

Beaverhead County High School Guidelines for Athletics and Associated Activities
Effective August 24, 2020 *(Updated 1/3/2021)

Preamble

Following the Governor’s current directives and orders related to COVID-19 and operation of schools during the 2020-2021 academic year, and so long as a State of Emergency is declared for the State of Montana and Beaverhead County, Beaverhead County High School with review and input by the Beaverhead Public Health Officer has developed this plan.

Under the terms of the Governor’s directives, the “sponsor” of an event is responsible for ensuring compliance with applicable requirements issued by the Governor or the local Health Officer, including but not limited to the use of masks and the maintenance of appropriate physical distancing throughout the entirety of the event. For purposes of athletic events and activities, the School District of the home team is deemed to be the sponsor of the activity and is therefore responsible for ensuring compliance with the requirements by all in attendance, including both the home team and the visiting team. It is therefore incumbent upon the District of the home team to ensure that visiting teams from outside of Beaverhead County are aware of the terms of this plan and provide an indication that they will comply with them, prior to the activity or event.

Core principles and assumptions underpinning this plan include:

- Protecting the health and safety of our communities and mitigating the risks associated with COVID-19 are the top priorities.
- School-related activities, including athletics, events, and other activities associated with the athletic undertaking (e.g., pep band, cheerleading) support and enhance the academic, social, physical, and emotional development of students.
- With the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear that there are risks from holding athletic events / activities, and risks associated with canceling athletics and activities. Risk elimination is not possible. The aim of this plan is to mitigate and manage the entire range of risks attendant to athletics and activities, while candidly acknowledging that there likely will be cases of COVID-19 associated with such activities.
- Student participation is prioritized over the understandable and rational desire of parents, family members, friends, fellow students, and community members at large to be physically present at all events and activities.
- Responsibility for complying with this plan as well as applicable Beaverhead County Health Officer orders and Governor’s directives rests with the school district sponsoring or hosting the activity.
- This plan will likely evolve over time as experience is gained with the operation of athletic events and activities during a pandemic and as the incidence and prevalence of COVID-19 shift over time.
- It is the consensus opinion of the Beaverhead County Health Department and Beaverhead County High School that it is better to initiate activities under more stringent restrictions than to start with less stringent restrictions and be forced to increase restrictions. The goal is to be more restrictive as the school year begins, but to build in room for relaxation of these guidelines if COVID-19 data support doing so and school communities comply with the requirements established under this plan.

This plan is based on discussions between the high school activity director and superintendent with public health officials; the Montana High School Association (MHSA) Directive of July 27, the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) Reopening Guidance of July 2; the Governor's Plan for Reopening Safe and Healthy Schools of June 2020; and, the recent Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines.

It is recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic represents a rapidly evolving situation. Actions and interventions are subject to frequent change based on experience and clarity as to the science of the SARS-coV-2 novel coronavirus. It is therefore fully anticipated that these requirements for the operation of athletics and activities will change over time.

Application

This plan applies to all high school athletic events and activities at Beaverhead County high school. Teams or schools from outside of Beaverhead County must comply with the requirements of this plan when they are participating in an activity within Beaverhead County, regardless of plans that might be more or less restrictive within their home jurisdictions.

Similarly, it is recognized that members of the Beaverhead County high school community participating in activities in other jurisdictions are subject to any requirements or restrictions established in those jurisdictions, regardless of whether this plan is more or less restrictive.

The requirements of this plan are effective as of August 24, 2020 and remain in effect until modified by the Beaverhead County high school Board.

Requirements of the plan – athletic events

1. Attendance at all athletic events will be for team, team staff (coaches, managers, medical, etc.) and game management (e.g., officials, timekeepers, etc.) and a limited number of fans. Management of numbers would look like...
 - a. 4 tickets for each home team student athlete dressed out for the game.
 - b. ** Student section is limited to 50 for BW Lodge and may be chosen by lottery or on a first come first served basis.*
 - c. ** Pep band performance is allowed in the BW Lodge. Presence of the pep band reduces the allowed number in the student section. Band enter and exits with social distancing and masks.*
 - i. *Band student may invite up to two guests at the events in which they perform. This will reduce the number allowed in the student section correspondingly.*
 - d. ** Choir perform national anthem masks and distancing required.*
 - e. Max of 50 individuals on each football sideline exclusive of game workers
 - f. 2 tickets per home team coach
 - g. Fan from visiting teams will be limited to two tickets per suited player up to a max 60 visiting fans.
 - h. ** Max of 270 fans in BW Lodge.*
 - i. ** Seating in BW Lodge is home students section on the upper deck east, teams not playing and visiting fans lower bleachers east, home fans upper seating west.*
 - j. ** Masks must be worn and social distancing practiced.*
 - k. Fans asked to limit movement, children must be seated with parents
 - l. Ongoing cleaning of restrooms

2. Locker rooms will be available for visiting teams according to home team stipulations on how many athletes the facility can handle while maintaining physical distancing at any one time. This may require the visiting team to plan for rotation of cohorts of athletes into the locker room with enough time to be on the field or court for the start of the competition as scheduled.
3. All team personnel (including but not limited to coaches, managers, and trainers) and players will wear masks when they are not exercising in a strenuous manner. All personnel who are not actively engaged in athletic activity must wear masks or face coverings, including but not limited to: on the sidelines, during team discussions such as a timeout, during halftime, and breaks in play or practice. Each individual must have his/her own identified mask and masks must not be shared.
4. For indoor sports and to the extent possible by physical space, athletes will be seated at least 6 feet apart, assigned to a specific team member, and a mask specific to that player at each chair so they are ready to be donned and doffed as needed during competition or practice. Masking is required while not engaging in strenuous activity (repeated for emphasis). A mask must be worn whenever a player is out of the game.
5. ** For basketball, wrestling and cheer, and to the extent possible by physical space, athletes will stand or sit at least 6 feet apart while waiting to compete or practice. Masking is required while not engaging in strenuous activity (repeated for emphasis). For basketball, a mask must be worn whenever a player is out of the game allowing for a period of recovery for players coming out of the game. For wrestling, a mask must be worn anytime athletes are not in an active match or recovering from a match. For cheer, a mask must be worn when the participant is in the gym.*
6. Given the critical importance of maintaining hydration, the high school will provide water or other hydrating drinks. Individual, non-shared water bottles or non-shared disposable cups are to be used. Refilling should be assigned to a team support person who must wear gloves and a mask while refilling containers to reduce the risk of virus transmission to surfaces.
7. Meals purchased during travel for competition will be of the “boxed” variety or brown bag from home. This is done to limit time waiting in line to order, reduce handling of meals by multiple people, and obviate the inherent physical distancing problems associated with dine-in meal services. If teams wish to purchase meals in out-of-town communities, they are encouraged to pre-order meals and use “grab and go” strategies.
8. Transportation to away games require athletes to sit on buses in assigned seats and identical front to back order across the season to help limit exposure to other people on the bus, while aiding in contact tracing if necessary. Buses will be limited to 25 individuals including coaches or chaperones. In an effort to reduce the number of athletes subject to quarantine should one member become positive for COVID-19, coaches should make all reasonable efforts to reduce intermixing of groups. This can be accomplished by having the same small group of individuals practice drills together, use the weight room together, sit together on the bus, sit together for team meetings, room together during overnight trips, etc. All occupants are required to wear masks during the time they are in the transporting vehicle.
9. Students are required to ride the school-provided transport vehicle to the competition to ensure arrival with the team and allow for timely game preparations. To facilitate exit from the competition and as allowed by District policy, participants may ride with parents/guardians for the trip home. This will decompress the bus on the return trip. Even if some students return home by alternative means, the assigned seating plan identified in #9 above must be maintained, subject to documented change only if riders can be separated by 6 feet or more.

10. The interior of each bus (e.g., seats, seat backs, windows, etc.) will be sanitized according to the district transportation processes, after arrival at each site and prior to re-boarding for another segment of the travel.
11. If a student or coach becomes ill during travel, that person must not ride with the team, but instead be transported by self, (for the coach) or a parent, guardian, family member, or designated school official in another vehicle so as not to expose the large number riding the team bus. If this transportation is provided by a designated school official, the ill student and any others in the vehicle should be spaced as widely as possible and all must be masked.
12. Any individuals associated with the team, including but not limited to coaches, medical personnel, cheer squads, District administrators, etc., who share rides in a vehicle other than on the team bus must be masked throughout the trip.
13. In anticipation of end of season tournaments which require travel out of town and overnight stay, students should be roomed other students from their pod. Masks must be worn in all public spaces, as well as when outside and unable to maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance. Masks must be worn in indoor spaces and sleeping rooms at all times except when sleeping, showering, or completing other hygiene tasks for which a mask is not feasible (e.g., brushing teeth.)
14. Concessions will not be offered.
15. Team personnel and athletes will be screened before every practice or competition for symptoms of COVID-19. All team members and personnel will be asked the same screening questions and will be required to follow the same guidelines in acting on positive screening responses. In the interest of safety and to reduce the risk of infection of others, coaches are strongly encouraged to have a very low threshold for removing participants from games or practices for any symptoms associated with COVID-19.
16. If a team member or personnel tests positive for COVID-19, the individual testing positive and the identified close contacts will be quarantined. For COVID-19, ** a close contact is defined as any individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for an accumulative time of 15 minutes in a 24 hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.*
(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/contact-tracing.html>)

Requirements of the plan: associated activities

1. Recognizing that some extra-curricular activities (for example and not by way of limitation, pep band and cheerleading) intersect with athletic events and participants in these endeavors practice, prepare, and perform, these activities will be allowed with physical distancing between participants and athletic team members.
2. No instrument “spit valves” are to be emptied on the floor or other hard surface used by multiple people at the same time.
3. Cheer / spirit squads must wear masks and may perform physically distanced cheers and stunts.
4. Participants in associated activities shall be subject to the procedures as participants in athletic events described in items 15 and 16 above.

News media

Members of the media, including videographers preparing sports reels, are allowed to attend school athletic events for purposes of covering the event and reporting only (i.e., not as fans but in their professional capacity) subject to the following restrictions:

1. Members of the media must be masked at all times while at the event.
2. Members of the media must conduct interviews or film participants from a distance of at least 6 feet from the person(s) being interviewed or filmed.
3. Microphones or other audio recording devices must be sanitized after every interview.