

PSAL Health Guidance

Section One: Overview

Relevant DOE Guidance

[Extended Use Permit/Afterschool Policy](#)

[DOE Situation Room](#)

[DOE Health and Safety and Health Screener](#)

[Guidance Regarding Use of Face Coverings for Students Participating in Blended Learning](#)

[Cleaning Protocol](#)

[Physical Education Return to School Guidance](#)

[PSAL Sport COVID-19 Transmission Risk Level](#)

Section Two: PSAL General Guidance

COVID Prevention Core Four

The COVID *Core Four* represents four actions that must be followed by all PSAL participants in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission between PSAL participants. The Core Four are:

1. Facial coverings,
2. Physical distancing,
3. Staying home when sick, and
4. Hand hygiene

Facial Coverings

In accordance with [Guidance Regarding Use of Face Coverings for Students Participating in Blended Learning](#) all staff, students, and visitors over the age of two years old entering a New York City Department of Education (DOE) building MUST wear a face covering.

For the purposes of this guidance, a face covering is any well-secured cloth covering or disposable mask that covers a person's nose and mouth and is worn to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19. Acceptable face coverings include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings (e.g., homemade, sewn, or quick cut masks), and disposable surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose.

The following facial coverings are NOT permitted for PSAL activities:

- Bandanas and neck gaiters.
- Face coverings with an exhalation valve or vent.
- Face coverings that completely cover or hide an individual's face, such as ski masks.
- Unless otherwise approved by school administration, clear face shields cannot be worn unless accompanied by a face covering.

In accordance with [New York State Department of Health guidance](#), players must wear acceptable face coverings, unless players are unable to tolerate a face covering for the physical activity (see guidance on mask breaks). Coaches, trainers, and other individuals who are not directly engaged in physical activity are required to wear a face covering.

Schools may allow students to remove their face coverings for a brief period of time. These “[mask breaks](#)” can be offered throughout practice and other PSAL activities and should not last for more than five minutes. Mask breaks can only occur when:

- Students are outdoors or in well-ventilated areas
- Students are at least six feet apart

Coaches should monitor students for perceived levels of exertion and should consider building extra water/mask breaks or limiting the number of vigorous activities in their practice plan.

Schools must provide participants with proper masks if they do not have access to them.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing of at least 6 feet between individuals must be enforced by coaches and Athletic Directors at all times outside of the field of play.

For the field of play:

1. Strength and conditioning period: All participants must maintain at least six feet of physical distancing at all times.
2. Practice and competition period: All participants must ensure at least six feet of physical distancing at all times, whether indoor or outdoor, unless safety or the core activity (e.g. practicing, playing) requires a shorter distance. If a shorter distance is required, individuals must wear acceptable face coverings.

Athletic Directors and Coaches should work with their Principal and building supervisor to ensure that building movement protocols maximize physical distancing capabilities and minimize congestion.

Health Screening and Staying Home When Sick

All participants will need to have completed the DOE’s [daily health screening form](#). Additionally, all PSAL participants need to take care to refrain from attending PSAL activities when feeling unwell. All participants have a responsibility to monitor themselves for COVID-like illness symptoms and to report positive COVID cases to their school.

All participants of a PSAL activity including students and adults must pass the DOE health screening and temperature check. Any participant who [fails the screening](#) cannot participate in or remain at the PSAL activity and must leave immediately. In the absence of school safety personnel, any necessary health screening and temperature checks will be conducted by the head coach or other school-based personnel as designated by the school. For PSAL-sponsored tournaments, PSAL will designate personnel to conduct the health check.

Hand Hygiene

Coaches and Athletic Directors are responsible for ensuring that all participants wash or sanitize their hands before and after every PSAL activity. Washing hands for 20 seconds with soap and water is preferred. When soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used.

Special care should be taken to prevent congregating in and around bathroom areas for the purposes of hand hygiene.

Schools will be responsible for ensuring that all PSAL participants have access to hand hygiene supplies.

Cohorting

Per the DOE Health and Safety policy, schools will operate at significantly reduced capacity for in-person instruction, with, on average, between one third and half of the student population attending at one time. PSAL programs using indoor facilities must coordinate with other extracurricular activities to ensure capacity limits are not exceeded.

As per the [Extended Use Permit/Afterschool Policy](#), whenever possible, after school programs must make every effort to keep students in the same groupings and the same space, during the day and in afterschool programming. Whenever possible, student athletes should be placed in cohorts to reduce the amount of contact and equipment sharing between individuals. Examples of cohorts include:

1. Keeping consistent partners/groups for drills,
2. Utilizing stations as opposed to full-team activities, and
3. Minimizing the sharing of spaces between teams at the same time.

Development of COVID-like Symptoms During PSAL Events

COVID-like illness symptoms are defined as any or all of the following symptoms that are new and unexplained by pre-existing conditions such as asthma or allergies:

1. Fever of 100.0 degrees F or higher or chills,
2. New cough,
3. New loss of taste or smell, and/or
4. New shortness of breath.

In accordance with [DOE Extended Use policy](#), schools need to establish a safe space that is isolated from other participants and consistent with the practice location, where a student may be held to be picked up or provided a safe transfer home in the event that the student develops COVID-like illness symptoms.

In the event that a student or adult develops COVID-like illness symptoms during a PSAL activity, play should be suspended immediately so that the situation may be assessed.

If the symptomatic individual is a student, they must be removed and isolated immediately. Play may resume if it is safe to do so and proper supervision can be provided to the rest of the team while the coach or Athletic Director is tending to the symptomatic student. Coaches and Athletic Directors should follow their first aid and CPR training to call 911 and activate their Emergency Action Plan for any student in distress. If the student is not in distress, the athletic director will be responsible for contacting the parent/guardian to provide instructions on testing and/or isolation rules as well as creating a plan for the student's safe transportation home. In addition, the Athletic Director will be responsible for contacting the principal and nurse at their school to alert them of a case of COVID-like illness requiring follow-up.

Any participating adult who develops symptoms must immediately remove themselves from the activity. The coach will be responsible for contacting the Athletic Director or other school designee who record the removal of the person for COVID-like illness symptoms.

If the symptomatic individual is an adult that would need to be present at the event for supervision or officiating such as a coach or official, the event will be suspended for the day and all participants should go home. Where possible, suspended contests will be resumed or replayed at a later date.

The Athletic Director will be responsible for coordinating with their Principal(s) to ensure that all school-based reporting protocols are followed.

Any individual (student or staff member) showing signs of COVID-19 can only return to PSAL activities when all the following conditions are met:

- Received a positive COVID-19 test AND
- Isolated for 10 days AND
- The individual has been fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication and overall symptoms are improving.
OR
- Received a negative COVID-19 test since the onset of symptoms (the negative result must have been from a test that tested saliva or used a nose or throat swab, not a blood test) AND
- The individual has been fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication and overall symptoms are improving.
OR
- Never got a COVID-19 test AND
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms started AND
- The individual has been fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication and overall symptoms are improving.

COVID Case Reporting and Contact Tracing Procedures

All participants (player, coach, manager, official, athletic trainer, etc.) of PSAL activities will be required to immediately notify the Athletic Director of any positive COVID-19 diagnosis. The Principal or designee as appointed by school leadership, will be responsible for following the DOE Situation Room policy to report all positive COVID-19 cases.

Students who test positive for COVID-19 must be placed on the inactive roster until, as mentioned in the Health Policy, the student has received a positive COVID-19 test AND completed isolation for 10 days AND the individual has been fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication and overall symptoms are improving.

Quarantine, Isolation, and Return to PSAL

In the event that a classroom, or cohort must quarantine due to a COVID-19 exposure, all affected participants will not be permitted to attend PSAL activities for the duration of the closure. In the event of a school, district, or city-wide closure, PSAL activities will be suspended for all affected schools for the duration of the closure.

Students who test positive for COVID-19 will not be able to participate in any in-person team activities while in isolation. All participants, including players and coaches on that team are assumed close contacts and will be instructed to self-quarantine for 10 days since their last exposure to that case. Further guidance will be provided by the Situation Room pending investigation.

Hydration Plan

Sharing of water bottles, coolers, and use of water fountains will not be permitted. Students will be responsible for bringing and labeling their preferred hydration fluid to PSAL activities. It is recommended that all athletes bring at least 16 oz of water to each PSAL activity. PSAL participants must be allowed to hydrate themselves liberally throughout the activity. Coaches should take care to have at least one five minute water break for every 30 minutes of activity.

Coaches and Athletic Directors should take extra care to ensure participants remain physically distanced by at least six feet during water breaks since the students will be taking mask breaks as well during this time. To reduce congestion and congregating during water breaks, water bottles should not all be stored in the same place during practice. An example of this would be having students use the entire perimeter of the gymnasium to place their water bottles as opposed to one sideline.

Equipment Rules/ Equipment Cleaning and Disinfection

Items that should Never be shared between PSAL participants	May be shared during a session but must be properly cleaned and disinfected between use by each participant*	May be shared during a session but must be properly cleaned and disinfected at the conclusion of the session*
Water bottles, towels, uniforms, clothing, shoes, helmets, headgear, mouthguards, personal protective gear (gloves, braces, shoulder pads, chest protectors, catcher’s gear, grips, baseball gloves, softball gloves, etc.)	Bats, racquets, sticks, fencing epees and foils, weightlifting equipment (barbells, weight bars, weight benches, etc.), Conditioning equipment (medicine balls, yoga mats, etc.), Sleds, tackling pads/dummies, individual equipment (poles for pole vaulting, shot put, discus, etc.), golf clubs	Training mats, balls, shuttles, gymnastics equipment, fencing body cords, table tennis tables, double dutch ropes, etc.

*Cleaning supplies will be provided by the school.

Spectator Policy

At this time, no spectators will be allowed at any PSAL activities.

Food/Eating During Activities

At this time, no concession stands or bake sales will be permitted at PSAL events. Per DOE rules, students should not engage in any sharing of foods and beverages. Whenever possible, consumption of any foods and snacks should take place before entering the venue of the activity. When consumption before the activity is not possible, participants who are eating must:

1. Sanitize their hands before and after eating
2. Remain physically distanced by at least six feet for the duration of their meal
3. Eat alone or with a small, physically distanced cohort

Athletes are responsible for bringing their own hydration fluids to the activity (see Hydration plan).

Sports Physical Examination and Parental Consent Forms

All students participating in PSAL must submit the following forms:

1. Pre-Participation Sports Physical Examination Form – Dated July 1, 2019 or later – As per [NYSED Memo](#)
2. Interval Health History Form - Completed within 30 days of the start of PSAL activity
3. Parental Consent Form
4. [NYC DOE Consent Form for COVID-19 testing](#)

AD’s Responsibilities in Reopening

* Whenever possible, additional cleaning and disinfecting should occur and coaches should take steps to minimize the sharing of equipment to individuals or small cohorts between cleanings. Items must be cleaned and disinfected per DOE [Cleaning Protocol](#).

The Athletic Director is responsible for implementing and enforcing the guidelines contained within this document. If at any time the Athletic Director needs more clarification on the guidelines, they should contact the PSAL at PSAL@schools.nyc.gov

The Athletic Director will be responsible for maintaining accurate attendance records of all individuals present at every practice and game. Each team event should have the date, time, type (practice or game) and location of the event. For the students, the record should include their first and last name, OSIS number and parent/guardian name and contact number. For all adults, including school staff, PSAL staff, medical staff, facility management staff, etc., the record should include a legible first name, last name, job title, and contact phone number.

Records may be kept as a physical paper log or in a digital method. All records (originals or copies) must be kept on file by the Athletic Director and must be filed by sport.

Coaches' Responsibilities in Reopening

The coaches will help to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission by:

1. Upholding all guidelines contained in this document
2. Communicating guidance in a clear and concise manner to athletes and parents
3. Producing accurate records of attendance for submission to Athletic Directors
4. Gradually returning athletes to play and encouraging proper hydration

Athletes' Responsibilities in Reopening

The athletes will help to reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission by:

1. Staying home and alerting a coach when they feel unwell or have been exposed to COVID-19
2. Maintaining physical distancing of at least six feet from other PSAL participants
3. Following hand hygiene measures including but not limited to washing/sanitizing hands before and after PSAL activities
4. Sanitizing personal sports equipment daily (clothing, towels, water bottles, etc.)
5. Wearing a proper facial covering for the duration of the PSAL activity
6. Labeling personal sports equipment whenever possible

Transportation

All efforts should be made to limit or reduce travel to only that which is absolutely necessary associated with participating in PSAL activity.

Schools utilizing school busses must adhere to all DOE busing policies. Whenever possible, game and match times will be adjusted to assist with the potential increase in transportation time. Depending on the sport and feasibility, schedules will be adjusted to limit travel to regional or borough travel only.

Teams traveling by public transportation must adhere to the MTA rules of travel including wearing face coverings on the trains and busses and social distancing as much as possible.

Testing

All players and coaches will be subject to regular testing aligned to [NYDOE testing policy](#). Additional information forthcoming.

Strength and Conditioning Period

PSAL will resume activity by introducing a strength and conditioning period. The purpose of the strength and conditioning period is to allow scholars to immediately start benefiting from being in community with their

teammates and coaches, and for a gradual return to physical activities for the athletes. During the strength and conditioning period, the following guidelines must be followed:

1. Every effort should be made to hold activities outdoors.
2. Physical distancing of at least six feet for low and moderate exertion activities and 12 feet for high exertion activities must be maintained.
3. All participants including coaches, athletes, and officials must wear proper facial coverings in accordance with [NYCDOE policy](#).
4. No contact between participants will be allowed for any reason.
5. Maintaining established room capacity based upon square footage of indoor space and ventilation.
6. Students should arrive at the activity dressed to participate. There will be no use of locker rooms for changing.
7. Limit the use of shared equipment wherever possible. Any equipment that is used must be properly cleaned and sanitized in between participants.
8. In the event of a school closure all PSAL activities competitions will be postponed or cancelled for the duration of the closure.

Practice and Drills

Teams will start engaging in more sport specific activity, including the introduction of increased activity and the use of sport equipment.

1. During practice and game simulations, physical distancing of at least six feet will continue to be enforced for sports such as golf or gymnastics where contact with other participants is not a fundamental pillar of the sport. For sports such as soccer, where contact with other participants is a fundamental pillar of the sport, lapses in social distancing for the purpose of sport-specific drills/simulated gameplay will be allowed. Game simulation of high risk sports must be conducted outdoors.
 - a. All non-essential lapses in physical distancing (handshakes, high fives, etc.) will still be restricted
2. Every effort should be made to hold activities outdoors.
3. All participants including coaches, athletes, and officials must wear proper facial coverings in accordance with NYCDOE policy.
4. Equipment sharing should continue to be limited as much as possible.
5. In the event of a school closure all PSAL activities competitions will be postponed or cancelled for the duration of the closure.

Competition

Teams will start participating in games and competitions against other PSAL teams. All high risk competitions must be played outdoors.

General Guidance (Applies to All Sports)

1. No spectators will be allowed at PSAL events.
2. No handshakes, fist bumps, high fives, or hugs between participants.
3. Schools will only be allowed to compete with other PSAL teams. Travelling outside of the five boroughs for competition will not be permitted.
4. In the event of a school closure all PSAL activities will be postponed or cancelled for the duration of the closure.
5. Physical distancing must remain in effect for all pregame activity, bench areas, and during timeouts.
6. Officials are not responsible for monitoring activities on the sidelines, such as social distancing, face coverings, hand washing, symptoms of illnesses and other such issues. This monitoring obligation remains with the coaching staff and school personnel.
7. Officials will be required to wear a proper face covering.
8. Pregame conferences will be limited to one official, the head coach from each team, and a single captain from each team, while maintaining social distance.

9. Pre-contest official crew meetings should be held outside when possible and where social distancing is more easily accomplished.
10. Coin tosses should involve only the Head Referee and one captain and head coach from each team.
11. Officials' tables should be limited to essential personnel, including the home team scorer and timer. Visiting team personnel (scorer, statisticians, etc.) are not deemed essential and may need to find an alternative location. Space availability at the table is a variable in determining the number of individuals permitted at the officials' table and observing social distancing requirements.
12. Facial coverings must be worn at all times (sidelines, timeouts, etc.) even when not physically participating in the activity.

Disclaimer

This document is for informational purposes only and is not intended to replace or change any of the state or city issued guidance. Schools should always follow and refer to the most updated DOE COVID-19 Guidance as well as city and state health guidance for any specific questions. Athletic Directors, principals, and other school administrators may contact the PSAL for clarification on any released guidance