

Health Plan for Sports Conditioning



Guiding Principles

The risk of COVID-19 spread can be different, depending on the type of activity. The risk of COVID-19 spread increases in youth sports settings as follows:

- Lowest Risk: Performing skill-building drills or conditioning at home, alone or with family members.
- Increasing Risk: Team-based practice.
- More Risk: Within-team competition.
- Even More Risk: Full competition between teams from the same local geographic area.
- Highest Risk: Full competition between teams from different geographic areas.

Pittsylvania County Schools will follow the guidance provided by the Governor's Office, the Virginia Department of Health, the Pittsylvania County Health Department, the Virginia Department of Education, and the [Virginia High School League](#) relating to extra-curricular activities and high school athletics.

In Pittsylvania County, students should not be permitted to practice or condition without a completed up to date VHSL Physical form during the season or out of season. The physical form should also include proof of health insurance coverage and if the student does not have this, the school can provide information relative to student accident insurance.

Practices to Reduce Risk of Exposure to COVID19

The way sports are played and the way equipment is shared can influence the spread of COVID-19 among players. Pittsylvania County Schools assessed the risk of spread of COVID-19 by considering the following measures:

- Physical closeness of players, and
- Length of time that players are close to each other or to staff

During Phase II of the Governor's reopening of schools plan, the following precautions will be followed:

- Extracurricular activities (such as clubs) will only be offered if social distancing mitigation strategies can be implemented.

- Athletics will be limited to individual or team-based practice, skill-building drills or conditioning activities that allow maintenance of physical distancing of 10 feet at all times.
- Competition will not take place in Phase II, unless physical distancing can be maintained at all times (e.g. Individual swimmers showing up at scheduled times to have their event timed, etc). Competition that involves contact with other athletes will be avoided.

If socially distancing competitions are taking place, the following conditions must also be met:

- 10 feet of physical distance can be maintained by all participants and spectators at all times and all shared items can be disinfected between uses. The total number of attendees (including both participants and spectators) cannot exceed the lesser of 50% of the occupancy load of the venue (if an occupancy load exists) or 50 persons.
- Indoor recreational sports (including practices and classes) will only occur if 10 feet of physical distance can be maintained by all participants at all items and all shared items can be disinfected between uses. The total number of attendees (including participants, referees, coaches, etc.) will not exceed the lesser of 30% of the occupancy load of the room in which the sport is being held or 50 persons for indoor activities.
- For indoor activities, spectators may not be present except parents or guardians who are supervising children. Spectators must wear face coverings consistent with any active Executive Orders and due to behaviors which may bring greater risk (e.g. cheering). Spectators will be separated by 10 feet of distance from other persons.
- There will be no gatherings (assemblies, graduations, etc) of more than 50 people (indoor or outdoor). Indoor gatherings will be held only as necessary, and be limited in duration.

Coaches Will Adhere to the following CDC recommendations:

- Modify practices so players work on individual skills, rather than on competition.
- Place players into small groups (cohorts) that remain together and work through stations, rather than switching groups or mixing groups.
- Reduce the amount of necessary touching of shared equipment and gear (e.g., protective gear, balls, bats, racquets, mats, or water bottles).
- Minimize sharing of equipment.
- Clean and disinfect shared equipment between use by different people.
- Players at higher risk of developing serious disease
 - Parents and coaches should assess the level of risk based on individual players on the team who may be at [higher risk for severe illness](#), such as children who may have asthma, diabetes, or other health problems.
- Limit the number of athletes practicing as follows:
 - 50 athletes on each field with social distancing
 - 10 athletes as long as social distancing can be maintained in weight rooms
 - 30 athletes as long as social distancing can be maintained in gyms
- Nonessential visitors, spectators, volunteers will not be permitted in practice areas.
- Travel will not be permitted during Phase II and will comply with the directives of the Governor's Orders in subsequent Phases.

Encouraging Behaviors that Reduce the Spread of COVID-19

Pittsylvania County Schools will implement the following strategies to encourage behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19.

- Staying Home when Appropriate
 - Educate staff and player families about when they should stay home and when they can return to activity
 - Actively encourage sick staff, families, and players to stay home. Develop policies that encourage sick employees to stay at home without fear of reprisal, and ensure employees aware of these policies.
 - [Individuals, including coaches, players, and families, should stay home](#) if they have tested positive for or are showing COVID-19 [symptoms](#).
 - Individuals, including coaches, players, and families, who have recently had a [close contact](#) with a person with COVID-19 should also [stay home and monitor their health](#).
 - Utilize the CDC's criteria to inform return to work/school policies:
 - [If they have been sick with COVID-19](#)
 - [If they have recently had a close contact with a person with COVID-19](#)
- Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette
 - Teach and reinforce [handwashing](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
 - Ensure soap and water are readily available and provide hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol for use when they are not available.
 - Do not allow spitting and encourage everyone to cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of their elbow. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used.
- Cloth Face Coverings
 - Teach and reinforce the use of [cloth face coverings](#). Face coverings are not intended to protect the wearer, but rather to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 from the person wearing the mask (who may not have any symptoms of disease). Face coverings may be challenging for players (especially younger players) to wear while playing sports. Face coverings will be worn by coaches, youth sports staff, officials, parents, and spectators as much as possible.
 - Wearing cloth face coverings is most important when physical distancing is difficult.
 - People wearing face coverings should be reminded to not touch the face covering and to [wash their hands](#) frequently. Information will be provided to all participants on the [proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings](#).
 - Note: Cloth face coverings should not be placed on:
 - Babies and children younger than 2 years old;
 - Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious;

- Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.
- Adequate Supplies
 - Ensure soap and water are readily available and provide hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol for use when not available.
- Signs and Messages
 - Post signs in highly visible locations (e.g., at entrances and exits, and in restrooms) that [promote everyday protective measures](#)

Maintaining Healthy Environments

Pittsylvania County Schools will implement strategies to maintain healthy environments.

- Cleaning and Disinfection
 - [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces on the field, court, or play surface at least daily, or between uses as much as possible. Use of shared objects and equipment (e.g., balls, bats, gymnastics equipment) will be cleaned between use by each individual.
 - Develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.
 - Ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of disinfectants, including storing products securely away from children.
 - Identify an adult staff member or volunteer to ensure proper cleaning and disinfection of objects and equipment, particularly for any shared equipment or frequently touched surfaces.
 - Cleaning products should not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes.
 - Use gloves when removing garbage bags or handling and disposing of trash. [Wash hands after removing gloves.](#)
- Shared Objects
 - Discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect. Players will not share towels, clothing, or other items they use to wipe their faces or hands.
 - Make sure there are adequate supplies of shared items to minimize sharing of equipment to the extent possible (e.g., protective gear, balls, bats, water bottles); otherwise, limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of players at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
 - Keep each player's belongings separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, bags, or areas.
 - If food is offered at any event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee instead of a buffet or family-style meal. Avoid sharing food and utensils. Offer hand sanitizer or encourage hand washing.
- Ventilation
 - If playing inside, ensure ventilation systems or fans operate properly. Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors. Do not open

windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling or triggering asthma symptoms) to players or others using the facility.

- Water Systems
 - Ensure that all water systems and features are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown.
 - Staff and players will bring their own water bottles to minimize touching water fountains.
- Modified Layouts and Social (Physical) Distancing
 - Identify adult staff members or volunteers to help maintain [social distancing](#) among athletes, coaches, umpires/referees, and spectators (if state and local directives allow for spectators).
 - Space players at least 10 feet apart on the field while participating in the sport (e.g., during warmup, skill building activities, simulation drills)
 - Discourage unnecessary physical contact, such as high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, or hugs.
 - Prioritize outdoor, as opposed to indoor, practice and play as much as possible.
 - Create distance between players when explaining drills or the rules of the game.
 - Encourage players to wait in their cars with guardians until just before the beginning of a practice, warm-up, or game, instead of forming a group.
 - Limit the use of carpools or van pools. When riding in an automobile to a sports event, encourage players to ride to the sports event with persons living in their same household.
 - Increase the amount of time between practices and competitions when facilities must be shared to allow for one group to leave before another group enters the facility to allow time for cleaning and/or disinfecting.
- Physical Barriers and Guides
 - Provide physical guides, such as signs and tape on floors or playing fields, to make sure that coaches and players remain at least 10 feet apart.
- Communal Spaces
 - Close shared spaces such as locker rooms, if possible; otherwise, stagger use and [clean and disinfect](#) between use.
 - Limit the number of players sitting in confined player seating areas (e.g., dugouts) by allowing players to spread out into spectator areas if more space is available (e.g., if spectators are not allowed).

Maintaining Healthy Operations

Pittsylvania County Schools will implement strategies to maintain healthy operations.

- Protections for Staff and Players at Higher Risk for Severe Illness from COVID-19
 - Offer options for individuals at [higher risk](#) of severe illness from COVID-19 (risk increases with age, and people of any age with certain medical conditions are at higher risk), such as virtual coaching and in-home drills that limits their exposure risk.
- Regulatory Awareness

- Be aware of state or local regulatory agency policies related to group gatherings to determine if events can be held. The School Division will follow the stipulations published for each of the Governor's Phase for reopening schools.
- Keeping Teams Together (Cohorting) During Practices
 - Keep players together by teams with dedicated coaches or staff, and make sure that each team of players and coach avoid mixing with other teams as much as possible. Teams can consider having the same group of players stay with the same coach or having the same group of players rotate among coaches.
- Staggered Scheduling
 - Stagger arrival and drop-off times or locations by team (group) or put in place other protocols to limit contact between groups and with guardians as much as possible.
- Gatherings, Spectators, and Travel
 - Avoid practice situations for conditioning activities where spacing of at least 10 feet between players cannot be maintained.
 - When practicing on team drills, ensure 10 feet of physical distance can be maintained by all participants and spectators at all times and all shared items can be disinfected between uses. The total number of attendees (including both participants and spectators) cannot exceed the lesser of 50% of the occupancy load of the venue (if an occupancy load exists) or 50 persons.
 - Indoor recreational sports (including practices and classes) will only occur if 10 feet of physical distance can be maintained by all participants at all items and all shared items can be disinfected between uses.
 - The total number of attendees (including participants, referees, coaches, etc.) will not exceed the lesser of 30% of the occupancy load of the room in which the sport is being held or 50 persons for indoor activities.
 - For indoor activities, spectators may not be present except parents or guardians who are supervising children. Spectators must wear face coverings consistent with any active Executive Orders and due to behaviors which may bring greater risk (e.g. cheering). Spectators will be separated by 10 feet of distance from other persons.
 - There will be no gatherings (assemblies, graduations, etc) of more than 50 people (indoor or outdoor). Indoor gatherings will be held only as necessary, and be limited in duration.
- Designated COVID-19 Point of Contact
 - Designate a staff person to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. All coaches, staff, officials, and families should know who this person is and how to contact them.
- Communication Systems
 - Consistent with applicable law and privacy policies, coaches, staff, umpires/officials, and families of players (as feasible) will self-report to each high 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.
- Leave (Time Off) Policies
 - Implement flexible sick leave policies and practices for coaches, officials, and staff that enable employees to stay home when they are sick, have been exposed, or [caring for someone who is sick](#).

- The high schools will use return-to-play after COVID-19 illness policies and procedures outlined in the CDC’s criteria to [discontinue home isolation and quarantine](#) when permitting students to return after COVID-19 illness.
- Back-up Staffing Plan
 - Monitor absenteeism of coaches and officials, cross-train staff, and create a roster of trained back-up personnel.
- Coach and Staff Training
 - Train coaches, officials, and staff on all safety protocols.
 - Conduct training virtually, or ensure that [social distancing](#) is maintained during training.
- Recognize Signs and Symptoms
 - Conduct daily health checks (e.g., [symptom checking](#)) of coaches, officials, staff, and players safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations.
 - Pittsylvania County Schools will use screening methods found in CDC’s supplemental [Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open](#) as a guide for screening children, and CDC’s [General Business FAQs](#) for screening staff.
- Sharing Facilities
 - Organizations that share or use Pittsylvania County Schools facilities will also follow these considerations.

Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick

Pittsylvania County Schools will implement the following strategies to prepare for when someone gets sick.

- Advise Sick Individuals of Home Isolation Criteria
 - Sick coaches, staff members, umpires/officials, or players should not return until they have met CDC’s [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#).
- Isolate and Transport Those Who are Sick
 - Make sure that coaches, staff, officials, players, and families know that sick individuals should not attend any school activity, and that they should notify PCS staff (e.g., the COVID-19 point of contact) if they (staff) or their child (families) become sick with COVID-19 [symptoms](#), test positive for COVID-19, or have been [exposed](#) to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case.
 - Immediately separate coaches, staff, officials, and players with COVID-19 [symptoms](#) (i.e., fever, cough, shortness of breath) at any activity. Individuals who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility, depending on how severe their symptoms are, and follow [CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others](#) who are sick. Individuals who have had [close contact](#) with a person who has [symptoms](#) should be separated and sent home as well, and follow [CDC guidance for community-related exposure](#) (see “Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts” below). If symptoms develop, individuals and families should follow [CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others](#) who are sick.

- Parents of sick children will be called to transport their children home from practices. If an ambulance is called, the parent(s) will be notified.
- Clean and Disinfect
 - Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after [cleaning and disinfecting](#) them (for outdoor areas, this includes surfaces or shared objects in the area, if applicable).
 - Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of [cleaning](#) and disinfection products, including storing them securely away from children.
- Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts
 - In accordance with state and local privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations, PCS staff will notify [local health officials](#), staff members, umpires/officials, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) and other applicable laws and regulations.
 - PCS will work with [local health officials](#) to develop a reporting system to notify health officials and close contacts of cases of COVID-19.
 - PCS will advise those who have had [close contact](#) with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and [self-monitor for symptoms](#), and to follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop.