

Allegheny Valley School District



Springdale Jr-Sr High School Athletic Department Resocialization of Athletics Procedures to COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented athletics across the world with a myriad of challenges. The COVID-19 virus is a highly contagious illness that primarily attacks the upper respiratory system. The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages. Research from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), among others, has found that while children may become infected by COVID-19, relatively few are hospitalized. However, some severe outcomes have been reported in children, and a child with a mild or even asymptomatic case of COVID-19 can spread the infection to others who may be far more vulnerable. 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, officials, and their families.

The Allegheny Valley School District (AVSD) will take the necessary precautions and recommendations from the federal, state, and local governments; CDC; Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH); as well as the National Federation of State High School Associates (NFHS); and the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA). AVSD realizes the knowledge regarding COVID-19 is constantly changing as new information and treatments become available. Therefore, these procedures will be adjusted as necessary when new recommendations are provided in order to decrease the risk of exposure for our staff, students, and spectators. AVSD has created a Task Force to help coordinate an independent response. This action team includes:

- Athletic Director (Mr. Peter Simpson)
- Athletic Trainer (Ms. Maggie Sturgill)
- Team Physician (Dr. David Shin)
- School Nurse (Ms. Kandi Conner)
- Superintendent of Schools (Dr. Patrick M. Graczyk)

The Primary Point of Contact is Mr. Peter Simpson, Athletic Director, psimpson@avsd.k12.pa.us or 724-274-8100.

As per the Pennsylvania Governor's statement on June 10, 2020, each school entity must develop and adopt an Athletics Health and Safety Plan that aligns with the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE) Preliminary Guidance for Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools. Allegheny Valley has developed a plan that includes provisions within the Governor's plan, approved by the school board on June 29, 2020, and posted on the District website. An update has been completed on January 12, 2021.

The guidelines in this plan are designed to minimize risk for our student-athletes, coaches, officials, staff, and community. It is vital to the health and safety of all involved that our student-athletes and staff are fully conscious of these guidelines at all times and take responsibility for implementation with utmost seriousness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for **all phases** for Senior High and Middle School Athletics:

- *Implemented the 11/24/2020 “Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Directing Public School Entities in Counties with Substantial Community Transmission to Attest to Health and Safety Protocols”*
 - *Certified and attested to District compliance with state masking orders including “Updated Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Requiring Universal Face Coverings, effective November 18, 2020”*
1. Screen athletes, coaches, and staff prior to any practice, event, or team meeting. The type of screening will be dependent upon the available resources and the Phase level. The purpose is to check for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
 2. Promote healthy hygiene practices such as hand washing (20 seconds with warm water and soap) and the wearing of a cloth face covering as feasible. Hand Sanitizer will be available for team use as resources allow.
 3. Utilize Personal Protective Equipment (gloves, masks, eye protection) as needed and situations warrant, or determined by local/state governments. **Pete and Jan, I Moved from 10 to #3**
 - a. Face coverings help decrease potential exposure to COVID-19 respiratory droplets by an infected individual. Face coverings will be used by athletes while practicing or competing until otherwise directed by the State or Local guidance.
 4. Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation in all facilities.
 5. Encourage social distancing through increased spacing, small groups, and limited mixing among groups, if feasible.
 6. Educate athletes, coaches, and staff on health and safety protocols.
 7. Require anyone who is sick to stay home.
 8. Plan for the possibility of a student or employee becoming sick, including contact tracing.
 9. Regularly communicate and monitor developments with local authorities, employees, and families regarding cases, exposures, and updates to policies and procedures.
 10. Require athletes and coaches to provide their own water bottle for hydration. Water bottles must NOT be shared; communal water stations should not be used.
 11. Hold closed practice sessions. Spectators are not permitted to attend practice sessions or to congregate at or near practice facilities
 12. Identify staff and students who may be at a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 due to underlying medical conditions such as:
 - Age 65 or older
 - Lung disease, moderate-severe asthma
 - Serious heart conditions
 - Immunocompromised individuals
 - Obesity
 - Diabetes

- Kidney or liver disease

If students or staff do not comply with the existing or new masking orders, the District reserves the right to suspend all extracurricular activities including all athletics, music groups, school plays, and other student activities.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF SPORTS

District sports will be classified as follows:

High Risk: Sports that involve close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted.

Examples: football, wrestling, cheerleading (stunts), dance

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 can't be cleaned between participants.

Examples: basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball, soccer, ice hockey, tennis, pole vault, high jump, long jump, 7 on 7 football

Low Risk: Sports that can be held with social distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment OR the ability to clean the equipment between use by competitors.

Examples: running events, cross country, throwing events, swimming, golf, weightlifting, sideline cheer

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

The following phases have been established:

Phase 1

- All school facilities remain closed as per PA State Guidelines.
- Athletes and coaches may communicate via online meetings (zoom, google meet, etc.).
- Athletes may participate in home workouts including strength and conditioning.
- Athletes and coaches should abide by guidelines set forth by the local and state governments.

Phase 2

Pre-workout Screening

- All athletes and coaches should be screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to a workout. Screenings may include a temperature check. (See Appendix for COVID-19 Screening Form.)
- Responses to screening questions for each person should be recorded and stored so that there is a record of everyone present in the event a case of COVID-19 develops (contact tracing purposes).

- Any person with positive symptoms reported should not be allowed to take part in workouts AND should contact his/her primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional. A release from a health-care professional is required for return to participation.

Limitations on Gatherings

The following limitations are in effect

- No gathering of more than 10% of the indoor space capacity, including athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators, per scheduled on an individual field/court. (exp. 760 capacity equals 76 individuals).
- Only controlled, non-contact practices are permitted; modified game rules are in effect.
- No Concession Stands or Rest Rooms will be available.
- Social Distancing will apply to the extent possible during practices - in locker rooms and gathering areas. Signage will be visible as a reminder to adhere to the guidelines.
- Face masks must be worn at all times by athletes, coaches, officials and spectators.

Facilities Cleaning

- Adequate cleaning schedules will be implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate the spread of any communicable disease.
- Athletic facilities should be cleaned prior to arrival and after workouts and team gatherings; high-touch areas should be cleaned more often.
- Weight room equipment should be wiped down after an individual's use.
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times in the weight room to minimize sweat from transmitting disease onto equipment surfaces.

Physical Activity

- Lower risk sports practices may begin.
- Modified practices may begin for Moderate and High risk sports (practices must remain non-contact and include social distancing where applicable).
- Students should refrain from sharing clothing and towels; clothing and towels should be washed after each practice, including pinnies, practice jerseys, etc.
- Intermittent cleaning of athletic equipment that may be used by multiple individuals (balls, shields, tackling dummies, shot put, discus, pole vault, etc.) during practice and events should occur as deemed necessary.
- Hand Sanitizer is encouraged and should be used periodically as resources allow. Athletes are also encouraged to bring their own sanitizer to use during practices, meetings, and games.
- Spotters for maximum weight lifts should be stationed at each end of the bar.

Hydration

- Athletes and coaches MUST provide their own water bottle for hydration; water bottles are NOT to be shared.
- Communal water stations should not be used.
- Water coolers are permitted for refilling water bottles, so long as the cooler is sanitized before and after use and there is one designated coach or sponsor dispensing the water. Additionally, that person must wear the appropriate PPE (gloves, masks, etc.) and not touch the participant's water bottle. The water source must be sealed at all times.

Phase 3

Pre-workout/Contest Screening

- NO person who has COVID-19 symptoms is allowed to participate in practice or games, and should contact their primary care physician or another appropriate health-care provider. A written medical release stating that the person tested negative for COVID-19 must be obtained before athlete, coach, or staff member returns to participation (or as dictated by local and state guidelines).
- Team attendance should be recorded.

Limitations on Gatherings

- Limits should follow State and Local Guidelines.
- When not directly participating in practices or contests, and when able, social distancing should be considered and applied.

Facilities Cleaning

- Adequate cleaning schedules will be implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate the spread of any communicable disease.
- Athletic Facilities should be cleaned prior to arrival and after workouts and team gatherings; high touch areas should be cleaned more often.
- Fitness Center and Weight Room equipment should be wiped down after an individual's use.
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times in the weight room to minimize sweat from transmitting disease onto equipment surfaces.

Physical Activity and Athletic Equipment:

- Low, Moderate, and High Risk practices and competitions may begin (as per State, Local, and PIAA Guidelines).
- Students should refrain from sharing clothing and towels; clothing and towels should be washed after each practice, including pinnies, practice jerseys, etc.
- Intermittent cleaning of athletic equipment that may be used by multiple individuals (balls, shields, tackling dummies, shot put, discus, pole vault, etc.) during practice and events should occur as deemed necessary.
- Hand Sanitizer should be used periodically as resources allow; participants are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer to use at practice, meetings, and events.
- Spotters for maximum weight lifts should be stationed at each end of the bar.
- Whenever possible, equipment and other personal items should be separated and not shared. If equipment must be shared, all equipment should be properly disinfected between users.

Hydration:

- Athletes and coaches MUST provide their own water bottle for hydration; water bottles must NOT be shared.
- Communal water stations should not be used.
- Water coolers are permitted for refilling water bottles, so long as the cooler is sanitized before and after use and there is one designated coach or sponsor dispensing the water. Additionally, that person must wear the appropriate PPE (gloves, masks, etc.) and not touch the participant's water bottle. The water source must be sealed at all times.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Avoid activities that increase the risk of exposure to saliva including chewing gum, spitting, licking fingers, and eating sunflower seeds.

Avoid shaking hands, fist bumps, or high fives before, during or after games and practices. Limit unnecessary physical contact with teammates, other athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators.

Transportation

Modifications for student and coach transportation to and from athletic events may be necessary. This may include:

- Reducing the number of students/coaches on a bus/van
- Using hand sanitizer upon boarding a bus/van
- Social distancing on a bus
- Face masks should be worn at all times by anyone using District provided transportation.

These potential modifications will be determined by the school district, bus companies, PDE, State, and Local governments.

Social Distancing during Contests/Events/Activities (when allowed by State)

Sidelines/Bench – appropriate social distancing will need to be maintained on sidelines and benches during contests and events, as deemed necessary by the school, PIAA, state, and local governments. Consider using tape or paint as a guide for students and coaches.

Who should be allowed at events?

- Group people into tiers, from essential to non-essential, and decide which tiers will be allowed to attend an event:
 1. Tier 1 (Essential) – Athletes, coaches, officials, event staff, medical staff, security
 - Keep essential personnel at a minimum especially on the sidelines of events
 2. Tier 2 (Preferred) – Media, photographers, yearbook staff
 3. Tier 3 (Non-essential) – Spectators, vendors
- *Only Tier 1 and 2 personnel will be allowed to attend events until state/local governments lift restrictions on indoor and outdoor gatherings.*
- *Changes to seating capacity and social distancing may be necessary for each venue/facility and will be determined as more recommendations are released by the local/state governments.*

Overnight/Out of State Events/Events in COVID-19 Hot Spots

The Allegheny Valley School District will evaluate each event and follow all local/state government guidelines on a case-by-case basis. Every consideration will be taken as to not expose students to unnecessary or potential high-risk exposure.

Positive Cases and Coaches, Staff, or Athletes Showing COVID-19 Symptoms

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. (See Appendix B: CDC Fact Sheet on COVID-19)

Symptoms may include:

- Fever 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 to do if you are sick?

- If you are sick with COVID-19, or think you are infected with the virus, STAY AT HOME. 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 (principal, athletic director, athletic trainer, coach).
- It will be determined if others who may have been exposed (students, coaches, staff) need to be notified, isolated, and /or monitored for symptoms.
- If a Positive case of COVID-19 is diagnosed Contact Tracing will be implemented with the assistance of local health professionals and the CDC/PA DOH. (See Appendix C)

What to do if a student or staff become ill with COVID-19 symptoms during practice, event, or during transportation to or from an event?

- Every effort will be made to isolate the ill individual from others, until the student or staff member can leave the school or event.
- If student, a parent/guardian will be contacted immediately, and arrangements will be made for the student to be transported.
- Ill individuals will be asked to contact their physician or appropriate healthcare professional for medical advice.

Return of student or staff to athletics following a COVID-19 diagnosis?

A student and/or staff member who had been diagnosed with COVID-19 MUST have a written medical clearance from his/her physician or appropriate healthcare professional, stating that a negative COVID-19 test had been received, and that the individual was determined to be non-contagious, fever free (without fever-reducing medicine), had improvement in respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath), no vomiting or diarrhea OR as dictated by local and state guidelines.

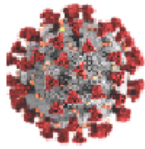
EDUCATION

Athletes, coaches, staff, officials, and parents will be educated through various means on the following:

- COVID-19 signs and symptoms
- Proper ways to limit exposure to COVID-19 (hand washing, cough in your elbow, disinfecting touched surfaces, social distancing, etc.)
- The content of this Athletics Health and Safety Plan
- Any pertinent COVID-19 information released by state/local governments, NFHS, and PIAA.

Additional informational resources are listed in Appendix D.

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.



CS170028 04/12/2020

cdc.gov/coronavirus

APPENDIX C: Contract Tracing



What is Contact Tracing:

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.

Appendix D: Resources for Additional Information

► For more information on wearing or making a mask,

visit: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Stop-the-Spread.aspx>

► For more information on COVID-19, visit the Department of Health’s website, www.health.pa.gov or help is available, contact the Crisis Text Line by texting **PA to 741-741**

Date Created: 6/10/2020

RESOURCES USED:

NFHS: Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities (per update on May 2020)

Centers for Disease Control – “What You Should Know About COVID-19 to Protect Yourself and Others”

Centers for Disease Control – “Schools Decision Tree”

PA Department of Health – “Coronavirus Symptoms”

PA Department of Health – “What is Contact Tracing”

PA Department of Health – “Phased Re-Opening Plan by Governor Wolf”

PA Governor Wolf - “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,” released June 10, 2020

UPMC Sports Medicine Playbook: Return to Sports during COVID-19 Minimum Guidelines (High School), Published online 5/28/2020.

Updated: January 12, 2021