



MCPS ATHLETICS

RETURN to R.A.I.S.E.

Update—January 7, 2022

Dear MCPS Community:

Thank you for your continued support this week, as there have been significant changes to program operations. MCPS remains committed to delivering an in-person experience and program for our student-athletes to the extent possible. We will continue to rely on the collective efforts across the program and our commitment to the [four "asks"](#) of MCPS, as we navigate the ever-changing challenges and dynamics of COVID-19. Here are some important program updates and reminders:

Spectator Restrictions

As communicated on January 2, in order to minimize indoor gathering sizes and account for potential reductions in staffing, **no spectators are allowed at contests in MCPS facilities** through January 16. An update will be provided on or before January 15 regarding future spectator limitations. Note the following:

- For non-MCPS facilities, operations will comply with the procedures and protocols of the host facility and/or jurisdiction.
- There are no limitations for outdoor competitions.

NFHS Network

Contests in stadiums and main gymnasiums will continue to be broadcast live on the [NFHS Network](#). Parents and fans can [subscribe](#) to the network and have access to all games for a monthly subscription of \$10.99/month (or yearly pass for \$69.99/year). All games are free after 72 hours. Information regarding programming is provided by local schools.

Spectator Restrictions at Swim & Dive Meets

All swim centers are aligning with the MCPS Spectator Guidelines; therefore there will be no spectators allowed in swim centers until further notice. All meet personnel (scorers, timers, diving judges) should be verified by the head coach with the swim center staff. Meets may be suspended if there are spectators gathering at meets.

Pauses - Team & School/Program

Per guidance from the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, MCPS will continue with current procedures regarding the pausing of team activities. If a team has three or more active positive COVID-19 cases, all team activities must be paused for 14 days. The 14-day pause begins from the last exposure (team activity).

Schools that transition to virtual learning due to a high number of positive cases of COVID-19, will also pause activities for athletics during this time. While teams may not meet in-person, they may engage virtually during this time.

Updates will be provided, if guidance regarding team/school pauses changes.

Virtual Resources & Procedures for Team Pauses

The [RAISE Reimagined Plan](#) provides resources for coaches and teams when pauses are necessary to in-person activities. Following a pause, teams/programs will transition back to in-person activities starting with at least one day of practice, per the COVID-19 Task Force for MCPS Athletics (bocce exempt). The R.A.I.S.E. Reimagined Plan provides MCPS Athletics stakeholders with guidance on delivering virtual activities during these brief pauses in programming.

Officials Appreciation Week

The Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) is declaring the week of January 10-14, 2022 as Winter Sport [Officials Appreciation Week](#) to thank and bring attention to the hard work and dedication of the nearly 5,500 MPSSAA registered sport officials in the state of Maryland. MCPS will be participating in this initiative - all teams and schools, be sure to thank your officials!

Indoor Track & Field Update

The Prince George's Sports and Learning Complex (PG Sportsplex) will be returning as a county vaccination site; therefore, all indoor track & field activities and competitions at the PG Sportsplex have been cancelled for the season. [Here](#) are more details regarding the contingency plan for MCPS, which include three dates of outdoor meets at high school sites. Teams may also continue to attend indoor meets and invitationals. The MPSSAA fully expects to administer a championship season for indoor track athletes and all winter sport athletes. The MPSSAA will continue to work closely with available facilities, create contingency plans, and collaborate with local school systems to maximize opportunities for student-athletes that benefit their physical, social, and mental well-being.

Overnight Travel

As a reminder, all overnight travel is cancelled through January 16. An update will be provided on or before January 15 regarding future overnight travel restrictions.

Team Communications

Communications will continue to be sent to teams impacted by a positive case of COVID-19. Additionally, communications will be sent to opposing schools that may have been exposed. Communications will be released in alignment with community messaging to the extent possible; however, there may be instances where team communications are released in advance of community messaging in order to ensure safe, timely operations.

Scheduling

Contests postponed before Winter Break will not be made up at this time. Wrestling teams that had a tournament opportunity postponed may participate in a future tournament, with the approval of the Athletics Unit and in compliance with MCPS and MPSSAA regulations.

Moving forward, to maximize participation opportunities, high school schedules may be adjusted on an ongoing basis to allow a team that loses an opponent due to COVID-19 to compete against another school who also loses an opponent on the same play date. New matchups will only be scheduled with the approval of the athletics specialists from both participating schools and the Athletics Unit, in compliance with MCPS and MPSSAA regulations.

Middle School Athletics

Middle school basketball games are officially underway! Schedules are available [here](#). Any potential rescheduling of middle school contests impacted by COVID-19 will be coordinated through league coordinators and the Athletics Unit. We look forward to a safe and successful season!

Masks/Face Coverings

Per the Return to R.A.I.S.E. Plan, masks/face coverings are required **at all times** indoors with the exception of safety-related exemptions per the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services. All individuals must comply with these protocols and procedures at all times.

Say Yes to the Test - Consent to Both Random and Rapid COVID-19 Testing

One significant mitigation tactic in MCPS is random COVID-19 screening tests and rapid testing across grades. MCPS, in partnership with the Maryland Department of Health, is offering COVID tests to students at no cost. Testing requires parent permission to "Say Yes to the Test".

[Fill out the consent form](#)

[Learn more](#)

See the flyers (multiple languages) [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Chinese](#), [French](#), [Korean](#), [Portuguese](#), [Vietnamese](#), [Amharic](#)

Return to R.A.I.S.E. Plan Operations

The [Return to R.A.I.S.E. Plan](#) will continue to drive program operations in regard to COVID-19 procedures and protocols. The plan is reviewed on an ongoing basis by the COVID-19 Task Force for MCPS Athletics. The latest version is always available on the [COVID-19 Athletics Information](#) webpage.

Communication and Resources

Our COVID-19 Task Force for MCPS Athletics will continue to evaluate and implement the latest safety measures. Updates and guidance from the Task Force will continue to be provided and are available on the [COVID-19 Athletics Information](#) webpage. Specific questions should be directed to your school's [athletics specialist \(AD\)](#), [athletic coordinator \(AC\)](#), or coach.

We appreciate your continued commitment and support of our student-athletes and MCPS Athletics!

Montgomery County Public Schools