



ATHLETIC HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN

Spring Sports 2021

Upper Perkiomen School District

Overview

COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus that affects the respiratory system and can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has spread throughout the world. Virus symptoms can range from mild (or no symptoms) to severe illness that could require hospitalization. COVID-19 can affect people of all ages.

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

While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of spreading and contracting COVID-19, current science suggests there are many steps schools can take to reduce the risks to students, coaches, and their families. The Upper Perkiomen School District will take the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of students and staff while following the recommendations of federal, state and local governments as well as the CDC, SLUHN, NFHS and PIAA. As more information becomes available about COVID-19, this plan may be modified and updated.

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 ramp up 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.

High Risk Groups

People with a higher risk of COVID-19 should consider delaying their participation in sports and activities given the increased risk.

Some of the higher risk categories are:

People at Higher Risk for Severe Illness

Individuals who are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

People who are immunocompromised

Individuals with Diabetes

Older Adults age 65 and Older

Individuals with Chronic Kidney Disease

Individuals with Asthma or Chronic Lung Disease

Individuals with Severe Obesity (BMI 40+)

Individuals with HIV

Individuals with Liver Disease

If there is a concern about the risk associated with participation due to underlying health conditions, the individual should consult their health care provider prior to returning to sports.

Point of Contact

The primary point of contact for this plan is the Athletic Director. Secondary contacts are the Athletic Trainers.

Attendance

Any student-athlete or coach attending a practice or competition should be in good physical condition. Anyone feeling sick or experiencing any symptoms associated with COVID-19 **must stay home** to protect themselves and others.

If a student-athlete starts to feel sick at a practice or competition, the individual should immediately inform one of the coaches who should isolate the individual. The parent/guardian should be alerted immediately by the coach or athletic trainer and the student-athlete should be sent home.

PPE Requirements

All coaches must wear face coverings at all times. Any exceptions to this – for medical reasons – must be approved by the Athletic Director.

In accordance with the most current state guidance, student-athletes must wear a face covering at all times, including during sport activities. Face masks which are worn during PIAA competitions may not have any advertising or corporate names on them. The only exception to this is a student-athlete with a Section 3 waiver.

Practice/Contest Screening

When a coach or student-athlete arrives for a practice or contest, ALL will be required to wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds (or use hand sanitizer if a handwashing station is not available). Following that, the individual will report to the coach, who will screen each individual. During this screening process, coaches and student-athletes must be wearing a face covering. Documentation will be done via a paper/computerized form or the use of online documentation. Coaches that perform screenings will keep this documentation and will send it to the athletic trainers to have a backup copy in the medical files. Responses of screening questions for each student-athlete is to be recorded and stored, and may be used to keep a record of everyone present, should a student, coach, or staff member develop COVID-19.

Per the UPSD Health and Safety Plan, if a student-athlete or coach has one Group A symptom or two Group B symptoms, the student-athlete or coach will be isolated and sent home. Parents will be asked to have their student-athlete examined by a medical professional and to provide follow-up documentation that the student-athlete is either COVID-19 free or has a differential diagnosis or a negative COVID-19 result.

As part of this process, the individual conducting the screening will utilize a non-contact thermometer to take the temperature of each student-athlete and coach. If someone registers a temperature of 100.4 or higher, he/she will be isolated for 5 minutes and the temperature will be taken again. Following another 5-minute isolation period, the student-athlete will have a third temperature reading. If the average temperature of the 3 readings is 100.4 or higher, the parent/guardian must be contacted to pick up the student-athlete. Parents will be asked to have their student-athlete examined by a medical professional and to provide follow-up documentation that the student-athlete is either COVID-19 free or has a differential diagnosis or a negative COVID-19 result.

If a student-athlete or coach gets sick, he/she will be isolated, parents/guardians will be notified and they will be sent home and must follow the student-athlete/coach return to play protocol.

Education and Acknowledgement Form

Prior to participation in athletics, parents will be required to sign PIAA Section 10: Supplemental Acknowledgement, Waiver and Release: COVID-19 indicating that they and their child understand the risks of COVID-19 associated with participation. This acknowledgement form must be electronically signed before a student-athlete can begin participation. Included in the form will be information about COVID-19 and safety precautions that can be taken.

All coaches are required to sign an Acknowledgement Form stating they have read the Health and Safety Plan for spring sports and agree to follow the guidelines.

Signs will be posted in bathrooms and near training facilities emphasizing social distancing and proper hygiene.

Social Distancing

While contact is permitted, coaches and student-athletes should stay 6 feet apart whenever possible. An example of this includes during warm-up runs and stretching. Workout and training activities must be organized to allow for this required spacing. Student-athletes should continue to remain 6 feet apart when not actively participating (ie. sidelines, bench and dugouts).

Coaches will group student-athletes in small pods as appropriate.

In addition, student-athletes should not enter or leave the practice facility together or within 6 feet of each other. Student-athletes must wear masks when entering and leaving the facilities. Parents picking up student-athletes should remain in their vehicles. If student-athletes must carpool, it is recommended that they wear a mask inside the car.

Student-athlete and coach bags, apparel, etc. should be separated 6 feet apart. All personal supplies should be labeled with the owner's name on it to prevent someone from picking up the wrong bag.

Number of Participants

Each activity area will be limited to 25 participants indoors or 250 participants outdoors (or such other numbers as the Commonwealth, PIAA, Montgomery County or CDC may determine) which includes coaches and student-athletes. Parents, community members and spectators may not be permitted to attend.

Equipment Sanitizing

Prior to each workout, all equipment will be sanitized. Student-athletes should not share equipment with one another unless inherent to the sport. This includes athletic equipment, pinnies, towels, clothing etc. Whenever possible, any time equipment is used by one individual, it will be sanitized prior to the next person using that piece of equipment. If not feasible, athletic equipment should be cleaned often throughout the workout.

Every team will be provided with a minimum of one spray bottle filled with a sanitizing solution. This will be refilled as needed.

Student-athletes and coaches will be encouraged to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer frequently during training sessions. Student-athletes are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer to practices and games, especially for away games.

Bathrooms

A maximum of 2 individuals may be in the bathrooms at any given time. These spaces will be cleaned on a regular basis. Doors to enter these areas will be propped open when possible to allow for air flow.

Hydration

All student-athletes must provide their own water bottles and hydration which should be labeled with the individuals' name. Student-athletes will not be permitted to participate without water. The District will not provide water or the use of coolers during this time. In addition, water fountains will not be available.

Personal Conduct

There will be no chewing gum, spitting, licking fingers or eating sunflower seeds. Student-athletes will not be allowed to shake hands, high five one another, chest bump, hug or fist bump during practices and contests.

Indoor Facilities

Due to social distancing guidelines and state mandates, the following facilities may be used with all occupants wearing masks and being at least 6 feet apart but are limited to the number of occupants listed below:

HS Athletic Training Room - 9	MS Athletic Training Room - 3	4-5 Athletic Training Room - 5
Boys Gym Locker Rooms - 15	Boys Varsity Locker Rooms - 8	Girls Gym Locker Rooms - 12
Girls Varsity Locker Room - 10	Boys Middle School Locker Room - 12	Girls Middle School Locker Room - 12
Boys 4-5 Locker Room – 10	Girls 4-5 Locker Room - 16	Coaches Offices - 1
Swim Locker Rooms - 7	*Weight Room - 12	Natatorium – 25
Auxiliary Gymnasium - 25	**Gymnasium – 25	

*When using the weight room, masks must be worn and equipment will be allocated to one student-athlete at a time. Individuals must remain a minimum of 6 feet apart. All equipment must be wiped down after each use.

**We may be able to get waivers from Montgomery County to permit larger numbers in our gymnasiums.

Hygiene

At the conclusion of practices or contests, student-athletes should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer. Student-athletes will be encouraged to shower as soon as they get home from an athletic event. In addition, student-athletes should be encouraged to wash all garments and wash or disinfect equipment after each practice or contest.

Facility Cleaning

All facilities utilized will be cleaned and sanitized on a regular basis. The Director of Buildings and Grounds will establish a schedule for cleaning.

Team Meals

Family-style team meals will not be permitted. If there are team functions that require meals, these should be individually packaged and participants must stay 6 feet apart when eating.

Travel to Away Competitions

Bus or van transportation will be provided to away events. Face coverings will be mandatory for all trips and any and all regulations established by the busing contractor and/or school district will be strictly followed and enforced. Coaches will be required to create seating charts for away contests for contact tracing purposes.

Home Competitions

All home competitions will follow the parameters of this plan. Individual sports will have specific guidelines based on the facility being used and the unique requirements of each sport.

Contest sites will have sanitation supplies available for players, coaches, officials and games workers.

All Competition Considerations

The pre-game conference in all sports will be limited to one official, the head coach from each team and one captain from each team. These individuals should be a minimum of 6 feet apart and/or be wearing masks. This includes the coin toss as well. These conferences will be moved to the center of the court and away from other coaches or players warming up.

Coaches and players on the bench should be wearing masks and sitting 6 feet or more apart.

During the pre-game introductions there will be no hand shaking. In addition, all players and coaches must be 6 feet apart during introductions. There will be no post-game handshake line between teams and officials.

Competition Spectator Information

Montgomery County is still mandating schools stay at or under the 25 maximum occupancy for all indoor facilities and 250 maximum occupancy for all outdoor facilities. Due to these guidelines, spectators will not be permitted to attend practices. Should that directive change, any and all guidance from the county and state will be followed.

If/When spectators are permitted to attend games, seating areas will be clearly marked and will adhere to social distancing guidelines. Spectator size may be limited depending on the facility being used and reservations may be required. Example, any spectators sitting in lawn chairs should be spaced out 6 feet apart from non-family members.

All spectators will be required to wear face coverings at all times and will not be allowed to enter the playing surface or bench area.

Live-Streaming Games

Upper Perkiomen has installed 3 NFHS Network live-stream cameras on campus – One in Keeny Stadium, one in Tribe Stadium and one in the high school gymnasium. All regular season home games in these facilities will be covered via the NFHS Network live-stream format for free for the 2020-2021 school year. If you would like to watch away contests at local schools who have NFHS Network cameras, there is a monthly subscription cost of \$10.99 or a yearly subscription at \$69.99. This entitles the viewer to watch any game being live-streamed on the NFHS platform.

Consideration for Coaches

All facilities utilized will be cleaned and sanitized on a regular basis. The Director of Buildings and Grounds will establish a schedule for cleaning.

- Communicate your guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents.
- Consider conducting workouts in “pods” of same students always training and rotating together in practice to ensure more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.

- Keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is needed.
- Coaches may have to limit game day squad sizes for social distancing purposes.
- Coaches should bring their own water bottle(s) and follow established guidelines for hydration.
- Coaches should emphasize the importance of social distancing, hydration and hygiene with their student-athletes.

Consideration for Parents/Guardians

(A family's role in maintaining safety guidelines for themselves and others):

- Parents/Guardians should monitor their children of any symptoms prior to any sporting activities. Children who are sick or showing symptoms must stay home. (If there is any doubt, stay home).
- Parents/Guardians and coaches should assess levels of risk based on individual athletes on the team who may be at a higher risk for severe illness.
- Provide personal items for your child and clearly label them.
- Disinfect your student's personal equipment after each practice or contest.
- Be prepared with face coverings (masks or face shields) for members of your family if permitted to attend events.
- Inform coaches if your student-athlete is quarantined, has tested positive for COVID-19 or has been exposed to (close contact) COVID-19.

Consideration for Spectators

- Spectators are permitted depending on each individual school's policies.
- Individuals are required to wear face coverings in accordance with the [Secretary of Health's Order](#) effective November 18, 2020.
- Seating areas, including bleachers, must adhere to social distancing requirements of at least 6 feet of spacing for anyone not in the same household. To assist with proper social distancing, areas should be clearly marked.
- Everyone age 2 or older must wear face coverings at all times, unless they fall under an exception listed in Section 3 of the Secretary of Health's Order on Universal Face Coverings.
- Caregivers or spectators should not enter the field of play or bench areas.
- Non-essential visitors, spectators, and volunteers should be limited when possible, including activities with external groups or organizations. Parents should refrain from attending practices, or volunteering to assist with coaching.
- Caregivers and coaches should assess levels of risk based on individual athletes on the team who may be at a higher risk for severe illness.
- Caregivers should monitor their children for symptoms prior to any sporting event. Children and athletes who are sick or showing symptoms must stay home.

Considerations for Media

- Individuals are required to wear face coverings in accordance with the [Secretary of Health's Order](#) effective November 18, 2020.
- Media are permitted, when possible, but are counted toward gathering limitations.
- Media members should complete a personal health assessment daily. Any media member who attends a game in person will be subject to school district COVID-19 screenings including having his/her temperature taken.
- The media must make contact with the school prior to attending to make appropriate arrangements for attendance.
- Media are required to wear face coverings in accordance with the Secretary of Health's order of July 1, 2020, unless they meet exceptions under Section 3 of that order.

- Media availability may be limited especially if there are limits on capacity.
- Media should be restricted to areas outside of the team areas.
- Interview requests may be limited and only permissible if social distancing is possible.
- Press box availability may be limited.

Consideration for Game Workers and Officials

- Individuals are required to wear face coverings in accordance with the [Secretary of Health's Order](#) effective November 18, 2020.
- Game workers and officials should complete a personal health assessment daily. Individuals working a game will be subject to school district COVID-19 screenings including having his/her temperature taken. Any official or game worker that feels sick should stay home.
- Officials will not have access to the locker rooms.
- Maintain 6 feet of social distancing from players, game workers and other officials as much as possible.
- Officials and game workers are required to wear a mask at all times. This includes between periods/halves and before and after play.
- Officials should provide their own towels and hydration bottles. These should be labeled with each individuals' name on them and should not be shared with anyone

Antigen Assurance Testing

In coordination with the MCIU and our school district's nursing staff, all high school and middle school spring athletes will be required to participate in weekly antigen assurance testing this spring. While sports are a voluntary student activity, it does possess a greater risk for COVID-19 transmission. Testing our student-athletes weekly keeps the school districts goal of reducing risk across high risk activities in order to preserve the instructional environment.

Testing

Each week, the Pandemic Coordinator and Athletic Director will set up a schedule for Rapid Antigen COVID-19 testing. If an athlete tests positive, they will be isolated and be sent home. Coaches will then review practice plans to determine any close contacts. Close contacts are defined as someone who has spent 15 consecutive minutes with someone inside of 6 feet.

Student-athletes who test positive will need to follow normal Montgomery County Office of Public Health school exclusion recommendations and the UPSD Health and Safety Plan.

Positive Case or Close Contact of COVID-19

If a student-athlete or coach contracts the COVID-19 virus, or has a close contact with someone who tests positive, the family must notify the athletic department, including the appropriate coach, athletic trainer and athletic director. The athletic trainers and the athletic director will then consult with the Pandemic Coordinator to develop a plan for return to play following current guidelines. The student-athlete or coach should consult with their primary care physician immediately.

If the student-athlete or coach tests positive for COVID-19, physician clearance (MD, DO, PA, CRNP) must be provided via e-mail to the athletic trainers. Per the UPSD Health and Safety Plan, if a student-athlete or coach contracts the COVID-19 virus, the individual should isolate for a minimum of 10 days if asymptomatic and monitor for symptoms; if symptomatic student-athletes or coaches should isolate until: 24 hours with no fever, improvement in symptoms and 10 days since symptoms first appeared. As always, student-athletes and coaches should follow their physicians orders.

If a student-athlete or coach must quarantine, the school will follow the most current guidelines provided by Montgomery County, which can be found here: <https://www.montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View/28942/COVID-19-School-Exclusion-Guide?bidId=>. Any athlete, coach or school that had a recent competition with the COVID-19 positive individual will be contacted by the athletic director. If a team is shut down due COVID-19, any game that is missed can be rescheduled if possible. However, if a contest cannot be rescheduled it will be recorded as a “no contest” and not a forfeit. The only time a team would forfeit a contest due to a COVID-19 situation would be in the case of post-season tournaments.

Sport-Specific Accommodations

Individuals are required to wear face coverings in accordance with the [Secretary of Health’s Order](#) effective November 18, 2020.

Tennis–

- Limit attendees to any pre-match conference between athletes and coaches. Make sure to maintain social distancing.
- Instead of shaking hands, tap racquets.
- While there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be transmitted by touching tennis balls, sanitary precautions, such as hand washing or using hand sanitizer, should still be utilized.
 - When possible, athletes should not touch their opponents tennis balls.
- Maintain physical distancing if changing ends of the court.
- Avoid touching your face after handling a ball, racquet or other equipment.
 - Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer promptly if you have touched your eyes, nose or mouth.
- When playing doubles, coordinate with your partner to maintain physical distancing, where possible.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before, during (between sets), and after play.
- Clean and wipe down your equipment, including racquets and water bottles. Use new tennis balls and new grip, if possible.

Girls Lacrosse–

- Pre-game meetings should consist of the lead official, head coach and one captain from each team.
- Ensure the pre-game meeting is away from the sideline and all individuals maintain social distancing.
- Eliminate handshakes following the pre-game meeting and at the conclusion of the game.
- The goalie should roll or throw the ball to the official after a goal.
- Split the substitution box with a cone so that each team substitutes in from their own half of the substitution box.
- All equipment will be sanitized after usage. Goalkeeper equipment and sticks will not be shared.

Track & Field–

- Shot put, Discus and Javelin should enforce social distancing for all athletes and officials.
 - To limit contact: Athletes can provide their own implements (that pass inspection) and retrieve their own implements after all throws.
 - If athletes cannot provide their own implements, then it is recommended that implements be sanitized between each use.
- Long Jump, Triple Jump, High Jump and Pole Vault should enforce social distancing for all athletes and officials.
 - To limit contact: Athletes should not share vaulting poles. If they do, poles should be sanitized between each use.
- Spring, Hurdle, Relay Events run entirely in lanes, may use every other lane to assist with distancing.
 - Starting blocks should be disinfected after each heat/race.

- Middle Distance and Distance races on the track of 800m and longer (any event not run entirely in lanes) are considered moderate risk activities. To minimize contact ,events are recommended to be run in alleys or minimally one turn staggers.

Rule Change Considerations Relay Races:

- Rule 5-10-5 Current rule: The baton is the implement which is used in a relay race and is handed by each competitor to a succeeding teammate. Gloves are not permitted in relay events.
 - The use of disposable gloves for the 2021 season by relay participants is permitted.
 - Schools can bring their own batons, or they should be disinfected after each heat/race.

Baseball/Softball–

- Have sanitizer available at the field and at each dugout.
- No one touches the score sheet except the scorer.
- Disinfect the bench/dugout prior to competition.
- Each team may provide sanitized baseballs/softball (bucket) while on defense.
 - Have a bucket of available baseballs/softballs so they can be sanitized after the game.
- Sanitize bases after each contest.
- Limit attendees to head coach and one captain from each team plus the plate umpire. Coaches should stay outside the width of the batter’s box at home plate, maintaining 6 feet of distance between each person.

Considerations for Coaches-

- Eliminate handshake post-game.
- Maintain 6 feet of distance between players and umpires.
- No sunflower seeds, gum or spitting.

Considerations for Players

- No sunflower seeds, gum, licking fingers or spitting.
- Players must clean and sanitize equipment after each game.
- Social distancing on the bench and/or dugout.
- The use of personal equipment is preferred. However, if equipment is shared, it is recommended to sanitize equipment between use by players.
- Sanitize all equipment after each use.
- Eliminate handshakes post game.
- Eliminate handshakes with coaches/umpire pre-game.
- Pitchers are encouraged to not lick their fingers or blow on their hands.
- Pitchers cannot wear optic yellow cloth face coverings. (Softball)
- If a pitcher is wearing a face covering in the field, it must be a solid dark color. (Baseball)

Adopted



Protect Yourself, Protect Others, Protect the Season