



## **South Dakota High School Activities Association**

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August 10, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Greetings from myself, the SDHSAA staff, and the SDHSAA Board of Directors. As you are all aware, the last five months have been extraordinary and unprecedented across our communities, state, country, and world. With heavy hearts we cancelled our remaining winter and all spring state events last May, and have worked diligently over the summer to study, prepare, and implement mitigation strategies that we hope will allow us to carry out full seasons of all of our sanctioned activities and events this school year. These mitigation strategies include rules modifications, screening procedures, protocol for confirmed close contacts and confirmed positive cases, and SDHSAA policy changes to address the current situation. We are thankful for the work of our Task Force, made up of medical professionals, individuals from the Department of Health and Department of education, and representatives from schools of all sizes and geographic areas of our state. All of our documents can be found on the SDHSAA website, [www.sdhsaa.com](http://www.sdhsaa.com). We encourage you to view those documents with your child/children.

I write this letter to you today to highlight a few important items:

1. **Screening.** This is perhaps the most important factor within our plan. I am a parent myself and understand how difficult it could be to have your child miss something, but it is incredibly important that you are diligent in screening and open with your school in reporting illness. If your child is sick, please keep them home. Trying to hide symptoms can not only impact your child, it can impact your child's teammates and all of the participants your child is playing against. Please help us to keep the seasons going and ultimately hold state championship events by being diligent in screening your children and being forthright with your local school personnel.
2. **Returning to Play**
  - a. Individuals who are a Department of Health verified close contact must quarantine for 14 days prior to returning to activities.
  - b. Participants with a positive test must sit for 14 days from the onset of symptoms, with the last 7 of those days being asymptomatic without the use of fever-reducing medication. We do realize that this is a longer time frame than what the CDC and our Department of Health are using to return kids to school; however, guidelines from the American College of Cardiology, NFHS, and American Medical Society for Sports Medicine all recommend additional time for screening of symptoms prior to resumption of athletics and other activities. This is similar to what happens within our concussion protocol- students are often able to return to school before they can/should return to activities.
  - c. Following a positive test, all participants must have an approved health care provider (MD/DO/PAC/ARNP) complete the Return to Play form prior to resumption of SDHSAA sanctioned sports and activities.
  - d. Within the Return to Play form, the health care provider has the option to require an additional 5-Phase Graduated Return to Play Physician for those individuals who have had moderate to severe symptoms, those with cardiac concerns, those who were hospitalized, those with compromised immune systems, or for any other concerns they may have.

I genuinely appreciate your patience, as well as the patience of our member schools, as we work through this environment that changes rapidly. We will continue to adapt and modify throughout the school year with the situation. I thank you for allowing your child/children to participate in SDHSAA athletics and fine arts activities. Our goal, as always, is to provide education-based activities that enhance the high school experience for every student.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dan Swartos  
SDHSAA Executive Director

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