



GUIDELINES
FOR RETURN TO SPORTS
DURING COVID-19
UPDATED JUNE 2020

ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT
NORTHGATE SCHOOL DISTRICT

INTRODUCTION

This document contains guidelines for establishing a set of standards to assist athletic programs in resuming participation. There can be no guarantee of safety in a contact sport. This document does not supersede any state or federal guidelines in place for the COVID-19 pandemic. Appreciate, as the medical and scientific community learns more about COVID-19, these recommendations are subject to change. It remains important to continue to consult and follow the most recent CDC guidelines. CDC - Considerations for Youth Sports will provide guidance and information for the following protocol at Northgate School District.

MOST IMPORTANTLY STUDENTS AND COACHES SHOULD STAY HOME IF THEY DO NOT FEEL WELL.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Social distancing must be maintained at all times (six feet at a minimum) including the field of play, locker rooms, sidelines, dugouts, benches and workout areas.
- Consider limiting staff to only essential personnel. During the Yellow and Green phases of reopening, sports related activities are limited to student athletes, coaches, officials and staff only
- Take into account the capacity of rooms/buildings and consider a reduction in this number. Each individual game or practice at a complex must adhere to gathering occupancy limits (25 in yellow, 250 in green) and the facility as a whole may not exceed 50% of total occupancy otherwise permitted by law.
- Large social gatherings in any space should be discouraged.
- Consider spacing in the cafeterias, classrooms, weight rooms, athletic training rooms/locker rooms, and other on-campus venues.
- Virtual team meetings should take place when possible.
- When at practice or in competition, any unnecessary contact should be avoided such as handshakes, high fives, fist bumps, or elbow bumps.
- Activities that increase exposure to saliva are not allowed, including chewing gum, spitting, licking fingers and eating sunflower seeds
- In all common areas, seating should be spaced six feet apart. Large social gatherings in any space should be discouraged.
- Student-athletes should sit every other seat on a bench and should avoid using a dugout when possible. They should consciously stand six feet apart when not participating in a drill or activity that requires closer contact.
- Survey other public spaces and determine the need for items such as gaming systems, ping pong tables, etc.
- Athletes are not to congregate while waiting for pick up or drop off. Pick up and drop offs should remain outside and parents should not enter the facility.

SANITIZATION

- All equipment should be cleaned between each individual use.
 - Coaches will be responsible for distributing/collecting equipment + sanitization.
- When possible, athletes should not share gear and instead use their own personal equipment.
- Each athlete should have his/her own personal defined hydration container that is never to be shared.

- Hand sanitizer should be made available throughout the facility for use before, during, and after workouts.
- Athletes should be educated on proper hand washing and sanitizing.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- Student-athletes, coaches, and staff should be strongly encouraged to use masks at all times, unless doing so jeopardizes their health.. This is inclusive of the athletic training rooms and weight rooms.
- Cloth face coverings are adequate (surgical or N95 masks, while also acceptable, are not necessary). The CDC website has complete references for mask specifications and maintenance. The garment should cover both the nose and mouth and allow for continued unlabored breathing. While we understand it may be difficult to wear a mask when actively participating in a sport that takes place indoors on a court, (for example: volleyball, basketball, gymnastics) the percentage of time without the mask should be limited to the active participation time.
- At all times, all coaches and staff should be encouraged to be masked 100% of the time.
- Wearing gloves has not been shown to decrease the transmission of the virus. The recommendation is for frequent handwashing and avoidance of touching the face.

The way sports are played, and the way equipment is shared can influence the spread of COVID-19 among players.

Physical closeness of players, and the length of time that players are close to each other or to staff:

- Sports that require frequent closeness between players may make it more difficult to maintain social distancing, compared to sports where players are not close to each other. For close-contact sports (e.g., wrestling, basketball), play may be modified to safely increase distance between players.
 - For example, players and coaches can:
 - focus on individual skill building versus competition;
 - limit the time players spend close to others by playing full-contact only in game-time situations;
 - decrease the number of competitions during a season.

Coaches can also modify practices so players work on individual skills, rather than on competition. Coaches may also put players into small groups (cohorts) that remain together and work through stations, rather than switching groups or mixing groups.

- **Amount of necessary touching of shared equipment and gear (e.g., protective gear, balls, bats, racquets, mats, or water bottles).** It is also possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes. Minimize equipment sharing, and clean and disinfect shared equipment between use by different people to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread.
- **Ability to engage in social distancing while not actively engaged in play (e.g., during practice, on the sideline, or in the dugout).** During times when players are not actively participating in practice or competition, attention should be given to maintaining [social](#)

[distancing](#) by increasing space between players on the sideline, dugout, or bench. Additionally, coaches can encourage athletes to use downtime for individual skill-building work or cardiovascular conditioning, rather than staying clustered together.

- **Age of the player.** Older youth might be better able to follow directions for social distancing and take other protective actions like not sharing water bottles. If feasible, a coach, parent, or other caregiver can assist with making sure that athletes maintain proper social distancing. For younger athletes, youth sports programs may ask parents or other household members to monitor their children and make sure that they follow social distancing and take other protective actions (e.g., younger children could sit with parents or caregivers, instead of in a dugout or group area).
- **Players at higher risk of developing a serious disease.** Parents and coaches should assess the level of risk based on individual players on the team who may be at [higher risk for severe illness](#), such as children who may have asthma, diabetes, or other health problems.
- **Size of the team.** Sports with a large number of players on a team may increase the likelihood of spread, compared to sports with fewer team members. Consider decreasing team sizes, as feasible.
- **Nonessential visitors, spectators, volunteers.** Limit any nonessential visitors, spectators, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations. During yellow and green phases of reopening, sports related activities are limited to student athletes, coaches, officials and staff only.
- **Travel outside of the local community.** [Traveling](#) outside of the local community may increase the chances of exposing players, coaches, and fans to COVID-19, or unknowingly spreading it to others. This is the case particularly if a team from an area with high levels of COVID-19 competes with a team from an area with low levels of the virus. Youth sports teams should consider competing only against teams in their local area (e.g., neighborhood, town, or community).

DAILY SCREENING

- Student-athletes, coaches, and staff should be screened daily with no-touch temperature checks and a questionnaire prior to and during games and practices. .
- A positive screen that would warrant further investigation would be a temperature greater than 100.4° F or a “yes” response to any of these three questions:
 1. Do you have a new onset cough or shortness of breath?
 2. Have you had a fever or felt febrile?
 3. Have you had known exposure to a COVID-19-positive individual?
- If the temperature is >100.4° F, or if any of the questions have a positive response, that individual should be removed from the group and their parent or guardian notified of the documented concern for illness/fever.

HYDRATION

- At no time will any athlete be denied access to fluids.
- Public hydration will not be available. This includes shared water bottles and water sources. Each athlete will be required to bring their own individualized and labeled bottles. If any participants needs to refill their individual bottle, they are required to sanitize their hands via available hand

- sanitizer or hand washing areas prior to dispensing water from any hydration device/cooler.
- If an athlete arrives to practice or competition without an individualized bottle, they will not be allowed to partake in the practice/competition.

EDUCATION AND NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

- Put systems in place for:
 - Consistent with applicable law and privacy policies, having coaches, staff, umpires/officials, and families of players (as feasible) self-report to the youth sports organization if they have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days in accordance with [health information sharing regulations for COVID-19](#) (e.g. see “Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts” in the Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick section below), and other applicable laws and regulations.
 - Notifying staff, officials, families, and the public of youth sports facility closures and restrictions in place to limit COVID-19 exposure (e.g., limited hours of operation).

PREPARING FOR WHEN SOMEONE GETS SICK

Youth sports organizations may consider implementing several strategies to prepare for when someone gets sick.

- **Advise Sick Individuals of Home Isolation Criteria**
 - Sick coaches, staff members, umpires/officials, or players should not return until they have met CDC’s [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#).
- **Isolate and Transport Those Who are Sick**
 - Make sure that coaches, staff, officials, players, and families know that sick individuals should not attend the youth sports activity and that they should notify youth sports officials (e.g., the COVID-19 point of contact) if they (staff) or their child (families) become sick with COVID-19 [symptoms](#), test positive for COVID-19, or have been [exposed](#) to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case.
 - Immediately separate coaches, staff, officials, and players with COVID-19 symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, shortness of breath) at any youth sports activity. Individuals who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility, depending on how severe their [symptoms](#) are, and follow [CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others who are sick](#). Individuals who have had [close contact](#) with a person who has [symptoms](#) should be separated and sent home as well, and follow [CDC guidance for community-related exposure](#) (see “Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts” below). If symptoms develop, individuals and families should follow [CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others who are sick](#).
 - Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone who is sick to their home or to a healthcare facility. If you are calling an ambulance or bringing someone to the hospital, try to call first to alert them that the person may have COVID-19.
- **Clean and Disinfect**
 - Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after [cleaning and disinfecting](#) them (for outdoor areas, this includes surfaces or shared objects in the area, if applicable).
 - Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait

as long as possible. Ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of [cleaning and disinfection products](#), including storing them securely away from children.

- **Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts**

- In accordance with state and local privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations, youth sports organizations should notify [local health officials](#), youth sports program staff, umpires/officials, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) and other applicable laws and regulations.
- Work with [local health officials](#) to develop a reporting system (e.g., letter) youth sports organizations can use to notify health officials and close contacts of cases of COVID-19.
- Advise those who have had [close contact](#) with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and [self-monitor for symptoms](#), and to follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop

Please Note: The above guidelines will be reviewed and revised as needed per any updated health and safety information provided during all phases of Covid-19.

ATHLETICS HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN GOVERNING BODY AFFIRMATION STATEMENT

The Board of Directors for Northgate School District reviewed and approved the Athletics Health and Safety Plan on June 15, 2020.

The plan was approved by a vote of:

 8 Yes (Unanimous Voice Vote 8 - 0 and 1 Absent)
 0 No

Affirmed on: June 17, 2020

By: 
(Signature of Board President)

Amy Robinson
(Print Name of Board President)