



Escondido High School District

“Return to Play” Guidance for Athletics

The following document is intended to help us plan and prepare for resumption of athletic training, and to resume competition when conditions warrant.

The risk of transmitting the COVID-19 virus depends on several factors germane to sports, including:

- Number of people in a location
- Type of location (indoor versus outdoor)
- Distance or physical contact between people
- Length of time at location
- Touching of shared objects
- Use of face coverings
- Mixing of people from locations with different levels of community transmission

The length of time, proximity of contact and use of shared equipment increases the potential risk for athletes, and as general guidance, smaller groups are safer than larger; outdoor locations are safer than indoor; sports that can ensure distance of six feet or more are safer than close contact; and shorter duration is safer than longer. For most sports activities, this guidance assumes that use of face coverings while playing is not feasible, although they should be worn by players and others while on the side lines. Athletic directors and coaches need to consider all these factors as they plan to resume training and conditioning.

As stay-at-home orders are modified, it is essential that all possible steps be taken to ensure the safety of athletes, faculty, and the public.

Athletic teams are permitted to begin a return to practice only if:

- EUHSD adopts, and its teams follow, this “Return to Play Guidance for Athletics” safety plan.
- Regular periodic COVID-19 testing of student-athletes (henceforth referred to as athletes) and support staff is established and implemented

- EUHSD adheres to the general guidance of state and local public health guidance related to isolation and quarantine of individuals who test positive for COVID-19 and close contacts of those individuals.

Competition between teams is permitted to begin only if:

- Teams provide COVID-19 testing and results within a 48 hour period in advance of competition in high contact risk sports.
- Athletics departments have considered how best to secure reasonable assurance that the same risks have been adequately considered and addressed by other teams. This includes consideration of how to share testing results and related safety assurances with opposing teams before the start of an event in a manner consistent with applicable health information and education privacy laws.
- Schools are able to notify other schools should an athlete from one team test positive within 48 hours after competition with another team.
- Schools utilize the same contact tracing resources (personnel and procedures) they would use for tracing contacts on campus.

Adherence to the guidelines in this plan is necessary to reopen EUHSD athletics, failure to do so could result in illnesses that may cause our athletic training and competition to be temporarily closed or limited.

Required Use of Face Coverings

In accordance with CDPH Guidance on the Use of Face Coverings, all individuals participating or involved with EUHSD athletics, including coaches, staff, and players not engaged in play, are subject to these requirements. These requirements include:

Athletic Facilities

Before beginning training or competition, each school site has performed a comprehensive risk assessment of all work and athletic areas, and identified a person at each facility to implement the plan. EUHSD has designated a person responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns for athletics overall, and for each team or sport, this individual is:

- Available to all coaches, staff, and athletes for contact regarding Covid-19 safety
- Communicates with the local health department about any COVID-19 athlete or staff cases or outbreaks
- Trains and communicate with staff, representatives, and athletes on the plan and makes the plan publicly available
- Regularly evaluates the facility for compliance with the plan and documents and corrects deficiencies identified.

- Investigates any COVID-19 illness and determines if any work-related or athletic-related factors could have contributed to risk of infection.
- Updates the plan as needed to prevent further cases.
- Implements the processes and protocols when a workplace has an outbreak, in accordance with CDPH guidelines and orders from the local health department.

Adhere to the guidelines below. Failure to do so could result in illnesses that may cause operations to be temporarily closed or limited.

Athlete and Staff Training

EUHSD will provide athletes, staff, and coaches an education session on COVID-19 upon or before return to training and competition, including additional topics such as:

- Risks COVID-19 poses for athletes
- Proper use of face coverings, including:
 - Face coverings are not personal protective equipment (PPE), and only limit protection from respiratory viruses
 - Face coverings can help prevent exposure of people near the wearer and the wearer, but do not replace the need for physical distancing and frequent hand washing.
 - Face coverings must cover the nose and mouth.
 - Avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - Face coverings must not be shared and should be washed or discarded after extended use.
 - When face coverings must be worn and the exemptions
- Reminding that all individuals should be aware of their daily activity and high-risk contacts (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes).
- Protocols for reporting any symptoms.

Individual Control Measures and Screening

Protocols to control the spread of Covid-19 include:

- Limiting building or facility entry points when possible
- Recommending self-screening at home as well as providing symptom and health screenings for all staff and athletes entering the facility or event. Making sure the temperature/symptom screener avoids close contact with staff and athletes to the extent possible.
- Athletes and staff are screened for fever and COVID-19 symptoms or exposure before each conditioning session, team meeting, practice or competition
 - Temperature checked for fever (>100°F)
 - Asked if they have had a new cough, a new sore throat, shortness of breath, new onset of loss of taste or smell, vomiting, or diarrhea

- Asked whether they have had an exposure to a known or suspected COVID-19 case in the previous 14 days
- Requiring staff to use gloves when handling items contaminated by body fluids.
- Requiring coaches or referees moving items used by athletes (e.g., balls) or handling trash bags to use disposable gloves (and wash hands before putting them on and after removing them) or wash hands before and after handling shared items.
- Limiting any nonessential visitors, staff, and volunteers as much as possible.
- Limited spectators during training or competition.

EUHSD has established procedures for regular periodic testing of athletes and staff participating in athletics for COVID-19 in accordance with CDPH guidance and in discussion with the local health department. This includes weekly COVID-19 antigen testing of athletes and support staff involved in athletics.

Isolation & Quarantine

EUHSD is committed to adherence with appropriate isolation and quarantine procedures for contact sport practice and competition by following the [SDCOE Covid-19 Symptom Decision Tree](#).

Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols, Ventilation and Sharing of Objects

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Each site/facility will implement cleaning and disinfecting protocols by:

- Performing thorough cleaning and disinfection of surfaces in high-traffic areas, including locker rooms, dugouts, benches, stairwell handrails, chairs, doors/door handles, etc., as appropriate.
- Identifying staff members or volunteers to ensure proper cleaning and disinfection of objects and equipment, particularly for any shared equipment or frequently touched surfaces.
- Cleaning touchable surfaces between shifts or between users, whichever is more frequent
- Developing and implementing a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.
- Providing time for staff to implement cleaning practices during their shift. Cleaning assignments should be assigned during working hours as part of the staff members' job duties.

- Ensuring sanitary facilities always stay operational and stocked, and provide additional soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizer when needed.
- When choosing disinfecting chemicals, sites should use products approved for use against COVID-19 on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved list and follow product instructions, as indicated in EUHSD's Covid Safety Plan

Ventilation

The district will promote practices encouraging use of ventilated areas by:

- Considering installation of portable high-efficiency air cleaners, upgrading the building's air filters to the highest efficiency possible, or making other modifications to increase the quantity of outside air and ventilation in all working areas.
- Ensuring indoor practice and game spaces are large indoor areas with good ventilation and air exchange.

Sharing of Objects

Each site/facility will implement practices discouraging the use of shared objects. Some of these practices include:

- Avoiding the use of shared objects and equipment (e.g., balls, bats, golf flags), or cleaning between use by each individual if possible. athletes will not share towels, clothing, or other items they use to wipe their faces or hands.
- Avoiding sharing equipment or balls as much as possible. For applicable sports, balls should be rotated on a regular basis to limit contact by multiple users until disinfected. For example, in baseball and softball umpires should limit their contact with the ball unless wearing gloves, and catchers should retrieve foul balls and passed balls where possible. Balls used in infield/outfield warm-up should be isolated from a shared ball container.
- Ensuring that there are adequate supplies of items to minimize sharing of equipment to the extent possible, for example by labeling and assigning them to individuals (e.g., protective gear, balls, bats, water bottles); otherwise, limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of players at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
- Increasing fresh air circulation in indoor facilities by opening windows or doors, if possible.
- Establish hand sanitizer dispensers at entrances and high contact areas

Physical Distancing Guidelines

Each site/facility will implement protocols meant to encourage physical distancing by:

- Prioritizing outdoor practice and play, as much as possible.

- Train in cohorts or small stable groups, for example, a cohort may be composed all members of the same team including coaches and staff, who consistently work out and participate in activities together. Cohorts should avoid mixing with other groups.
- Keep different cohorts separate to the greatest extent possible. Consider using signs, cones, or tape to make dividing lines clear.
- Athletes and coaches should maintain at least six feet of separation from others when not on the field of play or otherwise engaged in play/activity, where feasible, by:
 - Creating reasonable distance between players when explaining drills, rules of the game, or huddling.
 - Limiting the number of players sitting in confined player seating areas (e.g., dugouts) by allowing players to spread out into spectator areas if more space is available.
 - Prohibiting unnecessary physical contact such as high fives, handshake lines, and other physical contact with teammates, opposing teams, coaches, umpires, and fans.
 - Considering using physical guides, such as signs and tape on floors or playing fields, to make sure that coaches and players remain at least six feet apart.
 - Maintaining at least six feet of distance between players while participating in the sport whenever possible (e.g., during warm-up, skill-building activities, simulation drills).
- Maintain six feet of separation between officials and others and when interacting with athletes and coaches off the field of play. Officials should avoid exchanging documents or equipment with players and coaches.
- If practice or competition facilities must be shared, increasing the amount of time between practices and competitions to allow for one group to leave before another group enters the facility. For facilities that may be shared with the broader campus community, dedicate separate time for team use. If possible, allow time for cleaning and/or disinfecting.
- Encouraging physical distancing protocols in any high-density, high traffic areas.
- Holding meetings and training of more than 25 persons virtually, and in-person meetings may have a maximum of 25 persons. Meetings should occur outdoors, and in areas that allow for appropriate physical distancing between staff, athletes or other workers.
- Staggering breaks to maintain physical distancing protocols.

Food and Dining

- All players, coaches, and referees should bring their own individual water or drink bottles.
- Drink bottles should be labeled with the name of the owner.
- Do not provide team water coolers or shared drinking stations.
- Teams may also provide bottled water.
- If food is provided, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for players instead of a buffet or family-style meal.
- Prohibit the use of:

- Self-service condiment caddies, utensil caddies, napkins, lids, straws, water pitchers, to-go containers, etc.
 - Self-service machines, including ice, soda, frozen yogurt dispensers, etc.
 - Self-service food areas, such as buffets, salsa bars, salad bars, etc.

Travel during Competition

- Travel should be limited to essential personnel (e.g., athletes, coaches, medical staff).
- When possible, teams should drive to events.
 - If using more than one vehicle, travel parties should be split according to those already with the closest contact (e.g., cohorts)
 - Face coverings must be worn and removed only minimally for eating or drinking.
 - If traveling by bus, try to maximize physical distancing to the extent possible.
- When traveling to away games, teams must remain in a team cohort, with no mixing with the local teams or other members of the host community.

Return to Facility or Training after a Positive Test

In order for an athlete or staff member to return to facilities, training, or competition after a positive COVID-19 test, the district will insure that we:

- Advise sick staff and athlete-athletes not to return until they have met local county public health criteria to discontinue home isolation
- Instruct athletes to work with their medical provider and any team medical staff member to determine how to be cleared to safely return to training. Return to activity in all cases should allow an acclimatization process.