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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:

2021-2022

Return to Play and Voluntary Summer Work Outs

Anticipated Launch Date - July 28, 2021

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 workouts 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), Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) 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 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.

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.
- Contact your athletic trainer or coach if you experience symptoms or an exposure of COVID-19.
- If an athlete or staff member starts experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 during practice, 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 is 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 hot line 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 Director 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.
- Areas 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:

- 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)
- Fever-free for 24 hours without medication

Promote Wellness and Hygiene

- Parkland encourages all athletes, age 12 and older, to consider obtaining the COVID-19 vaccination. Currently, this is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Visit [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to locate a vaccination site nearest you.
- 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.
- Face coverings are currently required on any Parkland transportation, when working with the trainer. Please refer to the Face covering tiered mitigation strategy for further details.
- Students should refrain from these activities when they have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and should be tested.
- **Staying home when you are ill is necessary.**
- ***Please refer to the Covid-19 home screening tool for further guidance if you are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms or exposure.***
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Spectators, the media and parents are not permitted on the playing field area without prior approval

- 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.

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.
- Signs will be posted throughout the athletic facilities reinforcing desired behaviors which include, frequent washing or sanitizing of hands, sneezing and coughing into your elbow.
- **The Pa Department of Health on August 31, 2021 states (on page 5) for mask exceptions: Section 3: Exceptions to Covering Requirement. Paragraph H. When a child / student is participating in a sports practice activity or event, whether indoors or outdoors. [Order of the Acting Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Directing Face Covering in School Entities](#)**

Cleaning and Sanitizing

Lead Individual - Director of School Services, David Keppel

- All weight room equipment will be wiped down after each use.
- Locker rooms, training room and weight room as well as other high traffic areas will be cleaned with a sanitizing machine regularly.
- Locker rooms, training room and weight room as well as high traffic areas will be with a sanitizing machine regularly.
- 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.

Locker Rooms

- Proper sanitation and cleaning will be conducted regularly.
- Athletes may utilize the locker rooms and follow face covering and social distancing mitigation measures.
- Visiting team locker rooms will be cleaned before they arrive and upon their departure.

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.