



Oakland Catholic High School Athletic Department: Health and Safety Plan 2021-2022

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a number of unique challenges to sports worldwide. COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus that primarily attacks the upper respiratory system and can infect people of all ages. While it is not possible to eliminate all exposure to COVID-19 and subsequent variants, data and research on schools that were open last year, along with information on higher vaccination rates, indicate that steps like masking indoors and in crowded situations, and maintaining physical distance to the maximum extent possible, significantly reduce exposure to the virus. To minimize the risk of exposure, Oakland Catholic High School will follow directives from the Diocese and recommendations from the federal, local, and state governments, Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), National Federation of State High School Associations, and the PIAA. Oakland Catholic High School realizes that best practices regarding COVID-19 are in a constant state of change as new information and treatments become available. As new information becomes available, the recommendations contained in this document will be updated to reflect current directives, information, research, and data. This document is an extension of the Oakland Catholic High School Covid Safety Protocol plan for 2021-2022.

Participating in interscholastic athletics is a privilege at Oakland Catholic High School and it is of the utmost importance that everyone involved - athletes, parents, coaches, and administrators - work together to adhere to the guidelines outlined in this document. It is the responsibility of the participating interscholastic student athletes, parents, coaches, and administrators to follow these guidelines in season, out of season, and while conditioning. Failure to follow these safety measures will increase exposure, transmission, and the number of close contacts that are required to quarantine.

These guidelines will be reviewed and updated as needed throughout the 2021-2022 academic year.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- Physical distancing should be practiced during practices, competitions, and daily interactions. For a K-12 setting, three feet or more between students for extended periods of time of 15 minutes or more, is considered an acceptable distance. For students in a K-12 setting, this distance eliminates close contact status, provided individuals wear well-fitting masks, or are outdoors with adequate space between each other.
- Team meals will return, but outdoors with adequate physical distance between individuals, or indoors with six feet or more physical distance between individuals, to the maximum extent possible.
- Student-athletes are to be three (3) to six (6) feet apart **when not actively participating in a drill or physical activity** and masked, or six (6) feet or more apart if outdoors without a mask.
- Activities that increase the risk of exposure to saliva droplets are not allowed, including but not limited to, chewing gum, spitting, licking fingers, and eating sunflower seeds.
- 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, and to minimize interactions between athletes.
- Booster-run concession stands and other food provided for athletes must adhere to the [Guidance for Businesses in the Restaurant Industry](#) and pre-packaged items.
- If a student-athlete does not feel well, exhibits symptoms of illness, or suspects she has been exposed to Covid, she is to inform her coaches, the Athletic Department, and/or school. If ill or exhibiting symptoms, she should stay home to improve her personal health. If exposed to Covid but symptom-free, individuals must consult and adhere to the quarantine/testing protocol flowchart on page 10 of the overall Covid Safety Protocols plan to determine next steps.
- Attendance will be taken for each practice and competition for contact tracing purposes.
- If a student-athlete tests positive for COVID-19, or is determined to be a close contact of someone with Covid-19, they should follow all guidelines outlined in the COVID Safety Protocols plan.

SANITATION:

- ALL personal athletic equipment should be cleaned daily. All student-athletes are required to take their equipment home daily for cleaning.
- Only one student-athlete at a time is permitted to report to the Athletic Training room for evaluation or treatments. The athlete must be fully masked and make an appointment ahead of time.
- Each athlete **MUST** have her **OWN** personally-identified hydration container (i.e. water bottle) that is **never** shared.
- Hand sanitizers and wipes will be provided throughout the facilities and areas.

MASK POLICY:

Student-athletes, coaches, and staff, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, are **required** to wear masks when in all indoor spaces. This includes the Athletic Training room, gyms, and school buildings. **Masks can be removed when in active play and when 6ft of distance between individuals can be achieved for a mask break.** **As noted in the overall plan, mask breaks should be limited to 5-10 minutes.*

During any “down time” situations, coaches and athletes must wear masks. Masks should be well-fitting, properly worn (not under the nose or under the chin), and washed regularly. Frequent handwashing and avoiding touching one’s face are recommended to decrease the spread of the virus.

STUDENT-ATHLETES’ ACTIONS:

Oakland Catholic High School requires that its student-athletes assist in following these guidelines to help maintain a safe and healthy environment for all. Failure to adhere to these guidelines could result in the inability to participate in OCHS athletic programs.

- Student-Athletes are responsible for their own supplies and equipment for each practice/competition.
- Physical distancing is in effect at all times except during competitions. During competitions, athletes must always have their masks/face coverings readily available.
- The weight and athletic training rooms are open, but physical distancing guidelines must be followed.
- Lockers are available for student-athletes.
- Clothing is not to be left in any athletic facility overnight. Items left will be discarded.
- Athletes are not permitted to share towels, razors, clothes or personal hygiene items.
- Hands should be washed frequently and hand sanitizer used often, when available.
- Athletes are responsible for bringing a personal water bottle with their name on it to all practices and events. There will be no shareable water bottles available.
- **In accordance with the Diocesan Health and Safety Plan, during active play indoors, vaccinated student-athletes are permitted to play mask-free, but their mask needs to be readily accessible; unvaccinated student-athletes are required to keep their masks on at all times. Masks are optional for all athletes during active play outdoors.**

COACHES’ ACTIONS:

- Coaches will clearly communicate all guidelines to the student-athletes and parents.
- Coaches will model the behavior they expect of student-athletes by wearing masks at all times indoors and outdoors when not physically distanced from others and by maintaining physical distance to the maximum extent possible.
- Coaches who submit a medical exemption from the mask, according to the guidelines outlined earlier in this document, must always wear a shield in lieu of a mask. Only those with a medical exemption are permitted to substitute a shield for a mask.
- Coaches will be responsible for monitoring the number of student-athletes in the gymnasium during the season in order to promote social distancing guidelines. This may include limiting access to the building before or after events.

PARENTS'/GUARDIANS' ACTIONS:

- Maintain safety guidelines for yourself and others within your family unit. Adhere to all school policies.
- Monitor your daughter's health prior to any sporting activities. If your daughter is sick, she should stay home. Even if there is doubt, she is to stay home.
- Communicate with the coaching staff if your daughter is at higher risk for severe illness, has a preexisting health condition, or is immunocompromised.
- Provide the necessary supplies for your daughter and label them with her name.
- Disinfect your daughter's equipment after practice/competition. Be sure that she washes her clothes and mask daily.
- Bring appropriate masks/face coverings to practices/competitions for yourself, daughter, and family members for competitions. Maintain six feet of distance between you/your guests and other spectators who are not part of your family/guest unit. If you attend an event without the appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment), you will not be permitted into our facilities and will run the risk of being turned away from other schools or competition facilities.

ATHLETIC TRAINERS' ACTIONS:

Follow guidance from UPMC as it pertains to COVID-19. This includes, but is not limited, to the following:

- Limit athlete and coach occupancy to the athletic training room to promote physical distancing.
- Wear a mask at all times. If an athletic trainer has a pre-existing medical condition and cannot wear a mask, they will need to document their medical exemption according to the guidelines outlined earlier in this document. Trainers must maintain physical distance to the maximum extent possible and restrict their close interactions to under 15 minutes.
- Do not permit unsupervised admittance to the athletic training room.

COMPETITION AND TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS:

Competition and travel need to be considered and planned prior to the onset of the season.

The Athletic Director will be in contact with each opponent's administration prior to traveling to their facilities. Guidelines and policies of the host school must be strictly followed.

Domestic and international travel guidelines are noted on the CDC website and referenced earlier in this document. These guidelines pertain to individual members of the school community (coaches, students, teachers, staff) who travel for personal reasons, as well as to team travel.

Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible and masking should be maintained at all times during team travel. Preparations should be made in advance in order to limit stops (pre-packaged meals). Emergency medical supplies should be carried to each competition/practice.

ATHLETIC EVENT ATTENDANCE:

Following the current guidelines from the CDC, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Allegheny County, and the Diocese of Pittsburgh, spectators will be permitted to attend both indoor and outdoor events. Some capacity limits may apply for indoor events to accommodate physical distancing between visitors/visiting groups, but those will be updated as more information becomes available.

Indoor spectators are expected to wear a mask at all times and to physically distance themselves from other guest/family groups. Spectators at outdoor events should always be prepared to wear a mask if physical distance between themselves and other guests/family groups cannot be maintained.

**For reference, the CDC allows for three feet of distance between students in a K-12 school environment. For all other individuals (faculty, staff, parents, visitors) in the K-12 school environment, and all individuals in non-school environments, the physical distance recommendation is six feet to the maximum extent possible. Adequate physical distance eliminates the possibility of being deemed a close contact of someone later confirmed to test positive for Covid.*