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ATHLETIC FIELD CLOSURE GUIDELINES

The athletic fields located at St. James Collegiate, Westwood Collegiate, John Taylor Collegiate and Sturgeon Heights Collegiate have been designed and are maintained for the enjoyment and use of the students and community of St. James-Assiniboia. The fields are designated for special events and game play that will not result in damage to the field. Activities such as adult football, rugby and lacrosse have been deemed to be unsuitable for permit use on these fields.

These guidelines are intended to prevent damage to the playing surface and injuries to field users brought upon by inclement weather or unsafe playing conditions. An effective field maintenance program is essential for safe, quality fields. User groups are asked to help by accepting and adhering to these rules. Groups who use the Division's athletic facilities are expected to assist in protecting their participants and fields during periods of rain or inclement weather. It only takes one use to destroy a field that is not ready for play.

Field overuse or use during periods of wet weather, prolonged rain or a heavy downpour will cause irreparable damage to the turf. Grass that is dormant in early spring, late fall and during the hottest portion of summer, must have limited use as the grass will not recover from damage due to its dormancy.

In order to keep this damage to a minimum and ensure safe play conditions, fields will be closed during inclement weather, and may be temporarily closed to avoid overuse or for periodic maintenance.

FIELD CLOSURE STATUS

The St. James-Assiniboia School Division maintains a web page, www.sjasd.ca that provides daily field open or closed status for each field based on the playability, safety, and saturation of the athletic fields that must be adhered to. The page will be updated Monday through Friday by 4pm. A sign will also be displayed at the entrance to the field, indicating open or closed status.

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FIELD OPEN – USER RESPONSIBILITIES

Field closure updates will not occur after 4pm, on weekends or holidays. If a field is listed as open and the weather is changeable prior to the next update, the decision to play or not will be left to the discretion of the user. The user will be entirely responsible for all damages to fields adversely affected by their decision.

User discretion empowers the user to make a common sense decision about whether or not to cancel an event on their permitted field. If any of the following conditions occur, scheduled games and events must be canceled or postponed:

- The existence of rain on game day which could cause injury to participants or damage to fields.
- Water surfacing or bubbling up when walking on turf.
- Field is muddy to the point that footing becomes unstable (players slipping and sliding).
- Standing water on the field.
- 25 mm or more of rain 48 hours prior to scheduled game accompanied by rain on the event day.
- Extreme drought conditions where 50% of the playing surface has turned dormant.
- Audible thunder or visible lightning.
- Frost or snow.
- Sharp or other dangerous objects on field (i.e. broken glass, large unmovable rocks, broken base pegs, holes, etc.)

If damage occurs as a result of a user decision to play, the permit holder will be held responsible for all repair costs and may also have their permit privileges revoked.

Field use should be conducted in such a way that the activities takes place on different sections of turf, thus reducing excessive turf damage in one area. This could include, but is not limited to, rotating use of areas, relocating movable goals and when possible, staying off fringe or bare areas to limit erosion and further damage.

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PENALTIES

Abuse/use during wet conditions shall result in a minimum \$50.00 fine* upon the first occurrence. A second infraction during field permit season will result in a fine and the loss of the permit. (*Fine may be higher if cost of repairs exceeds minimum fine amount).

IT IS THE PERMIT HOLDER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT ALL COACHES/PARENTS UNDERSTAND AND ENFORCE THIS POLICY.

FIELD STATUS RECOMMENDATIONS

School Division Maintenance staff shall be responsible for assessing field conditions and updating of the website Monday through Friday by 4pm. Field use or playability will be determined by field saturation levels and/or field conditions due to usage.

DETERMINING FIELD SATURATION

To determine playability of turf athletic fields, Maintenance staff shall walk the fields to identify areas of saturation or pooling water. Staff will then take moisture readings using a soil moisture meter. This instrument is widely used in the golf course and turf maintenance industries. Moisture readings will be taken at five different locations, one reading in front of each goal; one reading between each goal line and the centerline of the field; and one reading along the sideline area. To take a reading, the probe of the meter will be inserted into the soil to a depth not to exceed 2 ½ inches. The gauge on the meter has a range of 1 to 10, with 10 being the wettest. A reading that registers from 8 to 10 shall constitute a saturated condition and deem the field unplayable.

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