- Athletes will wear masks at all times when not actively engaged in a stunt or tumbling routine
- Coaches will meet the athletes as they arrive on school grounds (if possible by the car when they are being dropped off) to ask the Covid questions verifying no symptoms and to take temperatures. A record should be kept of this process each day to verify compliance
- Chairs will be set up in practice area for each cheerleader to have a “station” socially distanced from others
- Cheerleaders will provide their own water
- Mats must be sanitized prior to the practice, during the practice and after the practice

- Breaks must be taken to sanitize hands
- “Pods” should try to be socially distanced wherever possible during practices