

9/9/2020



SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATION
North Attleboro High School
Return-to-Athletics Plan
2020-2021

**North Attleboro Athletic Department
COVID-19 Safety Standards**

Fall 2020 Season ONLY- To be amended and updated for future seasons.

NOTE- These Safety Standards are in addition to the existing Public Schools “Protocols for Responding to Covid-19 Scenarios” document

Introduction

The purpose of this plan is to ensure the safety of all players, coaches, staff, and spectators in respect to the spread of COVID-19 upon returning to athletic activity. The guidelines referenced in this plan are adopted from the recommendations set forth by the Massachusetts Department of Education (DESE), the Massachusetts Department of Health (DOH), the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA), and the MIAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC). This document will be modified as updated guidance is made available by DESE, EEA, NFHS, and the MIAA/SMAC.

The following plan is congruent with North Attleboro High School's Return-to-School Plan.

Guiding Principles

North Attleboro High School (NAHS) will implement prevention and mitigation practices to reduce the likelihood that an outbreak occurs as well as implement practices that allow for a productive and safe playing environment.

COVID-19 Contact Staff Member- Athletic Trainer

Jen Fitzpatrick jfitzpatrick@naschools.net will be our Covid Contact Staff Member

Schools should designate a staff member to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns.

All coaches, staff, officials, and families should know who this person is and how to contact them.

Train coaches, officials, and staff on all safety protocols. Conduct training virtually and ensure that social distancing is maintained during training. (NFHS COVID-19 FREE Course)

SELF ASSESSMENT

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the risk of exposure to our athletes, coaches, and athletics personnel/staff, all participants and their families will be asked to self monitor for potential symptoms. Parents and guardians should assist in monitoring their children for symptoms which include:

- Cough (not due to other unknown causes)
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills with or without repeated shaking
- Muscle aches/pain
- Fatigue (when in combination with symptoms)
- Headache (when in combination with other symptoms)
- Sore throat
- Nasal congestion/runny nose (not due to other known causes and when in combination with other symptoms)
- Loss of taste and/or smell
- Nausea, Vomiting, or Diarrhea
- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature at 100.0 degrees fahrenheit or higher. A non-contact, temporal thermometer will be utilized for temperature checks
- Have been in close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19

Athletics personnel/staff should monitor themselves daily for symptoms. **Any coach, athlete, or staff member who is feeling unwell must stay home.** They must contact the Athletic Director and Athletic Trainer.

PRE-PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

All athletes are required to pass a physical examination prior to participation in athletics. A physical exam covers the athlete for 13 months from the exam date (in accordance with MIAA Rule 56). Written doctor medical notes do not take the place of an annual physical.

Any athlete who has a history of upper respiratory infection, previously tested positive for covid-19 or cardiac complications may be asked for further evaluation/assessment prior to sport participation.

In addition, parents/guardians will be required to register their son/daughter on FamilyID

Exposure Defined

Exposure is defined as having had close contact with individuals who have either tested positive for COVID-19 or are showing symptoms of COVID-19. Close contact is considered as having been within 6 feet of distance for at least 15 minutes to a person who is positive or symptomatic. The infectious period begins two days prior to symptom onset.

Showing Symptoms

To participate or attend a NAHS athletic practice, contest or other event, all participants must show no signs or symptoms or Covid-19 for 14 days.

Student athlete attendance must be kept by the person in charge of a practice so as to assist in contact tracing if needed.

If, at the time of the arrival check-in screening, or at any time during the program, a student athlete shows symptoms or acknowledges they have been exposed to Covid-19, that person will be immediately removed from all other people (other than a minor and their parent). Parents will be immediately contacted and student athletes will be sent home. If Covid-19 symptoms exist, we will immediately contact the North Attleboro Board of Health.

If any individual (student athlete, coach, other athletic personnel, etc.) develops symptoms of Covid-19 during the activity, they should promptly inform the coach or other person responsible for the activity, and must be removed from the activity and instructed to return home.

Athletics personnel/staff and coaches will also be required to apply a face covering and will be dismissed from the facilities. Any individual who feels ill will be given a temperature check via a temporal, non-contact thermometer.

MEDICAL WAITING AREA

While waiting to go home they will be isolated in the NAHS Medical Waiting room in the high school or in the NAHS outdoor Medical Waiting area. This will be the designated isolation area. It is off-limits to all others. Students need to be supervised and placed in a clean mask when using the medical waiting room.

Return to Play

If an athlete or staff member presents with a positive COVID-19 test, they may return to athletics:

- After minimum 10 days from the start of symptoms
- AND symptoms have improved
- AND have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications
- AND Medical documentation for return to play
- They will follow an individualized gradual return to play program monitored by MD and/or ATC
- Athlete may require cardiac evaluation

Any athlete who tests positive or is symptomatic will require a note from a physician clearing that individual begin return to play program. The Athletic Trainer in consultation with MD will determine the final return to play plan for each participant to return safely to their sport.

In the event of a positive COVID-19 test the parents/guardians of each team member, administrators, athletics personnel/staff, visiting schools/teams, the Hockomock League, the MIAA, spectators in attendance, and the DOH will be notified immediately.

Return to Play

Any individual who has COVID-19 symptoms may return to athletics after:

- They have tested negative for COVID-19
- Improved respiratory symptoms
- AND have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications
- And medical clearance
- They will follow a gradual return to play program-this will be individualized to each participant

OR:

If a health care provider makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the athlete may return to play based on the **documented** recommendations for that alternative diagnosis.

If an athlete or staff member has been in close contact with an individual with a positive lab-confirmed COVID-19 test may return to athletics:

- After a 14 day quarantine period with no symptoms

This will include close family members.

Contact Tracing

Upon entering a facility for an event, indoor or outdoor, all spectators will be required to provide their name and phone number or email address to facilitate contact tracing in the event a person in attendance was confirmed COVID-19 positive or has become symptomatic.

Visiting teams are responsible for ensuring their athletes and staff/coaches are monitored for possible exposure or positive cases before departing their own school.

- In the event that a member of a visiting team feels ill with COVID-19 like symptoms during competition, that athlete will be removed from the area and isolated. A temporal temperature check will be provided and their parent/guardian will be contacted. NAHS will then contact administration for both the home and away school, the Hockomock League, and the DOH to report a possible case
- The event will be cancelled until either a negative COVID-19 test is presented or athletes complete a 14-day quarantine with no symptoms
- The EEA guidance says "Operators should log all persons (name and phone number or name and email address)". There is no mention of being required to ask Covid questions. We expect anyone who attends a event has self screened prior to coming to the event.
- We will be using a QR Code to track everyone at each game where they can answer the self screening questions.

Non-Compliance

Athletes, coaches, athletics personnel/staff, and spectators must abide by the aforementioned guidelines regarding social distancing, face coverings, and hygiene. Failure to do so will result in removal from the clinic/practice/competition or the facility. Multiple or intentional infractions may result in administrative discipline and possible suspension.

Indoor Facilities

For indoor facilities (gymnasium, locker rooms, Athletic Training Room)

- No NAHS Fall 2020 Athletics will be held indoors. This applies to practices, contests, meetings, etc. This includes use of the NAHS Locker Rooms. The NAHS Athletic Trainer will service most kids using the stadium entrance or turf field but will make every effort for treatments, etc. to be done outside. The only exception to this will be if a team must seek shelter from dangerous weather. All NAPS/BOH guidelines related to inside social distancing must be followed during any indoor shelter use.
- Adequate social distance of at least 6 feet must be maintained at all times.
- Locker rooms and changing areas will be limited to 50% capacity. Coaches and other athletic personnel will ensure that users are abiding by capacity restrictions and wearing appropriate personal protective equipment
- The use of locker room indoor showers is not permissible
- The Athletic Training room, gym, may allow 8 people per 1,000 square feet including staff members. All equipment will be spaced out to allow for at least 14 feet of space.
- Designated areas will be marked off to ensure social distancing practices are followed
- Indoor facilities will institute one-way entrance and exits while adhering to all building and fire codes
- Signage and visual guidelines/markers should be clearly visible to remind users to limit their time and maintain their distance while in enclosed areas

General guidelines

It is important to note that ALL NAHS Fall 2020 Athletics will take place outside.

MIAA modified rules All athletes, coaches, and athletics personnel/staff must adhere to all sport-specific modified rules and restrictions as set for by DESE, EEA, and the MIAA.

Not congregating Athletics personnel/staff will ensure that individuals are not congregating in common areas or parking lots following practices or events. Athletes will be encouraged to arrive dressed for activity and to leave immediately after activity. Individuals at practice sessions and contests may not congregate in common areas.

Storage Any equipment stored inside the buildings must be accessed ONLY by employees of the NAPS.

Time to Clean There must be at least 20 minutes of time between users built into a field schedule.

Locker Rooms – Should not be used during higher Risk Levels. Students should report to workouts in proper gear and immediately return home to shower, clean clothing, and equipment at the end of every workout. NAHS student athletes on remote days must arrive for all practices and contests already changed into their practice gear/uniform and ready to play. We will allow students to change in the locker room after school on days they are in school. No lockers will be available and they must bring everything with them to practice.

General guidelines

Sidelines may be used but at least 6 feet of distancing must be kept between all in that area AND they must be wearing masks while there.

Benches – No benches should be used during practice. Players' items should be separated as below for personal items, at least 6 feet apart. Benches should be permitted only during games. More benches will be provided for both home and away teams to allow athletes to properly distance themselves from one another.

Practice – Coaches are responsible for ensuring social distancing is maintained between players as much as possible. This includes additional spacing between athletes while stretching, warming up, chatting, changing drills, etc. Athletes must maintain spacing, and there should be no congregating of athletes while running drills. Workouts should be conducted in 'pods' of athletes, with the same 5-10 athletes always working out together. This ensures more limited exposure if someone develops an infection. Records should be kept of who is in each group, each day. No more than 25 persons can be on a single playing field/surface/area at any one time. Facilities **may** be used by more than 25 people as long as adequate social distancing (= <6ft) and group separation can be maintained. To ensure group separation, groups must be spaced at least 14 feet apart while sharing a single playing surface/field. **This applies to TRYOUTS** as well.

Practice Field – Only essential personnel are permitted on the practice/competition field. These are defined as athletes, coaches, medical personnel/athletic trainers, and officials (competition). All others (i.e. managers, photographers, media, etc.) are considered non-essential personnel and are not to be on the field of play.

Practice and Game Protocols:

Media – All social distancing and hygiene guidelines for spectators must be followed by media members planning to attend games. Media members should contact host school administrators prior to arriving at games to plan appropriate entry and available workspace.

Huddles – Social distancing must be maintained, as much as possible, when the coach is communicating with the entire team, or in smaller groups. Communicating with smaller groups is preferred.

Team Handshakes – Athletes shall NOT exchange handshakes before, during or following practices and competitions. Some MIAA sport specific modifications suggest sportsmanship recognition practices.

Ball Retrievers – Ball retrievers for any sport ARE NOT permitted. See sport specific modifications for extra ball placement procedures.

Post-Game Procedures – Refer to handshakes in this guidance. Recognition of the other team, coaches and/or officials should be done from a distance greater than 6 feet and should not delay departure from the competition venue. Sportsmanship should be conducted in a touchless manner - no handshakes, fistbumps, hugs, or high-fives.

Practice and Game Protocols:

Social distancing should be encouraged during practice and games as often as possible. Coaches, players, athletics personnel/staff, and spectators should maintain a 6 foot distance from one another to eliminate contact with others.

Masks – Athletes are required to wear cloth face coverings/masks per EEA guidelines. We are waiting to see if Gaiters are acceptable. Athletes should reference sport specific guidelines for mask breaks during play when spacing between players greater than 10 ft is available. Athletes that use mouthpieces should prepare to have extra face coverings available. Caution should be exercised when replacing a mask if hands are soiled or dirty. Coaches and officials are also required to wear masks. Spectators, workers, and others are required to wear masks and they are expected to follow social distancing guidelines.

Player habits – Coaches should work to break old habits and create new ones in an effort to minimize the spread of the virus. Spitting and nose clearing on the field, and goalkeepers spitting on their gloves during practices and competitions is not permitted. The habit of minimizing any touching of the face and covering the cough should be practiced.

Practice and Game Protocols:

Interaction with Officials – Coaches must follow social distancing guidelines (6 feet) when interacting with an official or any other individual. Conversations can occur at a distance. Athletes should not approach a referee closer than 6 feet at any time.

Hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing wipes – Athletes, coaches, and officials are encouraged to provide their own hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) and/or sanitizing wipes and use them frequently – including prior to taking the field and upon return to the sideline. Additionally, it is emphasized to avoid touching the face throughout practice and competition.

Pre-Game Introductions and Preparation – If pre-game meetings are necessary, they should be held with limited team representation – a single coach, single captain, etc. At the pregame meeting all participants will be required to wear masks and to socially distance from all participants

Introductions If a school chooses to do introductions, players will take their position on the field prior to being introduced. Introductions are suggested to be limited or eliminated to decrease time of athletes on the competition field. The National Anthem may be played before competition.

Face Coverings

Baseline Expectation Regarding Face Coverings- All participants will be required to wear appropriate face coverings at any time that they are not able to socially distance- as defined as remaining 10 feet or more from other participants. “mask break”

Coaches and other athletic personnel must wear face coverings at all times during practices and competitions even while social distancing. Coaches may take a “mask break” when they can clearly separate themselves from others for a short period of time.

Officials, referees, and umpires must wear face coverings at all times.

Spectators, athletics personnel/staff , and coaches must wear a face covering at all times, both indoors and outdoors. Spectators will be denied entrance to the event if they are not wearing a face covering properly or at all.

EXCEPTIONS- The only exceptions to the face coverings guidelines are laid out in individual sport rules or the individual has a medical condition or disability which prevents them from wearing a face covering.

Face coverings

Face coverings: Student Athletes must wear face coverings at all times during practice and competition when unable to maintain social distancing. Student athletes **MUST** clearly be able to identify their own face covering through markings, etc. It is highly recommended that NAHS student athletes have multiple, labeled face coverings available to them at every practice or contest.

The use of face coverings during game play must adhere to the sport-specific restrictions and modifications outlined by DESE, EEA, and the MIAA. Players should avoid touching the front or inside of their face covering. Athletes not directly involved in a drill or game play (i.e. on the bench) must wear their face coverings at all times.

Face coverings should completely and securely cover the entire nose and mouth.

All athletes riding the bus to an away contest must wear masks while on the bus. When possible, windows will be open to allow outside air to circulate throughout the bus.

Hygiene

Participants and coaches must achieve proper hand hygiene at the beginning and end of all activities, either through hand washing with soap and water or by using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Hands should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Touching of the eyes, nose, and mouth should be avoided as much as possible

Alcohol based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol will be used as an alternative as needed.

For outdoor facilities, the bathroom adjacent to the turf field can be used as a hand-washing station. Bathroom capacity will be limited to no more than 3 persons at a time limit any possible exposure.

No changing in the restroom

Face coverings must be worn at all times in this restroom

Visible signage should be present to remind users of hygiene and safety protocols.

Hygiene

Athletes, from both home and away teams, will be required to sanitize/wash their hands before the game, when they sub off the field, and before exiting the facility post-game.

No shared food and drink may be provided before, during, or after any activity for participants or spectators except by concessions and approved food service providers.

Post-game/practice showering, uniform and personal equipment washing, and regular hand-washing will be strongly encouraged on a daily basis.

There will be NO shared uniforms or other athletic clothing, pads or other athletic gear.

Student athletes may NOT, at any time, swap things such as sticks, helmets, pads, practice vests (pinnies), etc.

Cleaning

Shared equipment:

All shared equipment including, but not limited to, balls, field markers, and cones, must be properly disinfected after every clinic/practice/game with either wipes or spray. Sharing of equipment should be discouraged and limited as much as possible

There should be no sharing of equipment such as towels, clothing, shoes, or personal sport specific equipment (shin guards, mouthguards, headbands, gloves, sticks/bats, goggles)

Sport balls- such as field hockey balls and soccer balls may be used by teams to train and play their games. However, they must be sanitized before and after each practice/contest. Golf balls are not to be shared.

General Equipment – There should be no shared athletic equipment. Any equipment that is used for practice should be cleaned and disinfected prior to and immediately following practice. Only one individual should handle the set-up and break-down of equipment on any given day (i.e. goals, cones, etc.).

Cleaning

All cleaning activities require the cleaner to wear gloves and a mask.

Bathrooms in Concession Stand- These restrooms will be cleaned before each day of use. They will be cleaned following all Best Practices laid out by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

All high touch surface areas will be cleaned before each day of use.

Inventory of cleaning products will include but not be limited to: Disinfecting spray, Disinfecting wipes, bleach based bathroom cleaning product, paper towels, trash bags.

Indoor facilities including restrooms, locker rooms, gymnasium, the Athletic Training room, weight room, and fitness center will be cleaned daily with an EPA-registered disinfectant. Treatment tables, exercise equipment, and water coolers will be cleaned/disinfected after each use.

Outdoor facilities and fields that have benches/chairs/gates will be cleaned after each team exits and before another team uses the facility

Common high traffic surfaces such as doorknobs, handrails, etc. will be frequently disinfected

Cleaning logs that include date, time, and scope of cleaning will be kept.

Spectators

MANY decisions need to be made around the issue of Spectators. These will be made in consultation with Hockomock League schools, as well as NAHS and NAPS administration. Any spectator policy will include the following:

In order to enforce restricted attendance, the Hockomock League will only be allowing spectators associated with the host school into their facility. All spectators are strongly discouraged from traveling to away games, especially since they will not be allowed into the host school's facility when they arrive. The method by which each host school chooses to admit fans, or not admit, fans will be decided at the individual district level.

There will be NO SPECTATORS allowed for Golf this year.

Spectators will be limited to 50 home fans only to ensure proper distancing can be maintained and contact tracing limited.

Spectators must practice social distancing between different household units and accept personal responsibility for public health guidelines. The number of spectators is determined in compliance with EEA, DESE and DPH guidelines. When multiple fields are being utilized, designated areas will be marked off for spectators for each field to minimize overlap of spectators from adjacent fields.

We will be giving two fall sports passes to every athletes for family members to attend their home games.

Hydration

Each student athlete is encouraged to bring their own water bottles. Sharing of water bottles is not permitted.

In the case that a student athlete neglects to do so or needs to refill their water bottle, NAHS will provide “Limited Touch” water stations and the trainer will have refill water coolers that only she will be able to refill a water bottle with. Water fountains are to be used as refill stations ONLY.

The NAHS ice machine will not be accessible to any NAHS students or coaches. Only the NAHS Athletic Trainer and Athletic Director may access the ice machine.

Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) should NOT be utilized.

Disposable ice packs will be given to each coach

Personal Items

Supplies recommended for your personal gym bag:

****Everything inside the gym bag must be disinfected after every practice and before the return to practice.. Be sure to spray the inside and the outside of the bag as well. This is for everyone's protection.**

Bags will be able to be dropped off and stored in the concession stand in the morning before school. Bags will not be touching while they are stored. Bags will be sprayed with an aerosol disinfectant while in storage in the morning. Students will not have access to their bags until 1:49 before practice.

A reusable facial mask – The mask/face covering must be worn at all times. Sport specific modification may have further guidance for face coverings.

Warm-up clothing, electronic devices, and other personal items that are used by the athlete, prior to practice/competition, must be placed back in the gym bag before practice/competition begins.

Athletes are recommended to always have a personal bottle of hand sanitizer available. There will be less chance of possible cross contamination and less time standing around waiting to use a shared hand sanitizer. Be sure to have this inside a sealable bag, in case it leaks. This will be used when you enter and exit the practice/competition site, and at other necessary times in between.

Personal Items

Athletes are recommended to have disinfectant wipes for personal use. When using a restroom area, it is best to disinfect any surface that may be touched, before and after using the facilities.

Athletic braces, tape, inhalers, or any other sports-medical item used before, during or after practice/meets should be stored in a personal gym bag when not in use.

Additional shoes should also be stored in a separate compartment or bag inside a gym bag to prevent possible cross contamination with other items in the gym bag.

Any other item that is deemed necessary for practice or competition must be stored in the gym bag when it is not being used

Shoes, clothing, towels, and other personal items must not be shared among athletes. Any items that are not currently being worn/used should be stored inside a personal gym bag. Gym bags should be placed in a predetermined area 6 feet apart for the duration of practice/competition.

Transportation

The NAHS Athletic Department will follow all transportation guidelines established by the North Attleboro Public Schools. Beyond those guidelines, the NAHS Athletic Department will follow all policies and protocols for athletic transportation as in the past, with the following amendments/additions:

With written permission, any parent/guardian (or other approved family member) who wishes to transport their child(ren) to/from an away contest may do so. Parent/guardian (or other approved family member) may not be able to watch the contest depending upon the home school's spectator attendance policy.

Transportation

Students will be seated no more than one student per bench, alternating sides for each row. This allows students to maintain approximately 3 feet of physical distance.

Students may be assigned to a particular seat

Bus drivers must disinfect buses right before starting a route and after teams are dropped off at the end of the day

Students and coaches/staff will be seated as shown in diagrams provided by the State Guidelines.

Students and coaches/staff will wear masks at all times on the bus.

Windows must be kept open at all times.

Buses will provide hand sanitizer by the front door entrance to the vehicle.

Student Athlete Drop Off & Pick Up

Practices and Games on Stadium turf field drop off & pick up will be from Beaupre Lot and the senior lot.

Practices and Games on all the back fields drop off & pick up will be from the senior lot. The lot closest to the tennis courts.

Practices and Games on Kelly fields drop off & pick up will be from the junior lot n Beaupre. The lot closest to the outdoor basketball courts.

Drop off and pick up at Athletic entrance will be restricted to avoid congestion and allow for social distancing.

Please obey all traffic signs on campus.

Sports Specific guidelines

For any sport where rules modifications were approved by the MIAA for fall 2020, NAHS will follow all rules as laid out and approved per EEA. Furthermore, all rules modifications for in game play will be translated and followed during practices/training sessions.