

School District of Pittsburgh
Interscholastic Athletic Department
Re-socialization of Athletics Procedures
UPDATED AS OF 7-28-2021

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented all Athletic Department's with countless challenges. The COVID-19 virus is a highly contagious illness that primarily attacks the upper respiratory system. The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages. Research from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), among others, has found that while children do get infected by COVID-19, relatively few children with COVID-19 are hospitalized. However, some severe outcomes have been reported in children, and a child with a mild or even asymptomatic case of COVID-19 can spread the infection to others who may be far more vulnerable. While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of furthering the spread of COVID-19, the current science suggests there are many steps schools can take to reduce the risks to students, coaches, and their families.

The School District of Pittsburgh will take the necessary precautions and recommendations from the federal, state, and local governments, CDC, Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), as well as the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS), and Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) to safeguard the participants and staff of our athletic programs. The School District of Pittsburgh realizes knowledge regarding COVID-19 is constantly changing, as new information and treatments become available. The recommendations below will be adjusted as needed as new information becomes available in order to decrease the risk of exposure for our staff, students, and spectators.

The School District of Pittsburgh has designated Karen Arnold as the District's primary point of contact for all questions related to COVID-19 as they relate to Interscholastic Athletics. She can be reached at 412-529-2222.

MANDATES

The following is mandatory for **all phases** for Middle School and High School Athletics during the COVID-19 pandemic:

1. All Student Athletes, Coaches (paid and volunteer), and Staff will undergo a COVID-19 health screening prior to any in-person practice, event, or team meeting. The purpose of the health screening is to check for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. This location of this health screening will be announced prior to the practice or event.
2. Promote healthy hygiene practices to limit the spread of COVID-19 including:
 - a. Hand washing (20 seconds with warm water and soap)
 - b. For outside sports, masks can be removed by coach/athlete whether on the sidelines or engaged in the activity. For inside sports, masks must still be worn by coach/athlete when not engaging in the sport or on the sidelines.

- c. Use hand sanitizer.
3. Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation in all facilities.
4. Encourage social distancing through increased spacing, small groups, and limited mixing between groups, when feasible.
5. Educate Athletes, Coaches (paid and volunteer), and Staff on health and safety protocols.
6. Require that anyone who is sick to stay home.
7. Follow the plan for a student or employee who gets sick.
8. Regularly communicate and monitor developments with local authorities, coaches, staff, and families regarding cases, exposures, and updates to policies and procedures.
9. Athletes and Coaches MUST provide their own water bottle for hydration. Water bottles must not be shared. Disposable cups will not be provided. Water bottle filling stations are available to use for re-fill.
10. Personal protective equipment (PPE) will be used as needed and situations warrant or determined by local/state governments. These items include gloves, face masks, and eye protection. PPS will provide extra PPE in case of need at a practice or an event, i.e ripped mask.
11. Identify staff and students who may be at a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 due to underlying medical conditions such as:
 - Age 65 or older
 - Lung disease, moderate-severe asthma
 - Serious heart conditions
 - May be immunocompromised
 - Obesity
 - Diabetes
 - Kidney or liver disease

Pre-workout Screening:

- All coaches (paid and volunteer) and student athletes will complete a COVID-19 participation waiver. Coach waiver is from Pittsburgh Public Schools and student athlete waiver is Section 5 of the PIAA CIPPE document. This will be updated for the 2021 – 2022 school year for all groups.

- All coaches (paid and volunteer) and student athletes will be screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to any workout or event. (See Appendix for COVID-19 Screening Form.) Form is updated as needed.
- Screenings will include a temperature check and questioning to each person for COVID-19 symptoms. These responses should be recorded and stored to provide a record.
- Attendance should be recorded for contact tracing reasons.
- If individuals participating in sporting activities show symptoms, have a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, or are sick, they must be sent home.
 - Student athletes will need to contact parents/guardians for immediate pick-up.
 - Parents should contact their primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional for guidance.
- Any individual with suspected positive COVID-19 symptoms will not be allowed to take part in workouts.
 - Student athletes will need to contact parents/guardians for immediate pick-up.
 - Parents should contact their primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional for guidance.

Limitations on Gatherings:

- Per PA guidelines there are no longer limitations on gatherings.
- At PPS athletic sites, signage will continue to be displayed regarding COVID-19.
- Spectators will follow the CDC guidelines for masking inside buildings – those vaccinated can go without a mask and those unvaccinated should continue to wear a mask.
- Locker room use will be minimized during in season events.

Facilities Cleaning:

- Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities and common area to mitigate any communicable disease.
- Athletic facilities should be cleaned prior to arrival and following workouts and team gatherings, with high touch areas cleaned more often.
- Weight Room Equipment should be wiped clean after each individual's use.
- Athletic Training Room should be cleaned after each individual's use.
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times in the weight room to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment surfaces.

Physical Activity:

- Coaches must review and consider the CDC guidance to modify practices and games to mitigate the risk of spreading the virus. This includes focusing on individual skill building versus competition and limiting contact in close contact sports.
- Personal items should not be shared. This includes clothing, towels, and pinnies.
- If equipment must be shared, all equipment should be properly disinfected often during practice and events, as deemed necessary.
- Hand sanitizer should be used periodically, as resources allow.
- Spotters for maximum weight lifts should be stationed at each end of the bar.
- Each head coach of each sport should create an individualized health and safety plan related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Plans can be created using information from the School District of Pittsburgh plan; however, there should be specific information regarding

groupings, dates/times of meetings/practices, entrance and exit points for coaches and players, cleaning and water breaks, needed materials for the session, and any other pertinent information regarding the conditioning of athletes in preparation for each sports season. Plans MUST be submitted to the Athletic Office at karnold1@pghschools.org prior to your conditioning/practice sessions beginning.

- All off-season conditioning and in-season practices should be in compliance with the PIAA rules for off-season conditioning.

Hydration:

- All athletes, coaches, and officials must bring their own water and drinks to team activities. Participation will not be allowed without personal hydration.
- Team water coolers for sharing through disposable cups are not allowed.
- During games, small water bottles will be provided by the Athletic Office. Athletes are still able to bring their own water bottles, but cannot share with anyone.
- Water filling stations may be used in the school; bubblers on the water fountains should not be used.

OTHER GUIDANCE:

Primary Point of Contact:

- The School District of Pittsburgh has designated Karen Arnold as the District's primary point of contact for all questions related to COVID-19 as they relate to Interscholastic Athletics. Contact information for Karen Arnold is: 412-529-2222.

Transportation

- Coaches are directed to complete bus seating charts for all away events and submit as needed for contract tracing use.

Social Distancing during Contests/Events/Activities

- Sidelines/Bench Area - Appropriate social distancing will need to be maintained on sidelines or bench area during practices and events, as deemed necessary by the school, PIAA, state and local governments.

Who should be allowed at events?

- There are no limitations on attendance at events. Practices will continue to be limited to players and coaches only.

Overnight/Out of State Events/ Events in COVID-19 Hot Spots

- The School District of Pittsburgh will evaluate each event and follow all local/state government guidelines on a case by case basis.
- Every consideration must be taken as to not expose students to unnecessary or potential high-risk exposure by traveling outside of the region.

Other Important Information

- Activities that increase the risk of exposure to saliva must not be allowed including chewing gum, spitting, licking fingers, and eating sunflower seeds.

- Avoid shaking hands, fist bumps, or high fives before, during or after games and practices. Limit unnecessary physical contact with teammates, other athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators.
- If multiple events are to be held at the same facility, adequate time shall be scheduled between contests to allow for facilities to be cleaned and disinfected, and to minimize interaction between athletes.
- Sports complexes with multiple fields may operate simultaneous games or practices on fields within a complex only if social distancing can be maintained.
- Establish protocols to limit entrance and exit traffic, designating specific entry to and exits from facilities with clear signage.
- Stagger pick up and drop off times and locations for practice and events.
- Ensure that athletes are not congregating while awaiting pick up and to ensure congregation or crowding does not occur on drop off.
- Parents dropping off and picking up athletes should remain outside of athletic facilities. Parents should not enter the facility.

Positive Cases and Coaches, Staff, or Athletes Showing COVID-19 Symptoms

What are the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?

- Use this link to from the CDC to review the signs and symptoms of COVID – 10. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

What to do if you are sick?

- If you are sick or think you are infected with the COVID-19 virus, STAY AT HOME.
 - It is essential that you take steps to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home or community.
 - If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, call your healthcare provider for medical advice.
- Notify the school immediately (principal, athletic director, school nurse, athletic trainer, and/or coach)
- It will be determined if others who may have been exposed (students, coaches, staff) need to be notified, isolated, and/or monitored for symptoms
- If a Positive case of COVID-19 is diagnosed, contact tracing will be implemented with the assistance of local health professionals and the CDC and DOH.
- The team or teams affected by a positive case, including coaches, players and other support staff, will be quarantined based on CDC and DOH guidelines No practices or contests will occur during this period of quarantining.

What to do if a student or staff become ill with COVID-19 symptoms during practice, event, or during transportation to or from an event?

- Make every effort to isolate the ill individual from others, until the student or staff member can leave the school or event.
- If student, parent/guardian will be contacted immediately, and arrangements will be made for the student to be picked up

- The ill individual will be asked to contact their physician or appropriate healthcare professional for direction.
- The facility where the sick individual was present will need to be disinfected immediately.
- Coaches should report this information immediately to their school principal with a cc notification to the Director of Interscholastic Athletics. Next steps will then be provided.

Return of student or staff to athletics following a COVID-19 diagnosis?

- If a student athlete was positive for COVID-19 before starting a sport, the student's sports physical must be performed by the student's primary care provider. If permitted to play sports, a clearance letter signed by the provider must be submitted.
- If a student athlete is positive for COVID-19 while the sport is in session, the student must be quarantined for at least 10-days and be symptom free for at least 24 hours. The student must receive clearance from their primary care provider prior to returning to athletic activity. A clearance letter signed by the healthcare provider must be submitted. Once cleared to resume sports, the athlete will start a 7-day gradual increase in activity. If the increase in activity is tolerated, then the athlete may return to full activity.
- Clearance letters from MDs, DOs, CRNPs, and PAs are acceptable.
- Coaches (paid and volunteer) will follow PPS guidance on return to work.

EDUCATION:

- Staff, Coaches, Parents, and Athletes will be educated on the following (through posters, flyers, meetings, emails, phone calls):
 - COVID-19 signs and symptoms
 - Proper ways to limit exposure to COVID-19 (hand washing, cough in your elbow, disinfecting touched surfaces, social distancing, etc.)
 - The content of this Return to Sport Guidelines Document
 - Any pertinent COVID-19 information released by DOH, PDE, local governments, NFHS, and PIAA.

**School District of Pittsburgh
Interscholastic Athletic Department
Athlete and Staff COVID-19 Screening
UPDATED AS OF 4-22-2021**

One form per athlete/staff/coach. Forms are turned in to the Faculty Manager of Athletics or the Interscholastic Athletic office every Friday.

Name: _____ Athlete/Staff (Circle One)

Grade: _____ Sport: _____

Students/Coaches/Adults should self-report as deemed necessary prior to each practice/event.

Temperature may be taken from a designated trained individual as needed. The other symptoms should be marked as "N" NO or "Y" Yes answers.

For the- "Close Contact" question, the answer should reflect the following question:

Within the past 14 days, have you had close contact with someone who is currently sick with suspected or confirmed COVID-19?
(Note: Close contact is defined as within 6 feet for more than 15 consecutive minutes in a 24 hour period)

If any responses are "YES", student/coach/adult will NOT be allowed to attend practice or compete, and will be asked to leave school grounds. Parent/Guardian will be notified.

If athlete/staff/coach do not attend practice/event on a given date, mark ABSENT on Date line.

MONDAY – Date _____ Temperature: _____ Taken by: _____
Fever/Chills _____ Cough _____ Sore Throat _____ Short of Breath _____
Loss of Taste/Smell _____ Vomiting/Diarrhea _____ Close Contact? _____ Been tested in last 14 days? _____

TUESDAY – Date _____ Temperature: _____ Taken by: _____
Fever/Chills _____ Cough _____ Sore Throat _____ Short of Breath _____
Loss of Taste/Smell _____ Vomiting/Diarrhea _____ Close Contact? _____ Been tested in last 14 days? _____

WEDNESDAY – Date _____ Temperature: _____ Taken by: _____
Fever/Chills _____ Cough _____ Sore Throat _____ Short of Breath _____
Loss of Taste/Smell _____ Vomiting/Diarrhea _____ Close Contact? _____ Been tested in last 14 days? _____

THURSDAY – Date _____ Temperature: _____ Taken by: _____
Fever/Chills _____ Cough _____ Sore Throat _____ Short of Breath _____
Loss of Taste/Smell _____ Vomiting/Diarrhea _____ Close Contact? _____ Been tested in last 14 days? _____

FRIDAY – Date _____ Temperature: _____ Taken by: _____
Fever/Chills _____ Cough _____ Sore Throat _____ Short of Breath _____
Loss of Taste/Smell _____ Vomiting/Diarrhea _____ Close Contact? _____ Been tested in last 14 days? _____

SATURDAY/SUNDAY – Date _____ Temperature: _____ Taken by: _____
Fever/Chills _____ Cough _____ Sore Throat _____ Short of Breath _____
Loss of Taste/Smell _____ Vomiting/Diarrhea _____ Close Contact? _____ Been tested in last 14 days? _____