

## **2020-2021 UIL COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Guidelines (as Modified for TAIIO Member Schools and Organizations)**

Wherever the term “UIL” used herein, the terms shall also mean TAIIO. References to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) have been removed. If your school is subject to TEA rules and regulations, then you are to follow such rules and regulations.

Understanding that there is no way to 100% safeguard against contracting COVID-19, other than 100% isolation from society; and understanding that participation in any sporting activity involves the possible risk of contracting COVID-19; and understanding that TAIIO takes the safety and wellbeing of each athlete very seriously, TAIIO is adopting these COVID-19 Risk Mitigating Guidelines, formulated by the Texas UIL.

The following guidance related to UIL activities, based on the public health situation as we understand it today, applies to the 2020-2021 school year. This guidance is effective August 1, 2020. Changes to the public health situation may necessitate changes to this guidance.

Given the varying numbers of COVID-19 cases across different areas of the state, and the vast geographic area in the state of Texas, UIL is presenting modifications for the 2020-21 school year that reflect the situation at this time. UIL will continue to work with state officials and monitor CDC and other federal guidance to determine any potential modifications that may become necessary. Schools and Organizations should be prepared for the possibility of interruptions in contest schedules. The TAIIO Steering Committees will work and plan to accommodate, as best possible, for these interruptions.

The information below includes a requirement for schools to develop a plan for mitigating risk of COVID-19 spread during UIL activities. Schools and Organizations **SHALL** take their local context into account and follow all state and local requirements when conducting. All member schools and organizations SHALL follow all National, State, and Local orders and ordinances with regard to COVID-19, including the applicable UIL Guidelines, local health orders, and, if applicable, TEA Guidelines. All prior COVID-19 rules from the Steering Committee shall continue in effect, unless otherwise modified by the attached UIL Guidelines. The TAIIO Steering Committee, Football, Volleyball, and Cross County Committees ARE NOT giving any school, organization, team, administrator, or coach the advice, instruction, or authority, whether implicit or explicit, to violate any National, State, and Local orders and ordinances with regard to COVID-19, including rules relating to the start of school and/or when scholastic extracurricular activities may begin.

Each school shall identify a staff member or group of staff members to serve as compliance officer(s) to oversee effective use of these protocols, which individual shall not be a Head Coach. Schools and Organizations shall follow all requirements of state and local authorities in addition to the requirements below.

## **Face Coverings - Executive Order GA-29**

**Executive Order GA-29, regarding face coverings, applies to all UIL activities effective July 3, 2020. This includes the 2020-2021 school year. As the public health situation changes, and/or if subsequent Executive Orders are issued by Governor Greg Abbott, these guidelines may be further modified.**

1. For the purposes of this document, face coverings include non-medical grade disposable face masks, cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth), or full-face shields to protect eyes, nose, and mouth. Face shields may be superior to cloth face coverings in many circumstances, given improved ability to see mouth movements and improved air circulation.
2. All employees, parents, visitors and children ten years of age or older must wear face coverings or face shields upon entry to an area where UIL activities are being conducted and when not actively practicing or playing in the contest, unless an exception listed below applies.
3. The face coverings requirements do not apply to a school or organization in a county that meets the requirements of paragraph 11 of Executive Order GA-29, unless the a local governing entity chooses to implement these requirements locally. Even in these circumstances, the wearing of face coverings or face shields is strongly encouraged.

Exceptions to the wearing of face coverings or face shields include:

- Any person with a medical condition or disability that prevents wearing a face covering;
- While a person is consuming food or drink;
- While the person is in a swimming pool, lake, or similar body of water.
- When a congregating group of persons maintains at least 6 feet of social distancing; or
- Any other reason or circumstance indicated under Executive Order GA-29.

## **General Operational Guidelines**

**REQUIRED OF ALL SCHOOLS AND ORGANIZATIONS:**

TAIAO requires all schools and organizations to develop a plan for mitigating COVID-19 spread. UIL guidelines require schools to include UIL activities for the 2020-2021 school year as part of this plan and carefully plan for mitigating risk of spread as students and staff participate in them. These plans do not require TAIAO approval.

## **Required Screening**

### **Required Screening before attending or participating in activities:**

If staff have not been screened by the school for purposes of participating in instructional activities, schools must implement these screening protocols before allowing staff to participate in UIL activities.

1. Schools and organizations must require staff to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before participating in UIL activities or entering areas where UIL activities are being conducted. Symptoms are listed at the end of this document. The self-screening should include staff taking their own temperature. Staff must report to the school or organization if they themselves have COVID-19 symptoms or are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and, if so, they must remain off campus and away from areas where UIL activities are being conducted until they meet the criteria for re-entry as noted below. Additionally, they must report to the school or organization if they have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, as defined at the end of this document, and, if so, must remain off campus and away from areas where UIL activities are being conducted until the 14-day incubation period has passed. Close contact is defined in this document below.
2. Parents must ensure they do not send a student to participate in UIL activities if the student has COVID-19 symptoms (as listed in this document) or is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 until the below conditions for re-entry are met. Schools and organizations may consider screening students for COVID-19 as well. Screening is accomplished by asking questions by phone or other electronic methods and/or in person. The screening questions should also be asked of a student's parent if that parent will be dropping off or picking up their student from inside areas where UIL activities are being conducted.
3. Before visitors are allowed access to areas where UIL activities are being conducted, schools and organizations must screen all visitors to determine if they themselves have COVID-19 symptoms (as listed in this document) or are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and if so, they must remain off campus and away from areas where UIL activities are being conducted until they meet the criteria for re-entry as noted below. Additionally, schools and organizations must screen to determine if visitors have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and if so they must remain off campus and away from areas where UIL activities are being conducted until the 14-day incubation period has passed. When practical, screening questions could be supplemented with temperature checks of adults.
4. Schools and organizations are permitted to prevent any individual who fails the screening criteria from being admitted into school facilities or sites where UIL activities are being conducted until they meet the criteria for re-entry as

described below. Any individual for whom screening cannot be confirmed should be presumed symptomatic until confirmed otherwise.

### *Individuals Confirmed or Suspected with COVID-19*

1. Any individuals who themselves either: (a) are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) experience the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed below) must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus or place of sports activity until the school or organization screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:
  - In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school or place of sports activity when all three of the following criteria are met:
    - at least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
    - the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
    - at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
  - In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and who is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, such individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to the campus or place of sports activity until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above.
  - If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school or place of sports activity before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either (a) obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis or (b) receive two separate confirmations at least 24 hours apart that they are free of COVID-19 via acute infection tests at an approved COVID-19 testing location found at <https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>.

### *Identifying Possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus*

- Schools and organizations must immediately separate any student or athlete who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school or place of sports activity until the student or athlete can be picked up by a parent or guardian.
- Schools and organizations should clean the areas used by the individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school or place of sports activity as soon as is feasible.

- Students or athletes who report feeling feverish should be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.

This document refers to “close contact” with an individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19. Close contact is determined by an appropriate public health agency. For clarity, close contact is defined as:

- being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on while not wearing a mask or face shield); or
- being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes, while not wearing a mask or face shield;

if either occurred at any time in the last 14 days at the same time the infected individual was infectious.

Individuals are presumed infectious at least two days prior to symptom onset or, in the case of asymptomatic individuals who are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, two days prior to the confirming lab test.

*Required Actions if Individuals with Lab-Confirmed Cases Have Been in a School or in an Area Where UIL Activities Are being Conducted*

1. If an individual who has been in areas where UIL activities have been conducted is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school or organization must notify its local health department, in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, including confidentiality requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
2. Schools must close off areas that are heavily used by the individual with the lab-confirmed case until the non-porous surfaces in those areas can be disinfected, unless more than 3 days have already passed since that person was on campus.
3. Consistent with notification requirements for other communicable diseases, and consistent with legal confidentiality requirements, schools must notify all teachers, staff, and families of all students in a school if a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers or staff who participate in any UIL activities. Organizations must notify all coaches, staff, and families of athletes in the sporting activity if a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among athletes, coaches, or staff who participate in any UIL activities.

**COVID-19 Symptoms**

In evaluating whether an individual has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, consider the following questions:

Have they recently begun experiencing any of the following in a way that is not normal for them?

- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Headache
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Shaking or exaggerated shivering
- Significant muscle pain or ache
- Diarrhea

#### *Screening Questionnaire Information*

1. When asking individuals if they have symptoms for COVID-19, schools and organizations systems must only require the individual to provide a “Yes” or “No” to the overall statement that they are symptomatic for COVID-19, as opposed to asking the individual for specific symptom confirmation. Schools and organizations are not entitled to collect information during screening on the specific health information of an individual beyond that they are symptomatic.
2. Once it is determined that individuals who responded “Yes” to either of these questions have met the criteria for re-entry, schools and organizations must destroy those individuals’ responses.

#### **Performance Areas, Band Halls, Locker Rooms and Other Congregate Settings**

1. Schools and organizations should make hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectant readily available in these areas.
2. All congregate areas should be regularly and frequently cleaned and disinfected including all frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, tables, chairs, lockers, and restroom.
3. Any equipment that will be kept in student lockers and/or in these areas should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected each day prior to students accessing these areas. Schools and organizations should develop a plan for managing the storage, cleaning and disinfecting, and redistribution of student equipment.
4. Schools and organizations should consider identifying staff to monitor locker rooms and other areas where students or athletes may congregate to ensure

effective use of school and organization protocols. When possible, schools and organizations should open windows and/or doors or otherwise work to improve air flow by allowing outside air to circulate in these areas.

5. Schools and organizations must require staff, students, and athletes to wear face coverings while inside locker rooms, meeting rooms, training rooms, band halls and other areas where students or athletes may congregate other than shower facilities.
6. As part of their overall plan, schools and organizations should develop a plan for mitigating risk of spreading COVID-19 when disinfecting, cleaning, and laundering items such as towels, practice clothes, and uniforms. This plan should include protocols for redistributing these items to students and athletes. Involved staff should be trained specifically on these protocols.

### **Practice and Rehearsal Activities**

In addition to the above general guidelines and rules in the TIAO Constitution, General Rules, Individual Sports Plans, and prior emailed COVID-19 related guidelines and instructions, the following applies to practice activities during the 2020-2021 school year.

1. All surfaces in practice areas should be thoroughly disinfected throughout and at the end of each day.
2. Any equipment should be regularly disinfected before, during, and after practice sessions.
3. Schools and organizations may provide food, water or other drinks. If they provide these items, schools and organizations should do so in a manner that ensures students are not sharing these items.

### **Game, Contest, and Event Management**

In addition to the above guidelines and rules in the TIAO Constitution, General Rules, Individual Sports Plans, and prior emailed COVID-19 related guidelines and instructions, the following applies to games, scrimmages, and events:

#### **Teams and Participants**

1. If the school is planning to offer transportation for students, schools should follow TEA guidance related to such transportation, if the school is subject to TEA rules.
2. Teams and participants are required to wear face coverings as described in Executive Order GA-29.

3. The host site should designate a cleaned and disinfected area for teams to unload and load buses separate from fans, spectators, and other individuals not essential to the team or group.
4. Visiting team/group locker rooms should be cleaned and sanitized by the host site before the visiting team arrives. Visiting teams/groups are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting equipment once it is unloaded. Schools and organizations should limit access to these facilities to only students, athletes, and staff essential for the game, contest, or event.
5. Before each game, contest, or event, schools and organizations should follow the screening protocols described above to screen all staff members, contractors, volunteers, sports officials, contest judges, and any individuals otherwise involved in working the event. These individuals should also self-screen as described in these screening protocols.
6. Fan and spectator areas including bleachers, stands, walkways, and other spectator areas should be at least six feet from team/group areas such as team benches or performance areas. Where distancing is not feasible, other methods should be utilized to slow the spread of COVID-19, such as face coverings, implementing engineered controls such as physical barriers, or other risk mitigation efforts the school or organization deems appropriate.
7. As previously indicated, water or other drinks and/or food may be provided. Schools, organizations, or host sites should consider doing so in a manner that ensures students are not sharing these items.
8. Other areas used by participants, such as press box areas, should be cleaned and disinfected prior to and after use. Sites should develop plans for providing access to these areas that limit or remove potential contact between participants and non-participants.
9. The host site should provide sports and contest officials an area to enter and exit separate from fans when possible. Officials should be provided a dressing and meeting area, if applicable, that has been cleaned and disinfected prior to their arrival.
10. Pregame or pre-event meetings between teams and/or sports and contest officials should be planned to allow appropriate distancing between individuals.
11. Pregame and post-game gestures of sportsmanship should be conducted between teams and sports and contest officials in ways planned to help reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19.
12. All participants should be provided with entry and exit plans for contest areas that maintain separation from non-participants and fans. Individuals not essential to



the team or group should not be given access to contest areas, performance areas, courts, or fields at all before, during, or after contests and events.

### **Student and Organization Groups not directly involved in the game or contest**

Student and organizations groups such as marching bands, cheerleaders, drill teams, and other groups approved by the school district may attend and perform at games or contests in which they are not competing. Schools and organizations should consider limiting the number of participants to those essential to the performance.

1. These student and organizations groups should remain separate from the game or contest participants at all times. These student and organizations groups should avoid mixing with fans or non-group members throughout the game or contest.
2. Student and organizations groups are required to wear face coverings as described in Executive Order GA-29.
3. Schools and organizations should consider limiting the number of students, athletes, and staff given access to the playing areas and ensure protocols for entering and exiting the playing areas are in place.
4. Fans and spectators should be located to provide at least 10 feet of distance from bands playing wind instruments from the stands.
5. These students and organizations should maintain appropriate distancing from game or contest participants at all times, including when on the sideline.

### **Spectators, Audiences, Fans and Media**

Schools and organizations may allow spectators to attend games, contests, or events within a maximum 50% capacity limitation, provided that appropriate spacing between spectators is maintained according to the protocol, and according to the following:

1. Schools, organizations, and/or host sites should post visible signs and/or messaging stating any individuals who are confirmed to have, suspected of having, are experiencing symptoms of, or have been in close contact with an individual who has been confirmed to have COVID-19 should not enter the facility.
2. Press Box seating should include social distancing of at least six feet between individuals when possible.
3. Schools and organizations should limit access to working media providing coverage of the event to ensure protocols are followed.

4. Post-game interviews should be conducted while wearing face coverings and maintaining at least six feet of distance between the interviewer and individual being interviewed.

### **Concession Stands and Food Service**

For games, contests, and events that will include concession stands or other food service, the following guidelines apply:

1. Staff, contractors, and volunteers involved in food service are required to wear face coverings as described in **Executive Order GA-29**.
2. Sites should avoid leaving condiments, silverware, flatware, glassware, or other traditional table top items on unoccupied tables or at the counter. Sites should only provide condiments or flatware upon request, and in single use, individually wrapped items.
3. Regularly clean and disinfect the food service counters and areas. Clean and disinfect dining areas (tables, etc.) after each patron departs.
4. Limit contact between the individuals involved in food service and patrons as much as possible. Have employees, contractors, and volunteers follow proper food-handling protocols.
5. Before each game, schools should follow the screening protocols described above to screen staff, contractors, and volunteers who will be involved in food service prior to events. These individuals should also self-screen as described in these screening protocols.