

**Pine Grove Area School District
Return to Participation**



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 Pine Grove Area School District 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 Pine Grove Area School District 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.

Vince Hoover, Director of Curriculum, is the Pine Grove Area Pandemic Coordinator.

REQUIREMENTS

1. All out-of-season athletic activities must complete a "Facility Request" form and submit to Henry Snyder and/or Sarah Readinger. **(No change from previous years)**
2. Lehigh Valley Health Network trainer, Kyle Smitreski, must be notified of all off-season activities.
3. Outdoor off-season activities may begin Monday, June 22 following the Pine Grove Area School Board's approval of the Return to Participation plan.
4. Indoor off-season activities may begin July 1, provided the school board approves the plan at their June meeting.
5. This plan will remain in effect for the remainder of the summer or until the guidelines and regulations are modified by the federal, state, local governments, CDC, PA DOH, NFHS or the PIAA.
6. The first legal fall practice date for football is Monday, August 10 (heat acclimatization) and Monday, August 17 for boys' soccer, cheerleading, cross country, girls' soccer, golf, and volleyball.
7. Coaches who are participating in off-season workouts are required to complete "Coronavirus Awareness" through the Safe Schools link on the Pine Grove Area web page. This is a 10-minute course. If you need login information for the Safe Schools website, please contact Vince Hoover, Director of Curriculum, at his email address (vhoover@pgasd.com). To access, visit **www.pgasd.com – Resource Links – Safe Schools – View Library – Health – Coronavirus Awareness**
 - a. Upon completion of the course, please email your certificate to Mr. Hoover or me.
 - b. Head coaches are asked to send the names of participating coaches to Mr. Hoover.
8. All coaches are responsible for the material presented in this plan. After reading, please send me an email stating that you have received it and have read it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for **all phases** for Junior and Senior High Athletics at Pine Grove Area School District

1. Athletes, Coaches, and Staff should, when available, 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 may 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 anyone who is sick to stay home.
5. Encourage social distancing through increased spacing, small groups, and limited mixing between groups, if feasible.
6. Plan for if a student or employee gets sick.
7. Regularly communicate and monitor developments with local authorities, employees, and families regarding cases, exposures, and updates to policies and procedures.
8. Athletes and Coaches **MUST** provide their own **water bottle** for hydration. Water bottles must not be shared.
9. PPE (gloves, masks, eye protection) will be used as needed and situations warrant, or determined by local/state governments.
10. 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

REQUIREMENTS FOR YELLOW AND GREEN PHASES

1. Each student-athlete and his/her parent/guardian must sign the Participation Waiver before participating.
2. Attendance should be taken at all activities.
3. The "Covid-19 Screening" form should be completed prior to all activities.
4. Any person with positive symptoms reported should not be allowed to take part in workouts. They should be sent home and contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional.

REQUIREMENTS FOR YELLOW PHASE

1. Activities are limited to 25 people including coaches.
2. Controlled non-contact practices only.

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 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, shotput, 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 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 use by competitors.

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

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.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GREEN PHASE

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:

- Activities are limited to **250** people
- 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 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, shotput, 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

Pine Grove Area will not provide transportation during the summer for any athletic activity. School vans will not be available for use.

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.

Weight Room

- Limited to **15** people at a time
- If creating groups for the weight room, the groups should remain the same.
- Equipment should be sanitized after each use.

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.

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 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:

Coaches are required to complete the Coronavirus Awareness course through Safe Schools. Staff, 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.

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**Pine Grove Area School District
Athletic Department
Participation Waiver for Communicable Diseases Including COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented athletics across the world with a myriad of challenges concerning this highly contagious illness that primarily attacks the upper respiratory system. 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 PGASD will take necessary precautions and comply with guidelines from the federal, state, and local governments, CDC, PA DOH, as well as the NFHS and PIAA, to reduce the risks to students, coaches, and their families. As knowledge regarding COVID-19 is constantly changing, PGASD reserves the right to adjust and implement precautionary methods as necessary to decrease the risk of exposure for our staff, students, and spectators. Some precautionary methods in the PGASD Resocialization of Sports Recommendations include but may not be limited to:

1. Health screenings prior to any practice, event, or team meeting with participation in the activities being limited and/or prohibited where an individual displays positive responses or symptoms.
2. Encourage social distancing and promote healthy hygiene practices such as hand washing, using hand sanitizer, etc.
3. Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation in all facilities.
4. Educate Athletes, Coaches, and Staff on health and safety protocols.
5. Require Athletes and Coaches to provide their own water bottle for hydration.

By signing this form, the undersigned voluntarily agree to the following Waiver and release of liability. The undersigned agree to release and discharge all claims for ourselves, our heirs, and as a parent or legal guardian for the Student named below, against the PGASD, its Board of Directors, successors, assigns, officers, agents, employees, and volunteers and will hold them harmless from any and all liability or demands for personal injury, psychological injury, sickness, death, or claims resulting from personal injury or property damage, of any nature whatsoever which may be incurred by the Student or the undersigned relating to or as a result of the Student's participation in athletic programs, events, and activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The undersigned acknowledge that participating in athletic programs, events, and activities may include a possible exposure to a communicable disease including but not limited to MRSA, influenza, and COVID-19. The undersigned further acknowledge that they are aware of the risks associated with COVID-19 and that certain vulnerable individuals may have greater health risks associated with exposure to COVID-19, including individuals with serious underlying health conditions such as, but not limited to: high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, asthma, and those whose immune systems that are compromised by chemotherapy for cancer, and other conditions requiring such therapy. While particular recommendations and personal discipline may reduce the risks associated with participating in athletics during the COVID-19 pandemic, the risk of serious illness, medical complications and possible death does exist.

We knowingly and freely assume all such risks, both known and unknown, even if arising from the negligence of others, and assume full responsibility for Student's participation in athletics during the COVID-19 pandemic. We willingly agree to comply with the stated recommendations put forth by the PGASD to limit the exposure and spread of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases. We certify that Student is in good physical condition or believe Student to be in good physical condition and allow participation in this sport at our own risk.

Student Name: _____ Sport: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Student Athlete: _____ Date: _____

**Pine Grove Area School District
Athletics Health and Safety Plan
Governing Body Affirmation Statement**

The Board of Directors/Trustees for **Pine Grove Area School District** reviewed and approved the Athletics Health and Safety Plan on **Thursday, June 18, 2020**.

The plan was approved by a vote of:

5 Yes

3 No

Affirmed on: **Thursday, June 18, 2020**

By:



(Signature of Board President)

David Lukasewicz

(Print Name of Board President)