

Venango Region Catholic School

RETURN TO PLAY PLAN

In Accordance with the VRCS Return to School Plan

Venango Region Catholic School (VRCS) will take the necessary precautions and recommendations from the federal, state, and local governments, CDC, PA DOH, as well as the NFHS and PIAA. VRCS realizes the knowledge regarding COVID-19 is constantly changing as new information and treatments become available. These recommendations will be adjusted as needed as new information becomes available to decrease the risk of exposure for our staff, students, and spectators.

The purpose of this policy is to allow our coaches to begin organizing voluntary practices with our student-athletes in a measured and controlled environment while performing cautious methods/tactics for conditioning, strength, individual skill development, and team-oriented trainings.

With a suitable line of communication between the athletic department, coaches, student-athletes, and parent/guardian(s), this will provide an effective component that will allow a safe environment for everyone involved in voluntary summer training sessions. Athletic Director of VRCS Ron Bair, will be the primary contact throughout this whole process and will coordinate with everyone to make sure all practices will be organized. VRCS President Laura Blake and VRCS Principal Katie Chandley will be the secondary contact.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented athletics across the world with challenges. The COVID-19 virus is a highly contagious illness that primarily attacks the upper respiratory system. The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages. Research from the Centers for Disease Control, among others, has found that while children do get infected by COVID-19, relatively few children with COVID-19 are hospitalized. However, some severe outcomes have been reported in children, and a child with a mild or even asymptomatic case of COVID-19 can spread the infection to others who may be far more vulnerable. While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of furthering the spread of COVID-19, the current science suggests there are many steps schools can take to reduce the risks to students, coaches, and their families.

RECOMMENDATIONS ALL LEVELS – Elementary and Jr./ Sr. High Athletics:

1. Athletes, Coaches, and Staff will undergo a COVID- 19 health screening before any practice, event, or team meeting. The type of screening will be dependent upon the available resources and the phase level. The purpose is to check for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The screenings will range from a verbal/written questionnaire to a temperature check. Temperatures at 100.4 or higher will be sent home.
2. Promote healthy hygiene practices such as hand washing (30 seconds with warm water and soap) and employees wearing a cloth face covering as feasible. Face coverings are recommended to help decrease potential exposure to COVID-19 respiratory droplets by an infected individual. Face Coverings will not be used for athletes while practicing or competing. Hand Sanitizer stations will be available for the teams, and fans.
3. Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation in all facilities
4. Encourage social distancing through increased spacing, small groups, and limited mixing between groups, if feasible
5. Educate athletes, coaches, and staff on health and safety protocols
6. Anyone who is sick must stay home
7. Plan in place if a student or employee gets sick
8. Regularly communicate and monitor developments with local authorities, employees, and families regarding cases, exposures, and updates to policies and procedures
9. Athletes and coaches MUST provide their water bottle for hydration. Water bottles must not be shared.
10. PPE (gloves, masks, eye protection) will be used as needed and situations warrant, or determined by local/state governments.
11. Students should come dressed for activity
12. Student-athletes should remain with their assigned groups during each workout and during daily workouts to limit the number of people they come in contact with.
13. No students allowed in training areas without the presence of a coach
14. Concession stands or other food must adhere to the Guidance for Businesses in the Restaurant Industry

CLASSIFICATION OF SPORTS

High Risk: Sports that involve close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants. Examples: football, wrestling, cheerleading (stunts), dance, etc.

Moderate Risk: Sports that involve close, sustained contact, but with protective equipment in place that may reduce the likelihood of respiratory particle transmission between participants OR intermittent close contact OR group sports that use equipment that can't be cleaned between participants. Examples: basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball, soccer, tennis, etc.

Low Risk: Sports that can be done with social distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between uses by competitors. Examples: running events, cross country etc.

** High/Moderate Risk Sports may move to a Low-risk category with non-contact modifications. Team Activities should be limited to individual skill development drills that maintain social distancing.

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

Level 1 (PA State Red) Team Activities: No In-person gatherings allowed, Athletes and Coaches may communicate via online meetings (zoom, google meet, etc.). Athletes may participate in individual home workouts including strength and conditioning.

- All school facilities remain closed as per the PA State Guidelines.
- Athletes and Coaches should abide by guidelines set forth by the local and state governments.

Level 2 (PA State Yellow or Green) Team Activities may include: team meetings, open gym, kick around, weight training/conditioning, running events, cross country, throwing events, swimming, golf, and sideline cheer, etc. Pre-workout Screening:

- All coaches and students should be screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 before a workout. The screening will be a temperature check and symptoms questionnaire.
- Responses to screening questions for each person should be recorded and stored so that there is a record of everyone present in case a student develops COVID-19
- Any person with positive symptoms reported should not be allowed to take part in workouts and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate health care professional. A clearance may be required to return to play.

FACILITIES CLEANING

- Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate any communicable disease
- Athletic Facilities should be cleaned before arrival and post workouts and team gatherings, high touch areas should be cleaned more often
- Weight Room Equipment should be wiped down after an individual's use
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times in the weight room to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment surfaces
- Equipment and room will be disinfected after every use by the Coach
- Students should refrain from sharing clothing/towels and should be washed after each practice, including jerseys/pinnies
- Athletic equipment that may be used by multiple individuals (balls, shields, tackling dummies, etc.) should be cleaned intermittently during practice and events as deemed necessary, also after every session
- Hand Sanitizer should be used periodically throughout the session

HYDRATION

- Students **MUST** bring their water bottles. Water bottles must not be shared.
- Hydration stations (water coolers, water fountains, water cows, water troughs, etc.) should not be utilized.

POSITIVE CASES - COACHES, STAFF, OR ATHLETES SHOWING COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

What are the signs and symptoms of COVID-19? Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. The symptoms may range from mild to severe. Symptoms may include:

- Fever or chills (100.4 or High)

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Congestion/Runny Nose
- Sore Throat

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE IS SICK?

- If you are sick with COVID-19 or think you are infected with the virus, STAY AT HOME. You must take steps to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home or community. If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, call your healthcare provider for medical advice.
- Notify the school immediately (coach, athletic director, principal)
- It will be determined if others who may have been exposed (students, coaches, staff) need to be notified, isolated, and /or monitored for symptoms
- If a Positive case of COVID-19 is Diagnosed Contact Tracing will be implemented with the assistance of local health professionals and the CDC/PA DOH.

WHAT TO DO IF A STUDENT, COACH OR STAFF BECOME ILL WITH COVID-19 SYMPTOMS DURING PRACTICE, EVENT OR DURING TRANSPORTATION TO OR FROM AN EVENT?

- Every effort will be made to isolate the ill individual from others until the student or staff member can leave the school or event
- If student, parent/guardian will be contacted immediately, and arrangements will be made for the student to be picked up
- Student, coach or staff should have medical clearance from their physician or appropriate healthcare professional, determined to be non-contagious, Fever free (without fever-reducing medicine), improvement in respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath), no vomiting or diarrhea

