

Revised 8/19/20

Solebury School

Athletics Health and Safety Plan

Guidelines and Recommendations In Response to COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

This document was prepared to adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the safe return to interscholastic athletics during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was developed considering resources and procedures provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education ([PDE](#)), the National Federation of State High School Associations ([NFHS](#)), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)), and the Bucks County Department of Health ([BCDOH](#)).

The virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) is thought to spread mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another. It may be possible that people can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. (See Appendix)

The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages. Some people who are infected may not have symptoms. For people who have symptoms, illness can range from mild to severe. Adults 65 years and older and people of any age with underlying medical conditions are at higher risk for severe illness. 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 athletes, coaches, and their families.

This document is intended to provide guidance for the Solebury School community--particularly its athletes, coaches, and parents--during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it addresses the procedures the athletic program, its staff, and its teams must follow to limit the spread of COVID-19 to the extent they are permitted to conduct in-person operations. This guidance (as well as dates and other recommendations contained herein) will be updated as more public health data and other information is made available by state and local officials, in addition to any guidance from NFHS or PAISAA.

PRIMARY POINTS OF CONTACT

Robert Eichen
Director of Athletics
reichem@solebury.org
(215) 862-5261 x123

Stacie Anastasio
Assistant Director of Athletics/Athletic Trainer
sanastasio@solebury.org
(215) 862-5261 x139

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- All off-season workouts are voluntary.
- Athletes should gradually work up intensity of activity.
- When returning to play, coaches should design activities to resume in a gradual fashion to avoid overuse injuries and exertional/heat-related illnesses. They should consider that all athletes have some level of de-training and may not be returning at the same fitness level and activities may need to be adjusted accordingly.
- While there is still an inherent risk of infection for those participating, everyone in attendance should be actively working towards decreasing the risk of transmission to others by adhering to mitigation guidelines.
- All athletes should clean individual equipment (personal and/or school-issued) and clothing after every use. Coaches should thoroughly clean all team/shared equipment before and after every use.

EDUCATION

The Director of Athletics and Assistant Director of Athletics will mandate educational sessions with adults (coaches and assistant coaches) supervising the activity prior to them returning to practice. Attendance will be taken at each session to ensure that all coaches are trained prior to them being able to run their assigned athletic programs. Additionally, all coaches will be required to complete the NFHS online course, "COVID-19 for Coaches and Administrators." Coaches, athletes, and parents will be educated on the following (through emails, in-person and/or virtual meetings, facility signage, etc.):

- COVID-19 signs and symptoms
- Proper ways to limit exposure to COVID-19 (wearing a face covering when appropriate, hand washing, coughing in your elbow, disinfecting touched surfaces, physical distancing, etc.)
- The content of this Health & Safety Plan
- Any pertinent COVID-19 information released by state and local governments, NFHS, and PAISAA
- CDC guidance on considerations for youth sports to modify practices and games

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for ALL phases for athletic practices & interscholastic competitions:

- All Solebury School athletes and coaches will undergo a COVID-19 health screening prior to any practice or interscholastic competition; opposing schools will be responsible for screening their own athletes and coaches prior to competition. Screenings may include a temperature check. The purpose is to check for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Promote healthy hygiene practices such as hand washing (at least 20 seconds with soap and water) and wearing cloth face coverings.
 - Hand sanitizer will be available for use when hand washing is not feasible and as resources allow.
 - Face coverings decrease potential exposure to COVID-19 respiratory droplets by an infected individual. Coaches will wear face coverings unless doing so jeopardizes their health. Athletes are not required to wear face coverings while actively engaged in practices and competitions 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 physical distancing is not possible.
- Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation in all facilities. Appropriate cleaning schedules will be created and implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate the risk of transmission.
- Coaches and athletes must practice physical distancing at all times, including locker rooms (when open), sidelines, dugouts, benches, and workout areas. During down time, no one should congregate.
- Encourage physical distancing during practices through increased spacing, small groups, and limited mixing between groups, where feasible.
- Require anyone with COVID-like symptoms to notify the nurse's office.
- Plan for if an athlete or coach becomes sick (see Appendix).
- Athletes and coaches must provide their own water bottle for hydration; water bottles will not be shared.
- Activities that increase the risk of exposure to saliva must not be allowed, including chewing gum, spitting, licking fingers, and eating sunflower seeds.
- All participants will avoid shaking hands, "fist bumps," or high-fives before, during or after contests and practices.
- The Athletic Department will conduct on-going maintenance of guidelines, recommendations, education and updated processes based on school policies and evolving knowledge and governmental guidelines. Routine meetings (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or as needed) will be scheduled to monitor plan implementation and effectiveness as well as reviewing any new guidelines shared by the CDC, the Bucks County Department of Health or the Governor's office.
- Coaches will develop a communication plan in the event that a practice needs to be cancelled on short notice.

- Identify athletes and coaches who may be at a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 due to underlying medical conditions to create a plan that allows for safe participation, if possible.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

TRANSPORTATION

- Modifications for school-sponsored athlete/coach transportation to and from interscholastic athletic competitions will be necessary. These include:
 - Reducing the number of athletes/coaches on a bus/van
 - Using hand sanitizer upon boarding a bus/van
 - Wearing face coverings on a bus/van
- Additional modifications may be determined and informed by school policies, bus companies, the Department of Education, State and Local governments.

ATTENDANCE AT EVENTS

- Individuals will be assigned to tiers in order to determine who will be in attendance at interscholastic athletic competitions:
 - Tier 1 (Essential): Athletes, coaches, officials, medical staff, event staff
 - Tier 2: Media, college coaches
 - Tier 3: Parent/guardians, spectators
- Only Tier 1 and 2 personnel will be allowed to attend events on campus until the Commonwealth lifts restrictions to allow for gatherings of more than 250 individuals.
- Parents/guardians and other spectators are restricted from attending practices and competitions at this time. This will be revised as more information becomes available.
- When spectators are permitted, seating areas must adhere to physical distancing guidelines of 6 feet of spacing for anyone not in the same family.
- Spectators must wear face coverings, unless they are outdoors and can consistently maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet. Regardless, spectators must have face coverings with them at all times in the event that their use is required.
- Concessions stands, selling of food or merchandise at events are prohibited at this time.

NFHS CLASSIFICATION OF SPORTS

Higher 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. Example:

Wrestling

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 cannot be cleaned between participants. Examples:

Soccer, field hockey, basketball, girls lacrosse, baseball*, softball*, tennis*, individual jumping events (high and long)*

*Could potentially be considered “Lower Risk” with appropriate cleaning of equipment and/or use of masks by participants

Lower Risk: Sports that can be done with physical distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between use by competitors. Examples:

Cross country running (with staggered starts), individual running events, individual throwing events (shot put, discus, javelin), golf

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

This plan employs a “phased” approach to resuming athletic programming, to coincide with the [“Process to Reopen PA”](#) color-coded phase guidelines established by the Commonwealth.

- PHASE ONE -- **RED**
- PHASE TWO -- **YELLOW**
- PHASE THREE -- **GREEN**

PHASE ONE (RED)

- All school facilities remain closed per PA State Guidelines
- Athletes and coaches should abide by guidelines set forth by state and local governments
- Athletes and coaches may communicate via online meetings (Zoom, Google Meet, etc.)
- Athletes may participate in home workouts (i.e. strength and conditioning)

Pre-Practice/Competition Screenings for PHASES TWO & THREE

- All coaches and athletes should be screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to practices. Screenings may include a temperature check.
- Any person with positive symptoms reported should not be allowed to take part in practices and will be isolated, sent home, and directed to contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional. Medical clearance will be required prior to returning. The Head of School and Director of Athletics will be notified. The Head of School, or his designee, will contact the Bucks County Department of Health to notify them of all positive COVID-19 tests.
- Responses to screening questions for each person should be recorded and stored so that there is a record of everyone present in case an athlete or coach develops COVID-19.
- Team attendance should be recorded.
- Athletes and coaches must use hand sanitizer and/or wash hands prior to the start of the practice and as needed throughout and/or at breaks.

PHASE TWO (YELLOW)

Physical Distancing and Limitations on Gatherings:

- No gathering of more than 25 individuals, including coaches, per scheduled field/court.
- Coaches will be required to wear face coverings unless doing so jeopardizes their health.
- Physical distancing should be applied during practices and in gathering areas.
- Spectators are not permitted; parents, if present on campus, must remain in their cars.

Facilities:

- Signage will be posted inside and outside of the Athletic Center that includes:
 - Safety and screening procedures in detail
 - Appropriate preventative measures for COVID-19
- Locker room use may begin with frequent cleaning. Athletes are encouraged to maintain physical distancing and avoid congregating in locker rooms. Athletes are required to take their equipment home to clean on a daily basis.
- Access to indoor facilities will be limited to follow physical distancing guidelines.
- If multiple events are held in the same facility, adequate time will be scheduled between events to allow for facilities to be cleaned and disinfected to minimize interactions between athletes.

Physical Activity and Athletic Equipment:

- Lower risk sports practices are allowed.
- Modified practices may be allowed for moderate and higher risk sports, though practices must remain non-contact and include physical distancing where applicable.
- Conditioning and individual non-contact drills only with focus on individual skill building versus competition.
- Indoor sports should consider doing conditioning and individual drills outside.
- Students should refrain from sharing clothing/towels and should be washed after each practice, including pinnies.

- Athletic equipment that may be used by multiple individuals (balls, shot put, discus, etc.) should be cleaned intermittently during practice and events as deemed necessary.
- Students will be directed to wash their hands frequently; if facilities are not available, hand sanitizer should be used periodically as resources allow.

Hydration:

- Athletes and coaches must bring their own water bottle for hydration; water bottles will not be shared.
- Contactless hydration stations may be utilized to refill water bottles.

PHASE THREE (GREEN)

Physical Distancing and Limitations on Gatherings:

- Full teams may participate at the same field/facility.
- Coaches will be required to wear face coverings unless doing so jeopardizes their health.
- Social distancing should be applied during practices and in gathering areas.
- Spectators are not permitted; parents, if present on campus, must remain in their cars.

Facilities:

- Signage will be posted inside and outside of the Athletic Center that includes:
 - Safety and screening procedures in detail
 - Appropriate preventative measures for COVID-19
- Athletic facilities should be cleaned prior to arrival and post-practices or competitions, high touch areas should be cleaned more often.
- Locker room use may begin with frequent cleaning. Athletes are encouraged to maintain physical distancing and avoid congregating in locker rooms. Athletes are required to take their equipment home to clean on a daily basis.
- If multiple games are held in the same facility, adequate time will be scheduled between contests to allow for facilities to be cleaned and disinfected to minimize interactions between athletes.

Physical Activity and Athletic Equipment:

- Lower, moderate, and higher risk practices and competitions are allowed.
- Students will refrain from sharing clothing (i.e. pinnies) and towels; they should be washed after each practice and/or competition.
- Athletic equipment that may be used by multiple individuals (balls, shot put, discus, etc.) should be cleaned intermittently during practice and events as deemed necessary.
- Students will be directed to wash their hands frequently; if facilities are not available, hand sanitizer should be used periodically as resources allow

Hydration:

- Athletes and coaches must bring their own water bottle for hydration; water bottles will not be shared.
- Contactless hydration stations may be utilized to refill water bottles.

APPENDIX

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.



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[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

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.

PROCEDURES FOR COACHES, STAFF, OR ATHLETES EXHIBITING SYMPTOMS OR TESTING POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

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 and may include:

- Fever of 100.4 F or higher 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 should you do if you are sick?

- If you are sick with COVID-19 or think you are infected with the virus, stay at home and contact your health provider. 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 (email the school nurses at nurses@solebury.org)
- A determination will be made on possible exposure of athletes, coaches and staff for the need to notify, isolate, and/or monitor for symptoms.
- If a positive case of COVID-19 is diagnosed, contact tracing will be led by the Bucks County Department of Health, in cooperation with our school nurses.

What should be done if an athlete or coach becomes ill during a practice or competition?

- The ill individual will be isolated until the athlete or coach can leave the school or event.
- If the ill individual is a day student athlete, a parent/guardian will be contacted to pick them up as soon as possible. If the individual is a boarding student athlete, they will be isolated in the Health Center and assessed by a school nurse.
- Ill individuals will be asked to contact their physician or appropriate healthcare professional for direction and should not return to activity for 72 hours and upon medical clearances from their healthcare provider.

- Areas used by the sick person will be closed off and not used until after cleaning and disinfecting of the area occurs (for outdoor areas, this includes surfaces or shared objects in the area, if applicable).

How will an athlete or coach return to athletics following a COVID-19 diagnosis?

Athletes or coaches must have medical clearance from their physician or an appropriate healthcare professional, determined to be non-contagious, fever free, improvement in respiratory symptoms, no vomiting or diarrhea.

How will a positive COVID-19 test impact a team?

A determination will be made by the Head of School and Director of Athletics when teams can return to athletics after a positive COVID-19 case, in cooperation with the Bucks County Department of Health and our School's Health Services.

RESOURCES

Bucks County Department of Health (DOH): [Guidance for Bucks County School Reopenings](#) (6/20)

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC): [Considerations for Youth Sports](#) (5/20)

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC): [How to Protect Yourself & Others](#)

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Policy Lab: [Evidence and Considerations for School Reopenings](#) (7/20)

National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS): [Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities](#) (5/20)

Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE): [Guidance for All Sports Permitted to Operate During the COVID-19 Disaster Emergency to Ensure the Safety and Health of Employees, Athletes and the Public](#) (7/20)

Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE): [Pre-K to 12 Athletics Health and Safety Planning Guide](#) (6/20)

University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC): [Sports Medicine Playbook: Return to Sports During COVID-19 Minimum Guidelines \(High School\)](#) (5/20)

For more information on wearing or making a mask, visit the Pennsylvania Department of Health's [Help Stop the Spread](#)