

Belchertown-Granby Eagles Youth Football Organization
August 1-November 14, 2021
COVID-19 Health & Safety Plan



The Belchertown-Granby Eagles Youth Football Organization (BGEYFO) is a youth contact football program for youth in grades 3rd-8th and a competitive cheerleading program for youth in grades kindergarten-8th. We utilize Cronk Field, located at 59 State Street in Belchertown.

BGEYFO will consult with our local health department to determine risk level to start the program safely. Continued consultation with the local health department will be used to determine when progression to the next risk level can be initiated. BGEYFO will follow state and local COVID-19 guidelines as designed to keep players, coaches, volunteers, and spectators safe. Guidelines will be constantly reviewed and updated as necessary.

BGEYFO has designated, Kelly A Gemme MSN, RN, PED-BC (or appropriate delegate), to be our contact person/COVID Coach to work with the Belchertown Recreation Department and Department of Public Health (DPH). Cell 413-535-8501; email: belchertowngranbyeagles@gmail.com

Mitigation of COVID-19 Spread: it is important to note that COVID-19 infection related to youth sports seems to spread from outside field play. Coaches are encouraged to remind athletes about mitigation strategies including distancing and mask wearing. Athletes are encouraged to support the active cooperation of all youth within the organization's community by adhering to social distancing and mask wearing in all settings.

Pre-Practice/Pre-Game Screening: Athletes, coaches, volunteers, and spectators may not attend practices or games if they are isolated for illness or quarantined for exposure to infection. Prior to attending practices or games, athletes, coaches, and volunteers should check their temperature. If any individual has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or above, they should not attend practices or games. Likewise, if they have any other symptoms of COVID-19 infection, listed below, they should not attend practices or games.

- Cough (not due to other known cause such as chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache when in combination with other symptoms
- Muscle aches or body aches not due to physical activity
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms

Students, coaches, and volunteers who have symptoms of COVID-19 should test and isolate according with current DPH guidance. Student-athletes, coaches, spectators, and any others associated with the athletic program that were exposed to COVID-19 must quarantine, including no participation in practices

or games following exposure, and should follow all CDC, DPH, and local board of health protocols. Should a player be quarantined because of a COVID-19 designation, he/she must participate in a minimum of one practice before returning to competition. Athletes and coaches who are diagnosed with COVID-19 infection should rest and avoid exercise for ten days from symptom onset. Procedures for return to activity/play should follow CDC, DPH, and local board of health guidelines. In addition, persons with COVID-19 infection need to receive written clearance from their health care provider to return to sport. Return to activity should be slow and graded. All positive cases must be reported to the COVID Coach. Any individual that develops symptoms at a practice or games must leave immediately get tested, as well as follow above protocols.

Cohorts and/or Participants: A record will be kept of all individuals present at team activities i.e. – practices, practice cohorts, competitions, etc.

Social Distancing:

Practice – Coaches are responsible for ensuring social distancing is maintained between players as much as possible. This includes additional spacing between athletes while stretching, warming up, chatting, changing drills, etc. Athletes must maintain spacing, and there should be no congregating of athletes while running drills when possible. Contact drills should be limited and coaches should work with smaller groups when possible. This ensures more limited exposure if someone develops an infection. The groups should remain the same throughout the season. Records should be kept of who is in each group, each day.

Benches – No benches should be used during practice. Players' items should be separated at least 6 feet apart. Benches should be permitted only during games with six feet of distancing required between participants. Athletes and coaches should maintain the same seat for the duration of the game. Spectators should bring their own lawn chairs and need to remain 6 feet apart.

Playing Surface Access – Only essential personnel are permitted on the practice/competition field. These are defined as athletes, coaches, medical personnel/athletic trainers, and officials (competition). All others (i.e. photographers, media, etc.) are considered non-essential personnel and are not to be on the field of play. Teams must work to reduce the number of players on the sideline. Injured players with no ability to play in a contest are not permitted on the sidelines. Dressed players should be those with a potential opportunity or need to play. Coaches must not have players in uniform on the sideline for the sole benefit of dressing and being with the team.

Personal Items – It is recommended that each athlete bring their own gym bag for personal items. All personal items should remain in the gym bag when not in use. Gym bags should be placed in a predetermined area 6 feet apart for the duration of practice.

Huddles – Social distancing (6 feet between individuals) must be maintained, and face coverings utilized at all times. Communicating with smaller groups is preferred.

Team Handshakes – Athletes shall NOT exchange handshakes before, during or following practices and competitions.

Spectators – Spectators must practice social distancing between different household units and accept personal responsibility for public health guidelines. The number of spectators is determined in

compliance with CDC and Local DPH guidelines. As mentioned above, spectators should bring their own lawn chairs.

COVID-19 Coach/Site Supervisor: BGEYFO will designate a coach/site supervisor to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns and supervising adherence to established COVID-19 protocols. All coaches, volunteers, officials, and families will know who this person is and how to contact them. BGEYFO will follow established EEA/CDC guidelines for program and/or game management and train coaches, officials, and volunteers on all safety protocols. Coaches, athletes, officials, and spectators are required to cooperate with the local board of health whenever requested.

Practice and Game Protocols:

Masks/Face Coverings – Athletes are required to wear cloth face coverings/masks per EEA/CDC guidelines, including always covering both the nose and mouth. Mask breaks may be taken for drinking, and when needed for breathing comfort. Mask breaks may only be taken when greater than 6 feet of distance can be maintained from all others. All athletes, especially those that use mouthpieces, should prepare to have extra face coverings available. If mouth guards are removed on the sidelines or bench area, the athlete should use hand sanitizer each time after touching the mouth guard. Athletes are reminded that mouth guards must remain inserted in the mouth at all times. Athletes who have their masks become damp should change regularly. Masks should be exchanged when damp or soiled. Caution should be exercised when replacing a mask if hands are soiled or dirty. All individuals that are unable to wear a face covering due to a medical condition or disability must provide a medical note to the COVID coach excusing the player from wearing a mask. This note must always be in the possession of the head coach and available to the opposing head coach and/or game officials upon request. Spectators, volunteers, and others are also required to wear face coverings and are expected to follow social distancing guidelines.

Interaction with Officials – Coaches must follow social distancing guidelines (6 feet) when interacting with an official or any other individual. Conversations can occur at a distance. Athletes should not approach a referee closer than 6 feet at any time.

Hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing wipes – Athletes, coaches, and officials are encouraged to provide their own hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) and/or sanitizing wipes and use them frequently – including prior to taking the field and upon return to the sideline. Additionally, it is emphasized to avoid touching the face throughout practice and competition.

Equipment:

General Equipment – There should be no shared athletic equipment unless required by the sport rules. Any equipment that is used for practice/games should be cleaned and disinfected prior to and immediately following practice/game (including cheerleading mats etc.). Only one individual should handle the set-up and break-down of equipment on any given day (i.e. goals, cones, mats etc.).

Balls – When possible players should bring their own balls for practice. Skill training, conditioning, agility, etc. can be done with the one player/one ball concept. Balls must be sanitized before and after each practice/game. BGEYFO may have other ball cleaning practices during competition, i.e. after each change of possession.

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Personal Items – Shoes, clothing, towels, and other personal items must not be shared among athletes. Any items that are not currently being worn or used should be stored inside a personal gym bag. Gym bags should be placed in a predetermined area 6 feet apart for the duration of practice/competition.

Hydration: All participants must bring their own water bottle. Water bottles cannot be shared. Athletes should bring enough water for the entire game. Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) should NOT be utilized. The squirting of water by anyone but the person drinking from their own water bottle is not permitted. Water fountains are to be used as refill stations ONLY.

Food at Games: we will not open the snack shack this year. If conditions improve and we decide to open the snack shack it will only be done with proper approval from the board of health and will follow the state's guidelines.

Miscellaneous:

BGEYFO will ask our entire community to abide EEA guidelines which are attached.

Parents/Guardians will be responsible to monitor their football player or cheerleader for any medical issues that should prevent them from participating in activities; based on the protocols and symptoms listed above and any new regulations set forth by the DPH.

BGEYFO will alert the Belchertown Recreation Department of any positive COVID-19 cases within our organization. A roster will be kept of players and instructors (name, telephone number, email address) and information will be shared with the local board of health officials if necessary due to a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19.

BGEYFO will ask the members of our organization to follow any and all recommendations from their physician and not return to the field until specified quarantine and recovery period is over.

On site bathroom facilities (Porta-Potties) will be provided by and maintained by the Belchertown Recreation Department.