



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Michael Hill *Health Agency Director*

Penny Borenstein, MD, MPH *Health Officer/Public Health Director*

Date: October 18, 2021
To: All Individuals, Businesses, and Organizations in SLO County
Subject: **COVID-19 Requirements and Best Practices:
Youth Sports and Extracurricular
Activities**

What's new in this update: This update includes changes in the recommended testing schedule to align with guidance from the CDC and California Department of Public Health (CDPH).

OVERVIEW:

This document summarizes the requirements and best practices for youth sports and extracurricular activities in San Luis Obispo (SLO) County and applies to all public and private schools and youth-serving organizations in SLO County. In this context, youth sports and extracurricular activities include small and large groups that gather in person for activities, which may or may not be affiliated with a school or organization.

The purpose of this guidance is to reduce the incidence and spread of COVID-19 infection in SLO County by supporting a safer environment for the young participants, as well as the coaches, instructors, and community members associated with the activities.

This guidance is in response to elevated community transmission and may be revised as community transmission changes over time. This supersedes the County of SLO COVID-19 Interim Guidance for K-12 School Sports and Extracurricular Activities in San Luis Obispo County, August 19, 2021.

KEY FACTS:

- In addition to community transmission levels, factors specific to each activity influence the level of transmission risk. Outdoor or indoor activities, indoor ventilation, the number of participants, their vaccination status, if masks are worn, the level of exertion, and the frequency and duration of close contact.
- Mixing groups or teams outside the community increases risk for participants and attendees and contributes to the spread of COVID-19 disease and variants across communities.
- Besides the event itself, group travel to and from events and associated social activities are often the source of COVID-19 transmission among youth groups.
- Forceful breath and vocalizations in activities such as singing, vocal projection, and playing wind instruments produce more respiratory droplets and aerosols than typical breathing or

Public Health Department

2191 Johnson Avenue | San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 | (P) 805-781-5500 | (F) 805-781-5543

www.slopublichealth.org

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talking. Unlike typical droplet particles emitted with normal breathing and talking, aerosols travel farther and remain in the air much longer and can be inhaled deep into the respiratory tract.

- Respiratory aerosols build up in enclosed spaces with inadequate ventilation, which can lead to virus concentrations in the air if a performer is infectious. Prolonged exposure to these conditions increases risk. The risk from infectious aerosolized particles is reduced when the particles can dissipate quickly, such as outdoors and in sufficiently ventilated indoor spaces.
- Leagues and clubs do not have the authority to contradict or override requirements issued by local and state public health agencies.
- Vaccination continues to be the primary method to reduce transmission.

REQUIREMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND BEST PRACTICES:

Indoor Youth Activities

Required:

- Masks are required for all individuals regardless of vaccination status in all indoor settings¹.
- Any face mask that becomes wet or saturated with sweat must be replaced immediately.
- Requirements for employees are different than those for attendees. Employers must follow the [Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards \(ETS\)](#).
- Note that the directives in a [SLO County Health Officer Order](#) must be followed when they are more stringent than a State requirement, including those from CDPH and Cal/OSHA ETS.
- Exceptions to wearing masks during indoor sports:²
 - The American Academy of Pediatrics has determined that wearing masks during certain activities could pose a safety hazard if caught on an apparatus or impairing vision, therefore, the following activities are exceptions to the requirement for wearing a mask during **indoor** play:³
 - Competitive cheer involving tumbling, stunting, flying, spotting, or building.
 - Gymnastics involving fixed apparatus or aerials
 - Wrestling
 - Water sports (do not wear wet masks)

¹ In San Luis Obispo County, all individuals are required to follow the [September 1, 2021 SLO County Health Officer order requiring face coverings in all public indoor settings](#) in addition to the [CDPH Guidance for Face Coverings](#)

² Also applies to sports operated or supervised by schools, and all activities that occur on a school site, whether or not they occur during school hours per [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2021-22 School Year](#).

³ American Academy of Pediatrics, [COVID-19 Interim Guidance: Return to Sports and Physical Activity](#)- When should face masks be worn?

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- If the above activities are played indoors without masks, then all the players and associated staff, regardless of vaccination status, must be tested at least weekly for COVID-19 with PCR or antigen testing.⁴
- Masks removed for the above safety reasons must be put back on when not in active play.
- Vocalists and wind musicians are not allowed to perform indoors without a mask.⁵ Specialized masks for performers may be worn only while actively performing and must be replaced with a standard mask at all other times indoors.
- Musicians playing wind or brass instruments must place bell covers on the instruments.
- In K-12 settings, wind instruments and vocalists must maintain at least 6 feet distance from other performers.

Strongly Recommended:

- Move activities outdoors when possible.
- Ensure indoor ventilation meets or exceeds current standards in the [CDPH Interim guidance for Ventilation, Filtration, and Air Quality in Indoor Environments](#).
- Do not use indoor showers, saunas, or other indoor vapor generators in locker rooms or gyms.
- Wind musicians and vocalists should face away from other musicians, indoors and outdoors, and maintain at least 12 feet distance from audience members.
- Wind musicians should never empty spit valves on the floor. Recommend using a puppy pad (or similar) to catch the contents of the spit valve and discard. Sanitize hands after discarding pad.

Best Practices:

- Move indoor activities outdoors.
- Conduct weekly screening testing of all unvaccinated participants.
- Encourage everyone to get vaccinated when eligible.
- Inform parents and guardians of increased risk of COVID-19 transmission associated with indoor activities. Incorporate notification of increased risk into standard consent form.
- See County of SLO COVID-19 Requirements and Best Practices: Hosting Large Events. Notify attendees of indoor mask requirements in advance, if possible, and issue reminders during events as needed. Have masks available to attendees upon request.
- Prohibit indoor eating and drinking and provide a designated outdoor area for eating and drinking.

⁴ Schools must be in compliance with the required weekly testing no later than September 27, 2021.

⁵ In San Luis Obispo County, all individuals are required to follow the [September 1, 2021 SLO County Health Officer order requiring face coverings in all public indoor settings](#) in addition to the [CDPH Guidance for Face Coverings](#)

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- Limit indoor practice time for vocal arts and wind instruments. In spaces with good ventilation rates (minimum of 3 air exchanges per hour) and HEPA filtration, indoor limit rehearsal times up to 50 minutes (or longer if higher air change rates).⁶
- Use a microphone to amplify voice instead of projecting vocalizations and consider disposable microphone covers if performers will be sharing a mic.

Outdoor Youth Activities⁷

Required:

- At any time indoors, individuals must follow the [September 1, 2021 SLO County Health Officer order requiring face coverings in all public indoor settings](#). Masks are required for all individuals regardless of vaccination status in all indoor settings, including locker rooms, vehicles, and gyms.⁸

Strongly Recommended:

- Encourage everyone to get vaccinated when eligible.
- Consider weekly screening testing (PCR or antigen) of all unvaccinated participants, including coaches and staff, for high-risk sports.
 - High-risk sports include those with frequent or sustained close contact with others during increased exhalation.
 - High-risk sports include basketball, football, wrestling, water polo, boxing, martial arts, soccer, rugby, roller derby, cheer, and stunt
- Masks are strongly recommended for all individuals regardless of vaccination status when in a crowded outdoor setting.
- Provide a designated outdoor area for eating and drinking, and another for congregating or mingling.

ADDITIONAL BEST PRACTICES:

- Encourage everyone to get vaccinated when eligible. Besides protecting an individual's health and the health of those around them, a team or group of fully vaccinated participants will not miss out on games and practices because of quarantine.
- Regular testing is not required for asymptomatic persons who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days.
- Group travel to and from events and associated social activities are often the source of COVID-19 transmission among youth groups.

⁶ [International Coalition Performing Arts Aerosol Study Updated Guidelines 7/9/21](#)

⁷ Applies to sports operated or supervised by schools, and all activities that occur on a school site, whether or not they occur during school hours per [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2021-22 School Year](#).

⁸ In San Luis Obispo County, all individuals are required to follow the [September 1, 2021 SLO County Health Officer order requiring face coverings in all public indoor settings](#) in addition to the [CDPH Guidance for Face Coverings](#). Requirements in a [SLO County Health Officer Order](#) must be followed when they are more stringent than a State requirement.

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- Children and teens as well as the adults responsible for their safety away from home need to be informed of the risks associated with COVID-19 and the precautions necessary to prevent infection and transmission.
- Avoid traveling in vehicles with others outside your family. If you do, always wear masks, allow outside air to circulate as much as comfortable, and maintain distance as much as possible. If sharing a room during overnight stays is necessary, keep masks on indoors and remove only when eating, sleeping, and showering.
- Fully vaccinated youth and adults without symptoms do not need to quarantine if they have been a close contact to an infected person. However, testing 3-7 days after last contact is strongly recommended, even for the fully vaccinated.
- Any participant with symptoms, regardless of their vaccination status, should be excluded from participation and tested for COVID-19. The presence of any single symptom consistent with COVID-19 warrants testing and exclusion from participation until symptoms have improved and the participant has received a negative test.
- COVID-19 symptoms include fatigue, headache, sore throat, runny nose or congestion, fever, chills, muscle or body aches, cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- Allowing a child with symptoms to participate in sports or extracurricular activities places all other participants at risk. It is better to miss one or two days of practice or competition to get tested than be responsible for an outbreak that shuts down a team or activity for two weeks.
- Whenever a confirmed case is identified among participants in a sport or extracurricular activity, ensure that all unvaccinated close contacts quarantine and get tested. Any vaccinated close contacts should also get tested, although they are not required to quarantine.
- A close contact is defined as someone who was within 6 feet of a known case (person infected with COVID-19) for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, even if everyone wore masks.
- Local guidance for K-12 schools allows students who were wearing a mask when they came into close contact with someone infected with COVID-19 to continue in-person learning if they follow COVID-19 testing guidance. This option is known as modified quarantine. Students on modified quarantine are not permitted to participate in extracurricular activities, whether school-based or in the community. The child must remain at home in quarantine except to attend classes and to get tested.
- For exposures occurring on a K-12 campus, please refer to the [County of SLO Decision Pathways for Schools](#) guidance on required isolation and quarantine. For exposures occurring elsewhere, please refer to the [CDPH Guidance for Isolation and Quarantine for COVID-19](#).
- Persons who test positive for COVID-19 cannot participate in sports or extracurricular activities until they have recovered and completed their isolation period.
- At a minimum, a phone or telemedicine consultation with a physician is recommended prior to return to play in accordance with the [American Academy of Pediatrics COVID-19 Interim Guidance: Return to Sports and Physical Activity](#).