



**West Mifflin Area School District  
Athletic Department  
Health and Safety Plan in Response to COVID-19**

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## **OBJECTIVE**

As per Governor Wolf's statement on June 10, 2020, each PIAA member school entity must develop and adopt an Athletics Health and Safety Plan that aligns with the PDE Preliminary Guidance for Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools. West Mifflin Area School District has developed a plan that includes provisions with the Governor's plan to be approved by the school board and posted on the school website.

## **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, among others, has found that while children do get infected by COVID-19, relatively few children with COVID-19 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 students, coaches, and their families.

The WMASD will take the necessary precautions and recommendations from the federal, state, and local governments, CDC, PA DOH, as well as the NFHS and PIAA. The WMASD realizes the knowledge regarding COVID-19 is constantly changing as new information and treatments become available. These recommendations will be adjusted as needed as new information becomes available in order to decrease the risk of exposure for our staff, students, and spectators. WMASD has created a Task Force to help coordinate an independent response. This action team includes the following individuals:

- Principal (Chad Licht)
- Athletic Director (Scott Stephenson)
- School Nurse (Christine Chiponis)
- Athletic Trainers (Ron Ross and Kristen Moore)
- Team Physician (Dr. Rudolph Antoncic)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. Athletes, Coaches, and Staff will undergo a COVID-19 health screening 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 employees wearing a cloth face covering as feasible. (Face coverings are recommended to help decrease potential exposure to COVID-19 respiratory droplets by an infected individual. Face coverings will not be used for athletes while practicing or competing.) Hand sanitizer will be available for team use as resources allow.
3. Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation in all facilities
4. Encourage social distancing through increased spacing, small groups, and limited mixing between groups, if feasible
5. Educate Athletes, Coaches and Staff on health and safety protocols.
6. Require anyone who is sick to stay home
7. Plan for if a student or employee gets sick
8. Regularly communicate and monitor developments with local authorities, employees, and families regarding cases, exposures, and updates to policies and procedures
9. Athletes and Coaches MUST provide their own water bottle for hydration. Water bottles must not be shared.
10. PPE (gloves, masks, eye protection) will be used as needed and situations warrant, or determined by local/state governments.
11. 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
  - May be immunocompromised
  - Obesity
  - Diabetes
  - Kidney or liver disease

### **Phase 1 (PA State Yellow)**

1. All school facilities remain closed as per PA State Guidelines.
2. Athletes and Coaches may communicate via online meetings (Zoom, Google Meet, etc.).
3. Athletes may participate in home workouts including strength and conditioning.
4. Athletes and Coaches should abide by guidelines set forth by the local and state governments.

### **Phase 2 (PA State Green) after July 1<sup>st</sup> (or sooner if PIAA allows)**

#### **Pre-workout Screening:**

- All coaches and students 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 case a student develops COVID-19.
- Any person with positive symptoms reported should not be allowed to take part in workouts and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional.

#### **Limitations on Gatherings:**

- No gathering of more than 25 individuals including coaches and spectators per scheduled field/court
- Controlled non-contact practices only, modified game rules
- No Concession stands
- Social Distancing should be applied during practices and in locker rooms, and gathering areas.

#### **Facilities Cleaning:**

- Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate any communicable disease.
- Athletic Facilities should be cleaned prior to arrival and post 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 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/towels and should be washed after each practice, including pinnies
- Athletic equipment that may be used by multiple individuals (balls, shields, tackling dummies, shot put, discus, pole vault, etc.) should be cleaned intermittently during practice and events as deemed necessary
- Hand sanitizer should be used periodically as resources allow
- Spotters for maximum weight lifts should be stationed at each end of the bar

#### **Classification of Sport**

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

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 participant OR intermittent close contact OR group sports that use equipment that can't be cleaned between participants.

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

**Low Risk:** Sports that can be done 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, bowling

**Hydration:**

- Students **MUST** bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared.
- Hydration stations (water cows, water troughs, etc.) should not be utilized.

**Phase 3 (PA State Green) after July 1<sup>st</sup> (or sooner is PIAA allows)**

**Pre-workout/Contest Screening:**

- Any person who has COVID-19 symptoms should not be allowed to participate in practice/games and should contact their primary care physician or another appropriate health-care provider.
- Team attendance should be recorded

**Limitations on Gatherings:**

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

**Facilities Cleaning:**

- Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate any communicable disease
- Athletic Facilities should be cleaned prior to arrival and post 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 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/towels and should be washed after each practice, including pinnies
- Athletic equipment that may be used by multiple individuals (balls, shields, tackling dummies, shot put, discus, pole vault, etc.) should be cleaned intermittently during practice and events as deemed necessary
- Hand sanitizer should be used periodically as resources allow
- Spotters for maximum weight lifts should be stationed at each end of the bar

### **Hydration:**

- Students **MUST** bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared.
- Hydration stations may be used by **MUST** be cleaned after every practice/event.

### **OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:**

#### **Transportation:**

Modifications for student/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

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

#### **Social Distancing during Contests/Events/Activities**

- Sidelines/Bench - appropriate social distancing will need to be maintained on sidelines/bench 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 will be allowed at an event:

1. Tier 1 (Essential) - Athletes, coaches, officials, event staff, medical staff, security
  2. Tier 2 (Preferred) - Media
  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 mass 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 WMASD 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 CDC Fact Sheet in Appendix)

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 Information in Appendix

### **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, parent/guardian will be contacted immediately, and arrangements will be made for the student to be picked up
- Ill individual will be asked to contact their physician or appropriate healthcare professional for direction

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

- Student or staff should have a medical clearance from their physician or appropriate healthcare professional, determined to be non-contagious, fever free (without fever-reducing medicine), improvement in respiratory symptoms (cough shortness of breath), no vomiting or diarrhea.

## **EDUCATION:**

**Staff, Coaches, Parents and Athletes will be educated on the following (through posters flyers, meetings, emails, phone calls):**

- 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
- Return to Sport Guidelines Document
- Any pertinent COVID-19 information released by state/local governments, NFHS, and PIAA.

# APPENDIX

