



Merion Mercy Athletic Department

## Health & Safety Plan

### Introduction

This document is intended to provide guidance for members of the Merion Mercy Academy Athletic Department during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This guidance, as well as dates and other recommendations contained herein, is preliminary and will be updated as more public health data and other information is made available by state and local officials, in addition to any guidance from NFHS or the PIAA. This document addresses the procedures athletic programs and teams must follow to limit the spread of COVID-19 to the extent they are permitted to conduct in-person operations. Any update to this document will be provided as approved by the leadership of Merion Mercy Academy.

The virus that causes the coronavirus disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) is easily transmitted, especially in group settings, and it is essential that the spread of the virus be slowed to safeguard public health and safety, as well as the well-being of our faculty, staff, and students.

*This document was prepared to adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the safe return to interscholastic athletics at all academic levels during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was developed considering resources and procedures provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA), and the Montgomery County Department of Health.*

The intention of these recommendations is to keep our student-athletes, coaches, and community safe.

### General Considerations

- While there is still an inherent risk of infection for those participating, everyone in attendance should be actively working towards decreasing the risk of transmission to others by adhering to the prevention guidelines.
- Any athletes, coaches, or staff members who believe they may be sick should remain at home.
- Any questions related to the health & safety plan by any parent/guardian, coach, or student-athlete should be directed to the Director of Athletics and/or Athletic Trainer.
- All participants must complete the daily athletic RUVNA health screening prior to their participation in activity.
- Everyone should arrive and leave at the scheduled time of the event to avoid overlap in groups.
- All athletes should clean individual equipment (personal and school-issued) and clothing after every use.
- Coaches should clean all team/shared equipment after every use.

- All athletes are strongly encouraged to use proper hygiene, including washing their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or using hand sanitizer prior to, during breaks, and at the conclusion of practice and/or competition.
- Students may only attend workouts for one team at this time. Limiting students to one cohort is important for mitigation purposes as well as contact tracing and potential team quarantine. This will allow for conditioning acclimatization as well.
- Athletes MUST have their own water bottle to participate in workouts and bring sufficient water for hydration during the workout session.
- Activities that increase the risk of exposure to saliva will not be permitted including chewing gum, spitting, licking fingers, and eating sunflower seeds.
- All participants will avoid shaking hands, fist bumps, or high-fives before, during, or after contests and practices.
- Athletes and coaches must practice social distancing at all times, including in the field of play, locker rooms (when/if available), sidelines, pool deck, dugouts, benches, and workout areas.
- Stretching, warmups, and cool-downs should be done in a socially distant manner.
- No group huddles will be permitted.
- Limit unnecessary physical contact with teammates, other athletes, coaches, staff, and officials.
- Game day rosters may be limited for social distancing purposes.
- No social gatherings or team activities, except for practices and competition approved by the Athletic Department, are permitted.
- Food (i.e. team snacks) may not be distributed at practices and/or competitions. Bottled water may be provided during competition.
- Avoid sharing any items (i.e. gum, chapstick, water bottles, etc.).
- Parents or guardians must sign and return the 2020-21 Athletic Acknowledgement of Risk and Family Agreement.

### **Requirements for Coaches**

- Review and consider the CDC guidance on Considerations for Youth Sports and the PIAA recommendations to modify practices and games to mitigate the risk of spreading the virus (social distancing, hand hygiene, etc.).
- Attend mandatory virtual meeting(s) with the Director of Athletics and/or Athletic Trainer to learn and review guidelines to mitigate risk.
- Consider that all athletes have some level of detraining and may not be returning at the same fitness level and activities may need to be adjusted accordingly.
- Design activities to resume in a gradual fashion to avoid overuse injuries and exertional/heat-related illnesses.
- Create and execute activities to maintain proper physical distancing whenever and wherever possible. Use physical guides, such as cones or tape, to make sure athletes remain at least 6 feet apart (when applicable).
- Instruction must be given in a socially distant manner.
- Work with the Director of Athletics and/or Athletic Trainer for guidance on adhering to the current recommendations.
- Coaching staff and other personnel must wear proper face coverings at all times.
- Increase or stagger break times to accommodate for social distancing, hand washing/hand sanitizer, and avoiding shared hydration sources.

- The coaching staff is responsible for the enforcement of the masking and physical distancing policies for their individual teams before, during, and after scheduled practices and competitions.
- Coaches must monitor athletes for symptoms prior to and during practices and games, and report any concerns to the Director of Athletics and/or Athletic Trainer. Any information related to an athlete's health must also be reported to the AD and ATC.
- The use of any Merion Mercy Academy's facilities must be arranged and approval obtained prior to team use.
- No offsite practices will be considered at this time, unless necessitated by the nature of the sport, ie. crew, cross country, golf, tennis, etc. or approved by the Director of Athletics.
- Stay until all members of their team have left the campus or facility.
- Team meetings should take place on a virtual platform.

### **Requirements for Student-Athletes**

- Athletes must wear proper face coverings at all times. Masking is required at any time the athlete is competing, on the sidelines, on Merion's campus, and when representing Merion Mercy Academy.<sup>1</sup>
- Athletes will maintain social distance (a physical distance of 6 feet or more) whenever possible.
- Athletes will utilize their own equipment where possible and clean all equipment and clothing after workouts/contests. Whenever possible, equipment should be separated and not shared.
- Arrive at the team event prepared to go and avoid congregating. When athletes are waiting for practice or games to begin, they should maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance at all times. They should also be masked during any transition or downtime.
- If athletes are on campus prior to the start of practice or games, they should wait in the asynchronous lounge.
- Athletes should depart immediately following practices and games.
- Athletes **MUST** bring their own water bottle with ample water. Bottle filling stations are available at Merion in the athletic hallway.
- Locker room use is prohibited. Athletes may use the restrooms in accordance with the number of available restrooms.
- Athletes are required to complete the RUVNA daily screening prior to participation each day.
- Communicate all health and fitness-related concerns with coaches, parents, and/or the athletic trainer (if available) immediately.

### **Compliance Concerns**

Athletic participation is a privilege, not a right, in all circumstances, but particularly, during the COVID-19 pandemic. As the Merion Athletic Department works to keep its athletes and community members

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<sup>1</sup> As of November 18, the masking order from the Commonwealth of PA applies to physical activity and competition: Participating in indoor physical activity in a gym, fitness center or group fitness classes, where another person or persons who are not members of the individual's household are present in the same space, irrespective of physical distance.

safe, we must recognize that this is a collective responsibility. Our athletes play a role in ensuring the safety of their teammates, coaches, athletic staff, and themselves.

Keeping this in mind, any student-athlete who does not comply with the Merion Athletic Department Health and Safety plan will be removed from participation and will be asked to leave the facility. If the noncompliance continues, future status on the team will be evaluated.

### **Health Procedures**

- All athletes and coaches in attendance must complete the daily athletic RUVNA screening prior to practice.
- Coaches must confirm with the Athletic Trainer and/or Director of Athletics that everyone in attendance has completed a screening for that day.
- If an athlete, coach, or staff members experiences symptoms of COVID-19, tests positive for COVID-19, has been in contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19, or has been in contact with someone awaiting testing for COVID-19 should not attend (even as a spectator) the athletic event and should contact the school nurse by email ([nurse@merion-mercy.com](mailto:nurse@merion-mercy.com)). This individual is prohibited from participating in a workout or event until cleared to do so.
- Coaches should not allow athletes who have been sick to return to practices until they are given clearance by the Director of Athletics, the Athletic Trainer, or a school administrator.
- Appropriate notification and contact-tracing will be initiated in cases of contact with a positive individual and when a person tests positive for COVID-19. It is possible that activities will need to be postponed/canceled based on guidelines from local or state authorities.
- Athletes who were previously diagnosed with COVID-19 and have since recovered must provide a medical clearance to the school nurse from their treating physician or healthcare provider before returning to activity, so that an appropriate return to play plan can be established.

### **Transportation Considerations**

Merion Mercy Academy utilizes a variety of transportation methods, such as parent provided transportation, student drivers, subcontracted busing companies, and school vans.

When traveling on buses or school vans:

- Athletes should space out as far as possible.
- Members of the same family should sit nearest to each other.
- Athletes and coaches must wear masks for the duration of the trip.
- Those on the bus may not eat or drink during the trip.
- Athletes should utilize the same seat when traveling to and from away competitions or practice.
- Prior to departure, each student-athlete's temperature will be taken, a health screening is completed, and a seating chart will be created and kept for reference.

### **Out of State/Overnight Events**

At this time, travel should be limited. Therefore, the Merion Mercy Athletic Department will not be permitting any overnight trips or trips out of state. When coaches are planning their schedules with the

Director of Athletics, all efforts should be made to remain in our local community. This process will be evaluated as more data and information becomes available.

## **Facilities Considerations**

### Gathering Limitations:

- Outside Facility: 250 individuals or less including coaches and players
- Gymnasium: 25 individuals or less including coaches, players, and officials

### Event Attendance:

Individuals will be assigned to tiers in order to determine who will be in attendance at athletic events:

- Tier 1 (Essential) – Athletes, coaches, officials, event staff, medical staff, security
- Tier 2 – Parent/guardians, spectators
  - At the current time, Tier 2 individuals are limited in their participation. Current athletic events are limited to Tier 1 individuals.
  - At outdoor athletic events, the maximum number of members from Tier 1 and Tier 2 combined cannot exceed 250 persons.
  - At indoor athletic events, the maximum number of members Tier 1 and Tier 2 combined cannot exceed 25 persons.
    - Due to this 25-person restriction, spectators will NOT be allowed to attend indoor athletic activities

### Facilities Cleaning:

- Appropriate cleaning schedules will be created and implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate any communicable diseases.
- Prior to an individual or groups of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within that facility will be wiped down and disinfected (chairs, locker rooms, equipment, bathrooms, athletic training room table, etc.).
- Individuals will be directed to wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with soap and water before touching any surfaces and participating in workouts.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be available to individuals as they transfer from place to place.
- Students are encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning to home.

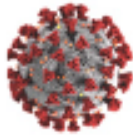
## **References:**

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3. PA Department of Education: Preliminary Guidance for Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools- June 3, 2020
4. CDC COVID-19 Considerations for Youth Sports- May 29, 2020

\*Revised November 2020

5. KSI Return to Sports and Exercise during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Guidance for High School and Collegiate Athletic Programs- June 2, 2020
6. Washington University Resocialization of Sports Recommendations- June 1, 2020
7. UPMC Sports Medicine Playbook: Returning to Sports During COVID-19 Minimum Guidelines (High School)- May 28, 2020
8. PIAA Press Release- June 5, 2020
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12. PIAA Press Release- July 3, 2020
13. PA Guidance for All Sports Permitted to Operate During the COVID-19 Disaster Emergency to Ensure the Safety and Health of Employees, Athletes and the Public, updated July 15, 2020
14. PA Department of Education Public Health Guidance Regarding COVID-19 for Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools, July 16, 2020
15. PIAA Return to Competition: Individual Sport Considerations Fall 2020
16. US Rowing Return to Training Considerations Post-COVID-19
17. USTA Playing Tennis Safely—Player Tips and Recommendations
18. PIAA Return to Competition: Individual Sport Considerations Winter 2020-2021
19. NCAA Sport Science Institute, COVID-19 Medical Advisory Group: [Core Principles of Resocialization of Collegiate Basketball](#)
20. NCAA Sport Science Institute, COVID-19 Medical Advisory Group: [Guidance & Recommendations for Basketball Game Day Operations](#)
21. NCAA Sport Science Institute, COVID-19 Medical Advisory Group: [FAQ: Principles of Resocialization of Collegiate Basketball and Testing Considerations for All Sports](#)

# What you should know about COVID-19 to protect yourself and others



## Know about COVID-19

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person.
- The virus that causes COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has spread throughout the world.
- COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild (or no symptoms) to severe illness.



## Know how COVID-19 is spread

- You can become infected by coming into close contact (about 6 feet or two arm lengths) with a person who has COVID-19. COVID-19 is primarily spread from person to person.
- You can become infected from respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- You may also be able to get it by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and then by touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.



## Protect yourself and others from COVID-19

- There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Stay home as much as possible and avoid close contact with others.
- Wear a cloth face covering that covers your nose and mouth in public settings.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



## Practice social distancing

- Buy groceries and medicine, go to the doctor, and complete banking activities online when possible.
- If you must go in person, stay at least 6 feet away from others and disinfect items you must touch.
- Get deliveries and takeout, and limit in-person contact as much as possible.



## Prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick

- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Avoid public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.
- Separate yourself from other people and pets in your home.
- There is no specific treatment for COVID-19, but you can seek medical care to help relieve your symptoms.
- If you need medical attention, call ahead.



## Know your risk for severe illness

- Everyone is at risk of getting COVID-19.
- Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at higher risk for more severe illness.



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[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)

## WHAT IS THE CONTACT TRACING PROCESS?

### CONTACT TRACING

Contact tracing is the process of identifying, notifying, and monitoring anyone who came in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19 while they were infectious (2 days before onset of symptoms until the end of the person's isolation period). Contact tracing is a key strategy for preventing the further spread of infectious diseases, such as COVID-19. Close contacts of a case are considered to have been exposed to COVID-19, and may go on to develop the disease. Identifying and quarantining close contacts limits their ability to spread disease should they become infectious and helps to limit community spread.

### WHAT DOES CONTACT TRACING LOOK LIKE?

1. When an individual is tested and confirmed positive for COVID-19, they are asked to isolate for a minimum of ten days. They must also be fever free for 72 hours without the use of anti-fever medication and show an improvement in symptoms before isolation can be discontinued. These individuals are called cases.
2. Positive COVID-19 test results are reportable to the PA Department of Health. Within 24 hours of receiving the positive result, trained public health staff conduct an interview with the case to obtain a list of close contacts they had while infectious. Cases are considered to be infectious beginning two days before onset of symptoms or two days before the date of the positive result if the person did not have symptoms. The cases are encouraged to utilize calendars, social media, etc. to remember where and who they were around during their infectious period. During the case investigation, the public health staff attempt to obtain as much information as possible on the contacts (address, phone, email, etc.) and then share the contact information with the designated contact tracers.
3. Contact tracers reach out to educate, inform and support those who had a known close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual through phone calls, texts, emails and mailings. To protect patient privacy, close contacts are only informed that they may have been exposed to an individual with COVID-19.
4. Close contacts are told to:
  - Stay home and maintain social distancing through the end of their quarantine period (14 days from the date of their last exposure to a case).
  - Monitor themselves daily for symptoms of COVID-19, including checking their temperature.
  - Be aware that they could possibly spread the infection to others, even if they do not feel sick.
  - Exceptions to these instructions may occur for healthcare workers and critical infrastructure workers who have no symptoms. They may be permitted to work with special precautions in place, such as daily symptom checking prior to reporting to work and masking while at work.
5. With consent, contacts are enrolled into a daily symptom monitoring system called Sara Alert. The Sara Alert system sends the contacts a daily symptom questionnaire via text, email, or robo-call, using whichever method is preferred by the contact. Public health staff and contact tracers review the contacts' responses on a real-time dashboard and promptly reach out to anyone who answers "yes" to having a symptom(s).
6. If a contact develops symptoms, they should isolate themselves and let their healthcare provider and public health staff know. The contact will be evaluated to see if they need medical care and/or COVID-19 testing.





## WHAT TERMS SHOULD I KNOW WHEN IT COMES TO CONTACT TRACING?

- A **contact** is an individual who had close contact while the case patient was infectious. This person should quarantine themselves, meaning they should stay at home to limit community exposure and watch to see if symptoms develop.
- A **contact of a contact** is an individual who had or continues to have close contact with a **contact**. This person should take everyday preventative actions, like washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, and cleaning surfaces frequently, however quarantine is not necessary. This person should also be alert for symptoms.

## RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on wearing or making a mask,

visit: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Stop-the-Spread.aspx>

For more information on COVID-19, visit the Department of Health's website, [www.health.pa.gov](http://www.health.pa.gov), or the [CDC's website](https://www.cdc.gov).

Help is available, contact the Crisis Text Line by texting **PA to 741-741**

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# Stop Germs! Wash Your Hands.

## When?

- After using the bathroom
- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage



## How?



Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.



Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.



Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.



Rinse hands well under clean, running water.



Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important things we can do to stop the spread of germs and stay healthy.

LIFE IS BETTER WITH

**CLEAN HANDS**



[www.cdc.gov/handwashing](http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing)

