

## THE 2020-2021 SPORTS SEASON

. . . unlike any other

### Section I: Assumed Risk

In addition to the usual risks taken on while playing sports, this year, the risk of contracting the Corona virus is also at play. The CDC has outlined risk according to different types of activity:

**Lowest Risk:** Performing skill-building drills or conditioning at home, alone or with members of the same household

**Increasing Risk:** Team-based practice

**More Risk:** Within-team competition

**Higher Risk:** Full competition between teams from the same local geographic area (e.g., city or county)

**Highest Risk:** Full competition between teams from different geographic areas (e.g., outside county or state)

Additionally the National Federation of High Schools has broken down risk of spreading the virus based on the specific sport.

**Lower risk:** Individual running events, throwing events, individual swimming, golf, weightlifting, alpine skiing, sideline cheer, single sculling, cross country running with staggered starts

**Moderate risk:** Basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball, soccer, water polo, gymnastics, ice hockey, field hockey, tennis, swimming relays, pole vault, high jump, long jump, girls' lacrosse, crew with two or more rowers in shell, 7-on-7 football

**Higher risk:** Wrestling, football, boys' lacrosse, competitive cheer, dance

While infections among those under 18 are usually fewer in number and less in severity, some young people do experience more severe symptoms, especially if there are underlying conditions. According to the CDC: People of any age with the following conditions are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19:

- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
- Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher)
- Serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Sickle cell disease
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus

COVID-19 is a new disease. Currently there are limited data and information about the impact of underlying medical conditions and whether they increase the risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Based on what we know at this time, people with the following conditions might be at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19:

- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Cerebrovascular disease (affects blood vessels and blood supply to the brain)
- Cystic fibrosis
- Hypertension or high blood pressure
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines
- Neurologic conditions, such as dementia
- Liver disease
- Pregnancy

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- Pulmonary fibrosis (having damaged or scarred lung tissues)
- Smoking
- Thalassemia (a type of blood disorder)
- Type 1 diabetes mellitus

There has been a high percentage of persons under age 18 who have the virus but show no symptoms. These persons can place at risk other persons in the home as well as grandparents and other adults with whom they interact.

### Section I Discussion:

1. Is our child at greater risk due to a combination of being in a number of higher risk categories?
2. Are we willing to put our child at risk to play sports this year?
3. Are we willing to place other family members at risk?

### Section II: Empty Stadiums/Empty Gymnasiums

According to Pennsylvania's "Guidance for All Sports Permitted to Operate During the CoVid 19 Disaster Emergency to Ensure the Safety and Health of Employees, Athletes and the Public" Issued 6.10 and updated 8.6.20:

*"The administration strongly recommends that Pre-K to 12 school sports be postponed until at least Jan. 1, 2021. The administration is providing this strong recommendation and not an order or mandate.*

*Sports-related activities at the PK-12 level are limited to student athletes, coaches, officials, and staff only. Band and cheer are also allowed in a sports setting, but individuals involved in such activities count towards gathering limitations and must comply with face covering order and social distancing guidelines. Visitors and spectators are prohibited from attending in-person sports-related activities."*

This means parents will not be permitted to attend games. We understand this is difficult but it must be done. Parents and spectators are not to be in the gym, gym lobby, or other part of the school. For outdoor events, parents and spectators should not be in the stadium, along the fence, on the hill or tailgating in the parking lot. While spectators are usually a big part of a game, for the sake of our students, we need to do everything possible to keep exposure limited.

An option will be to watch games streamed live. Currently, something known as a Pixellot System will be installed on September 16 and 17 in the high school gymnasium and Linden Field. Tentatively, games will be live streamed beginning the week of September 20. Live streaming is available by subscription only (not through the district but the company providing the equipment). The cost is \$10.99 a month or \$69.99 for the year. A subscription entitles you to watch any game from any of the 7,000 schools in the country using the system so, if you have relatives playing in other states, see if they have this system.

### Section II Discussion:

1. Are we willing to keep our distance and abide by the ban on spectators?
2. Can we be satisfied to watch the game from home?

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### Section III: Transportation

If the players on a team can fit on a bus with the restrictions placed by CoVid, those players **MUST** wear a mask the entire time. Windows will be cracked for ventilation so students must dress appropriately. Because of the increased use of busses and drivers for our instructional program, there may be times we will not have available busses and drivers and may have to ask parents to transport players to a game you cannot stay and watch.

#### Section III Discussion Questions:

1. Would we be willing to transport my child to a game we cannot stay and watch?

### Section IV: CONSIDERATIONS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

(A family's role in maintaining safety guidelines for themselves and others):

- Parents/Guardians should monitor their children for any symptoms prior to any sporting activities. Children who are sick or showing symptoms must stay home. (If there is doubt stay home).
- Parents/Guardians and coaches should assess levels of risk based on individual athletes on the team who may be at a higher risk for severe illness.
- Provide personal items for your child and clearly label them.
- Disinfect your student's personal equipment after each game or practice.
- Inform coaches if your student-athlete has been exposed to someone who is known to have COVID-19.
- Locker rooms cannot be used because social distancing and masking requirements cannot be met. Football players will put helmets and shoulder pads in the locker room (a small number entering at one time) and wear everything else home.

In normal times, a player not feeling well would be encouraged to "suck it up" and do their best for the sake of the team. It will feel counter-intuitive this year to keep them home when in doubt. The same screening protocols given to parents to review before students come to school should be reviewed before your athlete comes to a practice or game. Temperature scans performed before leaving home are more useful than upon arrival so if you have a scanner, please use it.

#### Section IV Discussion Questions:

1. Can I convince my athlete to be "safe rather than sorry" when he or she is not feeling well?
2. Can we commit to the extra cleaning and disinfecting that will be required?

### Section V: Starting and Stopping

Due to infections and risk of Covid infections, there may be practice and game cancellations somewhat frequently. Opponents may have to cancel due to an outbreak. Referees, who generally are in the higher risk category, may not be available for a game.

Because there is no clear research on spread of the virus among sports teams and because the game itself will preclude social distancing and masking, whole teams may have to be placed on quarantine for 14

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days should a team member test positive. A 14 day quarantine means the student stays at home, not attending school or sporting activities.

According the PIAA Return to Competition issued 8.22.2020, “If a positive COVID-19 case is determined, follow their school safety plans, Department of Health, CDC, and local health guidelines in determining the plan of action.”

At General McLane, that decision will be made by the Pandemic Coordinator and Assistant Pandemic coordinator who will work with county health officials. All cases must be reported to the county health department and they will follow up – the role of the school is to act quickly as the county health department is sometimes behind. All quarantine decisions are final and not subject to appeal. The county will release students in isolation (test positive for the virus) and students on quarantine.

### Section V Discussion:

1. Can we deal with the frustration of an on again/off again season?
2. Will we accept any decisions regarding 14 day quarantines?

### Section VI: Travel Ban

Currently, if you travel to certain states where the transmission rate is high, it is recommended by the state and required by the district to quarantine for 14 days upon your return. Again, quarantine means staying at home for 14 days - no school except for online learning.

The list of states on the ban is updated every Friday at

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Travelers.aspx> or just google, PA state travel ban.

### Section VI Discussion:

1. Are we planning any trips during or within 14 days prior to the season?
2. What will the impact be of this trip as it requires missing school and practice during the trip and for fourteen days upon return?



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## General McLane School District Participation Waiver for Communicable Diseases Including COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented athletics across the world with a myriad of challenges concerning this highly contagious illness that primarily attacks the upper respiratory system. Some severe outcomes have been reported in children, and a child with a mild or even asymptomatic case of COVID-19 can spread the infection to others who may be far more vulnerable.

While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of furthering the spread of COVID-19, the GMSD will take necessary precautions in compliance with applicable guidelines from the federal, state, and local governments, CDC, PA DOH, as well as the NFHS and PIAA, to reduce the risks to students, coaches, and their families. As knowledge regarding COVID-19 is constantly changing, GMSD reserves the right to adjust and implement precautionary methods as necessary to decrease the risk of exposure for our staff, students, and spectators.

The undersigned acknowledge that participating in athletic programs, events, and activities may include a possible exposure to a communicable disease including but not limited to MRSA, influenza, and COVID-19. The undersigned further acknowledge that they are aware of the risks associated with COVID-19 and that certain vulnerable individuals may have greater health risks associated with exposure to COVID-19, including individuals with serious underlying health conditions such as, but not limited to: high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, asthma, and those whose immune systems that are compromised by chemotherapy for cancer, and other conditions requiring such therapy. While particular recommendations and personal discipline may reduce the risks associated with participating in athletics during the COVID-19 pandemic, the risk of serious illness, medical complications and possible death does exist.

By signing this form, the undersigned voluntarily agree to the following Waiver and release of liability. The undersigned agree to release and discharge all claims for ourselves, our heirs, and as a parent or legal guardian for the Student named below, against the GMSD, its Board of Directors, successors, assigns, officers, agents, employees, and volunteers and will hold them harmless from any and all liability or demands for personal injury, psychological injury, sickness, death, or claims resulting from personal injury or property damage, of any nature whatsoever which may be incurred by the Student or the undersigned relating to or as a result of the Student's participation in athletic programs, events, and/or activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We knowingly and freely assume all such risks, both known and unknown, even if arising from the negligence of others, including GMSD and/or agents of GMSD, and assume full responsibility for Student's participation in athletics during the COVID-19 pandemic. We willingly agree to comply with the stated recommendations put forth by the GMSD to limit the exposure and spread of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases. We certify that the Student is in good physical condition or believe the Student to be in good physical condition and allow participation in this sport at our own risk.

We have read and understand the GMSD document, "The 2020-2021 Sports Season . . . unlike any other" and will abide by the parameters set therein.

Sport: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student Athlete: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_