



Orange County Schools

Hillsborough, NC

Health & Safety Athletic & Sports Recommendations 9.12.2021

Current Status of COVID-19 for Orange County NC: **High Community Transmission**

Background

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) released interim guidance on August 6, 2021 for the [Participants of Youth and Amateur Sports Programs](#). This information along with guidance from the [NC DHHS Strong Schools Toolkit \(K-12\)](#), Orange County Health Department (OCHD) and ABC Science Collaborative are used to inform decisions and recommendations for operations of athletic programs for the Orange County Schools.

DHHS Update

The following update was released on September 8, 2021 regarding sports. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is seeing a sharp increase in [COVID-19 clusters](#) among school sports teams. For the period between July 1 and Sept. 2, 2021, clusters among school sports teams accounted for 45% of all clusters in North Carolina middle and high schools, despite most school sports activities not beginning until August as schools began the fall semester. School sports teams are urged to follow [NCDHHS guidance for youth sports](#).

Between July 1 and Sept. 2 there have been at least 42 athletics-related [clusters](#) in North Carolina public, charter and private middle and high schools, with a sharp increase in August coinciding with the start of the school year. Only four athletics clusters occurred in July. While NCDHHS data cannot distinguish how people were exposed in these clusters, [past public health investigations in other states](#) have shown that spread among teammates often happens off the field, including during practice. To protect students' privacy, no other identifying information, including county or school, will be released.

OCS Summary & Recommendations for Athletics & Sports Programs

Closed Sports Programs: The following high risk sports programs should be closed immediately following guidance from NC DHHS and the Orange County Health Department with high community transmission rates and high risk for transmission due to close proximity of athletes on and off the field. The closure of sports programs would include those actively participating in-season and those programs offering off-season practices or workouts.

All student athletes in these programs eligible to be vaccinated must be fully vaccinated in order to participate when programs restart.

Sports Team	Risk for Transmission	Closed Period
Football	High	September 14 - September 30
Basketball	High	September 14 - September 30
Wrestling	High	September 14 - September 30
Competitive Cheerleading	High	September 14 - September 30

The requirements outlined below will be implemented following the restart of the above high risk programs:

Sports Team	Fans & Other Limitations	Mask Requirements for Athletes
Football	ALL FANS MUST BE MASKED BOTH INDOORS AND OUTDOORS PHYSICAL DISTANCE REQUIRED BY NON-HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS ATTENDANCE LIMITED TO PARENTS OR GUARDIANS (NO MORE THAN 2) OF ATHLETES ONLY NO SELLING OF FOOD ITEMS OR CONCESSIONS	REQUIRED OFF THE FIELD OF PLAY REGARDLESS OF VACCINATION STATUS
Basketball		
Wrestling		
Competitive Cheerleading		

Limited Sports Programs: The following sports programs and activities may continue to operate on a limited basis with modifications for both the participants and spectators in order to reduce the risk for COVID-19 transmission on and off the campus.

All students participating in these programs must be vaccinated or participate in the required bi-weekly COVID-19 testing.

Sports Team	Risk for Transmission by Limited Contact	Fans & Other Limitations	Mask Requirements for Athletes
Cheerleading	Medium	ALL FANS MUST BE MASKED BOTH INDOORS AND OUTDOORS PHYSICAL DISTANCE REQUIRED BY NON-HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS ATTENDANCE LIMITED TO PARENTS OR GUARDIANS (NO MORE THAN 2) OF ATHLETES ONLY NO SELLING OF FOOD ITEMS OR CONCESSIONS	REQUIRED ON AND OFF THE FIELD OF PLAY REGARDLESS OF VACCINATION STATUS
Lacrosse	Medium		
Soccer	Medium		
Tennis Doubles	Medium		
Volleyball	Medium		
Baseball	Medium		
Softball	Medium		

Open Sports Programs: The following sports programs will continue to operate with close monitoring of guidelines and restrictions in order to maintain low risk for COVID-19 transmission on and off the field.

All students participating in these programs must be vaccinated or participate in the required bi-weekly COVID-19 testing.

Sports Team	Risk for Transmission by Limited Contact	Fans & Other Limitations	Mask Requirements for Athletes
Cross Country	Low	ALL FANS MUST BE MASKED BOTH INDOORS AND OUTDOORS PHYSICAL DISTANCE REQUIRED BY NON-HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS ATTENDANCE LIMITED TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS (NO MORE THAN 2) OF ATHLETES ONLY NO SELLING OF FOOD ITEMS OR CONCESSIONS	REQUIRED WHEN OFF THE FIELD OF PLAY
Tennis Singles	Low		
Swimming	Low		

High School Vaccination Percentage Status Report: As of 9/10/2021*

Football	54%	Soccer	73%	Tennis	83%
Cheerleading	52%	Volleyball	60%		
Crosscountry	83%	Golf	**		

*Combined for all high schools.

**Not reported due to the limited number of participants.

High School Athletics Reported COVID-19 Positive Cases: 4