

JULY 1, 2020



**PARKLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT**  
RETURN TO SPORT COVID-19 HEALTH & SAFETY PLAN

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# Parkland School District Athletics Health and Safety Plan: Return to Play and Voluntary Summer Work Outs

**Anticipated Launch Date** - July 1, 2020

**Primary Point of Contact** - Director of Athletics, Bill Dreisbach

## **Preface**

The Athletics Health and Safety Plan provides guidelines and procedures for Parkland School District students and staff to safely return to sports and voluntary summer work outs when Lehigh County is in the Yellow or Green Phase. These guidelines have been compiled in coordination with Parkland School District and St. Luke's University Health Network with the guidance of Pennsylvania Department of Education (DOE) and Centers for Disease and Control (CDC). Upon approval of this plan by the Parkland Board of School Directors, these guidelines will be posted on the District's website and will be distributed to all Parkland School District coaches and student athletes.

## **Introduction**

**Benefits of Sport:** The participation in sports has known health benefits, including promoting physical fitness and mental wellness. Sports provide a social construct and interaction which is necessary in a time of uncertainty for our athletes. It is widely recognized that physical activity, performed for the right amount of time and intensity, can provide benefits to the immune system. In addition, sports can provide a template for young athletes to learn concepts of teamwork, leadership, work ethic and integrity.

**Inherent Risk of Sport:** Participation in athletics involves unavoidable exposure to an inherent risk of injury. It is important to recognize that rule books, safety guidelines and equipment standards, while a helpful means of promoting safe athletic participation, are themselves insufficient to accomplish this goal. To effectively minimize the risks of injury from athletic participation, everyone involved in athletics must understand and respect the intent and objectives of applicable rules, guidelines, and standards.

**Return to Activity Following Inactivity:** A thoughtful approach to exercise gives athletes a chance to acclimatize to the temperature and the intensity/duration of practices. This slow escalation of exercise can decrease the risk of injury and heat illness. Since practices and competitions have been halted, many athletes are deconditioned, putting the athlete at much higher risk for injury if pushed too quickly with high volumes and high intensity. Overtraining, defined as prolonged or excessive repetitive activity or workouts in efforts to "catch up," does not allow the body to adjust and recover, which can lead to decreased performance and/or increased risk of injury. Please refer to Important Reads Section for resources such as the [National Strength and Conditioning Association \(NSCA\) COVID-19 Return to Training and College Strength and Conditioning Coaches Association \(CSCCa\) Guidelines for Transition Periods: Safe Return to Training Following Inactivity](#).

This guidance is preliminary; as more public health information is available, the state of Pennsylvania may work with relevant entities to release further guidance which could impact fall, winter, and/or

spring sports seasons. These guidelines are meant to supplement – not replace – any state, local, territorial, or tribal health and safety laws, rules, and regulations with which schools must comply.

## **Acclimatization Phases**

Parkland School District's return to play will be broken up into 3 phases that will last 4 weeks. We cannot enter phase 3 until our county is in the Green Phase as established by Governor Wolf.

### **Phase 1: (Week 1) Yellow Phase or Green Phase**

- All PIAA out-of-season rules and regulations apply.
- No sharing of athletic equipment, towels, clothing, or shoes.
- Social distancing protocols are always in effect during and after each workout.
- During this phase outside sessions are recommended.
- Athletes are responsible to bring their own water bottles; refills will be handled by the trainers.
- If you are not participating in an exercise and cannot stay 6 ft. apart then a face covering must be worn.
- This phase is for conditioning and strength training only.
- No contact drills or equipment during this phase.
- Locker rooms will not be available.
- Restrooms will be available.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided during activities.
- If we are in the GREEN Phase, teams will begin returning in groups of no more than 25 student athletes and 5 coaches. If we are in the YELLOW Phase, teams will be returning in groups no more than 25 (total of coaches and athletes). These groups should remain consistent for this 7-day period. During this period, groups should wear face coverings when indoors when not participating in a drill or exercise.
- Multiple groups can occur at the same time if social distancing is followed. For example, two groups may practice on the same field if groups are on opposite ends of the field with a 6-foot social distancing area occurring at the midfield line.

**Weight room procedure:** all coaches and athletes not involved in an exercise must wear a mask. Spotters should be used at each end of the bar. All equipment must be wiped down after each exercise. Athletes and coaches must wash their hands entering and exiting the weight room.

### **Phase 2: (Week 2) Yellow Phase or Green Phase**

- All PIAA out-of-season rules and regulations apply.
- No sharing of athletic equipment, towels, clothing, or shoes.
- Equipment must be cleaned intermittently during practice/games.
- Social distancing protocols are always in effect during and after each workout.
- Athletes are responsible to bring their own water bottles; refills will be handled by the trainers.
- If you not are participating in an exercise and cannot stay 6 ft. apart then a face covering must be worn.
- This phase is for strength training, conditioning, drills, and skill development.

- Locker rooms will not be available.
- Restrooms will be available.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided during activities.
- If we are in the GREEN Phase, teams will begin returning in groups of no more than 25 student athletes and 5 coaches. If we are in the YELLOW Phase, teams will be returning in groups no more than 25 (total of coaches and athletes). These groups should remain consistent for this 7-day period. During this period groups should wear face coverings when indoors when not participating in a drill or exercise.
- Multiple groups can occur at the same time if social distancing is followed. For example, two groups may practice on the same field if groups are on opposite ends of the field with a 6-foot social distancing area occurring at the midfield line.

### **Phase 3: (Weeks 3&4) Green Phase**

- All PIAA out-of-season rules and regulations apply.
- No sharing of towels, clothing, or shoes.
- Equipment must be cleaned intermittently during practice/games.
- Other equipment such as helmets, pads, eyewear should not be shared.
- Social distancing protocols are always in effect during and after each workout.
- Athletes are responsible to bring their own water bottles; refills will be handled by the trainers.
- If you are not participating in an exercise and cannot stay 6 ft. apart then a face covering must be worn.
- Locker rooms will not be available.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided during activities.
- Restrooms will be available.
- The limit of athletes for this phase is 250. The phase is for strength training, conditioning, drills and skill development with full workouts and competition now occurring.

### ***Return to Physical Activity \*ONLY APPLICABLE AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL\****

Given the unique circumstances and potential health risks not yet fully recognized, as well as the increased workload created by the implementation of these considerations, it is required that no conditioning/return-to-activity take place without the presence of an appropriate healthcare professional (e.g., athletic trainer).

Given the high risk for musculoskeletal injury following a prolonged period of physical inactivity, coaches will be required to submit practice plans to the Athletic Director (Bill Dreisbach) [dreisbachw@parklandsd.org](mailto:dreisbachw@parklandsd.org) and Athletic Trainer (Lenny Paparo) [paparol@parklandsd.org](mailto:paparol@parklandsd.org) for the duration of this policy. This requirement is out of an abundance of caution to ensure that practice plans are in line with the following requirements.

- If at any time an athlete begins to show signs of struggle or exhaustion, they must be removed from the drill.

## **Monitoring Student Athletes and Staff Health**

Daily Prescreening for COVID-19

Student Wellness Form - <https://forms.gle/UDAYb7kRZKG7FNM79>

Employee Wellness Form - <https://forms.gle/Rifi7wpfhsPoPqgBA>

Each **student athlete, coach, and sports medicine staff** member will be required to answer daily pre-screening questions that coordinate with the CDC guidelines. This will be completed prior to arriving at school each day. Failure to do so will result in absence that day. Anyone answering **yes** to any pre-screening questions related to COVID-19 must remain home. Medical staff will contact the student or employee and they will not be permitted to participate until authorized to return by school administration.

### **Protecting Student Athletes and Coaching Staff at Higher Risk of Severe Illness**

Staff and students will be identified that are considered a higher risk for severe illness due to underlying medical conditions during this COVID-19 pandemic. If a student and/or staff member needs additional accommodations due to COVID-19, they will be considered on a case by case basis. See your athletic trainer or athletic director.

### **Illness Protocol**

- Athletes, coaches and staff must stay home if they are not feeling well.
- If an athlete or staff member starts experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 during practice and/or answers yes to any screening questions, district personnel will send them home immediately.
- If a parent or caregiver is not present, which in most cases they will not be, the student athlete will be sent to a designated waiting area. Maintaining confidentiality and privacy are of highest importance. Waiting areas will be determined by the athletic department and the athletic trainers. Symptomatic persons will be directed to contact their health care provider for evaluation and potential COVID-19 testing. Those without a health care provider can be directed to a local COVID hotline such as St. Luke's University Health Network 1-866-785-8537 Option 7 or Lehigh Valley Health Network 1-888-402-5846.
- The trainers will notify the Athletic Director who will notify the Supervisor of Health and Wellness with all communication maintaining confidentiality.
- The student or employee will not be able return until the results of their COVID testing have returned. Any positively screened individual should not return until they have documentation demonstrating the SARS-CoV-2 test was negative or a note from their healthcare provider indicating they do not need to be tested and their symptoms are not due to COVID-19.
- CDC does not recommend isolation of contacts of a person being evaluated for COVID-19 until the diagnosis is confirmed as a reportable illness to the Department of Health (DOH). Parkland is obligated to be in communication with the DOH.

### **Positive COVID-19 Cases**

- Consistent with applicable law and privacy policies, coaches, staff, umpires/officials, and families of athletes (as feasible) will self-report to the school 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, and other applicable laws and regulations.

- All those who had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 (within 48 hours prior to symptom onset) will be advised to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms and be advised to follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop. Individuals with close contacts will be excluded from practice for 14 days. Close contact is defined as having close (within 6 ft.) and prolonged ( $\geq 15$  minutes) contact with the COVID-19 patient.
- Area used by a sick person will be closed off and “do not use” signage will be placed in these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting them (for outdoor areas, this includes surfaces or shared objects in the area, if applicable).

### ***Returning to Sports Following COVID-19 Diagnosis***

An individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19 may return when all four of the following criteria are met:

- When 2 negative COVID tests 24 hours apart are obtained and/or public health clearance
- Individual has improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)
- At least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared
- Written documentation of clearance from a health care provider (MD, DO, NP, PA)

### ***Promote Wellness and Hygiene***

- The potential for pre-symptomatic transmission is why the use of face coverings and social distancing, including the avoidance of congregate settings, is imperative to reduce COVID-19 spread.
- Athletes and coaches with a higher risk for illness would follow this plan and may need additional accommodations to be determined on a case by case basis.
- Staying home when you are ill is necessary.
- Hand hygiene is essential. Parkland School District and the Sports Medicine Staff will promote frequent and effective, hand hygiene with ample hand sanitizer (>60% ethanol or >70% isopropanol) dispensers and areas with soap and water in many different locations. Hand washing or use of hand sanitizer should take place pre- and post-activity.
- You are encouraged to bring your own hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow.
- Activities that increase the risk of exposure to saliva must not be allowed, including chewing gum, spitting, licking fingers, and eating sunflower seeds.
- Avoid any unnecessary physical contact, such as high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, or hugs.
- No team huddles should take place.
- Wear face coverings when not exercising.
- All adult staff (coaches, athletic trainers, etc.) will always wear face coverings unless doing so jeopardizes their health.

- Athletes will wear face coverings (must follow school district dress code policy) when they arrive onsite and when not actively participating in activity and social distancing protocols cannot be maintained (sidelines, dugouts, athletic training room, etc.).
- Athletes will wear face coverings during activity if contact is closer than 6 ft. for a period longer than 15 minutes. If athletes are separated by more than 6 ft., then no face covering is required.
- Athletes are always permitted to wear PPE items if the items do not compromise the safety of the athlete or others participating in the activity.
- Social distancing is still required until CDC, state and local authorities declare otherwise.
- It is important to be aware of the potential negative impact that a crisis can have on our mental and physical health. Athletes and staff will be provided resources associated with seeking support.
  - [PA Mental Health Resources](#)
  - [CDC Coping with Stress](#)

### ***Non-Essential Persons***

- All federal, state, and local county guidelines in accordance with mass gatherings must be followed.
- During the Yellow and Green Phases of reopening, sports-related activities at the PK-12 level are limited to student athletes, coaches, officials, and staff only. The addition of visitors and spectators will be contingent upon future health conditions within the state and local communities.
- No person beyond those essential should be present until federal, state, and local county departments lift restrictions on mass gathering. Examples of non-essential persons may include managers, extra coaches, non-participating athletes, media, etc.
- Spectators, the media, and parents are not permitted at off-season workouts or in season practices.
- Parents should remain in their vehicles and cannot congregate in the parking lots or the fields.
- It is recommended to group people into tiers when competition begins, example below of National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) tier system:
  - Essential (tier 1) – athletes, coaches, officials, event staff, medical staff, security
  - Preferred (tier 2) – media
  - Non-essential (tier 3) – spectators, vendors
- If competitions take place while federal, state, and local county guidelines recommend social distancing, spectators must adhere to these guidelines and spectators must adhere to face covering guidelines.
- Parkland School district reserves the right to limit the number of spectators at a sporting event based on county data on communicable spread of COVID-19.

### ***Athletic Training Requirements***

- Parkland School District will provide athletic training staff with adequate supplies such as non-contact thermometers, hand sanitizer, face coverings, gloves, disinfectants, etc.
- Anyone who utilizes the athletic training room must wash hands or use hand sanitizer upon entry and exit.

- Athletic trainers will be practicing good hygiene and washing hands or using hand sanitizer.
- Athletic trainers will wear gloves during patient care that requires physical examination or direct contact.
- Gloves will be changed between patients.
- Athletic trainers will always wear face coverings until guidance from CDC is adjusted.
- Athletic Trainers will clean and disinfect according to CDC Reopening Guidance inclusive but not limited to treatment/taping tables after each patient, rehabilitation equipment, modality equipment, etc. A cleaning and disinfecting schedule will be created and maintained.
- While CDC, federal, state, and local counties recommend social distancing, the number of athletes in the athletic training room will be limited to ensure 6 ft. of social distancing. All persons in the athletic training room must wear face coverings. They must wash their hands before entering and exiting the training room. Only one athlete per treatment table will be permitted.

### ***Other Considerations***

- During the season, any athlete that is unable to wash their practice clothes, the school district will do this until they are able to wash them on their own. The district will follow current guidelines for laundry established by the PIAA.
- During the season, showering at the facility may be needed after practice and competitions in some circumstances (e.g., working after practice). Coaches, trainers, and administrators can make these exceptions. Social distancing should be maximized, and proper cleaning should occur.
- Team meals need to be approved by the administration and criteria will be implemented with the assistance of the Parkland Food Services Department.
- Social distance between athletes on school buses for team travel will be consistent with the school district health and safety plan regarding student transportation.
- All coaches MUST review the CDC's "Consideration for Youth Sports" and Governor Wolf's "Guidance for all Sports to Operate During the COVID-19 Disaster Emergency to Ensure the Safety and Health of Employees, Athletics, and the Public."
- Coaches must submit the "Confirmation of Review" form to the Athletic Office prior to beginning any workouts.
- Coaches will provide each athlete with an electronic copy of the documents and host a virtual meeting to review the documents with their team prior to the first scheduled workout.
- All student-athletes and their parents will be provided a copy of the CDC's "Consideration for Youth Sports" for review.
- Signs will be posted throughout the athletic facilities reinforcing desired behaviors which include face coverings, frequent washing or sanitizing your hands, sneeze and cough into your elbow, avoid large groups.

## ***Cleaning and Sanitizing***

*Lead Individual* - Director of School Services, David Keppel

- Locker rooms, training room and weight room as well as other high traffic areas will be cleaned with a sanitizing machine daily.
- All heavy traffic areas will be cleaned every night with proper sanitizing procedures.
- All weight room equipment will be wiped down after each use.
- Athletic equipment will be cleaned regularly.
- Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the athletic areas.
- In indoor facilities without windows, fans will be utilized to increase ventilation. In indoor facilities with windows, windows will be left open to improve ventilation.

## ***Entering and Exiting the Building***

### **Parkland High School**

- Athletes will enter the building through the pool entrance and exit through the doors next to the pool entrance which is located at the bottom of the steps leading to the pool balcony.
- Athletes will park cars in the student parking lot.

### **Orefield Middle School**

- Athletes will enter the Athletic Training Room through the single door entrance on the back of the field house and exit at the Athletic Training Room through the area where the golf cart is stored and proceed to where they are getting picked up or to their locker room/meeting location.

### **Springhouse Middle School**

- The Athletic Training room will temporarily be moved to the auxiliary gym when applicable. Entrance will be through the doors closest to the Girls Locker Room and exiting through the furthest doors near the auxiliary gym.

## ***Locker Rooms***

- For teams with over 30 athletes, arrival and departure from practice will be staggered at the discretion of the coaching staff. This plan needs to be submitted to the Athletic Director (Bill Dreisbach) and Athletic Trainer (Lenny Paparo).
- No more than 30 athletes will be allowed in the locker rooms for more than 15 minutes at a given time.
- Proper sanitation and cleaning will be conducted every night at the end of practices and competition.
- Visiting team locker rooms will be cleaned before they arrive.

## ***Communication***

- District communication systems will be used for notifying coaching staff, families, and the public of cancellation of sports-related activities, school closures, and other changes in safety protocols.

***Athletics Health and Safety Plan Governing Body Affirmation Statement***

The Board of Directors/Trustees of Parkland School District reviewed and approved the Athletics Health and Safety Plan on June 23, 2020.

The plan was approved by a vote of:

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No

Affirmed on:

By:

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*(Signature of Board President)*

Lisa Roth, Board President, Parkland School District  
*(Print Name of Board President)*