

As stated in a recent July publication of the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), although children have generally not been the source of outbreaks, it is possible. Because prolonged, close contact with a person infected with Covid-19 is the main form of transmission, the sport (number of players, spacing, and frequency and duration of contact) and setting (indoor versus outdoor, size, and ventilation of facility) influence the risk of infection. Although unlikely, the virus can be spread via surfaces; therefore, sports with shared equipment, facilities, or common surfaces may pose an additional risk and need to be addressed.

This statement is the driving perspective for this document along with the information provided by governing bodies such as the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, The Aspen Institute: Project Play, The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and Mass.gov guidance/the Office of the Governor of Massachusetts.

***This document will serve as guidance for Fall sports and how they are to be operationalized on the campus of the Noble and Greenough School. The document will highlight policies and procedures that ALL Nobles athletes and faculty/staff/coaches must abide by to participate and to best mitigate the risk of transmission. It shall also include strong recommendations on the gradual return to play, back to organized sports as a way of preventing injury, both orthopedic and environmental. Our Emphasis shall be put on mitigation of risk, hand hygiene, and social distancing, and gradual return to play best practices as ways to help keep students and staff safe during participation in the Afternoon Programming.***

The risk of spreading Covid-19 can be different depending on the sport and as such sports have been classified into low, moderate, and high-risk categories. Additionally, how each sport is coached/taught and played can have a direct bearing on the risk of transmission of this virus.

***The CDC assigns risk to sports by proximity in a group setting, time spent together, close contact, and the mixing of geographical areas:***

- **Lowest Risk:** Performing skill-building drills or conditioning at home, alone, or with family members.
- **Increasing Risk:** Team-based practice.
- **More Risk:** Within-team competition.
- **Even More Risk:** Full competition between teams from the same local geographic area.
- **Highest Risk:** Full competition between teams from different geographic areas.

**[NATA \(National Athletic Trainers Association\)](#) in Collaboration with [AAP \(American Academy of Pediatrics\)](#) GRAPHIC of RISK RELATED TO YOUTH SPORT**

## **NOBLES ATHLETICS WILL OPERATE UNDER STRICT GUIDANCE OF THE MASSACHUSETTS REOPENING STANDARDS AND BEST PRACTICES:**

Please click on the link below to familiarize yourself with the State Guidance as it pertains to your sport and how it should be played safely. Nobles is requiring the use of double layered masks at all times during the Afternoon Program as well as strict social distancing and de-densification measures while students are not actively participating in their sport. Changes to these policies are subject to change as new guidance is released by the State.

[MASSACHUSETTS REOPENING STANDARDS FOR BUSINESSES and OTHER ENTITIES PROVIDING YOUTH and ADULT AMATEUR SPORTS ACTIVITIES – Phase III, Step 1 Amended on August 13, 2020](#)

## **INJURY PREVENTION AND ACCLIMATION FOR SAFE RETURN TO SPORT:**

To prevent injuries and safely transition back to active sports, it is *HIGHLY* recommended that coaches follow the guidelines determined by the NSCA, NCAA, NFHS as closely as they can. Under this guidance, it is recommended teams follow the [50-30-20-10 rule](#) as outlined by the Korey Stringer Institute, as well as acclimatization guidelines for heat and exercise.

Nobles Athletics and the Office of Sports Medicine recognizes that it is not possible to equitably and efficiently re-acclimatize ALL its student-athletes in the ideally recommended manner of training, but we ask that all coaches consider dramatically changing their traditional methods of assessing fitness and skill, and running practices early on during the first two weeks of our return. We ask that you keep in mind that the risk of injury and heat-related illness is much higher than in years past and that the treatment of such injuries comes with greater risk due to the Pandemic.

**Coaches should err on the side of caution and conduct practices that are skill-oriented and lower intensity at the outset of the athletic calendar.** We must consider that not all athletes have had access to the same resources or could work out at the desired level of expectation over the last 5+ months. We also should consider that people who have been diagnosed with Covid-19, despite full recovery, may have lingering cardiopulmonary problems and thus are at higher risk of exercise-induced injury or illness.

[KEY FACTS ABOUT DETRAINING PDF](#)

Lastly, any athlete who has been exposed to Covid-19 may be at risk for cardiac conditions and therefore it is recommended that all coaches have current CPR certification and know the signs

and symptoms of cardiac emergencies and heat emergencies. While it is up to a student's Primary Care Physician, it is encouraged that a cardiac screening should be done for athletes who have been ill with Covid-19 before participation.

For your review, a copy of the [Noble and Greenough Athletics Emergency Action Plan](#) is public and available.

## **REQUIRED MATERIAL FOR ALL COACHES TO COMPLETE:**

**POLICY:** Every Nobles Coach is required to take a brief course on Covid -19 course specific to coaching sports. The course is free and offered by the National Federation of State High School Associations. It reiterates the importance of Masks, Social Distancing, Hand Hygiene and Sanitization of shared equipment in sports.

**PROCEDURE:** Coaches will not be allowed to coach until the course is completed and the certificate of completion is submitted to the Athletic Department. Please follow the instructions on this linked [NFHS Covid-19 COURSE FOR COACHES AND ADMIN: INSTRUCTIONS](#)

## **DAY TO DAY Covid-19 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:**

### **AFTERNOON PROGRAM WAY FINDING & DAILY CHANGING WAVES:**

**POLICY:** At the end of the academic day, students shall be released in waves from the schoolhouse(s) down to the MAC in order to maintain socially distanced, de-densified and masked groups. Students must adhere to the groups and times to which they are assigned for the days they are physically on campus. [Changing Room Way-Finding Document](#)

**PROCEDURE:** Upon arrival to the MAC they shall meet in designated areas, in the teams to which they are assigned. A coach from each team shall first take attendance then escort the team into their designated changing space within the MAC. Coaches shall have timers set to 10min, kids shall be masked the entire time they are inside, and they will be asked to change into their athletic attire as quickly as possible. Hand sanitizer will be available at every entrance and exit of the MAC, and its changing spaces. Once a group is changed they will be led out of the building through the nearest designated exit and to their designated practice field.



### COACHES DAILY CHECKLIST

The following steps **MUST** be completed **BEFORE** the start of all Athletics Practices/Events. These health and safety measures are to be completed **DAILY** and **COMPLETELY** before any activity may begin or end. The items on this list are **PIVOTAL** in the safety of sports participation at the Noble and Greenough School.

- Meet Team at the MAC @ designated area
- Take attendance of the entire team at the designated area, before entering the MAC
  - Check all 9th Graders attestation statements on Th/Friday via the safety pass.
- Review mask compliance, hand hygiene, and social distancing protocols with your team (locker room changing, sideline etiquette, water, and hand hygiene breaks, etc).
- Escort Team to designated locker room space
  - Set 10min timer for changing
  - Alert kids at 1min mark
  - Exit locker room and MAC
  - Remind kids to execute hand hygiene
- Run Practice while executing and monitoring mask, hygiene, and distancing compliance measures at all times.
- Wait with the team until the last child has been picked up by parent/guardian

## **CONTACT TRACING/TEAM ATTENDANCE:**

**POLICY:** Contact tracing and the ability to contact trace is integral in stemming the spread of Covid-19. It is a tried and true Public health strategy whereby you find people who are infected and you find the people they may have come into contact with to try to stop them from continuing to spread by changing their behavior so that they don't infect others. Since Covid-19 patients often do not exhibit symptoms, they can be infectious without knowing it. Contact tracing is one of the best tools we have to try to control community spread.

***For successful contact tracing, if any school identifies a Covid-19 positive diagnosis, groups of individuals need to be tracked and disclose location, time, date, and time spent in any location.*** As such, it is highly recommended that athletic teams keep rosters as static as possible in any given season, we encourage as little cross-rostering of children as possible, and we ask all respective school community members to try to limit time spent in multiple large groups such as club teams.

**PROCEDURE:** Each program and coach is asked to keep thorough records of every team member and coach per group as well as the date, time, location, and a record of attestation of symptoms and activity being performed, the best of their abilities and BEFORE the start of every practice. Attendance should be submitted via Veracross.

*Ideally, the goal is to limit the number of opportunities for the virus to spread and to limit the number of contacts, should a child or member of the community test positive for the virus.*

Team attendance will be taken BEFORE each team wave is taken through the building to change daily. On Thursdays and Fridays, coaches must verify "green light" attestation of all 9th graders participating in Varsity sports. Coaches must take attendance on Saturdays and check the attestation of all participating varsity team athletes.

**If there is a positive case identified, Nobles will work to identify close contacts who must adhere to the MA close contact quarantine guidelines (testing and remain home for 14 days).**

## **MASK WEARING:**

**POLICY:** It is required that a double-layered mask be worn to and from venues, during stretching and all static, pseudo-static, proximity situations such as coaches talks, and cooldowns. ***Additionally, masks are to be worn during all live play situations on the field. Neck gaiters and bandanas are NOT permitted while participating in a Nobles Afternoon Program activity.***

**PROCEDURE:** Double layered masks must be worn at all times by athletes and coaches. Masks must be worn securely and covering the nose and mouth completely. All coaches, staff, and non-athletes are required to wear a mask at all times during the afternoon program, without exception.

## **EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTION AND WATER:**

**POLICY:** Sports equipment, water, and ice shall be cleaned every morning and distributed directly to the athletic venues by 230pm daily (weather permitting).

**PROCEDURE:** Members of the equipment room and sports medicine shall set up the fields with equipment and water daily. Equipment shall be returned to the MAC Equipment Tent at the conclusion of the Afternoon Program session by a coach.

## **SPORTS MEDICINE SERVICES:**

**POLICY:** The Office of Sports Medicine and the athletic trainers shall operate from a Sports Medicine Tent located adjacent to the Morrison Athletic Center.

**PROCEDURES:** Any student that needs first aid, taping, or injury evaluation prior to the start of a practice must first check-in with their team/coach, change into their athletic attire, and then reports to the sports medicine tent promptly *after changing*. Once seen by a staff member, the student MUST report to the field on which their practice is scheduled to occur.

If an injury occurs during a Nobles practice, the student MUST report to a coach who will then notify the sports medicine staff. Injuries will be triaged and assessed accordingly. IF IT IS DETERMINED THAT A STUDENT CANNOT RETURN TO PLAY THAT DAY OR THE FOLLOWING, THE STUDENT WILL BE ASKED TO OBSERVE PRACTICE WHILE MAINTAINING MASK USE AND SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES. Rehab will be done by appointment only and utilizing outside spaces.

## **SANITIZATION OF EQUIPMENT:**

**POLICY:** All shared equipment should be sanitized regularly, before use and after, and a cleaning protocol should be provided to each coach/team. It is recommended that the sanitization of equipment be by the coaches or supervised by the coaches. No one outside the group session shall be allowed to clean equipment to limit touching and transmission of droplets on equipment.

### **PROCEDURES:**

- Team Coaches will be instructed in the appropriate cleaning of team equipment provided by Athletics
- All balls, sticks, touchable surfaces shall be wiped clean with disinfectant spray before practice, mid-practice and after practice, BEFORE the equipment is returned to the Equipment Room Tent outside of the MAC
- Cones can stay with a “pod” or “group” for the duration of the session and sanitized after the session

- Cooler interior and exterior will be washed out and cleaned with appropriate disinfectant products daily after use per school athletic department protocol by the Sports Medicine Staff
- The exterior of travel medical kits used by teams when traveling will have the exterior cleaned by the team at the end of each session when used with appropriate disinfectant products per school athletic department protocol by the Sports Medicine Staff
- Interior of travel medical kits will be inspected and cleaned as appropriately by Athletic Trainers upon their return as necessary.
- It is recommended that each student get a pinnie for the day and that pinnie will be cleaned by the Athletic Department.

Most equipment should NOT be shared and is up to the athlete to clean:

- Individual athlete gloves, mouthguards, protective eyewear, and padding/gear, sticks, or clothing/footwear should not be shared under any circumstances.
- Individual bags and equipment should also be spaced 6 feet apart.

### **SOCIAL DISTANCING DURING THE AFTERNOON PROGRAM:**

**POLICY:** A minimum of 6ft of static social distance should be maintained throughout the course of the afternoon programming. During transition times and sports, when strict distancing cannot be maintained, mask use will mitigate risk.

**PROCEDURE:** At times during which social distancing cannot be strictly enforced, such as moving as teams from space to space, mask usage will be enforced. During changing times, times in which students are not actively engaged in their sport/activity, during team talks, and after practices have been dismissed, social distancing will be enforced using clearly marked floor decals, sideline circles, and coaching cues and reminders.

In addition, all fall sports will be played outside in accordance with Mass.gov guidelines and all deliberate contact shall be eliminated from sports, locker rooms will be at 50% capacity, the number of participants per playing surface shall be capped at 25, with additional space provided with a 14ft buffer zone, individuals will not be allowed to congregate in common areas or parking lots following practices or events, and once athletes have completed their competition or activity, they must leave the area if another team is taking the field or using the playing surface to ensure adequate space for distancing.

### **SPACES:**

**POLICY:** All surfaces at athletic venues must be cleaned as athletes move about and a full sanitization needs to happen between groups in a given space. This will be done by Nobles' cleaning staff UG2 daily and regularly.

**PROCEDURE:** All surfaces in a weight room must be wiped between use and the equipment should be wiped after each use by the athletes. An additional wipe down by Strength and Conditioning staff, and the use of Sanitization machines by cleaning staff should be performed between groups. Once the afternoon programming has ended, Sports Medicine staff will wipe down all used surfaces throughout the building and then UG2 will clean all athletic spaces with electrostatic sprayers overnight and before the next day's programming.

## **SANITIZATION OF VENUES:**

**POLICY:** Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate any communicable diseases.

**PROCEDURE:** Before an individual or group of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within that facility should be wiped down and sanitized (chairs, furniture in meeting rooms, locker rooms, weight room equipment, bathrooms, athletic training room tables, etc.). Each school must work closely with their Operations/Buildings and Grounds departments to come up with CDC recommended and OSHA approved cleaning protocols.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

## **ATHLETE HAND HYGIENE DURING SESSIONS:**

**POLICY:** Frequent stoppage of sessions for hand washing is highly recommended and should be scheduled into your daily routine, at least every 15-20 minutes and for a duration of 5 minutes is preferred.

**PROCEDURE:** Coaches can spray athletes' hands with hand sanitizer or have multiple pump bottles accessible, or have athletes carry their own sanitizer for use. Handwashing stations will be available at every athletic venue for use during the practices.

### ***Technique for using hand sanitizer***

- Put product on hands
- Rub all surfaces of hands until hands feel dry
- Do not use clothing or soiled fabrics such as dish towels to dry excess sanitizer; allow to fully air dry

### ***Technique for using soap and water***

- Use soap and warm/room temp water
- Wash hands vigorously for 20 seconds



**Portable hand washing station**

Hand hygiene breaks are a good opportunity for a water break, however, a physical distance of 6' should be maintained during breaks, if breaks are over 10min in length.

## **HYDRATION:**

**POLICY:** All athletes need to carry personal, *LABELED*, water bottles, preferably ones that do not need to be screwed open to drink or touched with hands to open. Water fountains should be shut off, but bottle filling stations are appropriate.

**PROCEDURE:** Hydration breaks should be frequent and accompanied by hand washing, or hand sanitization break. Coaches can spray athletes' hands and they can rub together until dry, or have multiple pump bottles accessible, or both. If possible, the water bottles should be filled before arrival at each venue and a coach or one member of the staff shall turn on/off the water jug spigot for filling of bottles. ***Do not allow spitting or food at these breaks.***



**Once the Spigot is UP, leave it up and let the kids fill their bottles.**

### **SPORTS SPECIFIC PROTECTIVE GEAR:**

**POLICY:** All sport required protective gear must be worn, and each athlete must wipe down, or spray personal protective equipment after each session/use. Mouthguards should be cleaned and placed in a container to reduce exposure to others. Containers can be cases, or small plastic bags as examples. Mouthguards should NOT be touched by anyone other than the owner, unless with a gloved hand.

### **TRANSPORTATION:**

ISL Athletic Trainers recommend using the Massachusetts Department of Education' most current document with diagrams for transportation:

[K-12 DESE Transportation Guidance Document](#)

### **SPECTATORS:**

**POLICY:** NO spectators or non-team or staff members shall be at a session or game. If interscholastic play is to resume, live streaming is recommended.

### **OFFICIALS:**

**POLICY:** If interscholastic play is approved within the ISL, officials will be utilized at the discretion of the department and school

**PROCEDURE:** All officials need to complete a screening and temperature check before entering the venue or field. Accurate contact information must be recorded for contact tracing purposes. This should be done using a formal document that can be saved for reference. Officials must wear a mask at all times, sanitize hands frequently, and use an electronic or manual “whistle” while officiating.

## **WEIGHT ROOM AND STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING SPACES:**

**POLICY:** The weight room is currently closed to all Nobles students and employees, with the exception of Strength and Conditioning (S&C) staff and a limited number of S&C Afternoon Program participants. Richardson Gymnasium will also be used for the S&C Afternoon Program.

**PROCEDURE:** Students participating in S&C activities will wear masks during all low and moderate-intensity activities. During activities of high intensity, students may remove masks at the direction of the S&C coach and will maintain 6’ of distance from other students. Coaches will wear masks at all times. Students will be assigned specific spaces during their workouts to ensure 6’ of distance from other students. When using equipment, students will be assigned equipment for the workout, and that equipment will not be shared with other students. All equipment and surfaces used will be wiped at the end of the workout by the students. An additional wipe down by S&C staff and then the use of Sanitization machines by cleaning staff should be performed between groups.

# References

**NATA :**

[https://www.nata.org/sites/default/files/covid\\_19\\_return-to-sport\\_considerations\\_for\\_secondary\\_school\\_ats\\_1.pdf](https://www.nata.org/sites/default/files/covid_19_return-to-sport_considerations_for_secondary_school_ats_1.pdf)

**Korey Stringer Institute :**

[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](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)

**NFHS:**

[https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812287/2020-nfhs-guidance-for-opening-up-high-school-athletics-and-activities-nfhs-smac-may-15\\_2020-final.pdf](https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812287/2020-nfhs-guidance-for-opening-up-high-school-athletics-and-activities-nfhs-smac-may-15_2020-final.pdf)

**EDUCATION FOR COACHES AND ADMINISTRATORS:**

<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/covid-19-for-coaches-and-administrators>

**NCAA:**

<http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/core-principles-resocialization-collegiate-sport>

<http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/ncaa-student-athlete-covid-19-well-being-study#:~:text=Over%2037%2C000%20student%2Dathletes%20responded,the%20outset%20of%20the%20pandemic.>

**Cardiac concerns:**

<https://www.nfhs.org/media/4029935/cardiopulmonary-considerations-nfhs-amssm-guidance-statement-final-july-2020.pdf>

**USOPC :**

<https://www.teamusa.org/coronavirus>

**NSCA:**

<https://www.nasca.com/covid-19-return-to-training/>

**CDC:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/contact-tracing.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>

**Johns Hopkins Contact Tracing Content/Education page:**

<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/contact-tracing>

**USA Soccer:**

<https://www.ussoccer.com/playon/guides>

**USA Volleyball:**

<https://www.teamusa.org/usa-volleyball/features/usa-volleyball-response-on-coronavirus>

**USA Football:**

[https://cloud.3dissue.net/5614/5593/5593/35440/Brand%20Document\\_FBD%2020%20-%20RT P%20-%20Phase%20II%20RTYF%20Recommendations%20\[519847426\]\\_pages-20200625175944.pdf](https://cloud.3dissue.net/5614/5593/5593/35440/Brand%20Document_FBD%2020%20-%20RT P%20-%20Phase%20II%20RTYF%20Recommendations%20[519847426]_pages-20200625175944.pdf)

**DESE Transportation Doc:**

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:ed8ba4f7-d588-40c3-9e4f-5204e8876c6f>