



Villa Maria Academy Athletics Health and Safety Plan

(updated 10/5/2020)

Introduction

This document is intended to provide guidance for members of the Villa Maria Athletics Department during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This guidance (as well as dates and other recommendations contained herein) is preliminary and will be updated as more public health data and other information is made available by state and local officials, in addition to any guidance from NFHS or the PIAA. This document addresses the procedures athletic programs and teams must follow to limit the spread of COVID-19 to the extent they are permitted to conduct in-person operations. Any update to this document will be provided as approved by the leadership of Villa Maria Academy High School.

The virus that causes the coronavirus disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) is easily transmitted, especially in group settings, and it is essential that the spread of the virus be slowed to safeguard public health and safety, as well as the well-being of our faculty, staff, and students.

COVID-19 can be transmitted from infected individuals even if they are asymptomatic or their symptoms are mild. It can also be spread by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

This document was prepared to adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the safe return to interscholastic athletics at all academic levels during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was developed considering resources and procedures provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA), and the Chester County Department of Health.

General Considerations

- Fall season begins on 9/21/2020.
- The athletic facilities are open only to current students and employees/coaches.
- Students may only attend workouts for one VMA team at a time.
- Parent/Guardian must complete and turn in workout waiver prior to initial participation.
- While there is still an inherent risk of infection for those participating, everyone in attendance should be actively working towards decreasing the risk of transmission to others by adhering to prevention guidelines.
- Everyone should arrive and leave at the scheduled time to avoid overlap in groups.
- Outside events are limited to 250 people and inside events are limited to 35.

- Questions related to COVID-19 by any parent/guardian, coach, or athlete should be directed to the Athletic Director and/or ATC
- All athletes should clean individual equipment (personal and school-issued) and clothing after every use.
- Coaches should thoroughly clean all team/shared equipment after every use.
- Coaches and athletes must practice social distancing when able, including locker rooms (when open), sidelines, benches, and workout areas.
 - During down time, no one should congregate.
- Everyone participating in athletics should bring their own water as hydration stations will not be in use.
- Activities that increase the risk of exposure to saliva must not be allowed, including chewing gum, spitting, licking fingers, and eating sunflower seeds.
- All participants will avoid shaking hands, “fist-pumps,” or high-fives before, during, or after contest and practices.

Requirements for Coaches

- Maintain accurate attendance records
- No group huddles.
- Instruction can be given in a socially distant manner.
- Stretching, warmups, and cooldowns can be done in a socially distant manner.
- Team equipment should be cleaned at the conclusion of each session by coaching staff and individual clothing or equipment should be cleaned at the conclusion of each session by the participant.
- No handshakes, fist-bumps, high-fives, spitting, etc.
- Team meetings should allow for social distancing or take place on a virtual platform.
- Coaching staff and other adult personnel should wear face coverings at all times, unless doing so jeopardizes their health.
- Coaches MUST arrive to and leave from practices/competitions with a face mask or facial covering.
- Break time may need to be increased and/or staggered to accommodate social distancing, hand washing, and avoiding shared hydration sources.
- Use of any Villa Maria facilities must be arranged and approval must be obtained prior to team use.
- Coaches must stay until all members of their team have left the campus.
- Coaches and/or the athletic trainer must monitor athletes for symptoms prior to and during practices and games.
- Coaches will design activities that focus on increasing risk mitigation strategies (social distancing, handwashing etc.)
 - Coaches will design activities to resume in a gradual fashion to avoid overuse injuries and exertional/heat-related illnesses.
 - Consider that all athletes have some level of detraining and may not be returning at the same fitness level and activities may need to be adjusted

accordingly. Additionally, if athletes miss practices and/or competitions, she may need to start at a previous level.

- Coaches should work with the athletic director and/or the athletic trainer for guidance on a gradual return to play

Requirements for Student Athletes

- Communicate all health and fitness-related concerns with coaches and athletic trainer immediately.
- Athletes should arrive prepared to go and avoid congregating before the workout.
- Athletes MUST have their own water bottle and equipment to participate in workouts.
- Athletes will leave their belongings and water 6 feet away from any other teammate.
- Athletes should leave immediately following the workout.
- All athletes should clean individual equipment and clothing after every use.
- Clothes and equipment should be stored in your school locker during the school day.
- Equipment that does not fit in the locker can be stored in homeroom or arrangements can be made with the Athletic Office.
- Limited use of locker room and school facilities.
- After classes, students will change in a bathroom on campus and report to their designated meeting spot for screening questions.
- Limit shared objects to those required for sport only (i.e. volleyballs, etc.).
- Athletes should still bring their own water supply and avoid sharing towels or pinnies.

Transportation Considerations

Villa Maria utilizes a variety of transportation methods, such as parent provided transportation, student drivers, and subcontracted busing companies. In addition to their respective COVID policies, Villa athletes follow these procedures:

- When traveling on buses or school vans, a seating chart must be created for each trip
 - Athletes should space out as far as possible
 - Members of the same family should sit nearest to each other
- Athletes and coaches must wear masks for the duration of the trip
- Athletes and coaches must load the bus from back to front and exit from front to back
- Athletes should utilize the same seat when traveling to and from away competitions
- Please note, there may be limitations to how many athletes may travel on a bus at once. This may interfere with away game-day participation.

Pre-Workout Procedure

- All athletes and coaches in attendance must complete screening prior to practice. Temperatures will be checked by coaches, AD or ATC and symptoms will be checked verbally.

- Anyone with positive findings on screening should not attend (even as a spectator). Coaches should not allow athletes to return until they are given the ok by an athletic trainer or administrator.
- An administrator will continually monitor screenings and reach out to anyone with positive findings with further instructions.
- Coaches must review the screening report at the start of each workout and confirm that everyone in attendance has completed a screening survey that day.
- Coaches must maintain accurate attendance of each workout and submit to the athletics department.
- Athletes and coaches should use hand sanitizer and/or wash hands prior to the start of workout and if needed throughout practice and/or at breaks.
- Each athlete must have their own personal water bottle and a facial covering to participate. No coolers or hydration stations will be utilized at this time.

Screening Procedure

- Athletes will complete screening at their designated location prior to practice. Temperatures will be taken.
- If symptoms change from the morning symptom check, student athletes are asked to honestly report changes to the coach, AD, or ATC and should not attend practice.

Screening Survey Questions:

Have you been in close contact with someone who tested positive or is quarantining due to COVID-19?

Have you recently visited any of the states listed here
<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Travelers.aspx?>

Are you taking any medication to treat or suppress a fever?

Do you have a fever (100° or higher)?

Do you have body aches, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, diarrhea, chills and/or loss of taste and/or smell?

- If 'yes' to any question or you are concerned that you may be ill, the athlete MUST not attend the voluntary workout.
- The AD, athletic trainer or school nurse will contact parents of athletes who have answered 'yes' to any questions.
- The student athlete may be asked to produce documentation from a doctor before returning to campus.
- Team meetings should allow for social distancing or take place on a virtual platform.

Spectator Policy:

- At field hockey and soccer competitions held on the campus of Villa Maria Academy, each VMA student athlete will be allowed to invite two spectators for each competition.
- There will be no spectators allowed inside the gym for volleyball games.
- All spectators will maintain a minimum of 6 feet of social distance and wear a mask at all times.
- There can be no eating or tailgating.
- All spectators are asked to bring their own chair or blanket. Bleachers will not be available for spectators.
- Spectators are not permitted to enter team areas and must remain within the spectator area of the field, which is the side closest to the softball field.
- Parent volunteers will support the athletic office in adherence of this policy.
- This spectator policy will be discontinued if adherence to numbers, mask wearing, and social distancing is not maintained.
- **For Away Contests:** Parents will be notified of the spectator policy at their away competition venues. Spectators must be masked at all times and socially distant. There can be no eating or tailgating.

References:

1. NFHS Guide for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities- May 2020
https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812287/2020-nfhs-guidance-for-opening-up-high-school-athletics-and-activities-nfhs-smac-may-15_2020-final.pdf
2. NATA COVID-19 Return to Sport Considerations for Secondary School Athletic Trainers- May 2020 https://www.nata.org/sites/default/files/covid_19_return-to-sport_considerations_for_secondary_school_ats_1.pdf
3. PA Department of Education Preliminary Guidance for Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools- June 3, 2020 <https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/K-12/Safe%20Schools/COVID/GuidanceDocuments/Pre-K%20to%2012%20Reopening%20Guidance.pdf>
4. CDC COVID-19 Considerations for Youth Sports- May 29, 2020
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>
5. KSI Return to Sports and Exercise during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Guidance for High School and Collegiate Athletic Programs- June 2, 2020 https://ksi.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1222/2020/06/Return-to-Sports-and-Exercise-during-the-COVID_Final-endorsed_6.2.2020.pdf
6. Washington University Resocialization of Sports Recommendations- June 1, 2020
<https://www.bjc.org/Keeping-You-Safe/Community-Updates/ArtMID/5838/ArticleID/4441/Restarting-Youth-and-High-School-Sports>

7. UPMC Sports Medicine Playbook: Returning to Sports During COVID-19 Minimum Guidelines (High School)- May 28, 2020 <https://www.upmc.com/-/media/upmc/services/sports-medicine/documents/return-to-play/high-school-athlete-guidelines-pdf.pdf?la=en>

8. PIAA Press Release- June 10, 2020
<http://www.piaa.org/assets/web/documents/Press%20release%20-%20Wednesday%20June%2010%202020%20-%20RTP.pdf>

9. Guidance for All Sports Permitted to Operate During the COVID-19 Disaster Emergency to Ensure the Safety and Health of Employees, Athletes and the Public – June 10, 2020
<https://www.governor.pa.gov/covid-19/sports-guidance/>

10. UCFSD Athletics Reopening Plan – Pat Crater