

# COVID-19 Guidance for Athletics



Updated August 2022

Hawai'i State  
Department of Education



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## **Introduction**

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE) is committed to continuing athletics for the school year 2022-2023. The Hawaii State Department of Health continues to recommend COVID-19 vaccines, including boosters, for everyone eligible.

We believe it is in the best interest of the athlete and team to do what is possible to keep everyone healthy and safe. The HIDOE COVID-19 guidance for athletics is intentionally layered, flexible, and aligned with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) COVID-19 Guidance for Schools, and the HIDOE COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidance for School Year 2022-2023. Each school is different and not every strategy outlined in this guidance can be practically implemented at every school. Therefore, multiple mitigation strategies are described.

The widespread availability of COVID-19 vaccines, high level of infection-induced and vaccine-induced immunity, increased access to testing, and effective treatments have allowed an adapted approach to COVID-19 prevention and mitigation. All guidance, including this document, is subject to change as new information regarding COVID-19 becomes available.

## **Requirements for Student-Athletes, Paid and Volunteer Coaches Effective August 22, 2022**

Screening testing for all student-athletes and staff is highly recommended.

Under the Department's requirements for new hires, paid and volunteer coaches are required to be fully vaccinated (i.e. two weeks after the final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine primary series) but can apply for a medical or religious exemption to vaccination in order to continue with athletic coaching activities.

## Summary of General Guidance for Athletics (July 2022)

**Students or staff who have been exposed to a person with COVID-19** regardless of vaccination status

(day 1 is the first full day after symptoms develop or test specimen was collected)

- Can immediately return to athletics if they do not have symptoms.
- Wearing a mask indoors is strongly recommended for 10 days following exposure.
- Getting tested is strongly recommended, at least 5 days after potential exposure even if asymptomatic.
- If symptoms develop immediately self isolate and get tested.

**POSITIVE for COVID-19** regardless of vaccination status

- Stay home until **all** following conditions are met
  - Must remain out of athletics until 10 days have passed since symptom onset or test collection if no symptoms.
  - 24 hours with no fever
  - Asymptomatic or improved symptoms
  - M.D. clearance needed to start return to play protocol for COVID-19, may start return to play protocol on day 6 if cleared by physician and under the supervision of their athletic health care trainer.

**Gradual Return to Play COVID-19**

- Athletes must complete an individualized gradual progression back to sports without development of symptoms.
- For those with mild or asymptomatic COVID-19 a minimum 3 day return to sport progression is recommended. (Each day is separated by a minimum of 24 hours and can continue as long as symptoms do not develop or increase.)
- For mild /asymptomatic cases this progression may start no sooner than **DAY 6** from the start of symptoms or from a positive test if the athlete was asymptomatic.
- Athletes must wear a mask during this progression.

# General Guidance for Athletics

## Assessing risk

Athletics should consider the available data on levels of local transmission and the capacity to implement appropriate mitigation measures. Specifically, all activities should follow state and local ordinances, if any, including mask wearing and limits on gathering sizes.

## Return to play following COVID-19 diagnosis, symptoms, or exposure

### Communication

***Staff and families should self-report to the school if they or their student-athletes have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive COVID-19 test, or were in close contact with someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days.***

[See Isolation and Exposure Guidance for K-12 Schools](#)

### COVID-19 Symptoms or Positive COVID-19 Test Result

Individuals who have COVID-19 symptoms or have tested positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, must isolate for five days. Return to school/work when all the following conditions are met:

1. Five full days have passed since symptoms first appeared or, if asymptomatic, five\* days after the positive test was collected; and
2. 24 hours with no fever without use of fever-reducing medications; and
3. Symptoms have improved; and
4. Must wear a well-fitting mask around others indoors from day 6 to day 10 after completing home isolation.

\*Individuals unable or unwilling to wear a mask and have tested positive must remain at home for 10 days, regardless of vaccination status.

### COVID-19-like Symptoms, Low Clinical Suspicion for COVID-19, and No Known Exposure to COVID-19

Individuals who have symptoms of illness, low clinical suspicion for COVID-19 (e.g., symptoms are associated with another cause such as asthma or allergy), and no known exposure to COVID-19 may be cleared to return to school/work/athletics sooner than five days when all the following conditions are met:

1. Negative COVID-19 test result\* OR a note from a licensed medical provider; and
2. 24 hours with no fever without use of fever-reducing medications; and
3. Symptoms have improved.

**\*The adult or parent/legal guardian of a minor may attest to the negative COVID-19 test result; documentation to the office or school is not required.**

### Isolation and Exposure

Quarantine is not required following household or other non-school related exposure and in-school exposure or exposure during a school-sponsored extracurricular activity such as

athletics, unless active clusters or outbreaks necessitate a temporary return to isolation to prevent ongoing transmission.

**Individuals exposed during athletics** may continue to attend school if asymptomatic and should:

- Getting tested is strongly recommended, at least 5 days after potential exposure to a person with COVID-19, even if not having symptoms.
- If symptoms develop, immediately self-isolate and get tested.
- Wearing a mask indoors is strongly recommended for 10 days following exposure.

\*Students and staff who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 30 days or less can return to athletics immediately if they do not have symptoms. Testing is not recommended for these people if they have no symptoms.

See the [Isolation and Exposure Guidance for K-12 Schools](#) and [COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidance for School Year 2022-23](#) for more information.

## **Return to play after testing positive for COVID-19**

### Positive COVID-19 Test Results Regardless of Vaccination Status for those Participating in Athletics

Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status must remain out of athletics until 10 days have passed since symptom onset or test collection date, even if asymptomatic. Students should not be excluded from in-person instruction when allowed to return from isolation.

Return to athletics when all the following conditions are met:

1. Ten full days have passed since symptoms first appeared or, if asymptomatic, ten\* days after the positive test was collected;
2. 24 hours with no fever without use of fever-reducing medications; and
3. Asymptomatic or improved symptoms;
4. Must have physician clearance;
5. Complete a graduated return to play protocol; and
6. Must wear a well-fitting mask around others from day 6 to day 10 after completing home isolation.

\*Individuals unable or unwilling to wear a mask and have tested positive must remain at home for 10 days, regardless of vaccination status.

Athletes who have recovered from COVID-19 must be cleared to return to sports by their physician and undergo further evaluation if they sustained any cardiac symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath, fatigue, palpitations or syncope. (see references below)

A positive cardiac screen or other concerning findings should prompt an electrocardiogram (ECG) and potential referral to a pediatric cardiologist for clearance.

Those with severe COVID-19 symptoms (ICU stay and/or intubation) or multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C), should be restricted from exercise for a duration of

three to six months. These athletes must be cleared to resume participation by their primary care physician and obtain a cardiology clearance.

For all athletes who have tested positive for COVID-19, a graduated return-to-play protocol is required. This graduated return to play process may begin after their isolation period ends, as long as they have physician, PA or APRN clearance. For mild /asymptomatic cases this progression may start no sooner than day 6 from the start of symptoms or from positive covid test if the athlete was asymptomatic. Athletes must wear a well fitting mask during this progression. Consideration for extending the progression should be given to athletes who experienced more severe COVID-19 symptoms as outlined below.

- Review and follow the latest American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) [COVID-19 Interim Guidance: Return to Sports](#)
- [Return to play medical referral form for COVID-19 revised August 2022](#)

### **Those who have recovered from COVID-19 in the Last 90 Days**

Students and staff who were diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 90 days should not participate in screening testing (routine testing for a person without symptoms or known exposure). Students and staff who are not vaccinated may be permitted to participate in athletics without screening testing for 90 days following their COVID-19 diagnosis date if the following conditions are met:

1. They remain asymptomatic.
2. They are not exposed to someone with COVID-19 in a non-school setting.
3. They must submit a letter from a medical provider that documents the COVID-19 diagnosis (first positive test) date.
4. For student athletes, the provider letter should also attest that the student is medically cleared to resume play following recovery from COVID-19.
5. Monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and isolate immediately if symptoms develop.

## **Mitigation Strategies that Reduce the Spread of COVID-19**

### **Stay Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccinations**

All students, families, teachers, and staff should stay up to date on all recommended COVID-19 vaccines for their age group. Staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccination is the most important strategy. People 6 months and older are now eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. Vaccination protects people from severe illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. Vaccination provides individual-level protection, and high vaccination coverage reduces the burden of COVID-19 on people, schools, healthcare systems, communities, and individuals who are not vaccinated or may not develop a strong immune response from the vaccines.

“Up to date” definition: People are up to date on their vaccines when they have received all [recommended vaccine doses](#) for their age group, including recommended booster doses. Vaccine recommendations are different depending on your age, the vaccine you first received,

and time since the last dose. Use [CDC's COVID-19 booster tool](#) to learn if and when you can get boosters to stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines.

## Stay Home When Sick

People with symptoms of infectious diseases, including COVID-19, [influenza](#), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and gastrointestinal infection, should stay home and get tested for COVID-19. Staying home when sick is an important mitigation strategy to keep COVID-19 and other common infectious diseases from spreading in schools. All HIDEOE staff, contracted service providers, visitors and students must complete a [Daily Wellness Check](#) each morning before going to school or work.

### [Daily Wellness Check](#) for COVID-19-like Symptoms

- Fever (higher than 100°F or hot to the touch)
- 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

If any symptoms of infectious illness or COVID-19 are present, stay home, test for COVID-19, and follow the DOH [Isolation and Exposure Guidance for K-12 Schools](#). Report any illness or positive COVID-19 test result to your school or supervisor. To inform response procedures, the school/office will need the date of the positive test and/or symptoms onset.

If someone develops symptoms or tests positive at school/work, they will be sent home. Those with symptoms who have not been tested, should be tested as soon as possible.

## Masks

Wearing a [well-fitting mask](#) consistently and correctly reduces the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory pathogens. Masks are highly effective and inexpensive tools to protect yourself and others.

- Individuals do not need to wear a masks in most outdoor settings
- Indoor masking is strongly encouraged but not required in the following situations
  - [COVID-19 community level](#) are medium or high
  - For 10 days following exposure to someone with COVID
  - For 5 days following travel.
- Individuals who have been diagnosed with or tested positive for COVID-19 must wear a well-fitting mask indoors on days 6-10 after completing home isolation. If someone is

unable or unwilling to wear a mask indoors and has tested positive with COVID-19, they must remain in isolation for 10 days, regardless of vaccination status.

## Hand Hygiene (Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette)

Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette (covering coughs and sneezes) is a mitigation strategy to keep from getting and spreading respiratory illnesses including COVID-19.

## Testing for COVID-19

Testing is a strategy that schools can implement to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Testing for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is useful for diagnosis when someone has symptoms or known exposure, or screening purposes, such as before high-risk and extracurricular activities. See CDC's [School Testing for COVID-19](#), updated March 24, 2022, and [HIDOE's COVID Testing webpage](#) for more information.

If COVID-19 testing is conducted at school, it must be in accordance with applicable rules and regulations such as training, proper PPE, CLIA certificate or waiver, and reporting to the DOH. Consent is required for individuals aged 18 years and older or from a parent or legal guardian for minor students to participate in COVID-19 testing.

### Self-Testing

[COVID-19 self-tests](#) help to identify positive cases and prevent transmission at school and in the community. These over-the-counter tests may be offered by the school/office when someone has symptoms or known exposure to COVID-19, to be taken home and used according to the instructions in the package. Most COVID-19 self-tests have storage temperature requirements between 35.6-86°F. See [COVID-19 Testing To Keep Schools Safe for best practices](#).

For additional information on testing, responding to COVID-19 cases, clusters/ outbreaks please see DOE [COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidance for School Year 2022-2023](#).

## Cluster

DOH K-12 Cluster definition: Three or more confirmed or probable cases of COVID-19 among students, teachers or staff within a specified core group in a 14-day period as long as those cases do not have suspected outside exposure (i.e., they are not close contacts of cases outside the school setting). Note: Identifying cases as part of a cluster does not necessarily imply that transmission has occurred in the site or at the event associated with the cluster.

In consultation with the DOH, active clusters may necessitate a temporary return to universal or targeted indoor masking requirements.

When there is a cluster on an athletic team (i.e., student athletes and/or coaches):

- Notify the entire team of the potential exposure;
  - Customize [this template](#) for group notification.
  - Provide [COVID-19 Potential Exposure Notification for K-12 Schools](#).

- When someone develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they must not participate in high-risk activities and should get tested.
- Recommend testing 5 days after the exposure, even if asymptomatic.
- Distribute self-tests to the team, if available.
- Strongly recommend masking for 10 days following exposure.

Individuals who test positive, regardless of vaccination status, must follow the return to play following COVID-19 symptoms or exposure, [see page 7](#).

## **Resources**

[Hawaii State Department of Health: COVID-19 Guidance for K-12 Schools](#)

[Hawaii State Department of Health Isolation and Exposure Guidance for K-12 Schools](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools and Early Care and Education Programs to Support Safe In-Person Learning](#)

[Multilingual Resources on COVID-19 translated into 24 different languages.](#)

[Keiki Heroes](#) has multilingual resources for young students.

[COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidance for School Year 2022-2023](#)