

Willsboro Central School District

Winter Sports Preparedness Plan

Member of Section VII, NYSPHSAA

Overview:

In accordance with Essex County Health Department's guidance for High Risk Sports in conjunction with the NYSDOH guidance, Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency ("Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Sports and Recreation") and the NYSPHSAA guidance, Return to Interscholastic Athletics this document will serve as the Preparedness Plan for the Willsboro Central School district. This will serve as the Preparedness Plan for the Sports of Basketball and Ice Hockey (Willsboro Central School has one student who will be merging with the Plattsburgh High School Ice Hockey team. The student will go through the medical clearance process at Willsboro Central School and will follow the protocols set forth by Plattsburgh High School) for the 2020-21 Winter Season.

Willsboro Central School Plan Administrators

Justin Gardner, Superintendent of Schools

Michael Douglas, Athletic Director/ Dean of Students & Preparedness Plan Administrator

Justin Gardner / Michael Douglas Preparedness Plan Coordinators

Doctor Mary Halloran, Willsboro Central School Medical Director

Karen Crowningshield, Willsboro Central School Nurse

If you have a concern related to the sports of basketball and/or ice hockey at Willsboro Central School please use the following confidential communication means:

- **Phone Number: 518-963-4456**
- **Email Address: district@willsborocsd.org**

The Preparedness Plan Administrator is responsible for communicating the plan to student-athletes, coaches, parent/guardians, officials, and all other stakeholders.

The Preparedness Plan Coordinator will serve as a point of contact should any cases be identified. Additionally, the Coordinator will facilitate assist with case investigation and contact elicitation and notification.

Willsboro Central School agrees to indemnify and hold harmless Essex County, its directors, officers, employees, and agents from and against any and all claims, actions, or liabilities of any nature that may be asserted against them by third parties in connection with participation in higher-risk school sports.

General Requirements

- **Screening**
 - Every athlete, coach and official are required to attest the following:
 - I feel healthy today (I do not have: a fever over 100°, chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea)
 - Within the last 14 days, I have not tested positive for COVID-19 nor have I been diagnosed as COVID-19 positive by a healthcare provider.
 - Within the last 14 days, I have not been in close contact with anyone who has a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19
 - If I have traveled outside the State, I have abided by the [NYS COVID-19 Travel Advisory](#)
 - Temperatures will be taken prior to practices and contests.
- **Attendance log**
 - A daily attendance log will be completed for all practices and contests.
 - The log will include the date and time of the practice/contest
 - The log will include the names of all people present during the practice/contest
 - Logs must include Phone number, email and County of Residence for anyone that is not in the school's information database.
- **Facility Management**
 - All coaches, athletes, officials, and other site personnel are encouraged to minimize to the furthest extent possible the time spent in the facility before or after a practice/contest.
 - Avoid congregating in common areas before or after a practice/contest.
 - Ensure proper physical distancing is followed at all times.
- **Contests**
 - Site administrators may pause or end the contest if safety guidelines are not followed, including, but not limited to proper mask wearing.
 - Only BOE approved coaches will be permitted at contests. All teams are encouraged to reduce additional support staff.
 - **Traveling to a contest:**
 - Make sure all athletes, coaches and game personnel are screened and a completed log is submitted to the host school.
 - Make sure to communicate with the host school prior to the competition to discuss plans.
 - Follow all policies and guidelines the host school has communicated.
 - Make sure your team is bringing its own medical supplies and emergency action plans.
 - Travel is limited to only other Section VII Schools.
 - **Hosting a contest:**
 - Make sure to have an administrative contact (cell number and email address) for all events.
 - Communicate ahead of time with the incoming schools, event personnel (i.e. scorekeepers, timers, announcers) and officials about procedures, policies and guidelines.
 - Examples to be covered include but not limited to, the following:
 - Parking;

- When and Where to enter facility;
 - What equipment should the visiting team bring;
 - Water availability;
 - Bench area seating (how many players can be accommodated to maintain social distancing);
 - Emergency action plans;
 - How will game day paperwork be handled (electronic exchange of information is preferred).
 - Make sure facilities have been properly sanitized before the visiting team has arrived.
 - Have hand sanitizer and disposable masks readily available.
 - It is recommended to make frequent announcements prior to and during the competition, pertaining to face coverings being required and social distancing requirements.
- **Practices**
 - Practice times will be staggered when teams will be utilizing the same facility to ensure that one team leaves the facility prior to the next team entering.
 - Coaches and athletes are encouraged to avoid congregating (ensuring 6' of distance between individuals) in common areas near the practice/contest facility.
 - **Face Coverings**
 - Face coverings must be worn at all times by all coaches, athletes, officials, managers, game personnel, etc.
 - Cloth face coverings/masks that conform to recommendations from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) should be worn whenever possible by all student-athletes, coaches, managers, referees/officials, game personnel, etc.
 - It is important that the cloth face covering/mask fits the individual well and is worn over the nose and below the chin at all times when in use.
 - If the cloth face covering/mask is removed for a break, the individual should remain at least 6 feet away from all other individuals.
 - Cloth face coverings must be washed daily in hot water and not reused until cleaned.
 - Coaches, managers, and other school employees should monitor proper use of cloth face coverings/masks and correct improper use, when indicated.
 - Gaiters and face shields will not be allowed.
 - The American Academy of Pediatrics has indicated that cloth face coverings have been shown to be well tolerated by the majority of individuals who wear them for exercise but acknowledges that the coverings may need to be removed under certain circumstances.
 - District/school medical directors will review AAP guidance and other scientific literature for recommendations regarding specific sports where a cloth face covering/mask could pose a hazard and address those in their sport-specific preparedness plans.
 - Individuals with a medical condition that would be complicated by wearing a cloth face covering/mask can apply to the district/school medical director for an exemption by providing appropriate documentation that the condition will be present throughout the length of the sports season.

- **Pods**
 - If feasible, pods are encouraged. A pod is a group of student-athletes who only practice or play with members of their own pod.
 - Pods should either practice in physically separate rooms, facilities or areas or steps taken to ensure that pods are appropriately distanced.
 - Teams should avoid reassigning athletes to different pods to the maximum extent possible.
 - The smaller the pod size, the more the team can minimize potential transmission.
- **Equipment**
 - Consider making each athlete responsible for their own supplies.
 - Athletes should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing (practice jerseys, pinnies, etc.), and individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout immediately upon returning home.
 - Athletes should have their own water bottle and avoid touching or sharing of anyone else's.
 - Shared equipment will be cleaned and disinfected frequently. At minimum any shared equipment must be cleaned and disinfected daily.
 - Additional cleaning protocol will be found in the sport specific guidance.
- **Spectators**
 - During the Winter 2020-21 season, spectators will not be allowed at any indoor practice or contest.
- **Locker Rooms**
 - Locker rooms will be avoided.
 - Athletes are encouraged to attend practices and contests with the proper attire to avoid needing to use a locker room.
 - Officials should arrive at facilities in proper uniform. If a changing area is necessary, the official will contact the school Athletic Director and seek approval prior to arrival.
 - If locker rooms are used, proper mask use and distancing must be ensured. Locker rooms must be cleaned/disinfected as per NYSDOH guidance.
- **Travel**
 - When school buses are utilized to travel to contests or practices, proper mask use and social distancing will be ensured.
 - Congregate dining will be avoided when traveling (i.e. stopping at a restaurant after a contest)
 - If Congregate dining is necessary, a minimum 6' distance is required between anyone who is eating and drinking at all times.
 - If parents/guardians transport students to contests or practices, carpooling with people from separate households is highly discouraged.
- **Hygiene**
 - Coaches and athletes will be reminded to frequently practice proper hand hygiene which includes washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or utilizing hand sanitizer.
- **Celebrations**
 - High-fives, fist bumps, and celebratory hugs are to be avoided.
- **Overnight Travel**
 - Overnight travel will not occur during the Winter 2020-21 season.

SPORT SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

Basketball

The NYSDOH has determined that basketball is a high-risk sport (Least ability to maintain physical distance and/or be done individually; least ability to: (1) avoid touching of shared equipment, (2) clean and disinfect equipment between uses by different individuals, or (3) not use shared equipment at all).

Section VII Considerations

- **Game**
 - Additional game balls will be disinfected and made available for each game.
 - Halftime will be 5 minutes.
 - Players will be allowed to leave the playing surface during 30-second timeouts but must adhere to 6-feet social distancing.
 - The playing surface will be cleaned before and after each contest.
 - The bench areas will be cleaned before and after each contest.
 - Warmups will be a maximum of 15 minutes.
 - For substituting only one player per team need to be at the reporting area. Other substitutes may enter game from bench area once beckoned.
 - Players from opposing teams should remain at least 6' apart at the reporting area.

General Considerations

- **BOYS** - For pregame conference, limit attendees to the referee and the head coach from each team with each coach standing on the center circle on each side of the division line.
- **GIRLS** – For pregame conference, limit attendees to the referee and one athlete per team standing on the center on each side of the division line.
- For pregame conference, all individuals maintain a social distance of 6 feet or greater at the center circle.
- Limit the number of bench personnel to observe social distancing of 6 feet or greater.
- Additional chairs or rows may be added to allow bench personnel to observe social distancing of 6 feet or greater.
- Limit contact between players when substituting.
- The host school should sanitize the table before the game and at half time.
- Place officials table sufficiently away from the sideline to allow for additional space for substitutes if possible.
- Limit seats at the table to essential personnel which includes home team scorer, timer and shot clock operator with a recommended distance of 6 feet or greater between individuals. Other personnel (visiting scorer, statisticians, media, etc.) may not be deemed essential personnel and consider an alternate location for them.
- Eliminate all handshakes, fist bumps and similar gestures pre- and post-game.
- Give game ball to officials in the locker room where it is sanitized as recommended by the ball manufacturer and not used for warm-ups.
- The host school should ensure that the ball is sanitized during time-outs and between quarters.
- Sanitizer should be made available by the host team.
- Long-sleeved shirts are permissible.

Considerations for Officials:

- Officials are responsible for game management, which does not include monitoring activities on the sidelines, such as social distancing, face coverings, hand washing, symptoms of illnesses and other such issues. This monitoring obligation remains with the responsible parties.
- Bring personal hand sanitizer. Wash hands frequently.
- Do not share equipment.
- Follow social distancing guidelines.
- Suspend handshakes, fist bumps and similar gestures prior to and following the pregame conference.
- Officials are not required to wear jackets during pre-game court/player observation.
- Officials will use an electronic whistle.
- Gloves are permissible.
- Official may stand 6 feet or greater away from the player making a throw-in and bounce the ball to that player on a front court throw-in.
- The lead official shall stand on the end line and bounce the ball to the free thrower.

Considerations for Coaches:

- Communicate your guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents.
- Consider conducting workouts in “cohorts” of same students always training and rotating together in practice to ensure more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is needed.

Considerations for Students:

- Consider making each student responsible for their own supplies.
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing, including practice gear)
- Individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout immediately upon returning home.
- Bring own water bottle.

Ice Hockey

The NYSDOH has determined that Ice Hockey is a high-risk sport (Least ability to maintain physical distance and/or be done individually; least ability to: (1) avoid touching of shared equipment, (2) clean and disinfect equipment between uses by different individuals, or (3) not use shared equipment at all).

Section VII Considerations

- Ice Resurfacing- One ice cut at the whistle following the 8 min 30 sec mark of the 2nd period.
- 2 minutes break after the 1st and 2nd period with teams reporting to their designated bench areas.
- In lieu of handshake line team lines up on respective blue line for stick taps
- Elimination of Body Checking in Boys' Hockey.

General Considerations

- Communicate in advance with hockey rinks on policies, procedures and permitted time frames for practice and competition. No team shall arrive at the rink more than 30 minutes before game time. Teams need to exit the facility within 20 minutes of game completion.
- Team Benches - Maintain social distancing as much as possible when on the bench.
- Penalty Boxes - Limit to essential personnel and maintain social distancing from personnel and participating players. One event staff will be permitted in the home and one in the away penalty box.
- Team Captain – One Captain per team will need to maintain social distancing when talking to or conferring with a referee. Maintain social distance during the pre-game meeting with the team captain, head coaches, and officials wearing proper masks.
- Face masks- Plastic shields covering the entire face (unless integrated into the face mask, attached on the inside of the face mask, and clear without the presence of any tint) shall not be allowed during the contest. All coaching staff, officials, and athletes are required to wear a face mask at all times unless a medical exemption has been approved. (Gaiters & Masks that attach to the players cage are prohibited)
- Tooth and mouth protectors- If mouthguards are removed on the bench area, the athlete should use hand sanitizer each time after touching the mouthguard.
- Suspend pregame protocol of shaking hands during introductions/pregame meeting.
- Gloves are permissible for all coaches, team staff and game administration officials.
- Limit the number of non-essential personnel who are at ice level and near participants throughout the contest. (Section VII recommends a scorekeeper, clock operator, two penalty box workers, one video person, one event chaperone in addition to rostered athletes, school administrators, athletic trainer and coaching staff).
- It is recommended that athletes and officials arrive at the rink dressed minus their upper pads and hockey skates.

Considerations for Officials:

- Officials will use Electronic whistle.
- Officials are responsible for game management, which does not include monitoring activities on the sidelines, such as social distancing, face coverings, hand washing, symptoms of illnesses and other such issues. This monitoring obligation remains with the responsible parties.
- Bring personal hand sanitizer. Wash hands frequently.
- Do not share equipment.
- Follow social distancing guidelines:
 - Maintain social distancing for meetings with captains and coaches.
 - Essential off-ice officials should maintain social distancing and wipe down workspace before and after the contest.
 - Do not shake hands and maintain social distancing guidelines during pre and post-game ceremonies.

Considerations for Coaches:

- Communicate your guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents.
- Consider conducting workouts in “cohorts” of same students always training and rotating together in practice to ensure more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is needed.

Considerations for Students:

- Consider making each student responsible for their own supplies.
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing)
- Individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout immediately upon returning home.
- Bring own water bottle.

Athletic Participation Informed Consent COVID-19

After careful consideration, and as the parent or legal guardian of the student listed below, I give permission for my student to participate in “Higher Risk” school sponsored sports in accordance with the protocols established by the Willsboro Central School, Essex County Health Department, and New York State Department of Health.

Furthermore, I understand and acknowledge the following:

- ☐ The resumption of athletics does not mean they are safe or without risk.
- ☐ Participation in the sport may expose the student-athlete to COVID-19.
- ☐ Symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals can spread the virus.
- ☐ Masking, distancing, and other mitigation measures reduce, but do not eliminate risk.
- ☐ At present, it cannot be predicted who will become severely ill if infected.
- ☐ COVID-19 can lead to serious medical conditions and death for people of all ages.
- ☐ The long-term effects of COVID-19 are, at present, unknown; even people with mild cases may experience long-term complications.
- ☐ There is a significant risk of transmission to those in the home of infected student-athletes.
- ☐ Older people and people with underlying health conditions are at higher risk of serious disease.
- ☐ Masks will be worn by all student-athletes, coaches, managers, referees/officials, event staff and individuals dropping off or picking up student-athletes, etc.

Additionally, I agree to fully cooperate with any investigation into contact tracing and elicitation; and will adhere to isolation and quarantine orders.

Name of Student-Athlete (printed): _____

Signature of Student-Athlete: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian (printed): _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Medical Clearance Form

After careful consideration, and as the Healthcare Provider of the student listed below, I give medical clearance for "Higher Risk" school sponsored sports in accordance with the protocols established by the Willsboro Central School District and New York State Department of Health.

Sport: _____

Name of Student-Athlete (printed): _____

Name of Health Care Provider (printed): _____

Signature of Health Care Provider: _____ Date: _____