



## **COVID-19 Winter Protocols**

The following protocols are intended to assist schools and their athletic programs regarding COVID-19 prevention and exposure during the winter seasons 2, 2A, and 3 of the 2020-21 school year. In addition to this document, schools must comply with all guidelines issued by the Governor's office, the CDC, NJDOH, and local health officials while participating in practices and NJSIAA interscholastic competition. These protocols are subject to change based on actions taken by the Governor's office, the CDC, and the NJ Department of Health. All decisions are local and should be made by school administrators in consultation with local public health departments.

### **Mitigating Risk with Daily Self-Health Checks:**

Coaches should educate athletes about when they shouldn't play – if they tested positive for COVID-19, if they have COVID-19 compatible symptoms, if they had close contact with someone who has COVID-19, or if they recently traveled and need to quarantine. Every student-athlete and all athletics personnel should follow their school's policy for daily self-health evaluations before participating in any aspect of in-person athletics activities. Individuals with any of the following are encouraged to contact their coach or athletic trainer immediately and coaches/trainers should notify school administration:

- 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.

### **Contact Tracing:**

Contact tracing is important in deciding who should be placed in quarantine because of close contact with a person infected with COVID-19. Local public health authorities oversee contact tracing and work closely with school nurses and administrators to identify close contacts in schools, including athletes. Athletic departments should follow all contact tracing protocols established by the school's Pandemic Response Team. Coaches must be available to assist school staff and local health departments to help identify all people who may have been in close contact with an infected student-athlete. NJSIAA does not have any additional contact tracing protocols that are above and beyond the protocols, a school establishes with its local health department.

### **Close Contact:**

CDC and NJDOH define a COVID-19 close contact as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from two days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, two days before test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated. The ability of coaches, trainers, and athletes to ensure compliance with social distancing requirements will determine how many team members are considered close contacts. In some cases, if social distancing has not been enforced, an entire team may be considered exposed.

### **Quarantine:**

Quarantine keeps someone who was in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 away from others. Local public health authorities will work with school staff to determine who needs to quarantine and for what period of time. Coaches and trainers should work with school staff and ensure that athletes are complying with quarantine recommendations and don't return to play before completing quarantine. If an athlete develops symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19 during quarantine, s/he may need to isolate for an additional period of time.

### **Isolation:**

Isolation keeps someone who is sick or tested positive for COVID-19 without symptoms away from others, even in their own home. Coaches and trainers should encourage student athletes to notify school administration according to school policy if they become ill with COVID-19 symptoms or who test positive for COVID-19. If coaches or trainers become aware of a student athlete who is ill or positive for COVID-19, they should notify their school's administration or Pandemic Response Team ASAP. Most persons with COVID-19 will need to isolate for at least 10 days from when symptoms started (or the date of a positive test if asymptomatic), be fever free for at least 24 hours, and have improvement of other symptoms.

### **Reporting of Positive Tests to Opponents:**

With respect to competition, athletic departments should consider how best to secure reasonable assurance that the same risks have been adequately evaluated and addressed by the other team. The NJSIAA and its Medical Advisory Task Force believe the contact tracing process can be helped, and outbreaks are limited if schools communicate with each other about positive tests. Therefore:

1. If a student-athlete or coach tests positive, the school should report the positive test to any opponent the team played within two days of the symptoms/positive test, and the team's next opponent.
2. The school's report must preserve the anonymity of the person who tested positive.
3. The receiving school is encouraged to contact its Pandemic Response Team and local health department for direction as to what, if any, steps it should take as a result of this information. How this information is handled by the receiving school is a local issue.
4. There will be no penalty if a school chooses to cancel a game after having been notified of an opponent's positive test.

### **Return to Play:**

Athletic departments should follow all protocols established by the school's Pandemic Response Team and the local health department. Since COVID-19 has been associated with myocarditis, athletes seeking to return to play after having contracted COVID-19 may wish to consult with a doctor regarding overall medical fitness. NJSIAA does not require any documentation from the school or doctor's office to return to play after a positive test or from a quarantine due to close contact. Upon the completion of six total practices after the start of the season, it will be the school's decision, through consultation with the appropriate school personnel, to determine the date for students and/or teams to safely return to competition after a period of quarantine or isolation.

Please follow link below for the complete NJDOH "Guidance for Sports Activities"

[https://nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/COVID\\_GuidanceForSportsActivities.pdf](https://nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/COVID_GuidanceForSportsActivities.pdf)

*Information within this document was obtained from the following sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Academy of Pediatrics, New Jersey Department of Health, National Federation of State High School Associations, National Collegiate Athletic Association.*