

2020 School and Youth Sports Reopening Guidelines



WellSpan Sports Medicine prioritizes the health of athletes everywhere. We have compiled a game plan for the reopening of athletic practices and events that aligns with the CDC, PA Department of Health, PA Department of Education, PIAA and NFHS. This guidance is meant to assist in the development of Health and Safety Plans for schools and other facilities as they begin to reopen after COVID-19 shutdown. We have compiled and arranged the information into useful subgroups to help direct athletes and administrators to making safe and well-directed decisions about their health.

PIAA requests schools and venues to require attendees to comply with 6-foot social distancing requirements, to wear masks or face coverings, and to implement best practices such as timed entry, multiple entry and exit points, multiple restrooms and hygiene stations. These changes will assist schools in allowing parents and guardians to view their school sports programs while complying with safety standards.

As of November 16, 2020 Governor Wolf's Mitigation plan, PIAA posted information:

i. Maximum Occupancy Calculator for Indoor Events

Maximum Occupancy	Allowable Indoor Rate
0 - 2,000 people	20% of maximum occupancy
2,001 - 10,000 people	15% of maximum occupancy
Over 10,000 people	10% of maximum occupancy up to 3,750 people

ii. Maximum Occupancy Calculator for Outdoor Events

Maximum Occupancy	Allowable Indoor Rate
0 - 2,000 people	25% of maximum occupancy
2,001 - 10,000 people	20% of maximum occupancy
Over 10,000 people	15% of maximum occupancy up to 7,500 people


WellSpan COVID-19 Information: [Click here](#)

How to prevent getting sick: [Click here](#)

Facilities Cleaning and Maintenance

Cleaning Procedures (Taken from the CDC's COVID-19 Guidelines):

Hard (Non-porous) Surfaces

- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.
 - o A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available [here](#)  [external icon](#). Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products for concentration, application method and contact time, etc.
 - o Additionally, diluted household bleach solutions (at least 1000ppm sodium hypochlorite) can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application, ensuring a contact time of at least 1 minute, and allowing proper ventilation during and after application. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective

against coronaviruses when properly diluted. Bleach solutions will be effective for disinfection up to 24 hours.

- Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water or
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Soft (Porous) Surfaces

- For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination if present and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning:
 - o If the items can be laundered, launder items in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and then dry items completely.
 - Otherwise, use products that are [EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19](#) and that are suitable for porous surfaces

Electronics

- For electronics such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines, remove visible contamination if present.

- o Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.
- o Consider use of wipeable covers for electronics.
- o If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol to disinfect touch screens. Dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids.

Linens, Clothing, and Other Items That Go in the Laundry

- In order to minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air, do not shake dirty laundry.
- Wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items.
- Clean and disinfect hampers or other carts for transporting laundry according to guidance above for hard or soft surfaces.

[Click here for ReOpening America Cleaning Disinfection Decision Tool.](#)

Athletes, Coaches, and Other School Personnel

The NFHS released phased guidance for reopening school athletics. These phases are broken into red, yellow, and green phases according to geographical risk, sport level of risk, equipment availability, location of practices, and more. These guidelines were shaped with respect to The White House's phased reopening plan, so it is important to note that state and local regulations may outweigh some of the guidance in this document based on locality's phase of reopening. The NFHS document can be found here: [Click here for guidance for opening-up high school athletics and activities.](#)



The most important factor in preventing the spread of COVID-19 is staying home when you are sick. This needs to be stressed to students and athletes, but also double-checked by qualified people. Symptom and temperature screens are paramount in making sure sick people do not enter facilities, risking the spread of illness. WellSpan recommends screening all people entering the building for fever, cough, or shortness of breath. Fever can be checked in a non-invasive manner by use of infrared thermometer that scans the forehead without contact. It is also important to have a plan of action for if someone is ill and cannot be permitted in the building. Specific to COVID-19, WellSpan recommends staying home for 10 full days after the first symptoms of illness appeared, as well as going 3 full days fever-free without the use of antipyretics such as Tylenol.

Equipment Usage

- The CDC, PA DOH, and NFHS recommend avoiding shared equipment when at all possible.
- Each team should have its own equipment that does not need to be shared with other groups: this includes within JV and Varsity teams.
- Items like bats that are shared between team members should be sanitized between uses.
- Balls should be thoroughly sanitized at the end of each practice.
- There should be absolutely no sharing of water bottles; each athlete needs to bring their own every day and are responsible for its daily cleaning.
- Pinnies or other shared clothing items should be laundered daily and only used by one person per day.
- Items for equipment-intensive sports such as football should be sanitized daily prior to placing in a locker at the end of practice: this should be the responsibility of each student-athlete.
- Student Athletes should be encouraged to bring equipment from home whenever possible: bats, gloves, sticks, etc.

Practice and Game Considerations

- Schedules for practices and games will need to be different than we are used to.
- Extra time between groups for cleaning and sanitizing must be factored in.
- Lists should be created ahead of time which note what surfaces and materials need cleaned between each practice- for both indoor and outdoor practice venues.
- Outdoor areas will have fewer items that need cleaned: benches and tables are of most importance.
- Indoor venues will have more areas that need cleaned and so should factor in at least 30 minutes between one practice ending and another starting to be able to thoroughly clean and sanitize.
- Facilities will also need to designate who is cleaning surfaces after each group is done- maintenance and cleaning personnel most likely won't be able to walk out to athletic fields to clean after practices, so coaches or managers may need to be designated and trained in how to properly clean and disinfect. Logs should be kept daily to note that appropriate procedures have been followed.

Spectators and Others

As counties move to the green phase of reopening, there are some rules to keep in mind in general for facilities and events taking place. Businesses and buildings considered nonessential or closed during the first two phases of reopening are limited to 50 percent capacity once a county moves into the green phase. This could affect attendance of indoor sporting events should these limits still be in place at that time. Additionally, social distancing and mask wearing are still stressed as highly important during this phase, so schools and athletic groups need to decide how they are going to go about enforcing those matters.

The CDC's Guidance on Cloth Face Coverings and Wearing a Mask

CDC continues to study the spread and effects of the novel coronavirus across the United States. We now know from recent studies that a significant portion of individuals with coronavirus

lack symptoms (“asymptomatic”) and that even those who eventually develop symptoms (“pre-symptomatic”) can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. This means that the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity—for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing—even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms. In light of this new evidence, CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.

It is critical to emphasize that maintaining 6-foot social distancing remains important to slowing the spread of the virus. CDC is additionally advising the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

Cloth face coverings: [Click here](#)

Different sports have different risk levels based on interaction between athletes, shared equipment, and ability to maintain small groups and social distancing.

- Keeping strict attendance day-to-day is noted in the NFHS’s position statement on reopening high school athletics. This log of participants will be critically important if someone should become sick, in order to advise those who were exposed to that person.
- Participants should be required to wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water prior to joining any team practice or activity.
- Hand sanitizer must also be available during all team activities.
- There should be absolutely no sharing of water bottles; each athlete needs to bring their own every day.

Everyone who enters a practice, game, or facility in general needs to be held to the same standard of hygiene practices, symptom screening, and general accountability. Coaches should screen each other prior to any athletes arriving to ensure they are all well and able to conduct practice. Every employee entering the building should be screened daily. It may be helpful to limit access to buildings to ensure everyone is being screened- specifically employees. Personnel should be appointed to monitor these practices: lack of compliance could lead to a major outbreak.

CDC Considerations for Youth Sports: [Click here](#)

Reduce the Spread of COVID-19 in Youth Sports: [Click here](#)

What to Do When Someone Screens Positive

Each school’s protocols for how to handle a sick person are going to vary based on building layout, class size and number of people potentially exposed, drop off and pickup procedures, etc. The most important factor is not allowing the person inside the building once they screen positive. Screenings should be done outside the building in open air, so that if someone screens positive they have low risk of infecting anyone. WellSpan athletic trainers are an excellent resource for developing this protocol specific to each school: they know the school, they know the population, and they know COVID-19 procedures.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health’s Guidance for Reopening Schools requires that each school have a Pandemic Point Person or Team that handles the planning for sick students/staff in the building. This team should develop a plan specific to the school for how to isolate the sick person, cleaning procedures, returning after being sick, and notification of other people exposed. Signage will be required to be visible throughout the schools and facilities encouraging hand hygiene and symptom monitoring. These signs should be placed in areas of high traffic, as well as all entrances to the building.

CDC Handwashing materials: [Click here](#)

CDC COVID-19 Symptoms Signage: [Click here](#)

CDC Social Distancing Signage with Social Media-enabled documents: [Click here](#)

WellSpan advises screening every single person for symptoms and a fever. This may seem daunting at an athletic event, but is paramount in ensuring the health of students, staff and faculty, and spectators alike. Schools will need to take into account the extra personnel this may require for events like football games: extra volunteers at entrances to stadiums, gates opening sooner to allow for the added time this will take, etc. Additionally, WellSpan advises every person entering a facility to “gel in and gel out”, that is, sanitize hands prior to entering and exiting a location.

The following sources of information have been utilized in the creation of this document:

[The Pennsylvania Department of Health’s Preliminary Guidance for Reopening Schools](#)

[NFHS Position Statement](#)

[CDC Coronavirus Homepage](#)

[Pennsylvania Department of Health Coronavirus Homepage](#)



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