



## RONDOUT VALLEY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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January 31, 2021

Dear Rondout Valley School Community:

On January 22, 2021, Governor Cuomo announced that effective February 1, 2021, participants in higher risk sports and recreation activities may partake in individual or distanced group training and organized no/low-contact group training and may partake in other types of play, including competitions and tournaments, only as permitted by their local health departments.

Wrestling, ice hockey, basketball, football, contact lacrosse, and volleyball are among the sports categorized as higher risk.

On January 27<sup>th</sup>, the District received a guidance document from the Ulster County Department of Health stating that effective February 1, 2021, and until otherwise indicated, student-athletes are permitted to participate in K-12 sponsored higher-risk school sports in Ulster County, provided that specific requirements are met. Despite being ready to begin sports these requirements will take some time to implement.

These requirements include:

- ✓ Board of Education approval for participation in each higher-risk sports.
- ✓ Superintendent must oversee the creation of a sport-specific preparedness plan that delineates:
  - A plan administrator, who is responsible for communicating the plan to -athletes, coaches, parents, trainers, referees/officials, etc.
  - A plan coordinator, who will serve as a point of contact, should any cases be identified. The coordinator must facilitate and assist with case investigation and contact elicitation and notification.
  - A daily system to ensure that no one associated with the practice or competition is ill, including referees/officials and spectators.
  - A system for logging attendance by all individuals associated with the practice or competition, including referees/officials and spectators. The system must capture names, phone numbers and email addresses.
  - How practice and game times can be staggered to avoid crowding and congestion when participants, referees/officials and spectators are arriving, playing, and leaving.

- If feasible, how pods can be created to limit the potential for transmission in the event of an exposure. A pod is a group of 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.
- How sharing of objects (e.g. water bottles, towels, snacks) will be avoided and the use of dedicated personal equipment encouraged.
- If feasible, how practices or competitions can be held outdoors. If not feasible, how time spent indoors can be minimized.
- How locker rooms and facility shower use can be avoided.
- How carpooling can be discouraged to the extent possible.
- How travel by buses will conform to social distancing requirements for buses per state school transportation requirements; for recreational leagues, use of buses should also conform to NYS guidance for social distancing bus transportation requirements for schools.
- For games requiring overnight travel, how hotel room sharing can be discouraged, to the extent possible.
- How congregate dining will be minimized and when it is necessary, how NYS social distancing regulations related to dining and gatherings will be adhered to.
- ✓ Each sport-specific preparedness plan must be approved by the district/school's medical director.
- ✓ Each parent/guardian must sign a district/school developed SARS-CoV-2 informed consent that, at a minimum, acknowledges that:
  - Participation in the higher-risk sport places the student-athlete at risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2.
  - 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.
  - SARS-CoV-2 can lead to serious medical conditions and death for people of all ages.
  - The long-term effects of SARS-CoV-2 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.
  - This acknowledgement shall include consent that a condition of ongoing participation will be full cooperation with case/ contact investigations and compliance with isolation/quarantine requests if indicated.

- ✓ Each district/school obtains a medical clearance from the student-athletes healthcare provider.

We are pleased that we have received the go ahead for sports and are currently working to put into place the required guidelines, but they will take some time to implement. As we continue to develop our plans, we will share any additional information and guidance from the County Health Department.

Once we have developed the above requirements and receive the required approvals, we will move forward with the resumption of higher risk sports.

Sincerely,

Joseph Morgan, Superintendent