

## **VAA COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

**Amended April 27, 2021**

### **I. VAA COVID-19 Preparedness Plan**

Valley Athletic Association (“VAA”) is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for our participants, families, spectators, officials and facilities partners. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 on our fields and in our gyms and that will require the full cooperation of our volunteers, participants and families. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our fields and gyms. In addition to the guidelines below, all key prevention strategies and guidelines are intended to comply with applicable Minnesota law, including the current Stay Safe MN guidance for youth sports (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sportsguide.pdf>), the Governor’s executive orders, and strategies and guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (“CDC”) and Minnesota Department of Health (“MDH”) will be strictly followed. VAA will also comply with restrictions and guidelines imposed by the entities with which we partner to provide fields and gyms, including the City of Apple Valley, the City of Burnsville, and Independent School District 196. It must also be noted that applicable strategies and guidelines will be changed to ensure compliance with the Governor’s executive orders and guidance from the State of Minnesota specific to youth sports programs.

VAA’s COVID-19 Preparedness Plan is administered by VAA President Jason M. Hill, who maintains the overall authority and responsibility for the plan. However, VAA’s board members, commissioners, coaches and players are equally responsible for implementing and complying with all aspects of this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan and providing recommendations to further improve all aspects of the plan. As will be noted below, VAA Commissioners will conduct training for their respective coaches, and VAA coaches will be expected to serve as “on-site” compliance officials on behalf of VAA. VAA’s commissioners and coaches have our full support in enforcing the provisions of this policy. VAA’s board members, commissioners and coaches have the full support of VAA in enforcing the plan.

### **Screening Policies for Participants, their Family Members and Spectators**

The following policies and procedures are being implemented to assess the health status of VAA’s participants, their families, spectators and volunteers and to require participants, their families and our volunteers to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms. Successfully conducting our programs is dependent upon adherence to the plan and to all applicable guidance to prevent the transmission of the disease.

- Our families, participants, coaches and volunteers will be informed of and encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, which include fever, coughing, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain, sore throat and new loss of taste or smell.
- All persons who are at risk of severe illness from COVID-19 will be strongly encouraged to stay at home and to refrain from attending or participating in VAA activities.

- If a participant, coach or volunteer tests positive for COVID-19, the participant, coach or volunteer will be required to refrain from participation in any VAA activities until all of the following are true: (1) the person who tested positive feels better, (2) it has been 10 days since the person first felt sick and (3) the person has had no fever for at least 24 hours, without using medication that lowers fevers. If a participant, coach or volunteer tests positive but does not have symptoms, they must still refrain from participation in any VAA activities for 10 days. It would be greatly beneficial to the program, the participant's teammates and to help slow the spread of the disease if the coach were informed of a positive test. The coach will inform the sport's commissioner and the commissioner will inform the VAA President.
- If a case of COVID-19 is reported to VAA, MDH will be notified.
- People identified as exposed (close contacts) are those who spent at least 15 minutes within 6 feet of the case while the case was infectious or who had direct physical contact with an infected person.
- For close contacts, the following quarantine periods apply (quarantine period begins the last day of contact with the person with COVID-19):
  - A 14-day quarantine is required if someone in your home has COVID-19.
  - The quarantine period can be shortened to 10 days if all of the following are true: (1) The person has not had symptoms of COVID-19 during the quarantine period, (2) the person does not live with someone who has COVID-19, (3) the person does not live or work in a high-risk setting, including a long-term care or assisted living facility, correctional facility, shelter, or other congregate living facility, (4) the person does not work in a health care facility, and (5) the person had a defined exposure, meaning a known exposure with a beginning and an end.
  - If the requirements are met for a 10 day quarantine period, the quarantine period can be reduced to 7 days with a negative COVID-19 test (PCR-negative test, not an antigen or antibody/blood test) if the test occurred on day 5 after exposure or later.
  - To determine when the quarantine period will end, identify the last date of exposure to someone with COVID-19. This is considered day zero. The next day is the first full day of quarantine, or day one. People are able to resume normal activities the day after their quarantine period is completed.
- Coaches must maintain lists of participants taking part in practices, games and meetings.
- If a VAA board member, commissioner or coach observes a participant or volunteer exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19, they will be asked by the coach to leave and will be required to leave the activity. Board members, commissioners and coaches will be required to report their observations to the sport's commissioner and the commissioner will report to the VAA President.

## **Handwashing / Hand Sanitizing Stations / Sanitization of Equipment**

Basic infection prevention measures are being implemented at our fields and gyms at all times.

- Participants, their families and volunteers will be instructed to wash their hands at home for at least 20 seconds with soap and water prior to taking part in VAA activities.
- Families are strongly encouraged to provide hand sanitizer for their children at practices, games and meetings. Hand sanitizer dispensers must use sanitizer of greater than 60% alcohol.

- Participants and volunteers will be encouraged to use hand sanitizer as warranted during activities.

## **Face Coverings and Respiratory Etiquette**

Participants, coaches and volunteers are being instructed to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching their face, in particular their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. They should dispose of tissues in the trash and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Instruction with regard to respiratory etiquette will be communicated to VAA participants, their families and volunteers by email and on the VAA website through the publication of this plan.

With regard to outdoor activities, face coverings are required to be worn by participants when they are not actively practicing or playing and cannot maintain physical distancing. With regard to indoor activities, face coverings are required to be worn by all people at all times.

Spectators must follow face covering requirements in the Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues ([staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp](http://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp)), which generally require spectators to wear face coverings indoors and outdoors except when eating and drinking. When required, face coverings must be worn in accordance with MDH guidance and Executive Order 20-81.

The following people are exempt from the face covering requirement:

- Children under age 2 years must not wear face coverings.
- Children between the ages of 2 and 5 years old are not required to wear face coverings but are encouraged to wear a face covering when in public if they can do so reliably in compliance with CDC guidance (i.e., without frequently touching or removing the face covering).
- People who have medical or other health conditions, disabilities, or mental health, developmental, or behavioral needs that make it difficult to tolerate wearing a face covering.

In the event masks or face coverings are required by the State of Minnesota, local governmental entities or a sport's governing body, they will be required by VAA.

## **Social distancing**

Social distancing is being implemented at our fields and gyms through the following controls:

- Sports commissioners will prepare social distancing plans for coaches, participants and spectators that will be approved by the VAA board of directors.
- Participants will maintain at least 6 feet of space between from other participants when they are not playing (for example, on the bench, in the dugout, on the sideline, in locker rooms, attending team meetings, and other similar situations).

- Spectators in venues must maintain at least 6 feet of space between groups of no more than six people according to the Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues ([staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp](http://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp)).
- Spectator limitations will be implemented in accordance with applicable gathering limitations and the applicable limitations of the venue or facility.
- Stagger game and practice times to avoid crowding and congestion when participants are arriving, playing and leaving.
- Practices
  - If it is necessary for spectators to be at practices, they will maintain at least 6 feet of social distancing between households and comply with venue/facility guidance, including applicable capacity limits.
  - Spectators will follow face covering requirements in the Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues ([staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp](http://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp)), which generally require spectators to wear face coverings indoors and outdoors except when eating and drinking.
  - Practices must be small in size. For practices, we will create pods. Pod sizes cannot exceed 25 people per pod for indoor activities and 50 people per pod for outdoor activities.
  - A “pod” is a group of individuals that only practice or play with members of their own pod, which limits the potential for transmission in the event of an exposure or outbreak. Coaches and teams are responsible for ensuring that members of different pods do not practice together, interact, or otherwise come into close contact during activities. Pods must either practice in physically separate rooms, facilities, or areas, or steps must be taken to ensure that pods are kept separated by a distance of no less than 12 feet at all times. Coaches and teams must also avoid reassigning athletes to different pods to the maximum extent possible.
- Games/Scrimmages
  - The total number of spectators at games must comply with the appropriate venue guidance and capacity limits.
  - The number of participants allowed can include all of the people needed to make up the team. A team is defined as the total number of players/athletes, coaches, referees, umpires, etc. needed to hold the game or competition as long as the total number of people does not exceed the total number allowed by the venue or facility (check capacity limits). This includes cross country and track teams.
  - During a cross country or track event: The “course maximum” - meaning the number of people allowed on the course at one time – is the total square footage of the course divided by 113. Participants must be divided into completely separated participant groups to ensure that the number of participants on the course at one time never exceeds the course maximum. Event participants must be further divided into “pods” and physically distanced (meaning 6 feet of distance is maintained between people from different households) within the pods.
- Tournaments
  - The occupancy requirements that apply to the venue or event setting must be followed.
  - People who are spectators can get food and eat either in designated food areas or at their seats, if allowed by the venue or event setting.

- Only one team allowed in a locker room at any one time and the amount of time in the locker room shall be limited.
- Teams must minimize the time they spend in the venue or event setting.
  - Teams should only arrive early enough to warm up before their competition, and teams should leave as soon as their game is over.
  - If athletes linger after a game to eat or watch games, they are considered spectators and must be counted toward the overall occupancy of the venue. They must also follow guidance requirements that apply to the venue or event (e.g., they must eat in designated seating areas, wear face coverings, be in an assigned seat as a spectator or some similar accommodation, etc.). The other option would be for the participants to get their food to-go.
- If 12 feet cannot be maintained between the participants in the game (athletes, coaches, student managers, timekeepers) and spectators, participants must be included in the total occupancy count.
- If spectators and participants can be clearly separated by at least 12 feet, then participants do not need to be included in the total occupancy count.
- Stagger game times to avoid crowding and congestion when participants are arriving, playing, and leaving.
- Advanced reservations and/or ticketing will be required (e.g., online, app-based, email, will-call) according to the requirements in the Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues ([staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp](http://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp)).
- Remind parents and athletes to stay socially distant when waiting for entry to the facility.
- Post instructions for patrons throughout the venue or event setting and at entrances that inform patrons of the following:
  - Not to enter if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
  - The venue's attendance limits.
  - That they are required to adhere to hygiene and social distancing instructions, should not cluster at entry or exit points, observe signage and markings that promote social distancing.
  - That they are required to follow the venue's requirements for wearing face coverings.
- Sports commissioners will be required to provide training with regard to social distancing for coaches, either in person or by electronic means, while following all applicable safety strategies and guidelines, including social distancing and limiting the size of gatherings.
- Instruction and training with regard to social distancing will be communicated to VAA participants, their families and volunteers by email and on the VAA website through the publication of this plan.

## **Housekeeping**

Regular housekeeping practices are being implemented, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment and gear at our fields and gyms. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted in high-touch areas by coaches and volunteers. Sports

commissioners will prepare plans for the cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, high-touch areas, equipment and gear.

- The sharing of gear or equipment will be discouraged as much as possible. If gear or equipment must be shared, cleaning and disinfecting of the gear or equipment should be pursued as much as possible.

### **Communications and training**

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan was communicated by VAA to all participants, families, volunteers and VAA members and necessary training will be provided in accordance with the plan above. Additional communication and training will be ongoing by VAA. COVID-19 training, which will include the VAA COVID-19 Preparedness Plan and guidance specific to each individual sport, will be provided to VAA coaches by VAA commissioners prior to the commencement of organized activities. COVID-19 training will also emphasize the role of VAA coaches as “on-site” compliance officers. VAA board members, commissioners and volunteers are to monitor how effective the program has been implemented. VAA board members, commissioners and volunteers are to work through this new program together and update the training as necessary. This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan has been approved by the VAA Board of Directors and was posted on the VAA website on April 28, 2021. It will be updated as necessary.