



Fall Sports 2021 – COVID Safety Guidelines

Key guidance document: Washington State Department of Health’s [most recent guidance for schools](#), which was published on August 11, 2021

We are looking forward to a more typical season for our student athletes this fall, and it will take extra teamwork on the part of athletes, coaches, families and our other staff to keep our athletes healthy and playing.

We have summarized the most essential and relevant pieces of the [state Department of Health’s guidance](#) (DOH) for the start of the fall sports season. Please take time to review this summary, or read the full document if you’re interested. Questions? Contact Laurel Peak at laurel.peak@bellingshamschools.org.

High school fall sports

WIAA has classified each sport as low, moderate, or high contact.

	Indoor	Outdoor
Low Contact	Dance (no contact) Swimming	Tennis (singles) Cross Country Track and field
Moderate Contact	Cheerleading (high aerosolizing) Dance (contact) Volleyball	Soccer Tennis (doubles) Softball (slowpitch)
High Contact		Football

Overview of Prevention Measures ([page 2](#)):

Our athletic programs will follow the [Department of Health guidance](#) for prevention and mitigation strategies; however, we also recognize that choosing to engage in athletics is a choice that carries additional risk (and great reward!). Prevention and mitigation in athletics may look slightly different than prevention and mitigation in classrooms.

Vaccination ([page 3](#)):

We encourage all families and athletes to consider immunizing against COVID-19, not just for their individual health, but the health and safety of our schools and community. Fully immunized athletes do not need to quarantine if they are a close contact to a confirmed case. At this time, our athletic program will not collect student athletes’ vaccination status as a prerequisite to play; however, athletes’ immunization status will need to be shared in case of need for contact tracing.

Masks for athletes, coaches, volunteers and spectators ([pages 4, 5, 14, 15](#)):

The Department of Health guidelines **require** masks for all athletes and adults under these circumstances:

- Indoors when not practicing or competing
- In weight room
- On buses
- For all spectators indoors

The Department of Health guidelines **recommend** masks for all athletes and adults under these circumstances:

- When practicing indoors
- When unvaccinated athletes, coaches, athletic trainers and/or support personnel are in close proximity, such as standing on the sidelines, in a huddle, or sitting in a dugout.
- For vaccinated individuals who have been identified as close contacts of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

[Screening Testing \(page 9\)](#)

At BPS, our high-contact indoor sports are wrestling and basketball, both of which are winter sports. There are no high-contact indoor sports that take place in the fall season; however, cheerleading is categorized as a high aerosol-generating sport. For cheerleading, BPS will collect cheerleaders' vaccination status. For unvaccinated cheerleaders or those who don't wish to disclose their vaccination status, BPS will conduct screening testing.

[Responding to Cases of Suspected Cases of COVID-19 \(page 9\)](#)

If a student-athlete tests positive for COVID-19, our communications department and school administration will initiate our communication plan. If a coach or Athletic Coordinator learns of a positive COVID-19 case, they will immediately contact the athletic trainer, assistant principal, principal, or nurse.

If a student is at practice and demonstrates symptoms of COVID-19, coaches will immediately contact the athletic trainer or nurse. Depending on the situation, the student may be taken to the COVID isolation room or remain isolated while outside waiting to leave practice or competition.

[Returning to school and sports \(page 10\)](#)

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 will follow BPS COVID-19 protocols for contact tracing and return to school and activity. Coaches and athletic trainers will work closely with the Director of Health Services to ensure compliance with any quarantine and/or testing requirements prior to returning to school and sports.

[Contact Tracing and Quarantine \(pages 11-12\)](#)

If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 within any of our sports, we will follow our district contact tracing protocols. Our school nurses and athletic trainers will work together with district COVID lead and the Whatcom County Health Department to determine if someone needs to quarantine. Fully vaccinated individuals will not need to quarantine but should monitor their health for symptoms; testing is also recommended 3-5 days after first exposure. Those recovered from COVID-19 within the past three months do not need to quarantine. See [pages 11-12 of the Department of Health guidelines](#) for more specifics about contact tracing and quarantining.