



ALLEGHENY COUNTY  
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## **ACHD, WPIAL Statement on Meeting County Guidelines for Outdoor Gatherings**

**PITTSBURGH** – The Allegheny County Health Department and Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League (WPIAL) issued the following statement on meeting county guidelines for outdoor gatherings:

The Allegheny County Health Department's limit on outdoor gatherings of 50 remains in place and applies to youth and K-12 sports-related activities. The purpose of the measure is intended to limit the spread of COVID-19 in our community. That is particularly true for groups of youth who can be asymptomatic while having the virus, not realizing that they are spreading it.

The guidance set forth by the Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League (WPIAL) and the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, Inc. (PIAA) includes extensive protocols that were incorporated into school Health & Safety Plans reviewed and approved by the state. These measures are outlined in the PIAA's Return to Competition Considerations:

[http://www.piaa.org/assets/web/documents/Return\\_to\\_Competition.pdf](http://www.piaa.org/assets/web/documents/Return_to_Competition.pdf).

Specifically, the plans provide for the following:

- Spectators are prohibited from attending in-person K-12 sports-related activities.
- Personal health assessments are expected of each participant on the day of any game.
- Physical distancing of 6' is required at all times when not actively engaged in competition.
- Coaches and staff should be masked at all times unless they meet one of the exceptions in the state's universal face coverings order.
- Participants may not share uniforms, towels, apparel or equipment, and are expected to bring their own water bottle or rehydration beverages.

Based on these considerations and plans, each team is considered a pod. On a sideline, team members as well as coaches and staff, are physically distanced and following the order for universal face coverings. They are spread out and are not exceeding the 50-person gathering limit. On the opposite side of the field, the same is occurring in another pod. While playing the game, there is a third pod established with those players engaged in competition. All activity is occurring with mitigation measures in place for athletes, and established policies to address cases and outbreaks from games, should they occur.

The Health Department, in consultation with the WPIAL, recommends that these further guidelines be incorporated by participating schools into their plans. The considerations outlined by the PIAA, along with these guidelines, are all aimed at limiting groups that would be in close contact with one another for an extended period of time while outdoors. When met, these plans can provide a safe environment for interscholastic athletic events to occur in Allegheny County while simultaneously complying with the Health Department's gathering restrictions.

- Events must be hosted at a facility where regulation can occur.
- An administrator and/or designee must be present to monitor gatherings and ensure compliance.
- Teams and/or pods must not exceed the gathering size of 50 people in a close proximity to each other (such as an individual sideline, on the competition area during a contest, or in a section of the bleachers).
- While on the sidelines and not engaged in competition, coaches, athletes and staff should have a face covering and keep 6' of distance between each other.
- Athletes and coaches should comply with their school's Health and Safety Plans with regard to health screenings prior to practice and competition.
- Events should be limited to the time necessary for appropriate warm-up and competition. Schools should avoid arriving at a facility well in advance of the starting time and should leave as soon as possible after the completion of the competition. There shall be no congregating in groups after the event.
- The total facility capacity may not exceed the state mandate of 250 individuals.

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