

# NOTICE OF RISKS, INFORMED CONSENT REGARDING INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS DURING COVID-19

(This document is available, with active links, on the Ashford School webpage)

Given the current pandemic health emergency related to the highly contagious novel coronavirus (“COVID-19”), and following the recommendations of the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) for the continued operation of sports activities for interscholastic youth sports, the Ashford Board of Education and the Ashford Public Schools invites students to participate in District-sponsored interscholastic sports during the 2021 spring season under certain conditions and consistent with all applicable rules, regulations, federal and state orders and guidance, and guidance from public health officials related to COVID-19. This Notice of Risks and Informed Consent, relates to students’ optional and voluntary participation in the 2021 spring season of sports, which participation is expected to begin on or around April 12, 2021, and continue until on or around May 28, 2021. The parents or legal guardians of participating students and the Student must sign the last page of this Notice and return it to the main office by **Monday, April 12, 2021**.

## INFORMATION ABOUT COVID-19

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person, primarily through respiratory droplets. Recent data suggest that there can be transmission of COVID-19 through respiratory droplets of those with mild (or no) symptoms or those who do not feel ill. COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild (or no) symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include, among other symptoms, fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, headache, congestion or runny nose, muscle or body aches, sore throat, new loss of smell or taste, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. The estimated incubation period is between 2 and 14 days. It is important to note that some people become infected and do not develop any symptoms or feel unwell. The CDC advises, among other precautionary measures, that everyone two years and older should wear masks in public; stay at least six feet away from others who do not live with them; avoid crowds; avoid indoor spaces that do not offer fresh air from the outdoors as much as possible, and if indoors, bring in fresh air by opening windows and doors, if possible; wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not readily available; cover coughs and sneezes; clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily; monitor their health daily; and stay home and isolate from others when sick.

Additional information regarding COVID-19 is available on the following websites:

- CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
- DPH website at <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus>

Although the District has implemented certain preventative measures consistent with applicable rules, regulations, federal and state orders and guidance, and guidance from public health officials related to COVID-19, the District cannot ensure that Students participating in Spring Sports and/or their families or others in the Student’s household will not become infected with COVID-19. Moreover, the District cannot protect against exposure to or infection by COVID-19 that occurs due to the actions, omissions, and/or negligence of students or others, including District staff members.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE OPERATION OF SPORTS ACTIVITIES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Due to the rapid increases in community cases in the weeks leading up to the holidays, DPH and the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) recommended a “pause” on team sports activities effective November 23, 2020 through January 19, 2021. As of January 8, 2021, DPH continued to

recommend a cautious approach to any restart of athletic activities. In its Updated Guidance for the Operations of Interscholastic, Youth and other Amateur Sport Activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic, effective March 19, 2021 through May 27, 2021, DPH has offered revised guidance for the continued operation of sports activities in the interest of primary prevention of COVID-19 disease (the “Spring Guidance”). The Spring Guidance advises that DPH and DECD will continue to monitor pandemic metrics and will issue updated guidance for the spring sports season on or around May 17, 2021. The Spring Guidance further notes that, due to quarantine and isolation requirements if an individual is a close contact or infected with COVID-19, there are additional potential ramifications of operating sports activities, including compromising the ability of school districts to continue to offer in-person learning opportunities and the ability of adults and parents to attend work, for an extended period of time.

The Spring Guidance notes that, because of the environment in which activities take place (e.g., indoors vs. outdoors), community COVID-19 transmission rates, and other factors, certain sports are more likely to promote exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19 through respiratory droplets. Sports organizations are advised to pay specific attention to these risks when making a determination whether or not to engage in activities in the coming months, to inform players and parents of the risks of participation, and to be aware of any additional restrictions or requirements from local health departments or other local agencies. The Spring Guidance also acknowledges that the CDC recommends consideration of many variables in assessing the potential risks for COVID-19 spread. Both the NFHS and CDC recommend considering the overall risk of participation in athletic activities to be a continuum represented by many different variables, some of which can be mitigated to affect the overall risk profile of a particular sport or activity, rather than rigid risk categories for individual sports. The NFHS and CDC further recommend that athletic organizers pay special attention to COVID-19 case and test positivity rates locally and in the surrounding communities, which may be indicative of increased risk associated with group activities, including athletics.

Regarding mask-wearing, the Spring Guidance states: “Any athletic activities occurring indoors, as well as those occurring outdoors that involve frequent close contact between participants, require the use of a mask that completely covers the nose and mouth, and that is worn directly on the face (i.e. not attached to a helmet or other equipment), at all times, including during active play.” This mask-wearing requirement applies to all participants, coaches, officials, spectators, and any other individuals associated with athletic events. As noted below, the Spring Guidance offers specific recommendations and considerations regarding mask-wearing that differ according to the risk levels associated with individual sports and activities. The Spring Guidance also advises that individuals required to quarantine due to close contact with a known COVID-19 case must not gather with other athletes for engagement in team sports prior to completion of a full 14-day quarantine requirement, notwithstanding any guidance to the contrary regarding the shortening of required quarantine periods. For a complete list of DPH’s recommendations based on the risk level of various sports, please carefully review the Spring Guidance.

### **Return-to-Play after COVID-19 Infection**

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-interim-guidance-return-to-sports/>

For DPH’s guidance regarding, among other relevant matters, (1) risk categorization for various sports; (2) recommended COVID-19 mitigation strategies; (3) mask wearing, (4) quarantine requirements, and (5) return-to-play after COVID-19 infection, please carefully review in its entirety the Spring Guidance, available at [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DPH/Communications/Covid19/DPH-Youth-and-Amateur-Sports-COVID19\\_UPDA\\_TED\\_Mar\\_2021\\_v53.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DPH/Communications/Covid19/DPH-Youth-and-Amateur-Sports-COVID19_UPDA_TED_Mar_2021_v53.pdf)

INFORMED CONSENT for Spring Sport Participation at Ashford School

We, \_\_\_\_\_ [PARENTS AND STUDENT NAMES], understand that the Student has the opportunity to participate in Spring Sports. We understand that Spring Sports will take place both on and off District grounds and will be provided consistent with current applicable health and safety guidance from federal, state, and local authorities. We understand that the choice to have the Student participate in Spring Sports is voluntary. In signing below, the Parents attest that we are the parent/guardian of the above-named Student, and the Parents and Student attest that we have read the Notice and the websites cited herein and understand the risks related to COVID-19 associated with participating in Spring Sports. We further understand that there are cardiovascular and other health and safety risks associated with returning to athletic activities after COVID-19 infection. We also acknowledge that the health and safety risks posed by COVID-19 cannot be completely eliminated, despite the implementation of reasonable and age-appropriate precautions and protocols. We further understand that DPH and NFHS have identified various factors relevant to determining the level of risk of the potential for COVID-19 transmission involved in any sport or athletic activity and that there is increased potential for spread of potentially infectious respiratory droplets among players engaged in repeated face-to-face contact with exertion. Finally, given the unknown nature of COVID-19, we understand that it is not possible to list each and every specific risk associated with COVID-19 and that neither the District nor public health officials can guarantee that any student participating in Spring Sports or other in-person activities will not come into contact with someone infected by COVID-19 and/or contract such illness. By opting to allow the Student to participate in Spring Sports, we agree that the Parents and the Student will abide by any such health and safety protocols that the District may require.

In consideration for being allowed to participate in Spring Sports, we fully ASSUME ALL RISKS, inherent and otherwise, whether or not described above, in connection with the Student's participation in Ashford School Spring Sports.

WE HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE NOTICE ABOVE (INCLUDING THE INFORMATION ABOUT COVID-19 AND THE OPERATION OF SPORTS ACTIVITIES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC) AND CONSENT TO THE STUDENT PARTICIPATING IN SPRING SPORTS DURING THE 2021 SPRING SEASON.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Legal Guardian signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please return this form and keep the first two pages for your records.