
MEMORANDUM

TO: BCSS MEMBER SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS & ATHLETIC DIRECTORS
FROM: JORDAN ABNEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: UPDATED K-12 GUIDELINES; IMPACT ON SCHOOL SPORT
DATE: AUGUST 26, 2021
CC: BCSS LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, ZONE PRESIDENTS, SAC CHAIRS

Tuesday, the Ministry of Education, with support from the Provincial Health Officer and the BCCDC, released the [updated K-12 guidelines](#) (pages 28/29 for the section on school sport) for the fast-approaching 2021-2022 school year. BCSS is thrilled to confirm that under these guidelines **school sport will be returning** after a hiatus of 17-months.

While we are all undoubtedly excited to get back to school sport, student-athlete health and safety must remain the priority. Together we are responsible for providing the safest experience possible for the 70,000 student-athletes that represent their schools in a BCSS activity each year.

BCSS will be updating its Return to School Sport Guidelines before September 7th. In the meantime, this memo will provide some high-level guidance as we know that football teams have opened training camps across the province this week. Here are the keys:

- **“School sport may operate in accordance with local, regional, and provincial health recommendations and orders on gatherings and events.”** Currently, there are no provincial-wide restrictions on the types of activities, contests/competitions, or training a school can do. Nor are there requirements or restrictions with regards to physical distancing or cohorts. We are still subject to the province-wide order gathering and events that limit spectators to 50% of the normal seated capacity. Otherwise, school sport may proceed as normal, with training and competition.

At the time of publication, however, there are regional restrictions in place for the Interior Health Authority, (IH) which is primarily BCSS Zones Thompson-Okanagan, and Kootenay. However, in a recent change, the health authority has exempted youth sport (including school sport) from this order, and instead introduced restrictions on spectators and event sizes for sport. At this time, indoor events in IH may not exceed 50 persons. This includes participants, coaches, officials, coordinators, administrators, and spectators. For outdoor events in IH, the same applies, but the maximum is 100 persons. These IH guidelines have changed frequently in the last 24 hours, demonstrating that throughout the year, orders may be announced, changed or rescinded regionally or provincially. BCSS and our member schools will be required to adapt in real-time. BCSS will ensure our members are informed and educated when changes are introduced.

It is important to note that school sport and community sport are now being treated equally, so any restrictions put in place through these orders are not school-specific, but for all sport and recreation activities.



- “Masks are worn by staff, other adults and students in Grades 4-12. Students are NOT required to wear masks during high-intensity sport activities. Mask use during these activities is left to students’ personal choice. Schools are encouraged to move high-intensity sport activities outdoors whenever possible.” This means that students are required to wear masks in the school, during instructional and non-instructional time. This includes making their way to the field of play. Once on the field of play, for high-intensity activities, the mask may be removed at the student’s discretion. For low-intensity activities, certain sports such as golf, or periods of low intensity during practice (ie. stationary skill work, light warm-up, static stretching etc.) masks are required. Coaches and other support staff must wear masks at all times. Low-intensity activities can be identified as those that allow the participant to easily carry a conversation, whereas high-intensity activities, elevate heart rate, respiration rate and generally make carrying a conversation difficult.

BCSS wants to take this time to reinforce to district and school leaders how critical the role of the Athletic Director is within a school, especially this year. Communication with coaches, administrators, schedulers, officials, parents and other stakeholders will be critical and constant as we adapt to the changing environment. Please ensure you are supporting your Athletic Directors appropriately.

There are other considerations such as cleaning protocols, hand hygiene and visitors which will be covered in our Return to School Sport Guidelines. We encourage everyone to read the K-12 Guidelines, especially the section on school sport.

Please don’t hesitate to reach out to the BCSS office with questions. You can reach us at info@bcschoolsports.ca or 604-477-1488.