

# Branford Public Schools

## ATHLETIC

### RE-ENGAGEMENT PLAN

#### 2020-21



**This document has been prepared to guide the Branford Public School District in returning to play following the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been developed with guidance from the CT State Department of Education, Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC), National Federation of High Schools (NFHS), East Shore District Health Department, and Branford Public School district.**

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# **Branford High School/Walsh Intermediate School Model**

Branford Public Schools recognizes the enormity of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the education of our students. While the actions of canceling have been an unprecedented decision, our unwavering focus has been on the safety and welfare of all who are associated with the athletic program. This plan contains the necessary policies and protocols for the Branford Public Schools' Athletic Department the start of athletics in the fall. Ultimately the BOE has the authority to suspend, postpone or cancel the fall season based on the best interest of their student-athletes and the broader Branford community.

## **Branford High School**

Branford High School will be participating in regionalized Interscholastic Competition. Students will be traveling regionally utilizing an abbreviated schedule.

## **Walsh Intermediate School**

Walsh Intermediate School will participate in Middle School Fall Athletics using a School-Based Intramural Model. Students will not be traveling for competition, but rather will be competing against one another within our school.

## **CIAC Fall Sports Guidance**

The CIAC released a document, [“The CT Interscholastic Conference Resocialization of Interscholastic Athletics and Activities Programs Guidelines”](#) to guide school districts in the return to interscholastic athletic experiences.

The CIAC has released its guiding document [“CIAC Fall Sports Plan”](#)

CIAC sport specific committees will meet to provide further detail on individual sport mitigating strategies.

## **Physical Dates**

Due to the difficulty of scheduling a physical, the CIAC, in consultation with the medical society, has temporarily adjusted the policy for student physicals from 13 to 15 months. While this adjustment will be made to Branford's policy, our Board of Education policy P5141(e), which states:

**Health Assessments/Interscholastic Sports Programs:** Any student participating in an interscholastic sports program must have a health assessment. Each participant in a sport program must complete a health questionnaire prior to their health assessment. Completed physical examination forms, or copies of, must be on file in the Health Office of the high school or middle school prior to the first tryout/practice session. The physical examination is valid for **13 months\*** and must cover the athlete for the entire sport season (including the tryout period), as specified by the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC). Physicals cannot

expire during the season. The ARSD will annually post the dates for eligible physicals. A parent/guardian may submit an appeal to the Athletic Department in writing, if the last competition of the sports season is scheduled prior to **13 months\*** from the posted physical eligibility date. Physical examinations performed by a student's parent who is a medical professional will not be accepted.

***\*EXCEPTION: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CIAC has extended the 13-month rule to 15-months. This now places the fall sports physical cut-off date to: September 15, 2020.***

## **Athletic Registration**

Due to the pandemic and the cancellation of our fall sports information night, we have created some very important videos for you to learn about our athletic policies, protocols, and procedures. The videos may be viewed on our Athletic Department website here (add BHS link).

Registration for our fall athletics teams will continue to be through forms Infinite Campus Parent Portal. If you need further help with registration, please contact the Athletic Dept.

Parents will be able to upload BHS/SBHC pdf physical and medication documents in the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. This may be different at WIS as they continue to develop their process.

## **Tryout Information and Dates**

The CIAC resocialization of interscholastic athletics and activity programs guidelines call for the start date as August 17th for football and all other fall sports as August 27th. We will continue to be guided by the CIAC if any adjustments are necessary. All updated information will be posted on the Branford Athletic Department website.

## **Daily Screening Requirements**

Every student-athlete must complete the daily screening questions prior to the start of each practice and/or competition as prescribed by the CIAC.

All student-athletes must complete the COVID-19 daily screening prior to being eligible to participate each day. The screening questions may be found in Appendix A of this document. We will be using a digital form of this screening. More details will be provided prior to the season. If an athlete self reports yes for any of the symptoms listed on the COVID-19 daily screening, the coach must follow district protocols and the athlete should not attend practice.

If a student tests positive for COVID 19, the school/district must be notified immediately and local DPH must be contacted. The local DPH will direct the appropriate process.

## **Personal Protective Equipment Requirements**

Masks will be worn by coaches at all times while addressing the team and within proximity to any person. Masks will be worn by all student-athletes at all times except for times of physical exertion.

## Schedule Adjustments

The CIAC has discussed adjusting our schedules to regionalize, should there be a concern of long-distance travel and possible spread of the virus. The SCC scheduling committee has met and developed an alternative scheduling method should this be required. All schedule changes will be posted to [ArbiterLive](#) and [CIAC sports](#) websites.

Below is the CIAC adjusted seasons of limitations chart for fall sports:

	First Practice Date in Cohorts of 15	First Practice Date of Full Teams and Full Contact	First Scrimmage Date	First Contest Date	Max. Number of Regular Season Games	Max. Number of Games Per Week	*Last Date to Play	*Tourney Experience will provide all participating teams with additional games (Format TBA)
Cross Country	27-Aug	11-Sep	NA	24-Sep	12	2	29-Oct	31-Oct to 8-Nov
Field Hockey	27-Aug	11-Sep	18-Sep	24-Sep	12	2	30-Oct	2-Nov to 15-Nov
Football	17-Aug	11-Sep	18-Sep	24-Sep	6	1	30-Oct	2-Nov to 15-Nov
Soccer	27-Aug	11-Sep	18-Sep	24-Sep	12	2	30-Oct	2-Nov to 15-Nov
Swimming	27-Aug	11-Sep	NA	24-Sep	12	2	30-Oct	2-Nov to 15-Nov
Volleyball	27-Aug	11-Sep	18-Sep	24-Sep	12	2	30-Oct	2-Nov to 15-Nov

***A cohort of 15 was determined to be a reasonable number of student-athletes for coaches to work conditioning and skill progressions with while schools return to in-person instruction. There will be a three-week progression designed to slowly reacclimate student-athletes to the physical and skill conditioning level appropriate for interscholastic athletics given the extended layoff that athletes may have experienced since last March.***

***All contests will be scheduled regionally to limit transportation needs and maintain play within a geographic region to reduce COVID spread across the state. The CIAC will work with league commissioners to establish as much play within a league as possible. There will be outlier schools who are more regionally located to schools from other conferences. The CIAC will support our leagues and individual schools to develop a balanced regional schedule that provides students with an exceptional education-based athletic experience.***

***\*The CIAC will collaborate with league commissioners, athletic directors, and coaches to develop a tournament experience during the last two weeks of the fall season. No team will be eliminated***

*from competition during this experience to maximize the number of games each team will be able to play through the fall season.*

## **Daily Practices**

To ensure the safest environment for everyone involved in our athletics program, we will be instituting evening practices which will begin at 5pm and 7pm daily. All students MUST leave the school and campus following the dismissal of school. Student-athletes will then report directly to the field/gym they are practicing at the appropriate time.

1. At the final bell for the school day, EVERY student must leave campus; either by bus, car, or walk home. The entire campus will be swept by security to ensure no students remain. This will ensure that we are limiting the amount of contact in all areas.
2. Students will NOT be allowed to bring their practice attire or equipment with them to school during the school day. This will limit the amount of “stuff” they need with them during the school day.
3. Student-Athletes will return to campus/school, dressed, ready for play, and report directly to their practice/game area for practice to start. This will allow students to go home, do some schoolwork, and parents can get out of work and drive them back to campus.
4. There will be no access to locker rooms or changing areas. All players will transport their own equipment/pads to and from practice; there will be no storage of any equipment.
5. The athletic training room will be closed. The athletic trainer will go to every team rather than the team going to her.
6. Student-athletes must bring their own water; a minimum of 32 ounces of water. There will be no sharing of water – athlete to athlete and no communal water to reduce contact points.
7. Student-athletes AND coaches must have a mask – wearing it to the practice and during “bring it in” times per CIAC guidelines.
8. All student-athletes will be screened (Appendix A) prior to daily participation.

This plan does the following:

1. Separates the school day from the athletics program. Should we go to fully remote learning, there is a possibility our sports teams could still operate as independent small cohorts.
2. Eliminates students from hanging out in the school and increasing unnecessary contact points.
3. Ensures equipment will not be contaminated by others either in school or in a locker room.
4. Limits the amount of cleaning the custodians would have to do.

5. Limits cohort to cohort contact as teams will not intermingle; they will only be allowed in their own area under direct supervision of the coach.

## **Daily Attendance at “School” & Eligibility to Participate**

Daily attendance at “school” will be required to participate in athletics. There are 3 different scenarios to address:

1. Full In-school academics - Policy will be as stated student handbook\*.
2. Hybrid Model - Students must be marked “present” at both in-school and virtual classes each day to participate\*
3. Virtual Model - Students must be marked “present” each class, everyday to participate.

**\*Students who have temporarily opted out of in-person learning and are participating in voluntary remote learning will NOT be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities, including athletics.**

## **Cleaning of Equipment and Practice/Game Attire**

It is paramount to reduce the spread of COVID-19 to be cleanly. Washing your hands, taking a shower, and cleansing your equipment after every practice, competition, and use reduces the transmission of COVID-19. It is the responsibility of every student-athlete to properly clean and disinfect their personal equipment each and every day after use. Additionally, workout attire should not be worn again until properly washed and cleaned. This includes pinnies, practice shirts, and uniforms.

**Hygiene Practices** - Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer, especially after touching frequently used items or surfaces. Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place. Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow. Avoid touching your face. Appropriate clothing/shoes should always be worn to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment/surfaces. Athletes must be encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning to home. There should be no shared athletic towels, clothing, or shoes between students. Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces as much as possible. Athletes should take their equipment home with them and disinfect that equipment each night. Athletes should arrive at practice and games prepared to participate without the need to use a locker room, to the extent possible.

## **Transportation To Events Only**

The athletic department will continue to follow the policies regarding transportation to and from away contests as outlined in the student-athlete handbook with modifications as prescribed by the State Department of Education’s plan to Adapt, Advance, Achieve.

The following protocols will be in effect until further notice:

1. All student-athletes will be required to wear a face covering at all times while riding on school provided transportation.
2. Student-athletes will board the transportation, filling the bus from the rear to the front.
3. Student-athletes will load the bus the same both to and from their destination. The same student-athlete will sit in the same seat the entire trip.
4. There will only be one student-athlete per seat to accommodate student equipment.

## **Testing & Contact Tracing**

Testing and contact tracing will be guided by the ESHD. We will follow their guidance in any and all testing of coaches and/or student-athletes.

## **Travel to Quarantine State Prior to or During Season**

Should a student-athlete travel to an identified quarantine state at any time prior to the start or during the fall sports season, the student-athlete must report the travel to their Coach and the athletic department and also SELF-QUARANTINE 14 days as prescribed by the CDC and ESHD.

## **Fan Attendance**

**Spectator/Fan Attendance** - As an education-based experience, CIAC sports must consider the primary goal of maximizing on-campus learning for all students. Sport complexes and recreation athletic facilities are primarily utilized for sport contests. Conversely, school facilities are used as instructional areas when games are not being played. Due to the variety of fields used for interscholastic athletic competition, it is difficult to develop a one size fits all regulation. The CIAC understands that playing games without fans may be appropriate for some schools but not logistically possible for others. Any allowance for spectators/fans should provide well marked areas that maintain social distancing and follow capacity guidelines established in [Connecticut's Phase 2 reopening plan](#) and current CDC guidance. The CIAC supports the plans established by school districts that direct the presence of adults on campus at this time. Notwithstanding the above, permissible spectator/fan attendance will be governed by local districts' current operating plan. Therefore, it is Branford Public School District's decision to not have fans/spectators at sporting events.

## **Locker Rooms**

Locker rooms will not be used.

## **Gathering Limitation**

During practice/conditioning, athletes should remain grouped in smaller cohorts for purposes of spread mitigation and contact tracing strategy. When not directly participating in practices or contests, care should be taken to maintain a minimum distance of 6 feet between each individual. Consider using tape or paint as a guide for athletes and coaches. Vulnerable individuals should not supervise or participate in any workouts.



## Bad Weather Plan

Should bad weather encroach on our practices or competitions, many of the same protocols will continue to be followed. In the event student-athletes must take cover due to a weather related issue (such as lightning), everyone must be wearing a mask, stay as socially distant as possible in your cohort. The Coach will be responsible for notifying the athletic director of the location to ensure it is properly disinfected and cleaned.

## Game Officials

Game officials will adhere to the CIAC guidelines and should wear face covering whenever possible. – The CIAC has suspended the regulation of providing a room for officials for the fall season. Officials should come to contests dressed for contests, whenever possible.

# Appendix A

## COVID-19 Athlete/Coach Daily Monitoring Form

Date:	Circle Yes/No Below																			
	Player Name	Player Name	Player Name	Player Name	Player Name	Player Name	Player Name	Player Name	Player Name	Player Name	Player Name	Player Name	Player Name	Player Name	Player Name	Player Name	Player Name	Player Name	Player Name	Player Name
Fever or Chills	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Cough	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Nasal Congestion or Runny Nose	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Sore Throat	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Diarrhea	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Nausea or Vomiting	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Fatigue	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Headache	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Muscle or Body Aches	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
New Loss of Taste or Smell	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Temp (If Higher Than 100.3)																				

Have you been out-of-state? Yes No

If yes, please indicate, dates and location.