March 3, 2021

Ronald J. Wheelock  
Superintendent of Schools  
Sauquoit Valley Central School District  
2601 Oneida Street  
Sauquoit, NY 13456

Re: Sauquoit Valley Central School District COVID-19 Athletics Protocol and Return to Play

Dear Mr. Wheelock,

The Oneida County Health Department (OCHD) has reviewed the “Sauquoit Valley Central School District COVID-19 Athletics Protocol and Return to Play” which sets forth Sauquoit Valley Central School District’s (SVCSDD) plan to participate in the following higher-risk sports:

- Boys and Girls Basketball
- Boys and Girls Volleyball
- Competitive Cheerleading
- Football
- Wrestling

OCHD gave approval of said plan as of February 23, 2021.

Through review of many plans, OCHD is aware some schools are considering a COVID-19 testing program for their student athletes. Please be aware, according to the New York State Education Department (NYSED), schools are prohibited from making consent to COVID-19 testing a prerequisite to participation in higher-risk sports.

The goal of the OCHD Guidelines is to help SVCSDD provide an environment which protects its community from COVID-19 transmission as much as possible while permitting student athletes to play a higher-risk sport. If SVCSDD has an outbreak of COVID-19 as a result of participation in higher-risk sports, OCHD’s only recourse is to suspend play. In order to prevent transmission of COVID-19 and, once transmitted, to limit its spread, it is essential for SVCSDD to enforce its plan and, if a positive case is identified, to assist OCHD to aggressively pursue contact tracing.

If SVCSDD becomes aware of a positive COVID-19 test result, please report the positive result within 24 hours to OCHD by emailing Kevin Green at kgreen@ocgov.net, backtoschool@ocgov.net or, after hours, by calling him at 315-527-8032.
OCHD looks forward to working with you to safely provide higher-risk sports playing opportunities in Oneida County.

Very truly yours,

Daniel W. Gilmore Ph.D., MPH
Oneida County Director of Public Health