

North Allegheny Athletic Department Resocialization of Athletics Procedures

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented all Athletic Department's with countless 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 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 could 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 North Allegheny School District will take the necessary precautions and recommendations from the federal, state, and local governments, CDC, Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), as well as the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS), and Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) to safeguard the participants and staff of our athletic programs. The North Allegheny School District realizes knowledge regarding COVID-19 is constantly changing, as new information and treatments become available. The recommendations below will be adjusted as needed as new information becomes available in order to decrease the risk of exposure for our staff, students, and spectators.

MANDATES

The following is mandatory for **all phases** for Middle School and High School Athletics and Marching Band programs during the COVID-19 pandemic:

1. All Student Athletes, Coaches, Marching Band Members, and Staff will undergo a COVID-19 health screening prior to any practice, event, or team meeting. The purpose of the health screening is to check for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. These screenings will be conducted by the coach or band director and recorded in a chart. The location of this health screening will be announced prior to the practice or event.
2. Promote healthy hygiene practices to limit the spread of COVID-19 including:
 - a. Hand washing (20 seconds with warm water and soap - [Proper Hand Washing](#))
 - b. Students will wear a face covering (masks or face shields) when feasible. (Face coverings will not be required for athletes, marching band participants while practicing or competing.)
 - c. Coaching staff, band directors and other adult personnel should wear face coverings (masks or face shields) at all times, unless doing so jeopardizes their health.
 - d. Use hand sanitizer.
3. North Allegheny will intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation in all facilities. ([Disinfecting of Equipment and Facilities](#))

4. Encourage social distancing through increased spacing, small groups, and limited mixing between groups, when feasible.
5. Educate Athletes, Coaches, Marching Band Members, Directors, and Staff on health and safety protocols.
6. Require that anyone who is ill to stay home.
7. Follow the District's plan for a student or employee who gets ill
8. Regularly communicate and monitor developments with local authorities, coaches, directors, staff, and families regarding cases, exposures, and updates to policies and procedures
9. Athletes, Coaches, Marching Band Members, Directors, and Staff MUST provide their own clearly labeled water bottle for hydration. Water bottles must not be shared. Disposable cups will not be provided.
10. Personal protective equipment (PPE) will be used as situations warrant or are determined by local/state governments. These items include gloves, face masks, and eye protection.
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 (Pennsylvania Yellow)

- Athletes, Coaches, Marching Band Members, Directors, and Staff may communicate via online meetings (Google Classroom, etc.). Communication for outdoor sports can be via online meetings or work in-person with groups of no more than (25) athletes.
- Athletes are encouraged to participate in home workouts including strength and conditioning if outdoor small groups are not feasible.
- Marching Band Members are encouraged to practice their routines at home.
- Athletes, Coaches, Marching Band Members, Directors, and Staff should follow all guidelines set forth by the local and state governments.

PHASE 2 (Pennsylvania Green Phase)

Pre-workout Screening:

- All Athletes, Coaches, Marching Band Members, Directors, and Staff will be screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to any workout or event. (See Appendix for COVID-19 Screening Form)
- Screenings will include a temperature check and questioning of each person for COVID-19 symptoms. These responses will be recorded and stored to provide a record.
- Attendance should be recorded for contact tracing reasons.
- If individuals participating in sporting activities show symptoms, have a temperature of 100.0 degrees or higher, or are sick, they must be sent home.

- Any individual with suspected positive COVID-19 symptoms will not be allowed to take part in workouts until further consultation with a licensed medical provider.
 - Athletes and Marching Band Members will need to contact parents/guardians for immediate pick-up
 - Parents should contact their primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional for guidance.

Limitations on Gatherings:

- Athletes, Coaches, Marching Band Members, Directors, and Staff must maintain appropriate social distancing whenever possible, including on the field, locker rooms, sidelines, dugouts, benches, workout areas, etc. During down time, Athletes, Coaches, Marching Band Members, Directors, and Staff should not congregate.
- Gatherings shall not exceed 50% of the total occupancy permitted by law for the facility or no more than 250 total individuals (whichever is less), including adults per field or court.
- Sports and marching band related activities are limited to Athletes, Coaches, Marching Band Members, Directors, and Staff only. Spectators, parents/guardians, and boosters will not be permitted.
- The addition of visitors and spectators will be contingent upon future health conditions within the state and local communities.
- No locker room use for out of season workouts will be permitted. Locker room use will be minimized during in season events.

Facilities Cleaning

- Adequate cleaning schedules have been created and implemented for all athletic facilities and common area to mitigate any communicable disease.
- Facilities will be cleaned prior to arrival and following workouts/practices and team/band gatherings, with high touch areas cleaned more often.
- Weight Room Equipment should be wiped clean before and after each individual's use.
- In the weight room, appropriate clothing/shoes will be worn at all times to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment surfaces

Physical Activity

- Coaches and Directors must review and consider the CDC guidance to modify practices and games to mitigate the risk of spreading the virus. This includes focusing on individual skill building versus competition and limiting contact in close contact sports.
- Personal items should not be shared. This includes clothing, towels, and pinnies.
- If equipment must be shared, all equipment should be properly disinfected often during practice and events, as deemed necessary.
- Hand washing or use of hand sanitizer should be used periodically.
- Spotters for maximum weight lifts should be stationed at each end of the bar.

Hydration:

- All athletes, coaches, directors, and officials must bring their own clearly labeled water bottles and drinks to team activities.
- Team water coolers for sharing through disposable cups are not allowed.

- Fixed water fountains should not be used.

OTHER GUIDANCE:

Primary Point of Contact

- The North Allegheny Athletic Department has designated Athletic Director, Bob Bozzuto as the primary point of contact for all questions related to COVID-19. Contact information for Bob Bozzuto is: bbozzuto@northallegheny.org or at 412-527-0208.
- The North Allegheny Music Department has designated Band Director, Todd Stefan, as the primary point of contact for all questions related to Marching Band. Contact information for Todd Stefan is tstefan@northallegheny.org

Social Distancing during Contests/Events/Activities

- Sidelines/Bench Area
 - Appropriate social distancing will need to be maintained on sidelines or bench area during practices and events, as deemed necessary by the school, PIAA, state and local governments.
- Every consideration must be taken to not expose students to unnecessary or potential high-risk exposure before, during and after a contest.

Other Important Information

- Activities that increase the risk of exposure to saliva are prohibited, 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 or band members, coaches, directors, officials, and spectators.
- If multiple events are to be held at the same facility, adequate time shall be scheduled between contests to allow for facilities to be cleaned and disinfected, and to minimize interaction between athletes.
- Sports complexes with multiple fields may operate simultaneous games or practices on fields within a complex only if social distancing can be maintained.
- Protocols to limit entrance and exit traffic should be established when feasible, including designating specific entry to and exits from facilities with clear signage.
- Ensure that athletes are not congregating while awaiting pick up.
- Parents dropping off and picking up athletes and marching band members should make every effort to drop off and pick up their athlete(s) on time and remain outside of athletic facilities. Parents should not enter the facility.

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 Below)
- 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 ill?

- If you are ill or think you are infected with the COVID-19 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, band director, athletic trainer, and/or 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 and DOH.

What to do if a student or staff becomes 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
- The athlete/band member's parent/guardian will be contacted immediately, and arrangements will be made for the student to be picked up.
- The ill individual will be asked to contact their physician or appropriate healthcare professional for direction.
- All affected facilities will need to be disinfected immediately.

What is the Procedure for Notification if there is a Confirmed Case of COVID-19?

- Should an employee or student be confirmed with COVID-19, the employee (principal, athletic director, band director, athletic trainer, and/or coach) will notify the NA Communications Team (Brandy Smith at bsmith@northalleggheny.org or Matt Walker at mwalker@northalleggheny.org). The employee will share a list of students and employees that may have come in contact with the confirmed case.
- The District will issue communication via email to parents/guardians and staff that may have been exposed.

Return of Student or Staff to Athletics/Marching Band Following a COVID-19 Diagnosis

- Student or staff must provide written medical clearance from their licensed medical provider before being allowed back to practice/conditioning.
- Return to athletics or band can begin once the individual is cleared by a licensed medical provider and is determined to be non-contagious, fever free (without fever-reducing medicine), has vast improvement in respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath), and experiences no vomiting or diarrhea.

EDUCATION:

- Athletes, Coaches, Marching Band Members, Directors and Staff 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 DOH, local governments, NFHS, and PIAA.

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Wearing Masks - <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Stop-the-Spread.aspx>
- COVID-19 (from Governor's office) - <https://www.governor.pa.gov/covid-19/>
- NFHS Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities - https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812287/2020-nfhs-guidance-for-opening-up-high-school-athletics-and-activities-nfhs-smac-may-15_2020-final.pdf
- Center for Disease Control – “What You Should Know About COVID-19 to Protect Yourself and Others” - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- UPMC Sports Medicine Guidelines - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- PIAA Guidelines - <http://www.piaa.org/assets/web/documents/Press%20release%20-%20Wednesday%20June%2010%202020%20-%20RTP.pdf>