



Supplemental Youth Sports and Extracurricular Activities Guidance

SEPTEMBER 9, 2021

PURPOSE

On September 1, 2021, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) updated its [guidance for K-12 schools](#) to include requirements for school-based sports and extracurricular activities. However, this guidance was narrow in its scope, leaving many questions unanswered for schools and for youth-serving organizations. To fill in the gaps, the Yolo County Community Health Branch (Public Health) is providing this supplemental COVID-19 guidance on sports and extracurricular activities for public and private K-12 schools and youth-serving organizations in Yolo County. The purpose of this guidance is to reduce the incidence and spread of COVID-19 infection in Yolo County by supporting a safer environment for all who participate in sports and other extracurricular activities.

BACKGROUND

Yolo County Public Health recognizes the many benefits of extracurricular activities. Sports and extracurricular activities provide students with enrichment opportunities that can help them learn and achieve, and support their social, emotional, and mental health. However, the current surge in COVID-19 cases, fueled by the highly infectious Delta variant, necessitates actions to protect our younger population. The virus has changed, and for the first time in this long-running pandemic, children are becoming infected at the same rate as adults.

Yolo County Public Health recommends schools and youth-serving organizations follow the precautions outlined in this document. These recommendations are drawn primarily from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) [guidance for sports and extracurricular activities](#). Requirements based on CDPH guidance for K-12 schools and/or local health officer orders are indicated in **red** font.

Due to increased exhalation that occurs during physical activity, some sports can put players, coaches, trainers, and others at increased risk for getting and spreading COVID-19. Close contact sports and indoor sports are particularly risky. Similar risks might exist for other extracurricular activities, such as band, choir, theater, and school clubs that meet indoors.

The higher the level of virus circulating in a community, the higher the risk associated with any given activity. Therefore, additional precautions are needed when community transmission is high. On September 7, 2021, the COVID-19 case rate in Yolo County was 27.5 cases per 100,000 residents per day. This translates to a weekly case rate of 193 cases per 100,000 residents per week. The CDC considers a weekly case rate above 100 as high community transmission. This guidance is written such that it will remain relevant as community transmission increases or decreases over time.

In addition to community transmission levels, other factors influence the COVID-19-related risk of sports and other extracurricular activities. These factors include:

- **Setting of the sporting event or activity.** In general, the risk of COVID-19 transmission is lower outdoors than indoors.
- **Physical closeness.** Spread of COVID-19 is more likely to occur in sports that require sustained close contact (such as wrestling and football).
- **Number of people.** Risk of spread of COVID-19 increases with increasing numbers of athletes, spectators, teachers, and staff.
- **Level of intensity of activity.** The risk of COVID-19 spread increases with the intensity of the sport.
- **Duration of time.** The risk of COVID-19 spread increases the more time athletes, coaches, teachers, staff and spectators spend in close proximity. This includes time spent traveling to/from sporting events, meetings, meals, and other settings related to the event.
- **Presence of people more likely to develop severe illness.** People at increased risk of severe illness might need to take extra precautions.

TESTING

Table 1 reviews required testing of participants in school-based sports and extracurricular activities based on CDPH guidance. Table 2 reviews recommendations for routine testing of participants in all sports and extracurricular activities. Schools and youth-serving organizations are strongly encouraged to use screening testing for student athletes and adults (e.g., coaches, teachers, advisors) who participate in and support these activities to facilitate safe participation and reduce risk of transmission – and avoid jeopardizing in-person education due to outbreaks. Regular testing is not required for asymptomatic persons who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days and recovered from their illness. Fully vaccinated participants should participate in screening testing given the possibility of breakthrough infections.

Testing for the virus that causes COVID-19 can be done with PCR or another molecular test as well as using antigen tests. Home test kits for the virus are also acceptable if results are documented. When testing is recommended twice weekly, the two tests should be spaced at least 3 days apart.

Any participant with symptoms, regardless of their vaccination status, should be excluded from participation and tested for COVID-19. The presence of any single symptom consistent with COVID-19 warrants testing and exclusion from play until symptoms have improved and the participant has received a negative test. COVID-19 symptoms include fatigue, headache, sore throat, runny nose or congestion, fever, chills, fatigue, muscle or body aches, cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Allowing a child with symptoms to participate in sports or extracurricular activities puts all other participants at risk. It is better to miss a single day of practice or competition than to be responsible for an outbreak that shuts down a team or activity for 2 weeks.

Table 1. CDPH Testing Requirements for School-Based Sports and Extracurricular Activities

Indoor sports and extracurricular activities	Screening testing required at least once per week for all participants when face coverings (including modified face coverings) cannot be worn. Face covering required for all indoor sports except when the face covering poses a choking hazard, including aquatic sports, cheerleading, and gymnastics.
Outdoor sports and extracurricular activities	No screening testing required.

Table 2. Screening Testing Recommendations for Sports and Extracurricular Activities by Level of Community Transmission

Low Transmission Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
Daily case rate 0-1.3 Weekly case rate 0-9	Daily case rate 1.4-7 Weekly case rate 10-49	Daily case rate 7.1-13.9 Weekly case rate 50-99	Daily case rate >14 Weekly case rate >100
Recommend screening testing at least once per week for all participants.		Recommend screening testing twice per week for all participants.	Cancel or hold virtually unless all participants are fully vaccinated.
No screening testing recommended.	Recommend screening testing at least once per week for all participants.		

1. High-risk sports include all indoor sports and outdoor sports where either masks cannot be worn and sustained close contact occurs between participants along with increased exhalation. All other sports are low and intermediate risk. High-risk sports include basketball, boxing, football, ice hockey, lacrosse, martial arts, roller derby, rowing (non-singles), rugby, soccer, water polo, and wrestling.

2. High-risk extracurricular activities are indoor activities in which increased exhalation occurs, such as activities that involve singing, shouting, playing of wind instruments, or exercise. High-risk extracurricular activities

include cheer, dance, drill team, choir, band, and similar activities conducted indoors. When these activities are moved outdoors, they become low-to-intermediate risk. Indoor clubs like robotics, chess, and Academic Decathlon are low-to-intermediate risk.

MASKS

Masks are required to be worn by all participants, athletes, coaches, staff, and spectators in school-based indoor sports and extracurricular activities, even during physical exertion, per CDPH guidance. Yolo County's health officer order for universal indoor masking also requires all participants, athletes, coaches, staff, and spectators in non-school-based indoor sports and extracurricular activities to wear masks, even during physical exertion. Participants who are engaged in indoor water sports such as swimming, water polo, or diving, may remove their face masks while they are in the water. Face masks must be worn when participants are not in the water. Participants in cheerleading and gymnastics, where masks may present a choking hazard, may remove their masks indoors.

Individuals playing wind and brass instruments are recommended to use modified face coverings and bell coverings (as well as maintain 6 feet of distance from other participants) both indoors and outdoors.

Face masks may be removed indoors temporarily to eat or drink. When eating or drinking indoors, maintain a 6-foot distance from others, and replace mask immediately when not eating or drinking. It is preferable to limit eating to outdoors.

For outdoor activities, unvaccinated participants are recommended to wear a mask when they are not able to maintain 6 feet of distance from others.

VACCINATION

It is strongly recommended that all participants in extracurricular activities and sports, including youth 12 and older, coaches, and staff are fully vaccinated. Vaccination is safe and the most effective way to protect sports participants, their families, and the community from illness, hospitalization, and death due to COVID-19. Policies that result in high vaccination rates among participants will reduce disruption to team activities, because fully vaccinated individuals are not required to quarantine if they exposed to someone with COVID-19, as long as they remain asymptomatic and continue to test negative.

When case rates in the community are high (greater than 14 cases per 100,000 residents per day), it is recommended that only fully vaccinated persons participate in high-risk sports and extracurricular activities. Frequent testing is not a substitute for vaccination. Frequent testing can reduce the number of cases among participants by detecting infection before it spreads, but testing provides no protection to the individual tested. A vaccine, on the other hand, reduces the risk of infection in the first place, and protects an infected person from severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE

Whenever a confirmed case is identified among participants in a sport or extracurricular activity, ensure that all unvaccinated close contacts quarantine and get tested. Any vaccinated close contacts should also get tested, although they are not required to quarantine. Persons who test positive for COVID-19 cannot participate in

sports or extracurricular activities until they have completed their isolation period of at least 10 days from when their symptoms began or their positive test was collected if they had no symptoms.

Recent CDPH guidance for K-12 schools allows students who were wearing a mask when they came into close contact with someone infected with COVID-19 to continue in-person learning if they are tested for COVID-19 twice a week. This is known as modified quarantine. Students on modified quarantine are not permitted to participate in extracurricular activities, whether school-based or in the community.

For exposures occurring on a K-12 campus, please refer to the [Yolo County School Exposure Decision Tree](#) for guidance on required isolation and quarantine. For exposures occurring elsewhere, please refer to the [Yolo County Exposure Decision Tree for Non-School, Non-Healthcare Exposures](#).

HANDWASHING

While cleaning and disinfection of surfaces has become less important as we have learned about the virus that causes COVID-19 spreading primarily through the air, it remains important to keep hands clean, especially before hands are used to touch the face or any food or drink. Encourage frequent handwashing and place handwashing stations or hand sanitizer at convenient locations and post signage promoting use.

GATHERING “OFF THE FIELD”

Many cases of COVID-19 associated with youth sports and extracurricular activities are transmitted not on the playing field but during team gatherings, such as meals or celebrations, or during shared transportation to practices and competitions. Team meals and in-person celebrations are discouraged, as are carpools. When not actively training, practicing, or competing, continue to follow COVID-19 prevention measures including masking and distancing from non-household members. Use of locker rooms should be limited to changing and using the restroom. Coaching and pep talks should be conducted outdoors rather than in the locker room.

SPECTATORS

Spectators are permitted but must comply with indoor masking requirements. If six feet of distance cannot be maintained between non-household members outdoors, spectators should wear masks.

CONCESSIONS

Outdoor concessions are permitted to operate; persons waiting in line should remain at least 6 feet apart. Indoor concessions are strongly discouraged because eating and drinking require masks to be removed, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission.