

This guidance is preliminary; as more public health information is available, the administration may work with impacted entities to release further guidance which could impact fall, winter, or spring seasons.

## 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.

New Covenant will take the necessary precautions and recommendations from the federal, state, and local governments, CDC, PA DOH, as well as the NFHS and PIAA. New Covenant realizes the knowledge regarding COVID-19 is constantly changing and 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.

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## CLASSIFICATION OF SPORTS

**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 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 done with social distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between uses by competitors. *Examples: running events, cross country, throwing events, swimming, golf, weightlifting, sideline cheer*

*\*\*High/Moderate Risk Sports may move to a Low Risk category with non-contact modifications. Team Activities should be limited to individual skill development drills that maintain social distancing.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL ATHLETIC LEVELS - YOUTH, MIDDLE SCHOOL, JV, VARSITY

1. All players, coaches, parents, staff must wear a mask while on NCCS property. Masks may be removed during drills, workouts and competitions only. Masks must be worn on the sidelines unless outdoors and social distancing can be maintained. Per PIAA, PA Dept of Health, Order of the Governor's office.
2. All coaches and students will be screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to a workout. Screening includes a temperature check. And both parents and play must sign a waiver stating they are clear of symptoms prior to the start of open gyms.
3. 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 people in attendance can be notified.
4. Any person with positive symptoms including a temp of 100 degrees 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.
5. Vulnerable individuals should not oversee or participate in any workouts
6. When not directly participating in practices or contests, care should be taken to maintain a minimum distance of 3 to 6 feet between everyone. Consider using tape or paint as a guide for students and coaches.
7. All students shall bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared.
8. Large orange water jugs may be utilized but must be cleaned after every practice/contest. No water fountain use will be allowed.

## PHASES OF PARTICIPATION

### Phase 1 (PA State Red)

Team Activities: No in-person gatherings allowed. Athletes and Coaches may communicate via online meetings (zoom, google meet, etc.). Athletes may participate in individual home workouts including strength and conditioning. All school facilities remain closed as per PA State Guidelines. Athletes and Coaches should abide by guidelines set forth by the local and state governments.

### Phase 2 (PA State Yellow)

Team Activities may include team meetings, open gym, kick around, weight training/conditioning, running events, cross country, throwing events, swimming, golf, and sideline cheer, etc. All participants will need to sign an acknowledgement of the dangers of COVID-19. All coaches and students should be screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to a workout. The screenings could range from a verbal/written questionnaire to a temperature check. Responses to screening questions for each person should be recorded and submitted to AD and/or ATC daily 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 (MD, DO or PA). A clearance may be required to return to play.

### Phase 3 (PA State Green - Out of Season)

Team activities may include basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball, soccer, ice hockey, tennis, pole vault, high jump, long jump, 7-on-7 football, etc.

**Pre-workout/Contest Screening:** All participants will need to sign an acknowledgement of the dangers of COVID-19. 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. A clearance may be required to return to play. COVID-19 screenings (questionnaire and temperature checks) may continue as per State and Local government recommendations.

**Limitations on Gatherings:** Team attendance should be recorded and conducted with 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 and 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 Low and Moderate risk competitions may begin (as per State, Local, and PIAA Guidelines). Students should refrain from sharing clothing/towels and fabrics 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 but MUST be cleaned after every practice/event.

### Phase 4 (PA State Green - Pre-Season/Regular Season)

Team Activities may include Low/Moderate Sports. High-Risk Sports (Football, Wrestling, and Cheerleading Stunting) may begin full person-to-person contact and competition.

**Pre-workout/Contest Screening:** All participants will need to sign an acknowledgement of the dangers of COVID-19. 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. COVID-19 screenings (questionnaire and temperature checks) may continue as per state and local government recommendations. 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:** All sports may resume normal practice and competition. Students should refrain from sharing clothing/towels and fabrics 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 but 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, and/or social distancing on a bus. These potential modifications will be determined by the school district, bus companies, Department of Education, state and local governments.

**Sidelines/Bench:** Appropriate social distancing will need to be maintained on sidelines/bench during contests and events, as deemed necessary by the school, PIAA, and state and local governments. 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.

New Covenant 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.

**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.** You must 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.

## **EDUCATION**

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

- COVID-19 signs and symptoms
- Proper ways to limit exposure to COVID-19 (hand washing, cough in your elbow, disinfecting touched surfaces, social distancing, avoid touching eyes, nose, face and mouth, no spitting, gum chewing, etc.)
- No Handshakes/Celebrations (high fives, fist/elbow bumps, chest bumps, hugging), etc.
- Limiting and assigning indoor activities for best areas to use
- Student athletes should remain with their assigned groups during each workout and during daily workouts to limit the number of people they encounter
- No students allowed in training areas without the presence of an athletic trainer