

VHSL Guidelines for Reopening Sports/Activities

Objective	<p>This document is intended to provide guidance for schools to consider with their stakeholders in designing return-to-activity protocols in accordance with state and county restrictions. It allows for a coordinated reopening following the initial stay at home orders and may also be used if conditions dictate the need for increased restrictions in the future.</p>
Position Statements	<p>The VHSL believes it is essential to the physical and mental well-being of students to return to physical activity and athletic competition.</p> <p>The VHSL recognizes that all Virginia students may be unable to return to – and sustain – athletic activity at the same time across the state. There will also likely be variation in what sports and activities are allowed over the next 9 to 12 months.</p> <p>While recognizing that county-by-county reopening may lead to inequities, the VHSL advocates for returning students to school-based athletics and activities as directed by state and local guidelines.</p> <p>Prior to allowing use of facilities, schools should review facility use agreements, especially in the areas of sanitation requirements and liability.</p>
Points of Emphasis	<p>Limited testing availability, lack of resources for contact tracing, and expanding knowledge of COVID-19 transmission could all result in significant changes to this guidance. The VHSL will disseminate more information as it becomes available.</p> <p>Administrators and coaches must emphasize the need for all coaches and participants who have signs or symptoms of illness to stay home when ill to decrease risk of viral transmission.</p> <p>Currently, the 2019-20 VHSL Physical Form expires on June 30, 2020. Therefore, any student-athlete must obtain a physical prior to any athletic participation moving forward dated after May 1, 2020. PPE's are an important way to screen student-athletes for conditions that may expose them to risk of injury, illness, or death due to athletic activity. The VHSL requires annual pre-participation exams prior to any athletic activity.</p> <p>Current pre-season conditioning and acclimatization models assume that athletes have deconditioned during the stay at home orders. The current pandemic may result in students being deconditioned for several months. The intensity and duration of training should be moderated upon return. The NFHS is currently involved with several organizations in developing consensus guidelines for the resumption of workouts and practices.</p> <p>Due to the possibility of recurrent outbreaks in the coming months, schools must be prepared for periodic school closures and the possibility of some teams having to isolate for two or more weeks while in-season. Development of policies is recommended regarding practice and/or competition during temporary school closures, the cancellation of contests during the regular season, and parameters for the cancellation or premature ending to postseason events/competitions.</p> <p>Phases are in accordance with guidelines published by the Commonwealth of Virginia and are subject to change. Please note that counties must meet “gating” criteria to establish Phase One and that further criteria must be met to advance from one phase to the next. These criteria will be determined by the Governor’s Office and/or VDH/VDOE and should be strictly followed.</p>
Athletic Training Services	<p>Given the coming financial crisis at the state and local levels, the NFHS SMAC fears that athletic trainer positions will be seen as a “luxury” and those positions will be at risk during the budgeting process. It is also assumed that athletic trainers supplied to high schools by hospitals and sports medicine clinics are also at risk as many medical clinics and hospitals have suffered severe revenue loss during the pandemic.</p> <p>Athletic trainers in high schools are positioned to play a vital role as sports return following this pandemic. As health-care professionals, they can take lead roles in developing and implementing infection control policy throughout the school. Whenever needed, state associations and their SMACs should promote the importance of athletic trainers in high schools and their role in injury evaluation, treatment and risk minimization as well as being a vital component of any return-to-school and athletics plan.</p>
Guiding Principles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical and mental well-being of students. 2. Health and safety of all involved in sports: athletes, coaches, sports medicine, volunteers, school officials. Individuals who are at higher risk for severe disease should take extra precautions or sometimes choose not to participate. This includes individuals who: have chronic lung disease, moderate or severe asthma, serious heart conditions, immunocompromised or take immune-suppressant medication, severely obese, diabetes, chronic kidney disease or dialysis, or those over 65 years. CDC Guidelines can be found here. 3. There is a near certainty of recurrent outbreaks in the coming months. 4. Phases 1, 2, and 3 are based on disease prevalence and community transmission (VHSL Phases match Commonwealth phases). It is possible that a school may move up or down the Phase level. This movement, in either direction, will be dependent upon disease prevalence, community transmission, and guidance from local/state public health officials. 5. Permitted activities may fluctuate based on which Phase the school is in. Permitted activities could include: skill-building drills at home, team practice, within-team competition, competition with teams from a specific area, or full competition from different areas. 6. Returning to activities should also take into account that most of the student-athletes will be deconditioned. They will require a prolonged acclimatization and progression of intensity of activities. This especially applies to student-athletes with sickle cell trait.

	VHSL Phase One	VHSL Phase Two	VHSL Phase Three
Facilities Cleaning	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	<p>Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities. VDH recommends a minimum of every 2 hours and disinfect after every use of any shared equipment.</p> <p>Athletic Training facilities may be utilized if adhering to the cleaning, occupancy limits, and physical distancing. VDH Guidelines can be found here.</p> <p>Prior to an individual or groups of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within that facility should be wiped down and sanitized (chairs, furniture in meeting rooms, weight room equipment, bathrooms, athletic training room tables, etc.). A list of EPA approved disinfectants can be found here.</p> <p>Weight equipment should be wiped down thoroughly before and after an individual's use of equipment.</p> <p>Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap or use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol before touching any surfaces or participating in workouts.</p> <p>VDH recommends hand sanitizer be available to individuals as they transfer from place to place, especially entrances/exits.</p> <p>Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment/surfaces.</p> <p>Any equipment such as weight benches, athletic pads, etc. having holes with exposed foam should be covered and disinfected. If equipment cannot be thoroughly disinfected it should not be used.</p> <p>Students must be encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning home.</p>	<p>Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities.</p> <p>Athletic Training facilities may be utilized if adhering to the cleaning, occupancy limits, and physical distancing. VDH Guidelines can be found here.</p> <p>Prior to an individual or groups of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within that facility should be wiped down and sanitized (chairs, furniture in meeting rooms, weight room equipment, bathrooms, athletic training room tables, etc.). A list of EPA approved disinfectants can be found here.</p> <p>Weight equipment should be wiped down thoroughly before and after an individual's use of equipment.</p> <p>Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap or use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol before touching any surfaces or participating in workouts.</p> <p>VDH recommends hand sanitizer be available to individuals as they transfer from place to place, especially entrances/exits.</p> <p>Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment/surfaces.</p> <p>Students must be encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning home.</p>
Entrance/Exit Strategies	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	<p>To limit crossover and contact between persons and to prevent groups from gathering, consider separate entrances/exits and staggering starting/ending times for workouts and other athletic activities.</p> <p>Consider posting CDC signage at entrances / exits. See CDC Print Resources link in the Additional Resources/Links/Signage section.</p>	<p>To limit crossover and contact between persons and to prevent groups from gathering, consider separate entrances/exits and staggering starting/ending times for workouts and other athletic activities.</p> <p>Consider posting CDC signage at entrances / exits. See CDC Print Resources link in the Additional Resources/Links/Signage section.</p>
Limitations on Gatherings	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	<p>Indoor practices/activities may occur if at least 10 feet of physical distance can be maintained by all persons (including participants, coaches, etc.) at all times. The total number of attendees (including participants, coaches, etc.) cannot exceed the lesser of 30% of the occupancy load of the room in which the activity is being held or 50 persons. No spectators allowed during practices.</p> <p>Outdoor practices/activities are allowable if at least 10 feet of physical distance can be maintained by all persons (including participants, coaches, etc.) at all times. The total number of attendees (including participants, coaches, etc.) cannot exceed the lesser of 50% of the occupancy load of the venue or 50 persons.</p> <p>Workouts should be conducted in "pods" of students/coaches with the same 5-10 students/coaches working out together weekly to limit overall exposure. Smaller pods can be utilized for weight training.</p>	<p>Indoor practices/activities may occur if at least 10 feet of physical distance can be maintained by all persons (including participants, coaches, etc.) at all times. The total number of attendees (including participants, coaches, etc.) cannot exceed the lesser of 50% of the occupancy load of the room in which the activity is being held or 250 persons. No spectators allowed during practices.</p> <p>Outdoor practices/activities are allowable if at least 10 feet of physical distance can be maintained by all persons (including participants, coaches, etc.) at all times. The total number of attendees (including participants, coaches, etc.) cannot exceed the lesser of 50% of the occupancy load of the venue or 250 persons. No spectators allowed during practices.</p> <p>Workouts should be conducted in "pods" of students/coaches with the same 5-10 students/coaches working out together weekly to limit overall exposure. Smaller pods can be utilized for weight training.</p>

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Pre-Workout Screening	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	<p>Plan for daily health screening questions of staff and students.</p> <p>Responses to screening questions for each person should be recorded and stored. Screening and record keeping should meet local HR and OSHA requirements.</p> <p>Any person with positive symptoms reported should not be allowed to participate, should self-isolate, and contact their primary care provider or other health-care professional. Return to participation guidelines will be developed by local school divisions. VDH guidelines can be found here and CDC guidelines can be found here.</p> <p>Vulnerable individuals should not supervise or participate in any workouts during Phase 2 as defined by the local school system.</p>	<p>Plan for daily health screening questions of staff and students.</p> <p>Responses to screening questions for each person should be recorded and stored. Screening and record keeping should meet local HR and OSHA requirements.</p> <p>Any person with positive symptoms reported should not be allowed to participate, should self-isolate, and contact their primary care provider or other health-care professional. Return to participation guidelines will be developed by local school divisions. VDH guidelines can be found here and CDC guidelines can be found here.</p> <p>Vulnerable individuals can resume public interactions but should practice physical distancing and minimize exposure to social settings where physical distancing may not be practical unless other precautionary measures are taken.</p>
Face Coverings	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	<p>State, local or school district guidelines for cloth face coverings should be strictly followed.</p> <p>Cloth face coverings should be considered acceptable. There is no need to require or recommend “medical grade” masks for physical activity. All students should wear face coverings when physical distancing is not possible.</p> <p>Executive Order 63 allows an exemption for face coverings when individuals are exercising or using exercise equipment.</p> <p>One piece plastic shields covering the entire face will not be allowed during participation due to the risk of unintended injury to the person wearing the shield or others.</p> <p>Coaches, officials and other contest personnel should wear cloth face coverings at all times and are strongly encouraged to wear cloth face coverings whenever physical distancing is not possible. Anyone with an identified health condition may be exempt from face covering policy. (Artificial noisemakers such as an air horn or a timer system with an alarm can be used to signal in place of a traditional whistle.)</p> <p>Face coverings should be laundered on a daily basis and hands should be washed after touching/adjusting face coverings.</p>	<p>State, local or school district guidelines for cloth face coverings should be strictly followed.</p> <p>Cloth face coverings should be considered acceptable. There is no need to require or recommend “medical grade” masks for physical activity. All students should wear face coverings when physical distancing is not possible.</p> <p>Executive Order 63 allows an exemption for face coverings when individuals are exercising or using exercise equipment.</p> <p>One piece plastic shields covering the entire face will not be allowed during participation due to the risk of unintended injury to the person wearing the shield or others.</p> <p>Coaches, officials and other contest personnel should wear cloth face coverings at all times and are strongly encouraged to wear cloth face coverings whenever physical distancing is not possible. Anyone with an identified health condition may be exempt from face covering policy. (Artificial noisemakers such as an air horn or a timer system with an alarm can be used to signal in place of a traditional whistle.)</p> <p>Face coverings should be laundered on a daily basis and hands should be washed after touching/adjusting face coverings.</p>
Hygiene Practices	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	<p>Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap or use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol before touching any surfaces or participating in workouts.</p> <p>Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow. Avoid touching your face.</p> <p>Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces. VDH recommends disinfecting every two hours or after every use of any shared equipment.</p> <p>Strongly consider using face coverings while in public, and particularly when using mass transit.</p> <p>Students must be encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning home.</p>	<p>Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap or use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol before touching any surfaces or participating in workouts.</p> <p>Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow. Avoid touching your face.</p> <p>Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces as much as possible. Strongly consider using face coverings while in public, and particularly when using mass transit.</p>

	VHSL Phase One	VHSL Phase Two	VHSL Phase Three
Hydration/Food	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	All students must bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared. Food should not be shared. Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) should not be utilized.	All students must bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared. Food should not be shared. Hydration stations may be used for refilling of personal bottles but must be cleaned after each practice or contest.
Travel	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Keep it local and avoid cross county travel when possible, especially if counties are in different phases.	Keep it local and avoid cross county travel when possible, especially if counties are in different phases.
Locker Rooms and Athletic Training Room	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	If locker rooms or meeting rooms are used, there must be a minimum distance of 10 feet between each individual at all times. Shower use should not be allowed at schools. Athletes are encouraged to shower and change clothing immediately upon returning home. Athletic Training facilities may be utilized if adhering to the cleaning, occupancy limits, and physical distancing.	If locker rooms or meeting rooms are used, there must be a minimum distance of 6 feet between each individual at all times. Shower use should not be allowed at schools. Athletes are encouraged to shower and change clothing immediately upon returning home. Athletic Training facilities may be utilized if adhering to the cleaning, occupancy limits, and physical distancing.
Weight Rooms	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Weight equipment should be wiped down thoroughly before and after an individual's use of equipment. Maximum lifts should be limited and power cages should be used for squats and bench presses. Allowable exercises should be individual based. If a spotter is needed, they should stand at each end of the bar. All equipment should be disinfected after each use.	Weight equipment should be wiped down thoroughly before and after an individual's use of equipment. Maximum lifts should be limited and power cages should be used for squats and bench presses. Allowable exercises should be individual based. If a spotter is needed, they should stand at each end of the bar. All equipment should be disinfected after each use.
Physical Activity and Athletic Equipment	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	There should be no shared athletic equipment (towels, clothing, shoes, or sports specific equipment) between students. Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing). Individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout. Use disposable towels and linens when possible. Individual drills requiring the use of athletic equipment are permissible, but the equipment should be cleaned prior to use by the next individual. Recommend disinfecting all equipment between each group usage. Physical contact such as high-fives, fist bumps, and hugs should not be allowed.	Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing). Individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout. Use disposable towels and linens when possible. Individual drills requiring the use of athletic equipment are permissible, but the equipment should be cleaned prior to use by the next individual. Recommend disinfecting all equipment between each group usage. Athletic equipment such as bats, balls, sleds, tackling dummies, batting helmets, and catchers gear may be used. Equipment should be disinfected frequently before, during, and after practices. Other equipment, such as wrestling ear guards, football helmets/other pads, lacrosse helmets/gloves/eyewear should be worn by only one individual and not shared.

General Activity Description	No Athletics or Activities are Permitted	Individual Skill Development and Workouts Maintain Physical Distancing; No Contact with Others; No Sharing of Equipment	Individual or Team Based Practice, Skill Building Drills or Conditioning Activities That Allow Physical Distancing at All Times.
Lower Infection Risk Activities	Activities that can be done with physical distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between use by competitors.		
Golf	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Maintain appropriate physical distancing 10 feet apart.	Maintain appropriate physical distancing 10 feet apart.
Gymnastics	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Conditioning, individual drill or skill development. All equipment and event apparatus should be cleaned after each athlete uses equipment. No chalk bowls are allowed.	Conditioning, individual drill or skill development. All gymnast and team equipment should be disinfected frequently before, during, and after practices. No chalk bowls are allowed.
Swimming	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Relays must maintain physical distancing.	Relays must maintain social distancing.
Tennis	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Conditioning, no sharing of balls, each player may use their own can of balls to serve and use racket to pass other balls (singles only), ball machine use by individuals only. Players may do individual drills, wall volleys and serves. Wipe down rackets, tennis balls, and equipment after each use.	Conditioning, individual or team based skill development allowed. All player and team equipment should be disinfected frequently before, during, and after practices.
Forensics/Debate	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Follow your school's established protocols for physical distancing and mitigation in classroom and performance spaces	Follow your schools established protocols for social distancing and mitigation in classroom and performance spaces.
Scholastic Bowl	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Follow your schools established protocols for physical distancing and mitigation in classroom and performance spaces.	Follow your schools established protocols for social distancing and mitigation in classroom and performance spaces.
E-sports	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Follow your school's established protocols for physical distancing and mitigation in classroom and performance spaces.	Follow your schools established protocols for social distancing and mitigation in classroom and performance spaces.

General Activity Description	No Athletics or Activities are Permitted	Individual Skill Development and Workouts Maintain Physical Distancing; No Contact with Others; No Sharing of Equipment	Individual or Team Based Practice, Skill Building Drills or Conditioning Activities That Allow Physical Distancing at All Times.
Moderate Infection Risk Activities	Activities 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 OR sports that use equipment that can't be cleaned between participants. Note: Volleyball*, Baseball*, Softball*, Gymnastics* Could potentially be considered "Lower Infection Risk" with appropriate cleaning of equipment and use of face coverings by participants.		
Baseball	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Conditioning and tee work. Players should not share gloves or bats or throw a baseball that will be tossed among the team. A single player may hit in cages, throw batting practice (with netting as backstop, no catcher). Prior to another athlete using the same balls, they should be collected and cleaned individually.	Conditioning, individual or team based skill development allowed. All player and team equipment should be disinfected frequently before, during, and after practices.
Cross Country	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Runners should maintain at least 10 feet of distancing between individuals, with no grouping (i.e., starts and finishes).	Runners should maintain at least 10 feet of distancing between individuals, no grouping (i.e. starts and finishes).
Softball	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Conditioning and tee work. Players should not share gloves or bats or throw a softball that will be tossed among the team. A single player may hit in cages, throw batting practice (with netting as backstop, no catcher). Prior to another athlete using the same balls, they should be collected and cleaned individually.	Conditioning, individual or team based skill development allowed. All player and team equipment should be disinfected frequently before, during, and after practices
Track & Field	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Runners should maintain at least 10 feet of distancing between individuals, with no grouping (i.e., starts and finishes). No sharing of implements / equipment. Padded equipment should be cleaned after each use by an athlete.	Runners should maintain at least 10 feet of distancing between individuals, with no grouping (i.e. starts and finishes). All athlete, team, and padded equipment should be disinfected frequently before, during, and after practices.
Theatre	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Follow your schools established protocols for physical distancing and mitigation in classroom and performance spaces.	Follow your schools established protocols for social distancing and mitigation in classroom and performance spaces.
Robotics	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Follow your schools established protocols for physical distancing and mitigation in classroom and performance spaces.	Follow your schools established protocols for social distancing and mitigation in classroom and performance spaces.

General Activity Description	No Athletics or Activities are Permitted	Individual Skill Development and Workouts Maintain Physical Distancing; No Contact with Others; No Sharing of Equipment	Individual or Team Based Practice, Skill Building Drills or Conditioning Activities That Allow Physical Distancing at All Times.
Higher Infection Risk Activities	Activities that involve close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants.		
Basketball	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Conditioning, individual ball skill drills, no contact or sharing of balls. A player may shoot with a ball(s), but a team should not practice/pass a basketball among the team where multiple players touch the same ball.	Conditioning, individual or team based skill development allowed. All player and team equipment should be disinfected frequently before, during, and after practices.
Competition Cheerleading	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Conditioning and individual technique/choreography work. Students may not practice/perform partner or group stunts. Chants, jumps, dance, tumbling without contact are permissible as long as at least 10 feet of physical distancing is adhered to.	Conditioning, individual or team based skill development allowed. All team equipment should be disinfected frequently before, during, and after practices.
Field Hockey	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Conditioning, individual drills, each player has her own ball. A player should not use a field hockey ball that others touch in any manner. Goalie equipment should be cleaned after each use and should not be shared.	Conditioning, individual or team based skill development allowed. All team and goalie equipment should be disinfected frequently before, during, and after practices.
Football	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Conditioning and individual drills. A player should not participate in drills with a football that will be handed off or passed to other teammates. Contact with other players is not allowed, and there should be no sharing of tackling dummies / donuts / sleds. Protective equipment prohibited.	Conditioning, individual or team based skill development allowed. All player and team equipment should be disinfected frequently before, during, and after practices. Protective equipment prohibited.
Lacrosse (Boy's and Girl's)	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Conditioning, individual drills, each player has his own ball. A player should not use a lacrosse ball that others touch in any manner. Protective equipment prohibited.	Conditioning, individual or team based skill development allowed. All team and goalie equipment should be disinfected frequently before, during, and after practices. Boys may wear helmets and gloves for safety concerns. Shoulder pads/elbow pads prohibited. Girls may wear eye goggles.
Soccer	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Conditioning, individual ball skill drills, each player has their own ball, feet only (no heading/use of hands), no contact.	Conditioning, individual or team based skill development allowed. All player and team equipment should be disinfected frequently before, during, and after practices.
Volleyball	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Conditioning, individual ball handling drills, each player has their own ball. A player should not use a volleyball that others touch or hit in any manner.	Conditioning, individual or team based skill development allowed. All player and team equipment should be disinfected frequently before, during, and after practices.
Wrestling	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	Conditioning, mirror drills with spacing, no contact. Wrestlers may skill and drill without touching a teammate (as long as at least 10 feet of physical distancing is adhered to).	Conditioning, individual or team based skill development allowed. All player and team equipment should be disinfected frequently before, during, and after practices.
Event Considerations	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 1.	No athletics or activities are permitted in Phase 2.	To be determined.
Additional Resources / Links / Signage	Phase Guidance for Virginia Schools Summary of Virginia's Phased Return to School Plan Virginia Department of Health-K12 Resources Health Plan Guidance Phase II Plan Submission Form for Public School Division Instructional Plan Guidance Instructional Plan Submission Link	CDC Considerations for Youth Sports CDC Recommendations Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings CDC Print Resources	NFHS Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletic and Activities NCAA Core Principles of Resocialization of Collegiate Sport White House Guidelines for Opening Up America Again