



## **Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Youth Sports and Extracurricular Activities in Alameda County**

Alameda County values the benefits of youth sports and extracurricular activities. The latest surge of the COVID-19 pandemic, fueled by the highly infectious Delta variant, demonstrates the need for steps everyone can take to protect our youth population and others who are not fully vaccinated. This interim COVID-19 safety guidance includes recommendations for school sports and extracurricular activities at public and private K-12 schools operating in Alameda County, as well as for youth sports and extracurricular activities outside of the school setting. The purpose of this guidance is to reduce the spread of COVID-19 infection in our communities by supporting a safer environment for all who participate in youth sports and other extracurricular activities. Please also review [CDC guidance for K-12 school setting](#) for further recommendations that take into consideration county transmission rates.

Alameda County recommends the following precautions for all youth sports and extracurricular activities, which aligns with and augments CDPH guidance found in its [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2021-22 School Year](#):

### **1. Masks are required indoors for all participants, coaches, personnel, and spectators.**

Everyone must wear face masks indoors, regardless of vaccination status. Masks are required indoors for both competition and practice, during physical education, conditioning/weightlifting, and other indoor activities, in accordance with both the [CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings](#) and the [Alameda County Health Officer Order 21-03](#) requiring all people to wear masks while in indoor public settings, including school settings.

Exceptions:

- Participants playing indoor water sports such as swimming, water polo, or diving, may remove their face masks while they are in the water. Participants must wear face masks when not in the water.
- Also, see (3) below. Participants must wear masks when not actively engaged in any activity in which masks are removed under any of these exceptions.

During youth sports and other extracurricular activities, masks are recommended outdoors when maintaining 6 feet of distance between households is not practical. (e.g., athletes and coaches on the sidelines or spectators in the stands).



Any face mask that feels wet or becomes saturated with sweat should be changed immediately, as wet masks are less effective at filtration.

## 2. Vaccination

COVID-19 vaccination is strongly recommended for all participants who are eligible for vaccination, as well as coaches, staff, and volunteers. Leagues, teams, tournaments, and events can require that all participants and personnel be fully vaccinated for COVID-19. Having all athletes and staff in your league fully vaccinated will greatly decrease the risk of transmission of the virus among teammates and between teams, and will provide excellent protection against severe illness, hospitalization, and death. **It will also decrease disruptions in team activities, since fully vaccinated individuals who remain asymptomatic are not required to quarantine if they are close contacts of an individual with COVID-19.**

When COVID-19 transmission is high, it is safest to limit high-risk sports and extracurricular activities (especially when conducted indoors) to youth who are fully vaccinated, as noted in [CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in schools](#).

## 3. State guidance on school-based sports and extracurricular activities

The requirements and recommendations in the [K-12 schools guidance](#) also apply to all extracurricular activities that are operated or supervised by schools, and all activities that occur on a school site, whether or not they occur during school hours, including, but not limited to, sports, band, chorus, and clubs. Masks are required for all persons while playing all indoor sports, unless wearing a mask during play has been determined to pose a choking hazard by a well-recognized health authority, such as the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#).

For (1) the playing of musical instruments that cannot be done with a face covering (e.g., wind instruments); or (2) when wearing a mask during play poses a choking hazard, at least one of the following options is required:

- Conduct these activities outdoors;
- Use modified face coverings and bell coverings when playing wind and brass instruments, and maintain 6 feet of physical distancing; OR
- Perform at least weekly screening testing with either PCR testing (1:1 or pooled PCR) or antigen testing of all individuals, including those who are fully vaccinated.



#### 4. Additional testing considerations for unvaccinated participants and staff, including volunteers, in sports and extra-curricular activities

Performing regular COVID-19 screening testing in **unvaccinated** youth and staff involved in all indoor sports and extracurricular activities may be considered for added safety. Where resources allow, consider testing in unvaccinated youth and staff involved in outdoor sports and extracurricular activities as well. Asymptomatic people who are **fully vaccinated** or those who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days do not need to be tested.

##### *Testing Types and Frequency:*

- Test once per week if using PCR or similar test, such as school-based Color PCR, Cue tests, or PCR testing performed at a clinic or medical facility.
- Test twice per week if using a rapid antigen test, such as BinaxNOW.
  - A positive antigen test from someone who is asymptomatic (has no COVID-19 symptoms) should be retested with a PCR test within 24-72 hours to confirm. These tests should be treated as presumptive positives and individuals should be advised to isolate until receiving a negative PCR test result.
  - A negative antigen test in a symptomatic individual should be retested with a PCR test within 24-72 hours to confirm. *This scenario should be uncommon as people with symptoms are instructed to stay home until they have been tested and received a negative PCR result.*

##### Additional notes on testing

- Schools, teams, and event organizers must not accept home/self-testing results.
- Individuals who test positive should be sent directly home to isolate. They are NOT allowed to social distance instead.

#### 5. Very large events

Very large events (>1000 people indoors or >10,000 people outdoors), including sporting events, are subject to [CDPH Beyond the Blueprint recommendations and requirements](#).

#### 6. Prevent spread of COVID-19 off the field

Remind participants and families that COVID-19 often spreads off-the-field, especially in situations when groups let their guard down and eat or socialize together with their masks off (e.g., post-game parties, locker rooms, carpools).

##### Locker rooms

- Limit congregating in locker rooms
  - Players should arrive dressed to play as much as possible.



- Use locker rooms only to change or use the restroom. Do not use the locker room for coaching or pregame, halftime, or postgame talks.
- Avoid having different teams use a locker room at the same time.
- Ensure mask use in locker rooms.
- Consider closing showers.

#### Team buses and vans

- Masks are required
- Keep windows open.
- Turn the fan on high and set it to outdoor air.
- If more than one vehicle is used, have the same people ride together every time.

#### Carpooling

- Everyone in the vehicle should wear a face mask.
- Open the windows. Turn the fan on high and set it to outdoor air.
- Encourage participants and staff who carpool to ride with the same people each time travel occurs.

#### Travel

- When traveling overnight, team members not from the same household should sleep in separate rooms or in consistent groups when feasible. Keep masks on whenever visiting other members' hotel rooms.
- Socializing with other teams is strongly discouraged.
- Teams that travel outside the Bay Area or out-of-state are encouraged to follow [CDC recommendations for quarantine after travel](#).

### **7. Return to sports or physical activity after COVID-19 infection**

The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) recommends that children and youth who have had COVID-19 be screened by their healthcare provider prior to returning to sports or physical education. This screening may be done in person or by phone depending on the severity of their previous COVID-19 symptoms. Most students will not need further specialized testing before resuming physical activity, but it may be recommended for some.