

Athens Area School District Athletic Department Resocialization of Sports Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented athletics across the world with a myriad of 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. 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 AASD will take the necessary precautions and recommendations from the federal, state, and local governments, CDC, PA DOH, as well as the NFHS and PIAA. Athens Area School District realizes the knowledge regarding COVID-19 is constantly changing as new information and treatments become available. These recommendations will be adjusted as needed as new information becomes available in order to decrease the risk of exposure for our staff, students, and spectators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for **ALL PHASES** for Junior and Senior High Athletics

1. Athletes, Coaches, and Staff will undergo a COVID- 19 health screening prior to any practice, event, or team meeting. The type of screening will be dependent upon the available resources and the Phase level. The purpose is to check for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
2. Promote healthy hygiene practices such as hand washing (20 seconds with warm water and soap) and employees wearing a cloth face covering as feasible. (Face coverings are recommended to help decrease potential exposure to COVID-19 respiratory droplets by an infected individual. Coverings will not be used for athletes while practicing or competing.) Hand Sanitizer will be available for team use as resources allow.
3. Masks will be worn at all times indoors and when social distancing is not possible outdoors with the exception or when actively participating in the activity.
4. Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation in all facilities
5. Encourage social distancing through increased spacing, small groups, and limited mixing between groups, if feasible
6. Educate Athletes, Coaches, and Staff on health and safety protocols
7. Anyone who is sick must stay home
8. Plan in place if a student or employee gets sick
9. Regularly communicate and monitor developments with local authorities, employees, and families regarding cases, exposures, and updates to policies and procedures
10. Athletes and Coaches **MUST** provide their own water bottle for hydration. Water bottles must not be shared.
11. PPE (gloves, masks, eye protection) will be used as needed and situations warrant, or determined by local/state governments.
12. Identify Staff and students who may be at a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 due to underlying medical conditions.(See - CDC “People Who are at a Higher Risk for Severe Illness”)
13. All AASD Coaches will be educated and trained on this document and it will be a requirement of their coaching position that they teach and adhere to all principals within.

CLASSIFICATION OF SPORTS

- **High Risk:** Sports that involve close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants. Examples: football, wrestling, cheerleading (stunts), dance
- **Moderate Risk:** Sports that involve close, sustained contact, but with protective equipment in place that may reduce the likelihood of respiratory particle transmission between participants OR intermittent close contact OR group sports that use equipment that can't be cleaned between participants. Examples:

basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball, soccer, ice hockey, tennis, pole vault, high jump, long jump, 7 on 7 football

- **Low Risk:** Sports that can be done with social distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between uses by competitors. Examples: running events, cross country, throwing events, swimming, golf, weightlifting, sideline cheer

** High/Moderate Risk Sports may move to a Low risk category with non-contact modifications.

Phase 1 (PA State Yellow)

- All school facilities remain closed as per PA State Guidelines
- Athletes and Coaches may communicate via online meetings (zoom, google meet, etc.)
- Athletes may participate in home workouts including strength and conditioning.
- Athletes and Coaches should abide by guidelines set forth by the local and state governments.

Phase 2 (Green)

Pre-workout Screening:

- Each Head Coach will be the primary point of contact for all questions relating to COVID-19. Head Coaches will identify themselves as the contact person to parents and students. Contact information will be provided prior to the start of any pre-season activities.
- All Coaches, as employees of the district, will be screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 each day they report to work. (See Appendix for COVID-19 Screening Form for Coaches). The Athletic Director will monitor the self-screening of coaches during the season.
- Students will be monitored by Coaches for signs or symptoms of COVIDS-19.
- Any person with positive symptoms reported or where the coach has reason to believe symptoms may be present, will not be allowed to take part in workouts and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional. Parents of students will be notified immediately.
- Individuals with signs or symptoms of COVID-19 are prohibited from returning until they are symptom free without medication for 24 hours (48 hours for fever of 99.5 with a touchless thermometer or 100.4F with an oral thermometer or higher).

Limitations on Gatherings:

- Gatherings in facilities are limited to a maximum of 50% normal capacity provided 6 feet of social distancing can be achieved where practical.
- Students should practice within the same group. Changes to groups can be made gradually as needed. Group attendance will be tracked daily by coaches. (See Appendix for Student Group Attendance Record)
- Concession stands must adhere to DOH guidelines for Restaurants and Businesses.
- Social Distancing should be applied, where practical, during practices and in locker rooms, and gathering areas.

Facilities Cleaning:

- Adequate cleaning schedules will be created and implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate any communicable disease. The Director of Buildings and Grounds will create and monitor the cleaning schedule. Logs noting date, time, and staff initials will be maintained at each location.
- Indoor athletic facilities will be cleaned prior to arrival and post workouts.
- Weight Room Equipment will be wiped-down between each use by students and daily by custodial staff.

- District will provide the coaching staff with spray bottles, disinfectant, and paper towels to periodically wipe-down shared equipment, balls, etc. during and at the conclusion of practices.

Physical Activity:

- Low, Moderate, and High Risk practices and competitions may begin as per State, Local, and PIAA Guidelines.
- Practices should remain non-contact and include social distancing where applicable.
- Students must refrain from sharing clothing/towels and should be washed after each practice, including pinnies.
- Equipment that may be used by multiple individuals (balls, shields, tackling dummies, shotput, discus, pole vault, etc.) should be cleaned intermittently during practice and events as deemed necessary.
- Hand washing with soap and water for 20 seconds should occur periodically during events and practices. Hand Sanitizer may be used as resources allow.
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times in the weight room to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment surfaces.
- Spotters for weight lifts should be stationed at each end of the bar.

Mandatory Quarantine States:

Per the Governor's office on 7/2/20. Any athlete or Coach that has been in any of these 15 states since July 2nd is required to quarantine for 14 days before any resumption of activities with their respective teams. Please reach out with any questions or if you need further guidance.

<https://www.pennlive.com/coronavirus/2020/07/pa-officials-say-travelers-coming-from-these-15-states-should-quarantine-for-14-days.html>

Hydration:

- Students MUST bring their own water bottles. Water bottles must not be shared.
- Hydration stations (water coolers, water fountains, water cows, water troughs, etc.) will NOT be utilized.
- Water can be refilled by the trainer following safety guidelines.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:**Transportation:**

- Modifications for student/coach transportation to and from athletic events may be necessary. This may include:
 - Reducing the number of students/coaches on a bus/van.
 - Using hand sanitizer upon boarding a bus/van.
 - Social distancing.
 - Wearing of facemasks during transportation.
- These potential modifications will be determined by the school district, bus companies, Department of Education, State and Local governments.

Social Distancing during Contests/Events/Activities

- Sidelines/Bench – appropriate social distancing will be maintained on sidelines/bench during contests and events, as deemed necessary by the school, PIAA, state and local governments.

Who should be allowed at events?

Group people into tiers from essential to non-essential and decide which will be allowed at an event:

1. Tier 1 (Essential) – Athletes, coaches, officials, event staff, medical staff, security
2. Tier 2 (Preferred) – Media
3. Tier 3 (Non-essential) – Spectators, vendors
 - Only Tier 1 and 2 personnel will be allowed to attend events until state/local governments lift restrictions on mass gatherings.
 - Changes to seating capacity and social distancing may be necessary for each venue facility and will be determined as more recommendations are released by the local/state governments.

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

- The AASD will evaluate each event and follow all local/state government guidelines on a case by case basis. Every consideration will be taken as to not expose students to unnecessary or potential high risk exposure.

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, avoid touching eyes, nose, face and mouth, no spitting, gum chewing, etc.)
- No Handshakes/Celebrations (high fives, fist/elbow bumps, chest bumps, hugging), etc.
- The content of this Return to Sport Guidelines Document
- Any pertinent COVID-19 information released by state/local governments, NFHS, and PIAA.
- Limit indoor activities and the areas used. Locker room use is not permitted Facility showers cannot be used

- Student Athletes should remain with their assigned groups during each workout and during daily workouts to limit the number of people they come in contact with.
- No students allowed in training areas without the presence of an athletic trainer

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

What are the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. The symptoms may range from mild to severe. (See CDC Fact Sheet in Appendix)

Symptoms may include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore Throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

What to do if you are sick?

- If you are sick with COVID-19 or think you are infected with the 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, athletic trainer, 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/PA DOH. See Information in Appendix

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?

- Every effort will be made to isolate the ill individual from others, until the student or staff member can leave the school or event
- If a student shows any sign of COVID-19, parent/guardian will be contacted immediately, and arrangements will be made for the student to be picked up
- Sick individuals will be asked to contact their physician or appropriate healthcare professional for direction

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

- Student or staff should have medical clearance from their physician or appropriate healthcare professional, determined to be non-contagious,
Fever free for 72 hours (this is what is in the main plan) (without fever-reducing medicine), improvement in respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath), no vomiting or diarrhea.



PRESS RELEASE – Mechanicsburg, PA – Friday, July 3, 2020

This afternoon the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) authored some FAQ's for the recent wearing a face covering (mask) order signed by Secretary of Health, Dr. Rachel Levine on Wednesday, July 1, 2020. This action has created a number of questions for schools and their out of season voluntary workout programs.

PIAA Executive Director, Dr. Robert A. Lombardi stated, "We are tremendously appreciative of the Department of Health and the Department of Education for providing guidance and answers to the many frequently asked questions. This information will greatly assist PIAA member schools, their administration and staffs with the information needed to continue their voluntary, summer workout programs".

The most requested questions recently are the following:

Does the Order apply to athletes and sports activities?

Yes. Everyone must wear a face covering, such as a mask, unless they fall under an exception listed in Section 3 of the Order. Coaches, athletes and spectators must wear face coverings unless they are outdoors and can consistently maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet. Athletes are not required to wear face coverings while actively engaged in workouts and competition that prevent the wearing of face coverings, but must wear face coverings when on the sidelines, in the dugout, etc. and anytime 6 feet of social distancing is not possible.

Do schools need to update/amend their Health and Safety Plans if they have already been submitted to PDE?

Health and Safety Plans must reflect this Order. Understanding the volatility and uncertainty of the COVID-19 virus, plans should be flexible enough to contemplate any future change in conditions.

Do updated/revised Health and Safety Plans need to be re-approved by local school boards?

Yes. While the Order must be implemented immediately, plan approval, if necessary, should occur at the next board meeting.

For more information from the Department of Health on face coverings (masks) use the following link:

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Guidance/Universal-Masking-FAQ.aspx>

About Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association

Beginning in Pittsburgh, on December 29, 1913, PIAA was given the privilege of serving its member schools and registered officials by establishing policies and adopting contest rules that emphasize the educational values of interscholastic athletics, promote safe and sportsmanlike competition and provide uniform standards for all interscholastic levels of competition.

APPENDIX

For the column “Close Contact” 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 6ft for more than 10 consecutive minutes, without PPE equipment.)

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



WHAT IS CONTACT TRACING?

BACKGROUND

Contact tracing is the process of reaching out to anyone who came into close contact with an individual who is positive for COVID-19. Contact tracing helps monitor close contacts for symptoms and to determine if they need to be tested. Contact tracing is a key strategy for preventing the further spread of infectious diseases such as COVID-19.

WHAT DOES THIS PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

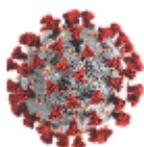
- In contact tracing, public health staff work with a case to help them recall everyone they have had close contact with during the time they were infectious.
- Public health staff then inform individuals who have had close contact (e.g. “close contacts”) that they have potentially been exposed to COVID-19. Close contacts are only told that they may have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19; they are not told who may have exposed them.
- Close contacts are given education, information and support so they understand their risk. They receive information on what they should do to separate themselves from others who have not been exposed, how to monitor themselves for illness, and are made aware that they could possibly spread the infection to others, even if they do not feel sick.
- Close contacts will be asked to quarantine themselves and are encouraged to stay home and maintain social distancing through the end of their infectious period, which is about 14 days, in case they become sick. They should monitor themselves by checking their temperature twice a day and watch for any other symptoms of COVID-19. Public health staff will check in with these contacts to make sure they are self-monitoring and have not developed symptoms.
- If a close contact develops symptoms, they should isolate themselves and let public health staff know. The close contact will be evaluated to see if they need medical care. A test may be necessary unless the individual is already in a household or long-term care facility with a confirmed case, then the close contact would be considered a probable case without a test.

WHAT TERMS SHOULD I KNOW WHEN IT COMES TO CONTACT TRACING?

- A **case** is a patient who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. A case should isolate themselves, meaning they should stay away from other people who are not sick to avoid spreading the illness.
- A **close contact** is an individual who had close contact with a case while the case was infectious. A close contact should quarantine themselves, meaning they should stay at home to limit community exposure and self-monitor for symptoms.

- A **contact of a close contact** is an individual who had or continues to have contact with a close contact. A contact of a close contact should take all regular preventative actions, like washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, and cleaning surfaces frequently. A contact of a close contact should be alert for symptoms.

What you should know about COVID-19 to protect yourself and others



Know about COVID-19

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person.
- The virus that causes COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has spread throughout the world.
- COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild (or no symptoms) to severe illness.



Know how COVID-19 is spread

- You can become infected by coming into close contact (about 6 feet or two arm lengths) with a person who has COVID-19. COVID-19 is primarily spread from person to person.
- You can become infected from respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- You may also be able to get it by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and then by touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.



Protect yourself and others from COVID-19

- There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Stay home as much as possible and avoid close contact with others.
- Wear a cloth face covering that covers your nose and mouth in public settings.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



Practice social distancing

- Buy groceries and medicine, go to the doctor, and complete banking activities online when possible.
- If you must go in person, stay at least 6 feet away from others and disinfect items you must touch.
- Get deliveries and takeout, and limit in-person contact as much as possible.



Prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick

- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Avoid public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.
- Separate yourself from other people and pets in your home.
- There is no specific treatment for COVID-19, but you can seek medical care to help relieve your symptoms.
- If you need medical attention, call ahead.



Know your risk for severe illness

- Everyone is at risk of getting COVID-19.
- Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at higher risk for more severe illness.



CS1740576 04/15/2020

cdc.gov/coronavirus

RESOURCES:

NFHS: Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities (per update on May 2020)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Website: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)

“What You Should Know About COVID-19 to Protect Yourself and Others”,

“Schools Decision Tree”

PA Department of Health

Website: [health.pa.gov](https://www.health.pa.gov)

“Coronavirus Symptoms”

“What is Contact Tracing”

“Phased Re-opening Plan by Governor Wolf”

A Guide to Re-Entry to Athletics in Texas Secondary Schools

By Jamie Woodall, MPH, LAT, ATC, CPH and Josh Woodall Med, LAT, ATC