

HEALTH RISK COMMUNICATION

TO PARENTS AND STUDENTS WITHIN WESTCHESTER COUNTY

Key Items to Consider Before Allowing Your Child to Engage in Higher-Risk Sports and Recreation Activities

- COVID-19 is still highly prevalent and variant strains have been continually appearing.
- Higher-risk sports and recreation activities increase the possibility of transmission of COVID-19 among students, their families, and their community
- Studies of sport-related transmission show that the brief interactions which occur during these activities increase transmission risk, even if it's less than 15 minutes
- Competitions and tournaments also increase the risk of spread through additional interactions like riding on team buses and interacting/congregating in locker rooms

This information is provided to you in order for you to make an informed choice for your child regarding their participation in these activities, as you know your child and their circumstances best.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its variants continue to be a factor in society. You can follow in Westchester County [at https://forward.ny.gov/early-warning-monitoring-dashboard](https://forward.ny.gov/early-warning-monitoring-dashboard).

Vaccinations are recommended to provide protection for students engaged in activities associated with a high risk for COVID-19 transmission.

Because this virus is relatively new, and although some symptoms are common among those suffering from the illness, the complete list of symptoms, as well as long term complications remain unknown. In fact, some children seem to be at risk for developing more severe complications from COVID-19, such as multi-system inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C), which is of great concern, especially for children who are medically fragile. For more information about MIS-C, please visit the following website: <https://www.cdc.gov/mis-c/>

At present, it cannot be predicted who will become severely ill, although older people and those with underlying health conditions are at higher risk. The long-term effects of COVID-19 are not known; even otherwise healthy people with mild cases may experience long-term complications and disability.

Please understand that the health risk from COVID-19 has not been eliminated.

As you are aware, any time people are gathered, there is a risk of exposure to COVID-19, which can lead to serious medical conditions and even death. Symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals can spread the virus. Contact sports and indoor, close contact practices and tournament events may increase this risk for athletes, coaches and other bystanders including parents.

Parents should understand that other social interactions which occur during organized activities, outside of an actual practice or competition, also increase risk of transmission among student-athletes. These include, but are not limited to, interactions in locker rooms and buses.

Decisions made by parents and guardians today can help contribute to the safest possible in-person operation of schools. These are difficult decisions and require a balancing of the public health best practices to limit the transmission of COVID-19 in the community and other societal factors. As we collectively learn more and more about this ongoing pandemic, new health information will be shared with you. With vaccines now being distributed and more vaccine options anticipated in the near future, there is every reason to hope for a much safer environment for schools and school-related activities as time continues to progress.

Please keep all of the foregoing in mind as you make the decision on whether or not to allow your child to participate in sports and recreation activities known to place them at a high risk for acquiring COVID-19.

The Health Department takes the health and safety of our children very seriously, even more so during the worst public health crisis in a century. We need to proceed with caution and take every step possible in resuming in-person activities safely and responsibly

By my signature below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the information above. I am voluntarily allowing my child to participate in interscholastic athletics which are known to place my child at a high risk for acquiring COVID-19 or a variant of COVID-19.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____