



SCARSDALE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2 Brewster Road
Scarsdale, N.Y. 10583

Trustees

Pamela Fuehrer, President
Alison Singer, Vice President
Karen Ceske
Carl Finger
Robert Klein
Ronald Schulhof
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Phone: (914) 721 - 2410
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June 30, 2021

VIA U.S. Mail and Email

Dr. Howard Zucker, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner of Health of New York State
New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower, Empire State Plaza, Albany NY, 12237

Dear Dr. Zucker:

Thank you for all of your leadership, guidance, and efforts to keep all New Yorkers safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, this has been a challenging year. Undoubtedly, our commitment to safety recommendations and guidance is allowing us to experience lower and lower infection rates of COVID-19 throughout New York State. Now, as we plan for the upcoming 2021-22 school year, we are seeking your assistance to continue this trend and allow for all of our student-athletes to practice and play sports as usual.

This year, school-based Competitive Cheerleading programs were disadvantaged by conflicting guidance within the documents provided by New York State Department of Health (NYSDoH), Westchester County Department of Health (WCDoH), and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Individually, each guidance document contained provisions to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and to maintain the physical safety of our athletes. Collectively, compliance with these guidelines became an impediment to our school district allowing our Cheerleaders to compete. The main issue laid in a confluence of guidance that, if our Cheerleaders were allowed to compete, would place us in a position of non-compliance.

As a higher-risk sport, Competitive Cheerleading was authorized by Governor Cuomo for all levels of play on February 1, 2021 pending approval from local departments of health. As part of the local

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approval process, the WCDoh included several requirements to acknowledge and manage the risks of participation in higher-risk sports and COVID-19 transmission. One of the WCDoh activity-based requirements stated that AAP guidance must be followed relative to the wearing of face coverings.

Specifically, the AAP guidance states that, “Face masks should not be worn for competitive cheerleading (tumbling/stunting/flying) and gymnastics (while on the different apparatuses) because of the theoretical risk that the mask may get caught on objects and become a choking hazard or accidentally impair vision.” Safety risks for other sports such as swimming and diving were also identified, and supervisory provisions for wrestling were included. However, unlike gymnastics, swimming, or diving, the nature of stunting in competitive cheerleading does not allow for social distancing. The inability to distance or safely use face masks would directly place a school district in non-compliance.

To facilitate a competitive season in the fall of 2021 for our cheerleaders, we are asking the NYSDoh to remove the risk categorizations of sport. As we have learned, the transmission of COVID-19 is more directly related to infection rates and less related to any sport categorization.

We thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. We are hopeful that you will assist us in our efforts to allow our cheerleaders to compete this season.

With appreciation,


Pamela M. Fuehrer (Jun 30, 2021 12:24 EDT)

Pam Fuehrer, President
Scarsdale Board of Education


Alison Singer (Jul 1, 2021 10:39 EDT)

Alison Singer, Vice President
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June 29, 2021

VIA U.S. Mail and Email

Sally Dreslin, M.S., R.N.
Executive Deputy Commissioner
New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower, Empire State Plaza, Albany NY, 12237

Dear Commissioner Dreslin:

Thank you for all of your leadership, guidance, and efforts to keep all New Yorkers safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, this has been a challenging year. Undoubtedly, our commitment to safety recommendations and guidance is allowing us to experience lower and lower infection rates of COVID-19 throughout New York State. Now, as we plan for the upcoming 2021-22 school year, we are seeking your assistance to continue this trend and allow for all of our student-athletes to practice and play sports as usual.

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June 29, 2021

VIA U.S. Mail and Email

Sherlita Amler, M.D, M.S, F.A.A.P
Commissioner of Health
Westchester County Department of Health
25 Moore Ave
Mt Kisco, NY 10549

Dear Dr. Amler:

Thank you for all of your leadership, guidance, and efforts to keep all New Yorkers safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, this has been a challenging year. Undoubtedly, our commitment to safety recommendations and guidance is allowing us to experience lower and lower infection rates of COVID-19 throughout New York State. Now, as we plan for the upcoming 2021-22 school year, we are seeking your assistance to continue this trend and allow for all of our student-athletes to practice and play sports as usual.

This year, school-based Competitive Cheerleading programs were disadvantaged by conflicting guidance within the documents provided by New York State Department of Health (NYSDoH), Westchester County Department of Health (WCDoH), and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Individually, each guidance document contained provisions to prevent transmission of COVID-19 and to maintain the physical safety of our athletes. Collectively, compliance with these guidelines became an impediment to our school district allowing our Cheerleaders to compete. The main issue laid in a confluence of guidance that, if our Cheerleaders were allowed to compete, would place us in a position of non-compliance.

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As a higher-risk sport, Competitive Cheerleading was authorized by Governor Cuomo for all levels of play on February 1, 2021 pending approval from local departments of health. As part of the local approval process, the WCDoH included several requirements to acknowledge and manage the risks of participation in higher-risk sports and COVID-19 transmission. One of the WCDoH activity-based requirements stated that AAP guidance must be followed relative to the wearing of face coverings. Specifically, the AAP guidance states that, “Face masks should not be worn for competitive cheerleading (tumbling/stunting/flying) and gymnastics (while on the different apparatuses) because of the theoretical risk that the mask may get caught on objects and become a choking hazard or accidentally impair vision.” Safety risks for other sports such as swimming and diving were also identified, and supervisory provisions for wrestling were included. However, unlike gymnastics, swimming, or diving, the nature of stunting in competitive cheerleading does not allow for social distancing. The inability to distance or safely use face masks would directly place a school district in non-compliance.

To facilitate a competitive season in the fall of 2021 for our cheerleaders, we are asking the WCDoH to remove the extra requirements for higher risk sports as outlined in their February 3 memorandum, and to specifically remove the clause, “American Academy of Pediatrics guidance must be followed relative to the wearing of face coverings.”

We thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. We are hopeful that you will assist us in our efforts to allow our cheerleaders to compete this season.

With appreciation,



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VIA U.S. Mail and Email

Debra Waldron, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.A.P.
Senior Vice President
Child Health and Wellness
American Academy of Pediatrics

Dear Dr. Waldron:

Thank you for all of your efforts to keep all children safely participating in youth sports during the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, this has been a challenging year. Undoubtedly, our commitment to safety recommendations and guidance is allowing us to experience lower infection rates of COVID-19 throughout the country while allowing our children to play. Now, as we plan for the upcoming 2021-22 school year, we are seeking your assistance to continue this trend and allow for all of our student-athletes to practice and play sports as usual.

This year, school-based Competitive Cheerleading programs in New York were disadvantaged by conflicting guidance within the documents provided by New York State Department of Health (NYSDoH), Westchester County Department of Health (WCDoH), and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Individually, each guidance document contained provisions to prevent transmission of COVID-19 and to maintain the physical safety of our athletes. Collectively, compliance with these guidelines became an impediment to our school district allowing our Cheerleaders to compete. The main issue laid in a confluence of guidance that, if our Cheerleaders were allowed to compete, would place us in a position of non-compliance.

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To facilitate a competitive season in the fall of 2021 for our cheerleaders, we are asking the AAP to add a provision in their guidance for the use of face masks (with a distinction about face coverings that wrap around the neck) that allows for cheerleaders to use face masks if a coach is in place to supervise.

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