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The following is a statement from the Alaska School Activities Association with consultation from the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services:

ASAA would like to notify Alaska school districts to the DHSS recommendation for wearing masks while engaged in activities and the ASAA response to this recommendation. DHSS now recommends that all youth athletes wear masks when they're playing or competing — even when that activity is vigorous. The exception? Swimmers and divers can't wear a mask when their faces are in the water (but they do need to wear one on the pool deck). To read the DHSS recommendation, go to this link:

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/PlayEveryDay/blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?ID=478>

ASAA's mitigation recommendations for practices and competitions are aimed to reduce risks, however, mitigation of all risk associated with activities is not possible. Additionally, schools are allowed the flexibility to tailor recommendations to their individual needs and circumstances.

However, as it pertains to the issue of wearing masks during practices and competition, ASAA is making this a requirement for indoor sports and strongly recommended for outdoor sports until further notice is given. We will be working with our officials on how to enforce this requirement during competitions and expect school districts to enforce this requirement during practices and competitions.

ASAA mitigation plans for activities are only one part of a strong school mitigation plan. Other components that should be addressed when choosing to attend include but are not limited to: methods and complexity of travel, housing, meals and limiting interactions with non-essential people. DHSS is available on request to consult with schools on their mitigation plans, including aspects related to travel, and to help schools and districts better clarify the risks associated with their athletes, staff and communities.

Sincerely,

Billy Strickland, Executive Director