MCPS ATHLETICS

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

Update—January 2, 2022

Dear MCPS Community:

As we begin 2022, we must remain vigilant in our efforts to fight the spread of COVID-19. We are calling on every member of our community to recommit to the procedures and protocols outlined in the Return to R.A.I.S.E. Plan and the four "asks" of the broader MCPS community. *Due to the vaccination requirement for MCPS Athletics, practices and competitions will continue*. Here are some important program updates and reminders from the COVID-19 Task Force for MCPS Athletics, per guidance from the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services:

Spectator Restrictions

In order to minimize indoor gathering sizes and account for potential reductions in staffing, **no spectators will be 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.
- Gymnasium events will continue to be streamed through the NFHS Network.

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. MCPS will be implementing a contingency plan that allows for outdoor meets to be held 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. Updates will be provided through coaches as information and meet logistics are confirmed. The first outdoor meets are scheduled for January 12.

Overnight Travel

All overnight travel is cancelled through January 16. An update will be provided on or before January 15 regarding future overnight travel restrictions.

Team Pauses

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).

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

Opening day for middle school basketball is Thursday, January 6th. 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!