



## GHSAA Special Considerations and Baseball Rule Modifications

The considerations outlined in this document are meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging social distancing, limiting participation in administrative tasks to essential personnel and allowing for appropriate protective equipment during practice and competition.

### **1. Host School Responsibility**

- Schools shall sanitize facility, press box, dugouts, and spectator area between games.
- Schools shall provide hand sanitizer for both schools (in dugout) and umpires.
- The use of face mask/covering is highly recommended for all spectators.
- Schools shall enforce social distancing requirements in spectator areas and facility entrances.

### **2. Player Equipment**

- Face mask/coverings are recommended, but not mandatory. If worn it may have a school logo and all masks shall match. If a school logo is not used the mask must be a single color, without logos or lettering. Pitchers shall not wear a facial mask that is any tint of white or grey.
- Face Shields are permitted to be plastic shields if they are integrated into the fielding face mask, catching helmet, or batting helmet. The face shield shall be clear without tint.
- Players shall use their own gloves, helmets, and bats as much as possible.
- Players shall use their own water/beverage bottles (sharing these items is prohibited).
- Sunflower seeds are prohibited in the dugout and on the field.
- Player/team equipment shall be sanitized before and after each practice/game.
- The host schools shall provide enough baseballs (NFHS Approved) that allow for sanitation of the game balls before they return to play.
  - a. If a game ball goes out of play, it should be returned to host dugout to be sanitized before putting back in play.
  - b. If weather conditions or damage creates a need to change the ball out, the host school is responsible to retrieve the ball, sanitize, make playable and/or provide another game ball.
  - c. This “modification” should provide another layer of safety precaution for the players and umpires.

### **3. Bench and Field Precautions**

- Physical distancing (6 ft.) requirements shall be maintained in both dugouts and may extend the dugout into a clearly marked “out of play” area.
- Limit bench personnel to observe social distancing.
- Players are not allowed to exit the dugout to congratulate teammates after a home run or a run score.
- Team huddles without physical distancing are prohibited.
- A charged defensive conference shall be conducted on the outer edge of the pitching circle maintaining physical distancing.
- Pitchers are prohibited from licking fingers, touching any part of their hands to the mouth, or blowing into their hands prior to delivering a pitch. NOTE: Any violation of this policy shall be called a “dead ball” immediately, the ball shall be removed from play, sanitized, another game ball provided by the host school, and the pitcher’s hand shall be sanitized before play resumes.



- a. The first violation will constitute the defensive team warning.
- b. Each subsequent violation will count as a defensive conference.
- c. If a pitcher is removed from the mound the defensive team will not be charged a defensive conference.
- d. Each pitcher will be allowed to carry a small cloth moistened with water only in their back pocket to use on their fingers.

- Eliminate handshakes from post-game.

#### **4. Coaches & Umpires**

- Officials should arrive in uniform to officiate.
- Officials are encouraged to wear face mask/covering and/or gloves.
- Coaches shall always maintain social distancing to own players and opponents.
- The pregame conference is limited to one coach from each team and the umpires. Coaches shall remain outside the batter's box nearest their dugout, plate umpire shall be behind the catcher's box, and base umpire shall be in front of the plate to exchange lineup cards.
- Substitutions shall be made with physical distancing to umpires and scorekeepers.
- Coaches who request a timeout to discuss a ruling on the field, or to make a substitution, shall maintain physical distancing from the umpire(s).
- Base coaches shall always maintain physical distancing to base runners.
- The plate umpire shall be positioned safely to call balls and strikes.
- Base umpires shall maintain physical distancing from any players in the starting positions and during rotations.
- The catcher and batter shall maintain physical distancing while the umpire dusts off home plate.