

PE, Elective Classes, Recess, & NMAA Sports & Activities



GUIDANCE FOR 2020–2021 SCHOOL REENTRY

Physical Education and Related Classes

Physical education (PE) classes and physical activity are important supports for students' physical, mental, and social-emotional health. Schools should continue to provide high-quality, standards-based PE programs, while being mindful of social distancing and good hygiene practices.

High-quality PE provides students with a planned, sequential, K–12, standards-based program of curricula and instruction designed to develop motor skills, knowledge and behaviors for active living, physical fitness, sportsmanship, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. Regardless of modality (face-to-face, hybrid, or online), the goal of PE is to

develop physically literate individuals who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity.

For the 2020–2021 school year students and staff are required to wear face coverings while at school, except when eating, drinking or exercising. Though face coverings are not required during periods of exercise, students should wear face coverings during PE classroom instruction.

The reentry considerations for PE classes are intended to guide administrators, staff, and teachers as they prepare for safe and supportive PE instruction.

New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) encourages districts and charter schools to consider:

1. Teaching PE outdoors or in well-ventilated areas;
2. Being creative and flexible in scheduling PE in the classroom;
3. Ensuring PE class sizes allow for social distancing;
4. Teaching personal hygiene, such as handwashing as well as coughing and sneezing etiquette;
5. Postponing or adapting units of instruction that take place in weight rooms or swimming pools,
6. Encouraging students to come in clothing appropriate for PE class;
7. Closing locker rooms and eliminating any requirement for changing clothes for PE class;
8. Maintaining social distancing, including using cues, such as tape on the floor, to mark six-foot spacing;
9. Avoiding use of equipment that is made of cloth or is porous and would be difficult to sanitize, as well as equipment that students are likely to put into their mouths;
10. Minimizing sharing of equipment;
11. Cleaning and sanitizing high-touch surfaces and equipment between classes;
12. Encouraging students and staff to bring water bottles rather than using water fountains; and
13. Focusing instruction on individual pursuits or skills such as dance, fitness, mindfulness, disc golf, track and field, throwing underhand, kicking, and target games.

For online and hybrid (online/in-person) instructional programs, PE teachers should continue to provide standards-based instruction and learning activities for students to complete at home. PE classes, during periods of online and hybrid instruction, support the goal of having physically literate individuals and also support the national recommendation of [60 minutes](#)

[or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily for children and adolescents ages 6–17.](#)

Much of this section is adapted from The Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) America's 2020–2021 School Reentry Considerations: [K–12 Physical Education, Health Education and Physical Activity.](#)

Other Classes with Unique Risks

In addition to physical education classes, there are other subject-area classes that may represent a heightened risk for transmission of the Coronavirus. Classes such as band, choir, theater, community internships, and others may represent unique challenges for re-entry due to the intense respiratory nature of activities involved, the close contact

required for classroom activities, or interfacing with the public.

Whether and how such classes meet is at the discretion of the district or charter school. The [CDC recommendations for youth sports](#) may be useful when considering how to safely convene such classes.

During the 2020–2021 school year, for classes that present a heightened risk of Coronavirus transmission, NMPED encourages districts and charter schools to consider:

- 1.** Providing related, alternative activities for classroom activities that exceed acceptable risk;
- 2.** Teaching and practicing hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette;
- 3.** Having students and staff use face shields in addition to, or instead of, masks, for activities such as singing, stage performances, or for community interaction;
- 4.** For intense respiratory activities such as band, choir, and theater, practicing outdoors if possible, if not, practicing in well ventilated spaces;
- 5.** Maintaining regular cleaning and disinfection routines;
- 6.** Prohibiting the sharing of apparatus including instruments, face shields, microphones, wigs, props, or other equipment;
- 7.** Maintaining social distancing, including using cues, such as tape on the floor, to mark six-foot spacing;
- 8.** Avoiding spectators when possible;
- 9.** Screening spectators, having them maintain social distancing requirements, and having them wear face coverings;
- 10.** Avoiding off-site competitions and performances;
- 11.** Using video-conferencing applications or outdoor spaces for performances; and
- 12.** Prohibiting concession stand sales.



For the 2020–2021 school year, students and staff are required to wear face coverings while at school, except when eating, drinking or exercising. Intense respiratory activities, such as playing a wind instrument, are to be considered exercising.

Recess

The COVID-19 pandemic has limited the opportunities for students to develop and practice social skills through interactive free play with classmates. Recess is an important educational opportunity for students to practice social skills. It also helps meet the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity for children and adolescents.

Recess supports the emotional needs of students, providing opportunities for students to reconnect with friends they may have been separated from during stay-at-home health orders. Recess also provides the time and space for students to develop new relationships and support systems that may help them cope with difficult circumstances.

For the 2020–2021 school year, requirements for recess include:

1. Time for recess will not be reduced or eliminated;
2. Recess will not be withheld as a punishment; and
3. Students are to maintain social distancing requirements.

Additional considerations include:

1. Cluster students within a class into groups of no more than five students, and have students play within their student clusters during recess;
2. Provide for regular cleaning and disinfection of playground equipment;

3. Stagger recess times such that few classes are sharing the recess space;
4. Add additional spaces where classes may take recess to reduce the number of classes sharing the recess space;
5. Teach students games for recess that can be played while maintaining social distancing requirements;
6. Limit the use of shared recess equipment such as balls and frisbees; and
7. Maintain sufficient adult supervision during recess to monitor and enforce social distancing requirements.



In addition to traditional recess, for periods during which instruction is occurring online, consider implementing recess virtually, providing instructional breaks for groups of students to socialize through video-conferencing technology or to participate in a menu of appropriate physical activities at home.

Much of this section is adapted from The Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) America's 2020–2021 School Reentry Considerations:

[K–12 Physical Education, Health Education, and Physical Activity.](#)

Extra-Curricular NMAA Sanctioned Sports and Activities

Extra-curricular sports and activities can be an important part of the educational experience, helping to motivate and engage students as well as encouraging pride and comradery across a campus. NMPED and the New Mexico Athletic Association (NMAA) are working together to ensure that NMAA sanctioned sports and activities continue in New Mexico schools while maintaining student, staff, and spectator safety.

The following testing requirements are in place for NMAA sanctioned sports and activities for the 2020–2021 school year:

- 1.** All members of the coaching staff will be tested for COVID-19 shortly before the start of the season for any sport or activity that they coach, and the coaching staff members will provide the results to a school or district official named by the school district or charter school;
- 2.** Each student participating in an NMAA sport or activity will be tested for COVID-19 shortly before each competitive season in which the student participates and will provide the results to a school or district official named by the district or charter school; and
- 3.** Coaching staff will self-monitor and screen students prior to all workouts, practices, and competitions.

Students or coaching staff who test positive for COVID-19 will be contacted and provided instructions by the Department of Health (DOH). Those who have been in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 may contact DOH at (505) 827-0006 to schedule testing.

Any person who fails a health screen for COVID-19, who has a preponderance of COVID-19 symptoms, or who has a temperature greater than 100.3, should not be allowed to participate in NMAA sanctioned activities, should self-isolate, and should contact their primary care provider or other healthcare professional to receive medical clearance before participating in NMAA sports or activities.

Comprehensive guidelines for convening practices and competitions for NMAA sanctioned activities in 2020–2021 are available through the [NMAA's return to play guidance](#). The NMAA Guidance for Return to Play follows a three-phase approach.

As of the release of this document, New Mexico is in phase one of return to play, which is described as, **“Individual skill development and workouts; no contact with others; minimal sharing of equipment; no games or scrimmages.”**

