

All Youth Sports Policy

Updated December 7, 2021

This guidance issued by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) pertains to all youth recreational sports, including, but not limited to, school-based sports (high school and elementary school), travel clubs, private leagues and clubs, recreational leagues and centers, and park district sports programs. This guidance does NOT pertain to adult recreational sports, professional sports leagues, or college division level sports. This guidance supersedes all previously issued All Sports Guidance issued from IDPH and/or ISBE.

Indoor Sports

For sports played indoors, individuals aged 2 years and older who can medically tolerate a mask, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a mask and maintain physical distancing to the extent possible. This is in alignment with [Executive Order 2021-18](#), which requires universal indoor masking for youth in public and nonpublic schools serving students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 (pre-K-12), and in accordance with [Executive Order 2021-22](#), which requires statewide universal indoor masking. Individuals playing sports indoors must wear a mask during training, competition, other active exercise, and during other contacts that do not occur during gameplay, such as on the sideline or bench, in the locker room, during team meetings, in the weight room, on the team bus or when carpooling. Participants may remove their mask in limited circumstances, including when actively eating or drinking indoors or while participating in indoor sports when wearing a mask poses an injury risk as described by the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) (see “When should face masks be worn?”). The safest option for engaging in sports-related activities indoors, especially when not wearing a mask, is for those individuals to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. In instances when an individual is not fully vaccinated or when vaccination is medically contraindicated, the safest option for engaging in sports-related activities indoors, especially when not wearing a mask, is for the individual to receive a negative COVID-19 test result prior to competition, preferably within two days. When engaged in sports-related activities indoors without a mask, individuals should do so while maintaining physical distancing to the extent possible, at a recommended distance of 6 feet from others.

All spectators, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a mask in attendance at indoor youth sports events, including in a public or nonpublic pre-K-12 school setting.

Outdoor Sports

Regardless of vaccination status, individuals may engage in training, competition, and other active exercise without wearing a mask for all sports played outdoors, except where required by laws, rules, or regulations, including local business and workplace guidance. As recommended by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC; see “Consistent and Correct Mask Use”) and the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) (see “When should face masks be worn?”), individuals who are not fully vaccinated are encouraged to wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated, particularly in areas of [substantial to high](#)

[transmission](#).¹ This recommendation applies to training, competition, and other active exercise, and contacts with other unvaccinated individuals that do not occur during gameplay, such as on the sideline or bench, in the locker room, during team meetings, in the weight room, on the team bus or when carpooling, or during meals, especially when eating indoors.

Spectators who are not fully vaccinated should wear a mask in attendance at outdoor youth sports events if unable to maintain recommended physical distance of at least 6 feet from non-household members or if the event is held in a community with substantial to high transmission.

Communities with High Transmission

To protect in-person learning at school, CDC recommends that sports that involve sustained close contacts with others be canceled in communities with high transmission, unless all participants are fully vaccinated.

Vaccination Requirement for School Personnel Involved in Sports Activities

Pursuant to [Executive Order 2021-22](#) and [23 Ill. Admin. Code 6](#), some adults involved with youth sports may be classified as “school personnel” who are required to receive the first dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or a single-dose COVID-19 vaccine by September 19, 2021, and the second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series no later than October 19, 2021. For example, “school personnel” as defined includes any parent volunteers involved in youth sports activities who regularly come into close contact with others. Because school personnel have regular close contact with others at distances of less than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes at least once per week, schools must exclude school personnel, including those involved in youth sports, from the premises unless they are tested for COVID-19 at least weekly, beginning on September 19, 2021. Schools and other sports organizers are not required to supply the testing for individuals who are not fully vaccinated to meet the requirements of Executive Order 2021-22 and 23 Ill. Admin. Code 6. Testing to satisfy those requirements must be conducted on site at the school or school personnel must submit proof or confirmation of a negative test result obtained elsewhere. IDPH recommends that school personnel testing for COVID-19 to satisfy the requirements of Executive Order 2021-22 and 23 Ill. Admin. Code 6 be tested using a PCR test if available. For more information on the COVID-19 vaccination requirement for school personnel and others, review Executive Order 2021-22, 23 Ill. Admin. Code 6, and answers to [frequently asked questions \(FAQs\) on face covering and vaccination requirements](#) from the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity.

Screening Testing

CDC and IDPH recommend routine COVID-19 screening testing for individuals involved with youth sports. Coaches, trainers, officials, and other adults involved in youth sports activities who are not fully vaccinated should test for COVID-19 at least once per week, regardless of community transmission. Adults involved in

¹ CDC defines levels of community transmission as total new COVID-19 cases per 100,000 persons in the past seven days: low (0-9), moderate (10-49), substantial (50-99), and high (≥ 100). Sports organizers and participants can find recent information about new cases in their county from the [CDC](#) or [IDPH](#).

youth sports activities who are not fully vaccinated and are also school personnel as defined in Executive Order 2021-22 and 23 Ill. Admin. Code 6 may “count” the required weekly testing to satisfy the requirements in Executive Order 2021-22 and 23 Ill. Admin. Code 6 as the once weekly recommended screening test for sports. IDPH recommends that youth participants who are not fully vaccinated test for COVID-19 at least twice per week, regardless of sport played, and preferably within two days of competition. Because people who are fully vaccinated are [less likely to contract or transmit the virus](#) that causes COVID-19, [CDC guidance for fully vaccinated people](#) states that individuals who are fully vaccinated with no symptoms of COVID-19 and no known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 may refrain from being tested for COVID-19 in routine screening programs, such as testing for sports participation. CDC guidance also recommends that fully vaccinated individuals who come into close contact with someone with COVID-19 be tested 5 to 7 days after exposure and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days, including during sports-related activities. Fully vaccinated individuals who develop symptoms of COVID-19 should be tested immediately. For more information on screening testing, review IDPH [guidance](#) and [answers to FAQs](#) on testing for COVID-19 in schools and [CDC guidance for COVID-19 prevention in K-12 schools](#) (see “Screening Testing”).

Travel for Sports

Individuals may engage in sports-related activities for all sports without restrictions on travel. Before traveling for sports activities, IDPH recommends individuals review the most recent data on county-level transmission [across Illinois](#) or in [other states](#). If playing outside of Illinois, teams should avoid traveling to areas of higher risk as recommended in the [IDPH Travel Guidance](#).