

**NEW JERSEY STATE INTERSCHOLASTIC  
ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**

**RETURN TO PLAY  
SUMMER RECESS GUIDELINES**



**JULY 13, 2020 – AUGUST 28, 2020**

## **The following procedures should be in place before the start of summer workouts**

Student-athletes who presently have COVID-19, or who have tested positive for COVID-19, shall provide clearance from a physician before he/she will be permitted to participate in workouts.

Student-athletes who have pre-existing medical conditions and/or are immunocompromised (e.g., diabetes, asthma, auto-immune disorders, etc.) shall provide clearance from a physician before he/she will be permitted to participate in workouts.

All student-athletes must have a COVID-19 Questionnaire completed before the start of the first workout session. This form only needs to be completed one time. Any athlete that does not have a COVID-19 Questionnaire on file will not be permitted to participate in any workouts. The questionnaire must be kept on file in accordance with the district's normal procedure for collecting such forms.

Districts shall develop COVID-19 protocols and procedures detailing, among other things, the name and contact information of the individual(s) who will be primarily responsible for responding to and addressing COVID-19 related issues; how it will conduct screenings (including administration of a screening questionnaire and temperature checks); how it will respond to a positive COVID-19 test or a student-athlete or coach who is symptomatic including, without limitation, contact tracing and a communication plan with parents, student-athletes, coaches, and appropriate health authorities.

Districts shall examine their Emergency Action Plans and determine what changes, if any, may be needed to respond to emergencies, including those related to COVID-19.

Districts shall determine how they will handle and respond to the routine treatment and care of student-athletes who may be injured during workouts, including both on the field and in the training room.

Because the prevalence of COVID-19 varies by state, and New Jersey's numbers are declining while numbers from other states are rising, the Governor has issued an incoming travel advisory that all individuals entering New Jersey from states with a significant spread of COVID-19 should quarantine for 14-days after leaving that state. If a student-athlete chooses to travel to one of the "hot spot" states, the district administration should advise the student-athlete that he/she cannot return to workouts until after a fourteen (14) day period of quarantine has been observed. The link below will provide you with the most up to date list of "hot spot" states.

<https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/general-public/which-states-are-on-the-travel-advisory-list-are-there-travel-restrictions-to-or-from-new-jersey>

**The following NJSIAA guidelines are set at a minimum level. School districts out of an abundance of caution may choose to exceed the NJSIAA guidelines, which is their decision and absolutely acceptable by the NJSIAA.**

# **General Guidelines for all Phases**

## **Rationale**

The NJSIAA summer recess period will run from Monday, July 13th, through Friday, August 28th. Participation in the summer recess period is optional and districts may choose which date to start. Summer recess workouts will run according to the guidelines issued by NJSIAA and the Medical Advisory Task Force. All schools participating in the summer workouts must start with the Phase 1 guidelines regardless of the start date. Each Phase must be completed to advance to the next Phase.

The Medical Advisory Task Force guidelines are only applicable to the summer recess period. Once regular season practices commence on September 14, all practices will be run in accordance with local school district policies. Additional information regarding the conducting of safe regular-season practices may also be forthcoming from NJSIAA as well. The Medical Advisory Task Force guidelines are consistent with research-based best practices used throughout the country at all levels of competition including both the professional and collegiate levels.

**Note:** Only a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) or a Doctor of Medicine (MD) can clear athletes for summer workouts concerning COVID-19 signs, symptoms, and history. It is the responsibility of the doctor or testing facility to notify the local agency of a positive test. The local agency will begin the contact tracing procedure.

## **Screening**

1. Who can conduct the daily screening process?
  - a. Each district must designate sufficient school personnel to conduct the daily screening process.
  - b. Any school-approved employee may conduct the screening process.
  - c. The screener does not have to be the same each day although it is strongly recommended.
2. COVID-19 Daily screening Questions
  - a. The COVID-19 daily screening form is required before each workout.
  - b. Student-athletes must fill this form out before they arrive on site.
  - c. If there is a “YES” answer on the form, students should not come to the workout until they are cleared by a DO or MO.
3. Responsibilities of the screener
  - a. The screener must always wear a face covering.
  - b. The screener must fill out the pre-screening questionnaire for themselves and have their temperature checked.
  - c. The screener must confirm that all coaches are wearing face coverings and have a completed pre-screening questionnaire in hand, or they will not be screened.
  - d. The screener must not start the screening process until the coach has arrived and been cleared.
  - e. The screener must confirm that all student-athletes must be wearing face coverings and have a completed pre-screening questionnaire, or they will not be screened.
  - f. The screeners must confirm that the student-athlete answered “NO” to all the screening questions and take the temperature of the student-athletes one at a time.
  - g. The screener only needs to document the temperature on the pre-screening questionnaire if it is 100.4 or above.
  - h. The screener must collect all completed documents and file them in accordance with the district's normal procedure for collecting such forms.
4. Can an assistant coach perform the screening if they are coaching on the same day?

- a. This is permissible only when there is more than one coach involved in coaching that day. There always needs to be at least one supervising coach that is not involved with the screening process to supervise the student-athletes. The supervising coach must concentrate on getting the student-athletes in their 10-person workout groups (pods) and making sure that student-athletes adhere to social distancing requirements and are wearing face coverings.
  - b. If there is only one coach, then there must be another district approved employee who can conduct the screenings.
  - c. To the fullest extent possible, districts should consider staggered arrival and departure times of student-athletes.
  - d. Multiple screenings may take place at the same time and/or at different locations if the district has the resources and personnel to do so and can ensure that all screening procedures are followed.
5. The supervising coach's responsibility during the screening process.
    - a. All coaches must always wear a face covering.
    - b. The supervising coach needs to get the student-athletes into their workout groups (pods), making sure the student-athletes adhere to social distancing requirements (6 feet apart) and wearing face coverings.
    - c. The student-athletes must keep their face coverings on until the screening process is completed, and they are instructed to remove them by their supervising coach.
  6. Student-athletes who have pre-existing medical conditions and/or are immunocompromised (e.g., diabetes, asthma, auto-immune disorders, etc.) shall provide written clearance from a DO or MO before he/she will be permitted to participate in workouts.
    - a. Personnel conducting the screenings may or may not know the student-athletes that have pre-existing medical conditions; therefore, school districts shall notify all parents/guardians that student-athletes with pre-existing medical conditions should consult with a doctor before they are permitted to participate in the workouts.
  7. Procedure for anyone that arrives on-site and has answered "YES" on the screening form or has a temp of 100.4 or above.
    - a. Stop the screening process immediately.
    - b. Separate the athlete from the rest and call the parent back. Parents must be instructed to remain at the drop-off point until the athlete clears the screening process.
    - c. The student-athlete is not permitted to begin workouts until cleared by a DO or MO.
    - d. If the supervising coach has answered "YES" or has a temp of 100.4 or above, then the workout will be canceled, and the athletes should return home unless there are additional coaches.

### **Procedural situations for student-athletes & coaches regarding COVID-19 contact**

1. A Student-athlete who has come in contact with someone, including a family member, that has tested positive of COVID-19
  - a. Student-athlete must self-quarantine and contact their doctor for further instructions.
  - b. A return-to-play note from a DO or MO must be completed before the student-athlete may return to workouts.
  - c. The related pod will be permitted to continue until results are known of the quarantined student-athlete.
  - d. All members of the related pod must be extremely vigilant in checking for signs or symptoms multiple times a day.
2. A Student-athlete has signs or symptoms of COVID-19
  - a. Student-athlete must self-quarantine and contact their doctor for further instructions.

- b. A return-to-play note from a DO or MO must be completed before the student-athlete may return to workouts.
  - c. The related pod will be permitted to continue until results are known of the symptomatic student-athlete.
  - d. All members of the related pod must be extremely vigilant in checking for signs or symptoms multiple times a day.
3. A Student-athlete has tested positive for COVID-19
  - a. The student-athlete must self-quarantine and contact their doctor for further instructions.
  - b. all members of the related pod must self-quarantine and contact their doctor for further instructions.
  - c. A return-to-play note from a DO or MO must be completed before all student-athletes of the related pod may return to workouts.
4. A coach who has come in contact with someone, including a family member, that has tested positive of COVID-19
  - a. The coach must self-quarantine and contact their doctor for further instructions.
  - b. A return-to-play note from a DO or MO must be completed before the coach may return to workouts.
  - c. The related pod will be permitted to continue until results are known of the quarantined coach.
  - d. All members of the related team/pod must be extremely vigilant in checking for signs or symptoms multiple times a day.
5. A coach has signs or symptoms of COVID-19
  - a. The coach must self-quarantine and contact their doctor for further instructions.
  - b. A return-to-play note from a DO or MO must be completed before the coach may return to workouts.
  - c. The related pod will be permitted to continue until results are known of the symptomatic coach.
  - d. All members of the related team/pod must be extremely vigilant in checking for signs or symptoms multiple times a day.
6. A coach has tested positive for COVID-19
  - a. The coach must self-quarantine and contact their doctor for further instructions.
  - b. If the coach was not directly engaged in a particular pod, and just supervised workouts while maintaining proper social distances and wearing a mask, then the team and pod may continue if other coaches are available.
  - c. If the coach was directly engaged in a particular pod, then all members of the related pod must self-quarantine and contact their doctors for further instructions.
  - d. A return-to-play note from a DO or MO must be completed for all coaches and student-athletes that were forced to quarantine before they may return to workouts.

### **Workouts**

1. Access to workouts must be limited to student-athletes, coaches, and appropriate school personnel.
2. Coaches must be mindful of practicing in the heat of summer. Proper hydration is essential. The NJSIAA heat policy is always available on our website as a reference during the summer recess period.
3. Coaches should have pre-drawn structured workouts for the duration of the session.
4. Hydration stations are not permitted during Phase 1 & 2. School districts should provide access to fluids in case of an emergency.
5. During all workouts, coaches and staff are reminded to be alert for any students exhibiting signs of distress regarding mental health secondary to the COVID-19 pandemic.
6. In case of inclement weather, each school district will need to monitor and be ahead of bad

weather to the best of their ability. Altering workout times because of potential bad weather is strongly encouraged. School districts should also have a plan in place for safe evacuation if avoidance of bad weather is not possible.

7. A pause period not to exceed seven (7) days between phase 1 & 2 or between Phase 2 & 3 is acceptable as long as the following guidelines are completed:
  - a. The preceding phase must be completed before the pause begins.
  - b. The pause period must immediately follow the end of the preceding Phase.
  - c. Coaches must check-in with their student-athletes at least 2 times and review the screening questions. This check-in can be done anyway the school/coach feels is the best procedure.
  - d. If a student-athlete chooses to travel to one of the “hot spot” states, the district administration should advise the student-athlete that he/she cannot return to workouts until after a fourteen (14) day period of quarantine has been observed.
  - e. Once the students-athletes come back and start the next Phase, coaches are advised to condition them back slowly.
8. A pause period not to exceed seven (7) days in the middle of Phase 2 or Phase 3 is acceptable as long as the following guidelines are completed:
  - a. The pause period during Phase 2 or 3 must not exceed 7 days.
  - b. Coaches must check-in with their student-athletes at least 2 times during the pause period and review the screening questions. This check-in can be done anyway the school/coach feels is the best procedure.
  - c. If a student-athlete chooses to travel to one of the “hot spot” states, the district administration should advise the student-athlete that he/she cannot return to workouts until after a fourteen (14) day period of quarantine has been observed.
  - d. If all are met above, then the team may pick up where they left of within the Phase they were in.
9. A pause period lasting 8 to 14 days in the middle of Phase 2 or Phase 3 will require the team to restart the Phase they were working in.
10. A pause period lasting 15 days or more in the middle of Phase 2 or Phase 3 will require the team to reset at Phase 1

### **Face Coverings**

1. Student-athletes must wear face coverings until the start of the workout.
2. It is critical that while the face coverings are off, a distance of at least six (6) feet apart is maintained at all times.
3. Once the workout is completed, face coverings must immediately be put back on.
4. Student-athletes are encouraged to wear masks while not engaged in high-intensity aerobic activity, e.g., sitting on the bench, reviewing plays, watching videos, etc.
5. Coaches and district personnel must wear face coverings at all times.
6. Coaches that workout with their student-athletes i.e. cross-country coaches, are permitted to remove the face-covering during the workout but must remain six (6) feet apart at all times.

### **Pods**

1. Once pods are determined, student-athletes may not switch to another pod, even for another sport.
2. Multiple pods can operate at the same time while following specific phase guidelines.
3. Student-athletes who participate in more than one sport are encouraged to be grouped with their fall sports teammates.
4. Social distancing of at least six (6) feet shall be maintained between student-athletes and staff at all times, including within the student-athlete pods.
5. There shall not be celebratory contact, e.g., fist bumps, high-fives, huddles, etc.

### **Sports Equipment**

1. Each student-athlete shall bring individual water bottles to each workout for his/her own personal consumption. There shall not be any trading or sharing of water bottles.
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3. There should be no shared athletic equipment between students unless permitted during certain phases.
4. All sports equipment and touchpoints (e.g., balls, benches, agility cones, ladders, clipboards, etc.) must be cleaned and disinfected after each workout with EPA approved cleaners and disinfectants against COVID-19.
5. Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing) individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout.
6. Schools are permitted to allow personal balls if they choose to as long as all hygiene and cleaning protocols are followed.
7. All other equipment like sticks, rackets, bats, etc. may be used if they are the student-athletes personal equipment and not shared.
8. It is recommended that gymnastics equipment not be used until the Fall season begins.

### **Locker Rooms/Restrooms**

1. Proper protocol regarding access to restrooms, locker rooms, and other indoor facilities must be followed based on the guidelines set by the school district.
2. All indoor facilities used, shall be cleaned and disinfected regularly following CDC and NJ DOH guidelines.
3. To the fullest extent possible, appropriate social distancing shall be maintained, and face coverings are worn when more than one student-athlete is in the restroom.
4. Porta-johns are permitted but must be cleaned according to CDC and NJ DOH guidelines.

### **Hygiene**

1. Students and staff should make every effort to wash their hands as often as possible including before and after the workout.
2. Hand sanitizer shall be accessible at all times.
3. Student-athletes shall wear their workout gear to the workout and shall return home in the same workout gear.
4. There shall be no spitting, chewing seeds or gum during the workout.

### **Forms**

1. COVID-19 Questionnaire
  - a. All student-athletes must have a COVID-19 questionnaire completed by the parent/guardian on file with the school district before they can participate in any workouts.
  - b. The COVID-19 Questionnaire only needs to be completed one time.
  - c. The optimal time for completing this form is 7 to 14 days before the first workout.
  - d. Student-athletes are not permitted to participate in works if there is a “YES” answer on the questionnaire. In this case, the student-athlete must be cleared by a DO or MO before participation in workouts can begin.
  - e. If a student-athlete has tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies, this is tantamount to testing positive for COVID-19. A positive test for COVID-19 antibodies means that the student-athlete had the virus at some point, even if he/she was asymptomatic.
  - f. You are not required to complete the COVID-19 questionnaire if you have a completed PPE form dated after July 1.

2. COVID-19 Daily Pre-screening Questions
  - a. The pre-screening form is required before each workout.
  - b. Student-athletes must fill this form out before they arrive on site.
  - c. If there is a “YES” answer on the form, students should not come to the workout until they are cleared by a doctor.
3. Health History Update Questionnaire (HHQ)
  - a. Districts should follow their regular procedure for completion and submittal of the updated HHQ.
  - b. Submission of the updated HHQ form is not required for the summer recess period
  - c. Since the updated HHQ also has the same updated questions as the COVID-19 Questionnaire, you may use the updated HHQ form to clear student-athletes for the summer recess period. However, according to N.J.S.A.18A:40-41.7(b), the updated HHQ shall be reviewed by the school nurse and, if applicable, the athletic trainer shall review it as well. As with all health records, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:32-7, these forms must be maintained in the school health office.
4. PPE (Sports Physicals)
  - a. There is legislation pending, which would eliminate the need for a PPE before fall sports participation.
  - b. Until the PPE extension bill passes, schools are to proceed as they would in the usual course. If a student-athlete has or can get an appointment with his/her medical doctor, it is highly recommended that they do so.
  - c. If the PPE extension bill passes, student-athletes will still need to get a physical but will have until the end of the fall season to get it.
  - d. Winter and spring student-athletes are not part of the PPE waiver and must comply with state requirements for PPE's.
  - e. Whether the bill passes or not, follow the school district's procedure regarding the requirement for a PPE for participation in the summer recess period.



## **RESOURCES & REFERENCES**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [\*Considerations for Youth Sports\*](#).
- New Jersey Department of Health, [\*Guidance for Sports Activities\*](#).
- National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC), [\*Guidance for Opening up High School Athletics and Activities\*](#).
- National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), [\*Coronavirus Resources\*](#).
- The Aspen Institute, Return to Play, [\*COVID 19 Risk Assessment Tool\*](#).
- U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee, [\*Sports Event Planning Considerations Post-COVID-19\*](#) (updated May 7, 2020).
- U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee, [\*Return to Training Considerations Post-COVID-19\*](#) (updated April 28, 2020).
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [\*Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs\*](#).
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [\*Cleaning and Disinfection for Non-emergency Transport Vehicles\*](#).
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [\*CDC Activities and Initiatives Supporting the COVID-19 Response and the President's Plan for Opening America Up Again\*](#) (pages 45-48) (May 2020).
- U.S. Department of Education, [\*COVID-19 \("Coronavirus"\) Information and Resources for Schools and School Personnel\*](#).
- Minnesota Department of Health, [\*Guidance for Social Distancing in Youth Sports\*](#).
- Minnesota Department of Health, [\*Guidance for Social Distancing in Youth and Student Programs\*](#).
- Iowa Department of Education, [\*COVID-19 Reopening Guidance: Summer Sports\*](#).
- Colorado Department of Education, [\*Planning the 2020-21 School Year. A Framework and Toolkit for School and District Leaders for Feedback\*](#).
- Pennsylvania Department of Education, [\*Preliminary Guidance for Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools\*](#) (June 3, 2020).
- Little League International, [\*Best Practices on Organizing, Playing and Watching Little League Baseball and Softball During the Coronavirus Pandemic\*](#).
- American Academy of Pediatrics, [\*COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Return to In-person Education in Schools\*](#).