
MEMORANDUM

TO: BCSS MEMBER SCHOOL ADMIN & AD's
FROM: JORDAN ABNEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: CLARIFICATION ON UPDATED PHO ORDERS K-12 GUIDELINES
DATE: JANUARY 2, 2022
CC: DISTRICT ADMIN, BCSS LEG ASSEMBLY MEMBERS, ZONE PRESIDENTS

Happy New Year! You are likely aware by now of the announcement made on Tuesday, December 29 by Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry and BC Minister of Education, Jennifer Whiteside introducing a phased in restart to schooling coming out of the winter break, and a new addendum to be added to the Communicable Disease Plan for K-12 Settings. It is important to note the previous safety protocols that were in place, remain, and the addendum introduces new protocols to be added in addition to those already in place.

While much of these updates will not affect school sport, there are two key pieces that will affect all member schools immediately and will be in effect during the phased restart and continue once regular instruction resumes.

As was announced just prior to the winter break, **school sport tournaments are prohibited**. This means any event whether it be a single day or multi-day event, that includes more than two teams cannot happen at this time. It is important to note that practices and single contests, with a maximum of two teams are permitted to continue, even during the gradual return period in early January before classes are in full session. Generally, these contests should be regularly scheduled league games, or single exhibition games scheduled with a frequency similar to that of a league game. We have already heard of teams trying to set up 'tours' to replace tournaments, where they may play different teams at different venues on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday. This type of action would be going against the intent of the restrictions, and we ask our schools to ensure their teams are not undertaking this type of schedule. Alternatively, if a team were to set up an exhibition series, playing on a Friday and Saturday, against the same team, this would be permitted. Please note that the maximum number of competition days for each sport, as listed in the BCSS Handbook is still in effect.

For individual sports such as Wrestling, Ski and Snowboard, competition in these sports can happen, but are asked to be scaled down as much as possible and have the strictest adherence to safety protocols; especially for wrestling given the nature of the sport, and it takes place indoors. We recommend reducing the number of schools at any contest, and even looking at dual meets structures to reduce the number of participants at any one event for the next little while.

The intent here is to strike a delicate balance that allows school sport to continue, but also limit the number of contacts the student-athletes are having in a sport context, especially over a short number of days where COVID-19 may be spread to many students from multiple schools unknowingly. While I know these restrictions are frustrating, and will require changing plans for teams, it is important our schools and teams respond accordingly, and ensure we are all doing our part to ensure that school sport can continue through the next number of weeks and months, without further interruption. We are hopeful that this Omicron driven wave will subside in time for changes to be made to allow for tournaments to happen in time for zone and provincial championships.



Secondly, schools will be reducing visitors to the school as per the updated protocols. This means that spectators will be prohibited. AD's, please be sure to speak with your coaches and communicate effectively to your parents, students, and other supporters, as well as to any school that may be visiting your school for a single competition. Please be sure to be aware of your school/district policy and ensure there is the proper enforcement. Generally, those permitted will be those directly involved in the competition (student-athletes, coaches, officials (field of play/minor), medical, etc.). Those external to putting on the competition should not have access.

Thank you for your continued support. I know that the constant adaptations are challenging, but hopefully we are heartened by the fact that school sport is continuing to happen, and we can play our regular seasons, with our eyes set on zone and provincial events in the coming weeks. As always, please contact the BCSS office with any questions.