TO: Benton Harbor Area Schools

FROM: Dr. Andrae Townsel, Benton Harbor Area Schools Superintendent

DATE: June 16, 2020

SUBJECT: Benton Harbor Area Schools Plan for Implementing Return to Athletics

Based on Governor Whitmer’s recent actions on Friday, June 5, the MHSAA is providing the following updated guidance regarding summer sports activity. This guidance is effective Wednesday, June 10.

Key Points:
• The following four-page document has been modified from earlier MHSAA guidance from May 29 and June 1. The MHSAA will continue to communicate on the progression of steps based on future government direction.
• OUTDOOR activity may continue to take place in groups of 100 or fewer
• All MHSAA out-of-season summer coaching regulations continue to apply (e.g. voluntary, not part of team selection, etc.).

ALL SPORTS: Must Maintain Physical Distancing when possible.

Low Risk Sports: Cross Country, Sideline Cheer, Track & Field
• All athletic equipment, including balls, should be cleaned intermittently during practices and workouts. Individuals should practice physical distancing while not involved in active participation.

Moderate Risk Sports: Baseball, Basketball, Softball, Volleyball
• Baseball: Players should not share gloves, batting gloves, helmets and catcher’s equipment. Common equipment, such as the ball, must be cleaned as permitted during a practice or workout session. Individuals must continue to practice physical distancing.
• Basketball: Common equipment, such as the ball, must be cleaned as permitted during a practice or workout. If outdoors, individuals must continue to practice physical distancing.
• Softball: Common equipment, such as the ball, must be cleaned as permitted during a practice or workout session. Individuals must continue to practice physical distancing.
• Volleyball: Common equipment, such as the ball, must be cleaned as permitted during a practice or workout session.

Higher Risk Sports: Football, Wrestling
• Football: Common equipment, such as the ball, must be cleaned as permitted during a practice or workout. Individuals must continue to practice social distancing.
• Wrestling: Conditioning, mirror drills with spacing, no contact. Wrestlers may drill without touching a teammate (as long as physical distancing is adhered to).

Reminders:

Facility Cleaning:
• Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities.
• Prior to an individual or groups of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within that facility should be wiped down and sanitized (benches, weight equipment, bathrooms, athletic training room tables, etc.).
• Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap or hand sanitizer before touching any surfaces or participating in workouts.

• Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place.

• Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment/surfaces.

• Any equipment such as athletic pads, etc., having holes with exposed foam should be covered.

• Students must be encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning to home.

Entrance/Exit Strategies:
• Consider organization to prevent groups from gathering at entrances/exits to facilities to limit crossover and contact, including staggering starting/ending times.

Limits on Gatherings:
• No gathering of more than 100 people at a time outdoors.

• Locker rooms may not be utilized during this step. Students should report to workouts in proper gear and immediately return home to shower at the end of the workout.

• Workouts should be conducted in “pods” of students with the same small group of students always working out together. This ensures more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.

• There must be a minimum distance of 6 feet between individuals at all times.

Pre-Workout Screening:
• All coaches and students should be screened daily for signs / symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participating, including a temperature check. This check may take place onsite or be completed and verified prior to arrival onsite (at home, for example). Anyone with a temperature of greater than 100.3 degrees should not participate and be sent home.

• Responses to screening questions for each person should be recorded and stored so that there is a record of everyone present in case a student develops COVID-19. These records must be kept confidential. Sample form at MHSAA.com.

• Any person with positive symptoms reported should not be allowed to participate, should self-isolate, and contact his or her primary care provider or other health-care professional. Involve local health departments if positive cases of COVID are discovered.

• Vulnerable individuals should not supervise or participate in any workouts. School districts will make the decision on vulnerable individuals.

Face Coverings:
• State, local or school district guidelines for cloth face coverings should be strictly followed. (Benton Harbor will provide each athlete with a new face covering that must be washed and brought to practice every day. Students with no face covering will not be allowed to practice).

• Cloth face coverings should be considered acceptable. There is no need to require or recommend “medical grade” masks for physical activity.

• Any student who prefers to wear a cloth face covering should be allowed to do so.

• In the absence of guidelines to the contrary, we recommend that cloth face coverings be worn by students. Exceptions are swimming, distance running or other high-intensity aerobic activity.

• Plastic shields covering the entire face will not be allowed during participation due to the risk of unintended injury to the person wearing the shield or others.

• Coaches, officials and all other personnel are encouraged to wear cloth face coverings at all times and are strongly encouraged to wear cloth face coverings whenever physical distancing is not possible. (Artificial noisemakers such as an air horn or a timer system with an alarm can be used to signal in place of a traditional whistle.)

Hygiene Practices:
• Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, especially after touching frequently used items or surfaces.

• Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow. Avoid touching your face.

• Disinfect frequently-used items and surfaces as much as possible.

• Do not spit at all - air, ground, equipment, hands, sunflower seeds, etc.

• All students shall bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared.
• Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) should not be utilized. Food should not be shared.

Facility Access:
• Locker rooms should not be used. Students should report in appropriate attire and immediately return home to shower after participation. No students allowed in a training area unless the athletic trainer is present.
• Currently all indoor facilities remain closed.

Physical Activity & Equipment:
• All athletic equipment, including balls, should be cleaned intermittently during practices and contests.
• There should be no shared athletic equipment (towels, clothing, shoes, or sport-specific equipment) when possible between students.
• Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing); individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout.
• All athletic equipment, including balls, should be cleaned after each use and prior to the next workout. (Equipment manager will clean all equipment prior to workouts and games)
• Individual drills requiring the use of athletic equipment are permissible, but the equipment should be cleaned prior to use by the next individual. (Coaches will be responsible for monitoring cleaning during practice)
• Resistance training should be emphasized through the use of body weight and resistance bands.
• Physical contact such as handshakes, high-fives, fist bumps, and hugs should not be allowed.