

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, sportspersonship, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence. Regardless of modality (face-to-face, hybrid, or online), the goal of PE is to develop physically literate individuals with 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 or drinking. At the time of this writing, face coverings are required even during periods of exercise, consistent with the statewide public health order. If the public health order is amended to no longer require masks during exercise, schools should operate in accordance with health order and may discontinue the mask requirement during exercise.

The reentry considerations for PE classes below 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. Avoid using 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 and in-person) instructional programs, teachers of PE 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, supports 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 six through 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.](#)

VERSION 2 08/06/20 – This guidance document has been updated to align with the current public health order such that:

- Masks must be worn even during periods of exercise (including PE, recess, and extra-curricular athletics)
- Masks may not be removed for playing musical instruments



Reentry Support Guidance

Public Education Department

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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 reentry 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 Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) recommendations for youth sports](#) may be useful when considering how to convene such classes safely.

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 offsite 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 or drinking.

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. Students are to maintain social distancing requirements.

Important considerations:

1. Time for recess will not be reduced or eliminated,
2. Recess will not be withheld as a punishment.

Additional considerations include:

1. Cluster students within a class into groups of no more than five individuals, and have them play within their clusters during recess;
2. Provide 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 Activities Association (NMAA) are working together to ensure that NMAA sanctioned sports and activities continue in NM schools while maintaining student, staff and spectator safety.

Requirements around NMAA sports and activities for the 2020–2021 school year continue to change based on changing conditions. As conditions change the requirements will continue to be updated.

- Summer workouts for football, soccer, wrestling, and basketball are not permitted.
- There is a modified schedule for 2020–2021 sports seasons available at the following links:
 - ▶ [Master Table of Athletic Events](#)
 - ▶ [Sports Calendar](#)
- Overnight travel for NMAA sanctioned activity teams is not allowed.
- Tournaments for NMAA sanctioned activities are not allowed.

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.”**

For additional information, please see the [NMAA's website](#).

As conditions change, the requirements for extra-curricular NMAA sanctioned sports and activities will continue to be updated.

