

# RETURN-TO-PLAY GUIDELINES

*Freeland Whippets Midget Football Association, Inc*

**EFFECTIVE: April 1, 2021**

## **Sporting/Athletic Activities Guidance for K-12 Schools and Non-School Youth and Adult Sports**



### **TRANSMISSION RISK FACTORS**

The risk of transmitting the SARS CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 depends on multiple factors including:

1. Number of people in a location
2. Type of location
3. Distance between people
4. Length of time at location
5. Level of protective equipment used (e.g. face coverings)

As general guidance, smaller groups are safer than larger ones; outdoor locations are safer than indoor; sports that can ensure distance of six (6) feet or more are safer than closer contact; and shorter duration is safer than longer.

### **EXPOSURE PROTOCOL**

Stay home when sick or if in close contact with someone with COVID-19.

Athletes, coaches, umpires/referees, spectators and any other paid or volunteer staff should be required to stay home if they feel unwell, show any signs of COVID-19, or have been exposed to a confirmed case or close contact. All coaches and students should be screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to a workout. Screening should consider [symptoms listed by the CDC](#). Any person with symptoms of COVID-19 or who has been in close contact with someone confirmed to have COVID-19 should not be allowed to participate and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional.

Those who are excluded from training or contests due to COVID-19 symptoms or because they are close contacts must follow DOH and local public health isolation and quarantine guidance before returning to training or contests.

People with underlying health conditions should consult with their medical providers regarding participation in athletic activities.

## **MASKS**

Masks are recommended during play. All coaches and participants not actively participating must wear a facial covering\*. Any spectators must wear facial coverings per the Department of Health facial covering order. Coaches, referees/umpires, trainers, managers, spotters, and any volunteer staff must wear face coverings at all times. Face coverings must be worn during captains meetings by athletes, coaches and officials.

*\*Note: This language was changed due to the PIAA update on March 4, 2020 which does not require athletes participating in spring sports to mask during participation if distancing can be maintained.*

## **PHYSICAL DISTANCING**

Physical distance of 6 feet must be maintained between staff, volunteers, and any spectators at all times with exceptions for training and medical personnel and volunteers performing their medical duties. Six feet of distance should be maintained among athletes when not engaged in sporting activities, huddles and team meetings. Avoid grouping of athletes at the start and end of practice or during transitions and stagger start times for meetings/workouts when possible.

## **HYGIENE**

Require athletes, coaches, umpires/referees and any other paid or volunteer staff to practice good hygiene including washing their hands frequently and covering their sneezes and coughs. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after practice, especially after touching shared objects or blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains 60-95% alcohol content. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they are dry. Athletes should not share water bottles, uniforms, equipment (unless properly sanitized), towels, or snacks and should not spit (saliva, sunflower seeds, etc.).

Provide handwashing or hand sanitizing stations at training and contest locations. Each team should be responsible for its own hand sanitizer and medical kit. Players and coaches should use hand sanitizer before entering and exiting the facility/stadium and any time they enter the sideline, bench, or dugout. There should be no pre or post-game handshakes, high-fives or fist bumps. Balls may be passed/shared, provided students wash their hands before and after the practice/contest.

When possible, athletes, coaches and officials should come dressed appropriately for the contest.

## **CLEANING**

Clean high-touch surfaces and disinfect shared equipment before and after each use. Ensure restrooms are cleaned and disinfected prior to and after any activity.

Individual drills requiring the use of athletic equipment are permissible, but the equipment should be cleaned prior to use by the next individual. Clothing, towels, pads, etc. should be washed and cleaned after every workout or event. Paper towels and disinfectant will be at all times to ensure proper sanitization of equipment.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Limit exposure to those outside the household unit during travel. Encourage only those in the same household to travel together, and if not in the same household, travel in separate vehicles if possible.

For travel groups (groups that include more than one household in the same vehicle whether in a carpool or on a bus), all members of the travel group, including the driver, must wear a face covering and spread out as much as possible within the vehicle. Limit travel groups to those who have been in regular contact (i.e. team members). Encourage family members to sit together. Maximize ventilation in the vehicle by opening windows.

## **RECORDS AND CONTACT TRACING**

Keep a roster of every athlete, staff, and volunteer present at each practice, training session, and contest to assist with contact tracing in the event of a possible exposure. Similarly, keep a roster and seating chart for each travel group. Attendance rosters and seating charts must be kept on file for 28 days after the practice, contest, or trip.

# NFHS RETURN TO COMPETITION RECOMMENDATIONS

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- **Considerations for Officials, Coaches, Other Personnel**
  - Organizations should have officials' information in order to track contacts.
  - A separate bathroom should be provided for officials when possible.
  - Officials are recommended to bring their own food and water.
  - Electronic whistles are preferred.
  - Officials must be spaced 3-6 feet apart.
  - Officials will not be expected to monitor the physical distancing; each person and organizations are responsible.
  - Cleaning supplies should be available on site with devices sanitized between uses.
- **FOOTBALL RULES CONSIDERATIONS**
  - **TEAM BOX**
    - The team box may be extended on both sides of the field to the 10-yard lines
  - **BALL**
    - The ball should be cleaned and sanitized throughout the contest as recommended by the ball manufacturer.
  - **FACE MASKS**
    - Cloth face coverings are permissible.
    - Plastic shields covering the entire face (unless integrated into the face mask and attached to the helmet and clear without the presence of any tint) shall not be allowed during the contest.
  - **TOOTH AND MOUTH PROTECTORS**
    - \*\*Still being determined at this time on how to best handle the tooth and mouth protector during the contest. The NFHS will update as soon as guidance is developed for all sports that require a toothand mouth protector.
  - **GLOVES**
    - Gloves are permissible but still must comply by meeting either the NOCSAE Standard or the PIAA Specification.
  - **STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTIONS**
    - Each state association may adopt other playing/administrative rules for football for the 2020 season that would decrease exposure to respiratory droplets and COVID-19.
  - **CHARGED TIME-OUTS AND AUTHORIZED CONFERENCES**
    - A single charged time-out may be extended to a maximum of two minutes in length.

- The authorized conference for the charged time-out should take place between the 9-yard marks and not at the sideline for social-distancing purposes.
    - Each game official and player should have their own beverage container brought out to them on the field.
  - **INTERMISSION BETWEEN PERIODS AND AFTER SCORING**
    - The intermission may be extended to a maximum of two minutes between the first and second and the third and fourth periods and following a try, successful field goal or safety, and prior to the succeeding free kick.
- **FOOTBALL GAME OFFICIALS MANUAL CONSIDERATIONS**
  - **GAME OFFICIALS UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT**
    - Electronic whistles are permissible.
      - Choose a whistle whose tone will carry outside.
      - Fox 40 Mini -
      - Fox 40 Unisex Electronic – (3 tone) -
      - Ergo-Guard - (3 tone) - orange
      - Windsor - (3 tone)
      - Check the market for other choices
    - Gloves are permissible.
    - Do not share uniforms, towels and other apparel and equipment.
  - **PREGAME CONFERENCE, COIN TOSS AND OVERTIME PROCEDURES**
    - For the coin toss, limit attendees to the referee, umpire and one designated representative from each team.
    - Maintain social distancing of 6 feet while performing all pregame responsibilities with all officiating crew members, game administration staff, line-to-gain crew, clock operators, individuals handling the balls during the game and team personnel.
    - For the overtime procedure, please use the same procedure as used at the start of the contest for the coin toss.
- **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FOOTBALL**
  - Before, during and after the contest, players, coaches, game officials, team personnel and game administration officials should wash and sanitize their hands as often as possible.
  - Gloves are permissible for all coaches and team staff and for all game administration officials.
  - Try and limit the number of non-essential personnel who are on the field level throughout the contest.

## COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines 2021 Freeland Flag Football

### COVID-19 POLICIES:

- **MASKS are required to be worn at all times – PLEASE see MASK FAQ for further details**
  - This includes Guardians, Players on and off the field, Referees, Scorekeepers, and staff. **Players are recommended to wear masks during contest.**
- Self-Assessments will need to be filled out prior to entry at Della Croce Field. Link to the form is below. Having this ready to go when you arrive will help speed up your check in time! Parent and Player on 1 form is fine!  
[www.freelandwhippets.com/covidassessment](http://www.freelandwhippets.com/covidassessment)
- **Teams and spectators will be allowed to enter the field 10 minutes before their scheduled game time. Until that point PLEASE remain in your cars.** You will be sent back to your car if you try to come in before 10 minutes of your game time!
  - If your playing field is cleared you will be allowed onto your field.
  - If your field is still playing you will be asked to stand as a team, including the team coaches, in a designated area on the field. Please remain in that area until a league representative tells you that you can go to your playing field.
- PLEASE be smart and social distance as much as possible while waiting. This is an important measure to ensure safety
- **There is a spectator limit of five (5) people per player.**

### ENTERING THE FACILITY PROTOCOL:

- **Everyone entering the facility must complete the self-assessment form within 2 hours before their scheduled game. Self-assessment form can be printed from our website or completed electronically.**
- Everyone will have their temperature checked at the designated entrance gate and checked for COVID-19 symptoms upon arriving at the facility.
  - All coaches and athletes will be checked for COVID-19 symptoms when they arrive at the facility. If they are showing any symptoms, have a temperature of 100 or higher, or are sick, they will be sent home.
- Hand washing upon entering the facility is highly encouraged. There will be multiple handwashing stations throughout the field.
- Once cleared to enter the field, player should go immediately to their field if the field is cleared from the previous game.

### GAME PROTOCOL:

- Players and coaches should avoid shaking hands, fist bumps, or high fives before, during or after games. Physical contact should be limited with teammates, players, coaches and officials as much as possible.
- Equipment and personal items should be separated and not shared with others. If equipment is shared, it must be disinfected after use.
- Game ball, flags, and any other gear used will be sanitized before the start of each game.

- There will be a 10-minute gap between games to allow for adequate time for the teams from the previous game to exit the field before the next teams show up to play. We ask that you arrive no earlier than 10 minutes before your scheduled game time to minimize interaction between athletes, coaches and officials as much as possible.
- Hand washing is strongly encouraged prior to the start of the game and after the game is completed. Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Individuals should avoid face touching whenever possible.

#### **MASKING:**

- Parents/spectators/fans are all required to wear masks at all times.
- Mandatory masking of each teams coaching staff, players, and other personnel will be enforced. Players not actively participating will also be required to mask (i.e. players on the sideline).
  - Athletes will be required to wear masks as they enter and exit the facility. They will also be required to wear a mask while on the bench/sidelines. We recommend masks be worn during competition; however, it is not required.

#### **SOCIAL DISTANCING & SEATING:**

- Coaches and athletes must maintain appropriate social distancing at all possible times. This includes while on the sidelines, in the hallways, etc.
- Spectators are expected to provide their own seating. All bleachers will be blocked off for the spring season.
- Families should bring their own seating (i.e. folding chairs).
- We will allow families to sit together within the 6 ft social distancing guidelines but will require anyone that is not family to use another designated area to sit.

#### **COVID BEST PRACTICES:**

- If a player or coach is showing COVID-19 symptoms, has a temperature of 100 or higher, or are sick, they must stay home.
  - Symptoms of COVID-19 include: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.
- If you feel sick at the facility and have any symptoms of COVID-19 we ask that you report this to a staff member immediately. You will then be entered into our COVID protocol.
- Players, Coaches, Officials, and Spectators that have tested positive for COVID-19 or have had contact with a person that has contracted COVID-19, we ask that you quarantine for 14 days, stay home and monitor your health.

\* All guidelines are subject to change as local and state officials put out new procedures and guidance.

## COVID-19 EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

- Individuals will immediately be separated if they are showing COVID-19 symptoms.
- All areas used by the sick individual will be closed off and cleaned after a 24-hour period has passed.
- The individual will immediately be sent home and should be tested as soon as possible for COVID-19. If tested positive, the individual will not be allowed back to the facility for at least 10 days after testing positive for COVID-19 and after having no fever for 3 days.
- If the individual is tested for COVID-19, one of the league officials must be contacted immediately with the results whether they are positive or negative. Any team that had contact with the individual who tests positive for COVID-19 will not be allowed back to the facility for 14 days and can return if they show no symptoms after that time.
- **POINT OF CONTACT: MATT WALSH (570) 956-2527**
- Local health officials, staff, and families will be notified immediately of the exposure or confirmed case of COVID-19. Confidentiality of the infected individual(s) will be maintained at all time (i.e. no names or symptoms will be revealed about the individual who would test positive for COVID-19).



# Freeland Whippets Football COVID-19 Self-Assessment Form

\*This form is to be filled out within **2 hours** of your scheduled start time and to be signed and handed into FWF Staff prior to getting to your field. You will not be allowed to participate without this completed form or if you are exhibiting any of the below symptoms.

### **Symptoms Include:**

Cough  
Difficulty breathing  
Fever (100.5 F or above)  
Chills  
Sore throat  
Loss of taste or smell

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Game Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Temperature: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Taken: \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you had a cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, a fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat or loss of taste or smell within the last 14 days?**

Yes or No

**Have you been in contact with anyone that has had a cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, a fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell within the last 14 days?**

Yes or No

Signature of Attendee or Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_