

Athletics Response and Action Plan for COVID-19 2020-2021 School Year

Notre Dame Jr/Sr High School

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**This complete plan is also available at www.ndhigh.org*

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PREFACE:

The COVID-19 Pandemic has presented several unique and difficult challenges to athletics worldwide, including high schools and middle schools. The COVID-19 virus is a highly contagious virus that primarily attacks the upper respiratory system. The virus can infect people of all ages even seemingly healthy individuals. Current research from the CDC, Pennsylvania Department of Health, St. Luke's University Health Network, and other entities suggest that while children can be infected with COVID-19, few children are hospitalized. However, rare occurrences have been reported in children that are severe.

A person who is even mildly symptomatic or asymptomatic however, can spread the virus to others who may be more vulnerable. While presently it is not possible to eliminate COVID-19 current scientific research does suggest that schools can take steps to help reduce the risk to their students, coaches, and families.

The Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS Administration, Athletic Director, and the Sports Medicine Team along with the Catholic Diocese of Scranton will take the necessary precautions and recommendations needed to ensure to the best of their abilities that all students, coaches, and families stay safe while participating in or involved in athletics at Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS. The above realize that this is an ever-changing situation and we will continue to apprise you as needed to updated information.

Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS will be utilizing the recommendations and guidelines set forth by federal, state, and local governments; as well as the Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). In addition, we will be using the recommendations of: The Pennsylvania Department of Health, St Luke's University Health Network, National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA).

Participating in interscholastic athletics at Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS is a privilege. It is of the utmost importance that everyone involved: athletes, coaches, administrators, and all our Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS families work in conjunction to help adhere to the guidelines outlined in this document.

It will be every individual's responsibility to do his/her part throughout the year to make sure as a Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS community we stay healthy. The guidance set forth in this document is for the benefit of all involved in athletics. **Failure to follow any of these safety measures that are included in this document may jeopardize an athlete's ability to participate in school sanctioned sports and out-of-season workouts.**

SOCIAL DISTANCING:

- Social distancing will be required (6 feet at a minimum) whenever possible. It will be the responsibility of everyone to help enforce this directive to make sure everyone is safe. If you see something kindly educate all parties and ask them to give some space for their safety and yours. Practice social distancing in all common areas inside and out, all team meetings and gatherings should be conducted in areas that are conducive to distancing.
- Teams should consider eliminating pregame meals and meetings in locker rooms since social distancing would be difficult in these areas. When having team meetings and gatherings of more than a few team members consider the amount of people and the capacity of the room. Consider the air quality and the ventilation in the room that you want to utilize. It would be a good practice to utilize classrooms, the cafeteria, gym, and the Cawley Auditorium when possible for team gatherings such as film sessions and meetings.
- All team functions will be limited to essential members only (athletes, coaches, athletic training/other medical personnel, and the administration). Team functions cannot include visitors/spectators of any kind including parents, perspective students and all alumni. All non-essential individuals that are seen will be asked to leave the facility.
- Full team workouts and large gatherings are strongly discouraged due to social distancing guidelines. Virtual meetings and electronic communication that is deemed appropriate by the Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS administration is strongly encouraged whenever possible. Small group meetings in large well-ventilated areas are recommended when a team must conduct in person meetings to allow for better distancing.
- Spacing will be enforced in the weight room, athletic training clinic, cafeteria, the Cawley Auditorium, and other high traffic areas on campus where teams gather.
- All team meals should be pre-packaged and be served "grab-and-go" style.

- All individuals must avoid handshakes, high-fives, fist bumps and all other forms of contact with one another.
- Only Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS Students and staff will be allowed in athletic facilities. No outside groups or speakers will be permitted to use Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS.
- During all team workouts student-athletes not actively participating in a drill or physical activity will remain six feet apart.
- Activities that increase the risk of exposure to saliva droplets will be strongly discouraged. This will include, but not limited to chewing gum, spitting, licking fingers, and eating sunflower seeds.
- No sharing of food, snacks, equipment, accessories, and clothing will be allowed. All individuals will need to have all their own properly fitted equipment to participate in workouts that day. If an individual is not ready to participate, a teammate may not loan items to them and they will be asked to leave the facility for that day. All ill prepared individuals will be deemed non-essential for the day.
- Adequate time will be scheduled between facility usage to allow for facilities to be cleaned, disinfected, and to minimize interaction between athletes of different teams.
- All concession stands and other food provided for athletes must adhere to *the Guidance for Businesses in Restaurant Industry*.

SANITATION:

- All personal athletic equipment should be cleaned daily. All student-athletes will be required to take all personal equipment home every night to be cleaned and disinfected.
- Athletes will not be allowed to share anything and must always have and use their own equipment.
- Athletes must always wear a shirt and shoes. Wearing Socks only will not count as shoes. No one will be allowed to walk around without these things at any time. This is to prevent the transmission of sweat and other body fluids from being transmitted to common high traffic surfaces in the facility.
- Each person will be required to have his/her **OWN** personal defined hydration container that is never shared. No common hydration containers will be allowed. If this is seen the individual will be directed to the athletic trainer and he/she will be given a clean sanitized bottle for his/her own personal use for the day. It will then be returned to the athletic trainer to be thoroughly cleaned.
- Hand sanitizers and wipes will be provided throughout all facilities and areas.
- All individuals that utilize the weight room will need a personal towel to reduce the amount of sweat transferred to the equipment.
- All individuals will be required to wipe down equipment that they handle before and after use in the weight room and athletic training clinic. All individuals that are seen not following this directive will be asked to leave the facility for the day.
- No bags or unnecessary items will be allowed in workout and practice areas. All unnecessary items are to be left in the person's personal locker in the locker room.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:

- All individuals will be required to wear masks while indoors or outdoors whenever proper social distancing is not possible. This will include but not limited to the athletic training clinic, offices, gymnasium, locker room, weight room, rest room, and all fields and common areas.
- If an individual has a medical condition that will prevent him/her from wearing a mask, he/she must practice social distancing without exception.
- Cloth face coverings are adequate to help prevent the spread of Covid-19; if it covers the nose and mouth and allows for continuous unlabored breathing. While surgical or N95 masks are acceptable they are not considered necessary at this time. Please refer to the CDC website for all questions regarding masks. This includes specifications and maintenance.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water for twenty seconds, or the use of alcohol-based sanitizers is required. This practice is based on current recommendations set forth by the CDC. This is thought to be the best practice for reducing the chance of transmission of the virus. Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS **will not be** requiring the use of gloves at this time. The use of gloves has not been shown to reduce the chances of transmission.
- It is strongly discouraged to touch one's face unless you have just finished washing your hands.

DAILY SCREENING:

- All individuals involved in athletics and members of athletic teams will be screened daily upon arrival to all athletic practices, workouts, and competitions.
 - Screening will include temperature screening with non-contact temporal temperature scanner.
 - All individuals will also be asked a series of health questions in addition to the temperature screen.
 - Have you had onset of cough or shortness of breath in the last 24hrs?
 - Have you experienced any other flu like symptoms in the last 24hrs?
 - Have you experienced fever or febrile illness in the last 24hrs?
 - Have you had any known exposure to someone diagnosed with COVID-19?
- ANY individual who presents with a temperature of 100.4 or higher, or answers affirmative to any of the above questions will be sent home and his/her parent or guardian will be notified of the documented concern of illness/fever and the subsequent procedures.

ACCLIMITIZATION PHASES:

- All athletic teams that participate at Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS will adhere to these phases when athletics resume.
- These phases are based on the most current recommendations and will be adjusted as needed to meet current recommendations when they become available.
- **PHASE ONE:** Teams should be broken into groups of no more than 10 student-athletes. These groups should remain constant for two weeks. In this phase students will be permitted to participate in non-contact workouts and conditioning. The coach in charge of each group will emphasize all social distancing practices as described in this document.
- **PHASE TWO:** After 14 days of small non-contact group (10 or less) workouts without a rise in disease load the group size may increase to 15-20 individuals. These larger groups may start to reintroduce contact drills with other members of the same group. Social distancing as described in the document will remain in place when possible.
- If at any time disease load starts to rise adjustments to these phases will be made. If needed, athletic participation will be suspended for a period determined by the medical staff and the school administration.

ILLNESS PROTOCOL:

- Should an individual become ill at any point, he/she will be immediately removed from the group or activity, masked if not already, and isolated from others.
- The parents or guardian of the individual will be contacted immediately, and the individual will be sent home.
- COVID-19 testing by proper medical personnel must be completed on all individuals that are sent home. It is strongly recommended that any individual that develops flu like symptoms be tested for Covid-19 as well.
- If the Covid-19 test comes back positive, contact tracing will be initiated. Tracing will identify those people that have been within six feet of the sick individual for more than 15 minutes while the person was symptomatic or within the 48 hours prior to becoming symptomatic.
- More information about tracing can be found at the Pennsylvania Department of Health or the CDC websites.
- Those identified by contact tracing are recommended to self-quarantine for a minimum of 14 days and be closely monitored for the development of symptoms.
- While testing of an asymptomatic individual may be available at this time, it does not confirm the infection potential of that individual. Asymptomatic individuals that have been identified by contact tracing must wait 14 days before returning to play.
- Any individual involved in athletics that has tested positive for COVID-19 may return to social interaction 72 hours after the resolution of symptoms. Symptoms include, but not limited to fever (without the use of fever medications), cough, shortness of breath, AND at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared according to CDC guidelines.

- Evidence in the field of cardiology recommends a 14-day convalescent period from the start of symptoms prior to starting back to strenuous activity and consideration of cardiac testing.
- Athletes who test positive for COVID-19 will need to provide a written release for return to activity from their medical provider before continued participation. This release will **ONLY** be accepted after the previous guidelines spelled out in this document are met. Under **NO** circumstances will an athlete or family be allowed to bring a note from a medical provider to be released early.

COMPETITION AND TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS:

- Competition and travel need to be considered and planned prior to the onset of the season.
- An open line of communication should be maintained between Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS sports medicine department and the opponent's medical provider prior to the start of the season and remain in effect until the end of the school year.
- Notre Dame Jr/ Sr HS Sports Medicine Department and Athletic Director will be in contact with all opponents prior to traveling to ensure that there are no changes to the original schedule.
- There should be a global agreement between Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS and the opponent concerning illness protocol, even if that illness is not Covid-19.
- Notre Dame Jr/ Sr HS and all opponents must be willing to share information regarding potential cases and exposures when they arise.
- Travel should be limited as much as possible. Only essential players (those **actually playing** in the game and personnel (coaches, school administration, and medical personnel) will be permitted to travel until further notice. While traveling away from Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS social distancing will still be maintained. This will include masking as well.
- When on a bus, or other means of transportation, social distancing (sitting every other seat or one person to a seat) will be required as much as possible. This will be established on a case by case basis with the coach or other adult supervisor enforcing the recommendation.
- Teams will not be allowed to stop for food on the way to or from an away competition. If a team will be providing food to its players, it must be prepackaged and distributed to each player prior to returning to the bus or other means of transportation. This will ensure that all athletes and staff encounter the least amount of people on the trip.
- Senior students that are driving themselves (with permission from a parent or guardian) will be limited in who may ride with them.

- Parents and guardians will only be allowed to take **other** children home from competitions or practices if proper permission slips are on file in the high school main office.
- Any teams that are practicing off-campus will be following these same guidelines. When traveling to a practice an athlete should only bring what is needed for that practice. All other personal property (schoolbooks, backpacks, bags etc.) should be left at school and retrieved upon returning.
- All athletes will be required to bring their own hydration device to away competitions. The host school will **not be allowed** to supply anything at this time.

ATHLETIC EVENT ATTENDANCE:

- The Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS administration will continue to monitor and evaluate guidance provided as it relates to spectators attending high school athletic events.
- In this document people have been grouped into tiers from essential to non-essential. This is to determine who will be allowed to attend an event until further guidance is received from federal, state, or local governments as well as the CDC and the department of health.
 - o Tier 1 (Essential)-Athletes, coaches, officials, event staff, medical staff, security, administrators.
 - o Tier 2 (Preferred)- Media
 - o Tier 3 (Non-Essential) – Spectators
- Only individuals in Tier 1 & Tier 2 will be allowed to attend events until more guidance is received and restrictions of mass gatherings are lifted.
- Seating areas, including bleachers, will adhere to social distancing requirements of at least 6 feet for spacing for anyone not in the same household once spectators are permitted. To assist with this, areas will be properly and clearly marked.
- If adults must be near one another, they will wear a face covering (facemask or shield) while at Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS.
- Once restrictions on mass gatherings are lifted, all spectators, including parents and guardians will still be prohibited to enter the field of play or bench area. The only exception to this will be in the case of a parent or guardian needing to be with a child that is injured or ill. This will be under the direction of the Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS Athletic Training Staff only. Parents will only be permitted in the area for as long as they are needed and instructed to be there.
- Under no circumstances are visiting students or alumni allowed to be on the sideline or on the bench.

CUSTODIAL ACTIONS:

- Social distancing must always be practiced.
- Athletic facilities should be cleaned on a schedule developed in conjunction with the Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS Administration, Athletic Director and Athletic Training Staff.
- High-touch (door handles, restrooms, athletic training clinic, locker rooms, concession stands, officials' room, weight room, and water fountains etc.) areas should be cleaned as often as possible throughout the day.
- Provide additional signage when available on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (proper handwashing and hygiene practices).
- Ensure **proper weekend cleaning**, disinfecting, and sanitizing due to activities occurring on Saturdays.
- Provide additional hand sanitizer in locker rooms, athletic training clinic, and concession stands.
- Provide additional cleaning supplies for the athletic training clinic and weight room.
- Provide additional cleaning supplies for coaching staffs to sanitize equipment before, during, and after athletic practices, games, or workouts.
- It must be the responsibility of **all players, coaches, staff, students, and visitors** to police and manage their own areas as much as possible to reduce the strain on the custodial staff. If people are constantly not following these rules, they will be asked to leave for a period of time determined by the school administration.

ATHLETE ACTIONS:

- Social distancing must always be practiced.
- Mandatory PIAA pre-participation physical examinations will be required prior to the start of the fall sports season on August 17, 2020. These physicals should be conducted by the athlete's PCP whenever possible.
- All athletes will be required to utilize the locker that has been assigned to him/her. No one will be allowed to put clothes and gear on the floor or benches in the locker room.
- All bags must **always** be left in the athlete's designated locker while the athlete is inside the building. The only exception to this rule will be when a visiting team will be using the locker room. In this instance all bags will be required to be left in the area designated by the Athletic Director.
- All athletes must maintain and clean locker and locker room. Any clothes that are left outside an athlete's locker or left anywhere on campus will be discarded during cleaning overnight. There will be **no lost and found storage**. (No clothing is to be left in any athletic facility overnight, in a locker or otherwise).
- Avoid touching your face as much as possible.
- Wash your clothes as often as possible, daily is preferred.
- **No** sharing of any personal items.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water for 20 seconds or alcohol-based hand sanitizer is strongly encouraged.
- Athletes must bring personal water bottles or hydration device to all practices and events. There will be no other water bottles available. If an athlete forgets a water bottle that day and will be unable to reasonably obtain one, he/she may see the Athletic Trainer for one for use that day.

That water bottle must be returned to the Athletic Trainer at the end of practice for proper cleaning.

- Congregating is strongly discouraged. As much as possible, athletes should not arrive to practice or workouts earlier than 20 minutes prior to the start.
- Athletes are required to assist coaches, custodial, and medical staffs in disinfecting of all athletic equipment used during a workout. Failure to do so may be reason to ask the athlete to leave for the day.
- Athletes **must** comply with the daily health screenings outlined in this document.
- Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS asks all athletes and students that use an athletic facility for any reason to follow the directives set forth in this document to help prevent the spread of Covid-19. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in disqualification from participating in sports or weight room usage.

COACH ACTIONS:

- Social Distancing must always be practiced.
- Coaches will be responsible for monitoring all team members for symptoms and or signs of illness before, during and after all workouts, practices, and competitions.
- Coaches will make sure that all athletes have been screened and properly cleared as set forth in this document until it is determined by federal, state and local governments as well as the CDC to be no longer necessary.
- All coaches will **always** be required to wear a face covering as described in this document. If a coach needs to remove their mask, they must without exception be social distancing.
- All coaches will be responsible for determining the small groups that athletes will be placed in during the early reopening phases. The coach will be required to make sure that these groups do not fluctuate. The coach will record these groups in case contact tracing is needed.
- If a large team gathering is required, it is recommended to be done remotely via an approved electronic platform or appropriate electronic communication.
- All coaches will be responsible to monitor the number of students gathering in common areas at one time to promote social distancing guidelines.
- All coaches will be asked to assist in the cleaning of all athletic equipment before, during, and after athletic practices, events, and workouts.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water for 20 seconds or alcohol-based hand sanitizer is strongly encouraged. Coaches will promote and remind students and athletes to also practice proper hand washing techniques.

ATHLETIC TRAINING CLINIC SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES/ ATHLETIC TRAINER ACTIONS:

- Follow guidance by the National Athletic Trainers' Association and St. Luke's University Health Network Infectious Disease Department as it pertains to COVID-19.
- Follow all federal, state, and local government directives.
- Follow all CDC and department of health guidelines.
- Monitor all the latest guidelines and update the Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS Athletic Director and administration about these changes. Update this policy as needed to reflect the current recommendations.
- **Athletic Training Staff** will be tasked with administering all daily health screens for athletes and coaches prior to the start of practices.
- There will be only **two** students allowed in the athletic training clinic at one time. A third student will be allowed to occupy the taping station outside the athletic training room for minor wound care and taping.
- To follow the social distancing protocol, a maximum of **six** people (students receiving treatment, Athletic Trainer, Athletic Training Students).
- No student will be allowed to occupy the athletic training clinic unless they are actively seeking treatment. Once the treatment is complete the student must leave. No student will be permitted to occupy the athletic training clinic for "social reasons".
- **No** food or drink will be permitted in the athletic training clinic.
- **No** bags of any kind (gym, duffle, backpacks etc) into the athletic training clinic. All bags are to be left in the student's designated lockers.
- All students will be required to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds prior to receiving any kind of treatments.
- **No** student will be allowed to administer his/her own treatments.

- Shoes must always be worn in the athletic training clinic unless specifically asked by a member of the Athletic Training Staff to remove them.
- There will be **no** changes to the pass policy to leave class early and see the Athletic Trainer. Only students leaving for an away game will be allowed to receive a pass. All other students that are seeking treatment for home games and practices will be responsible to get themselves to the athletic training clinic after school in a timely fashion.
- **No** equipment will be taken from the athletic training room. **All** equipment will be cleaned after each use.
- **No** student will be allowed to keep personal items in the athletic training clinic for any reason. **All** the student's personal items must always remain in his/her assigned locker.
- Athletic Training Staff will assist Notre Dame Jr/Sr HS Athletic Director and administration with enforcing social distancing practices until the time that it is deemed unnecessary.
- The Athletic Training Staff will make sure that the Athletic Director and Administration are updated on all new recommendations set forth by Federal, State, and Local governments as well as the department of health, the CDC and St Luke's infectious disease department.
- The Athletic Training Staff will always wear masks when social distancing is not possible.
- Athletic Training Staff will make sure that all athletic training room equipment, supplies and all other hard surfaces are cleaned frequently while the athletic training clinic is in use.
- There will be **no** unsupervised admittance to the athletic training room. The athletic training clinic will be locked, and the light turned off when not in use.
- Athletic Trainer will provide proper guidance to assist student-athletes on proper hand washing and social distancing.
- **All** athletes that are feeling ill during athletic participation must report to a member of the Athletic Training Staff for evaluation and documentation of symptoms.

- All other athletic training clinic rules will remain in effect. Failure to obey **all** rules while using the athletic training clinic will revoke your privilege. The only exception to this rule will be in the case of emergency and the need for medical care. These guidelines are important so that all individuals remain safe and we prevent the spread of Covid-19 as much as possible.

WEIGHT ROOM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES:

- The **MAXIMUM** number of students allowed to be in and around the weight room will be **10** individuals. This number also includes any adult that is supervising.
- **NO** bags will be allowed in the weight room.
- All individuals **must always** wear proper clothes while in the weight room. The clothes must belong to the individual wearing them. No sharing is allowed.
- All individuals must have his/her own towel to help prevent the transfer of sweat to the equipment. If an individual needs a towel for the day, he/she must see the Athletic Trainer for one. That towel must be returned to the dirty laundry bin at the end of their workout so it may be cleaned.
- All individuals that are working out must have his/her own hydration device. No one can share.
- All individuals are to wipe down the equipment he/she used, discard his/her trash and rerack weights.
- No equipment is to be removed from the weight room by students unless they are going in the hallway to have more room for a specific exercise.
- Face coverings are **always** to be worn while in the weight room.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or alcohol-based hand sanitizers is strongly encouraged while working out.
- All individuals are strongly encouraged to not touch one's face while working out.
- All other weight room rules will remain in effect. Failure to obey all rules while using the weight room will revoke your weight room privilege. These guidelines are important so that all individuals remain safe and we prevent the spread of Covid-19 as much as possible.

REFERENCES:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov>
- World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/>
- Pennsylvania Department of Health <https://www.health.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx>
- Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association <https://www.piaa.org>
- National Federation of State High School Associations <https://www.nfhs.org>
- St. Luke's University Health Network Infectious Disease Department <https://www.slun.org>