

SM East Tennis - COVID PLAN

In order to have the best opportunity to have a tennis season, we need to all work together. Tennis, however, only accounts for a small portion of the time we have each day. What we, as coaches, players, and families, do off-the-court has a tremendous impact on what we will be able to do on-the-court. The plans we put in place for tennis will only be effective if what we are doing outside of tennis also follows hygiene and social distancing recommendations.

We will do our best to create an environment that minimizes close contact between players so that we can conduct practices and events as safely as possible.

Failure to follow the SM East Tennis COVID plan will result in the following consequences:

Violation #1: *Player will be given a warning (As part of the warning, a message will also be sent to parent/guardian to let them know that a violation has occurred.)*

Violation #2: *Player will be dismissed from the day's event and lose future playing time.*

Violation #3: *Player will no longer be allowed to participate in the activity for the remainder of the season.*

Daily Check-In Form

Be honest about contacts and symptoms.

All players must complete the Lancer Tennis: Daily Check-In form before practice each day. The form asks players to record name and grade and then answer 5 COVID screening questions. If players answer YES to any of the 4 questions, they should not attend practice that day and work with parents/guardians to contact the SM East school nurse - stephanieptacek@smsd.org - and their health care provider to figure out next steps. Any player who will miss practice for whatever reason must communicate that absence before the start of practice with Coach Gibbs - andrewgibbs@smsd.org.

Players do not have to wait until the beginning of practice to complete the form, but it must be completed each day. The form is linked here: [Lancer Boys Tennis: Daily Check-In](#) We will also have printed QR codes available for players to scan when they arrive at practice. The QR code will provide a link to the form.

Masking and Social Distancing

During the girls tennis season, we learned that the most challenging times for maintaining social distance are when we are not on court. **All individuals must wear masks when arriving to and departing from practice as well as when not playing. Additionally, individuals need to maintain 6 ft of distance when arriving to, departing from, and transitioning during events. We will work with players to maintain 6 ft of distance from each other throughout practice. Team stretching, huddles, and announcements will be altered to keep players appropriately distanced.**

During the course of play, players will potentially come within 6 ft of each other, but we will work to eliminate close contact between points, especially between doubles partners. At East, one of our pre-COVID-19 rules of playing doubles is that partners needed to make physical contact between points - usually a high five or fist bump - to encourage unity and promote communication between partners. We will change this practice to better maintain social distance.

KSHSAA has recommended that post-match handshakes will also be replaced with a non-personal contact gesture of respect and sportsmanship like a racquet tap.

Players and spectators will be required to wear masks and maintain 6 ft of social distance from non-household members while watching events.

Equipment - What to Bring

In addition to normal tennis equipment - racquet, proper footwear, athletic apparel, hat or visor, sunscreen - players should bring the following:

- **Mask** - You MUST wear your mask to and from practice/events as well as when not actively participating. You may choose to wear a mask when playing; however, sweat, exertion, and the handling of your mask - for adjustments, taking it off for water - greatly reduces the mask's effectiveness. Here's [KU Med Center's instructional video on wearing masks](#).
- **Paper Bag or Ziploc Bag Marked with Your Name** - You should bring a paper or Ziploc bag to put your mask in when not wearing it to help keep it from being contaminated. Remember to avoid contaminating your mask when handling it.
- **Large, Filled Water Jug** - We will not be able to provide community water stations or coolers this year, so you need to have water in order to stay hydrated. You will take your water to court with you during practice and we will designate areas that are 6 ft. apart for water breaks.
- **Hand Sanitizer** - You should bring a bottle of your own hand sanitizer to use during practice. You should take it to court with you, keep it by your water bottle, and use it as necessary during practice.

Players should not share equipment, especially water bottles, masks, and racquets. For matches, players may want to consider bringing their own chair or stool if they would like to sit during changeovers. Many facilities are removing or blocking off usage of benches.

Tennis Balls

We will provide tennis balls for practice and matches. Although highly unlikely, it's possible that a tennis ball can harbor the COVID-19 virus. Our goal is to try to keep the same hopper of practice tennis balls with the same group of players each day. Our court set-up lends itself to having a hopper of balls for every two courts. If a ball from another court ends up on your court, we will ask you to try to use your racquet head or feet to return the ball to the proper court.

Research published in the fall has looked at the ability of the COVID-19 virus to live on balls for various sports. Here's a link to a peer-reviewed article published in *Public Health in Practice* and available in the Science Direct database: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666535220300288>

Here's the abstract from that article:

Objects passed from one player to another have not been assessed for their ability to transmit severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). We found that the surface of sport balls, notably a football, tennis ball, golf ball, and cricket ball could not harbour inactivated virus when it was swabbed onto the surface, even for 30 s. However, when high concentrations of 5000 dC/mL and 10,000 dC/mL [the equivalent of a sneeze or cough] are directly pipetted onto the balls, it could be detected for short time periods. Sports objects can only harbour inactivated SARS-CoV-2 under specific, directly transferred conditions, but wiping with a dry tissue or moist 'baby wipe' or dropping and rolling the balls removes all detectable viral traces. This has helpful implications to sporting events.

Based on recommendations from the USTA and current research, players should pay careful attention to avoid touching their face until they can sanitize their hands during water breaks and change-overs. Tennis balls that are contaminated with respiratory secretions (sneezed on, coughed on, spit on, etc.) will be thrown away.

Team Gatherings

One of the unique elements of high school tennis, when compared to playing USTA events, is that we are members of the same team. We want to promote unity among our team members, but we also need to be aware that social gatherings are a leading transmission event. As a result, team dinners and other gatherings are being eliminated for now.

Please do not undo the effectiveness of our safety measures by hosting and promoting social gatherings.

Team Snacks, Drinks, and Lunches at Events

In the past, we have asked families to contribute snacks and drinks for players while they are waiting to go on court for their matches or for after their matches. We have also arranged to purchase lunches at tournaments. Because of the number of hands that might potentially touch packaging or food items and the congregating that happens around food, players will be asked to be responsible for their own snacks, drinks, and meals during events.

Transportation

In the past, we have traveled to events using a combination of school vans and one-way buses (the bus would pick us up at the high school and drop us off at an event and players' families would pick them up and take them home from the event). Currently, the maximum number of players that can be transported in a school van is either 4 or 5 depending on the van. School buses can carry up to 25. Masks and social distancing will be required in vehicles.

With proper paperwork (transportation form that is included in the physical packet), students may be permitted to drive themselves to some events. Parents/Guardians may also drive their students to events. All transportation to and from events needs to be communicated through the member of the coaching staff who is responsible for the event. We want to make sure that all players have transportation and arrive safely.

We also encourage players to travel only with members of their immediate household.

Match Spectators

SMSD is asking that each participant only have immediate family members present to watch them. Spectators **MUST** wear masks, remain in family groups, and keep at least 6 ft of distance from other spectators. Failure to adhere to these policies may result in dismissal from the matches.

Player who is symptomatic and tests positive for COVID-19:

1. Student should follow county health department or KDHE isolation guidelines.

*KDHE guidelines: Home isolation is required for a minimum of 10 days from onset of symptoms and the individual should be fever free for 72 hours without fever reducing medication and there should be a significant improvement in symptoms (**minimum 10-day isolation period**).*

2. (Updated 2/11/21): After the isolation period is complete, obtain written clearance from a healthcare provider (MD, DO, DC, PA-C, APRN) through an in-person health exam to begin a gradual return to physical activity.

Healthcare providers should pay special attention to cardiac screening when evaluating patients recovering from COVID-19. Additional cardiac workup may be considered prior to clearing the student for physical activity.

3. Once symptoms improve the student may resume normal activities of daily living while in isolation and walk for light exercise provided symptoms continue to improve.
4. (Updated 2/11/21): Once cleared by a healthcare provider through an in-person health exam, the student-athlete (including Spirit and Marching Band) may begin a gradual return to physical activity using the graduated progression indicated below*. This graduated return to play protocol is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and endorsed by the KSHSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee.
 - Stage 1 (2 days minimum): Light activity (walking, jogging, stationary bike) for 15 minutes or less at an intensity no greater than 70% maximum heart rate. No resistance training.
 - Stage 2 (1 day minimum): Add simple movement activities (e.g., running drills) for 30 minutes or less at an intensity no greater than 80% of maximum heart rate.
 - Stage 3 (1 day minimum): Progress to more complex training for 45 minutes or less at intensity no greater than 80 % maximum heart rate. May add light resistance training.
 - Stage 4 (2 days minimum): Normal training activity for 60 minutes or less at an intensity no greater than 80% maximum heart rate.
 - Stage 5: Return to full activity.

For less physically intense activities such as Bowling and Golf, healthcare providers may choose to modify the length and intensity of this protocol.

If symptoms recur during the graduated return to physical activity protocol, the student should return to the previous stage and progress again after a minimum of 24 hours rest without symptoms.

Player who is asymptomatic and tests positive for COVID-19:

1. Student should follow county health department or KDHE isolation guidelines.
*KDHE guidelines: Home isolation is required for a minimum of 10 days from onset of symptoms and the individual should be fever free for 72 hours without fever reducing medication and there should be a significant improvement in symptoms (**minimum 10-day isolation period**).*
2. (Updated 2/11/21): After the isolation period is complete, obtain written clearance from a healthcare provider (MD, DO, DC, PA-C, APRN) through an in-person health exam to begin a gradual return to physical activity.
Healthcare providers should pay special attention to cardiac screening when evaluating patients recovering from COVID-19. Additional cardiac workup may be considered prior to clearing the student for physical activity.
3. While in isolation, the student may continue normal activities of daily living and light exercise such as walking provided the student remains asymptomatic.
4. (Updated 2/11/21): Once cleared by a healthcare provider through an in-person health exam, the student-athlete (including Spirit and Marching Band) may begin a gradual return to physical activity using the graduated progression indicated below*. This graduated return to play protocol is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and endorsed by the KSHSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee.
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For less physically intense activities such as Bowling and Golf, healthcare providers may choose to modify the length and intensity of this protocol.

If symptoms recur during the graduated return to physical activity protocol, the student should return to the previous stage and progress again after a minimum of 24 hours rest without symptoms.

Players who are asymptomatic and determined to be a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case:

1. (Revised 1/12/21): KSHSAA recommends quarantine with duration based on current county health department and KDHE guidelines.
2. While in home quarantine, students should be aware of any emerging symptoms and contact their healthcare provider.
3. During the first 2-3 days of home quarantine, students should refrain from intense physical activity. If the student remains symptom free and has no other underlying medical conditions, they may begin to resume physical activity on their own while in home quarantine to maintain a healthy level of physical conditioning.
4. (Updated 2/11/21): Due to likely detraining during quarantine and to minimize risk upon return to sport, the student should participate in some full team practices prior to returning to formal competition in order for coaches to assess the student's overall physical conditioning status and the student's readiness for competition. Every situation and every student are unique. Coaches and athletic directors are responsible to ensure every student is both physically and emotionally prepared for a safe return to competition after a quarantine period ends. the following suggested practice guidelines are encouraged once the home quarantine period ends and the student returns to school/activities:
 - Baseball, Softball, Track & Field, Basketball, Wrestling, Swimming/Diving, Football, Cross Country, Soccer: Student should participate in a minimum of 3-4 full practices before resuming competition.
 - Volleyball, Gymnastics, Tennis, Spirit, Marching Band: Student should participate in a minimum of 2-3 full practices before resuming competition.
 - Bowling, Golf: No minimum practice recommendation

IN ALL THREE CASES:

The player or family should also contact me - andrewgibbs@smsd.org, Debbie Katzfey (SME Athletic Director) - debbiekatzfey@smsd.org, and Stephanie Ptacek (SME School Nurse) - stephanieptacek@smsd.org. In the case of a positive test, we can begin the process of identifying and notifying close contacts. The name of the individual who tested positive will remain confidential when contacting close contacts. In the case of a close contact exposure,

Teammates/Classmates but not Close Contacts of a Player or Coach with a Positive COVID Test

Those who had limited contact (less than 10 minutes) with the positive case, and who maintained a distance of more than 6 feet and always wore a mask, are considered a low risk exposure and do not need to be excluded from school or practice. These individuals should monitor themselves for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, wear a mask when in public, maintain a physical distance of 6 ft or more from other individuals and wash hands frequently with soap and water.

Additional Resources:

Johnson County Department of Health and Environment - Corona Virus FAQs

<https://www.jocogov.org/coronavirus/faqs>

KSHSAA - Considerations for a Return to School Activities

<https://www.kshsaa.org/Public/COVID/PDF/ReturnToParticipationGuidelines.pdf>

Shawnee Mission School District - COVID-19 Information

<https://www.smsd.org/about/departments/health-services/coronavirus-or-covid-19-information>

Shawnee Mission School District - Information on Reopening Schools and Learning Models

<https://www.smsd.org/academics/learning-models>

USTA - Playing Tennis Safely: Player Tips and Recommendations

<https://www.usta.com/en/home/stay-current/national/usta-statement-on-safety-of-playing-tennis-during-the-covid-19-v.html>