

## Back to School CDC Recommendations Including Recess, PE & Athletics

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Keeping kids safe is of paramount importance to parents. As a matter of fact, when I was a principal, I worried about this issue more than any other. Although the school environment is generally considered one of the safest environments for children still educators worry about the unforeseen exception when it's not.

The good news is "schools are one of the safest places' for kids during the pandemic", according to the previous CDE Director Robert Redfield. However, that is if schools are following the CDC guidelines. The document emphasizes,

"Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools, a key takeaway is that students benefit from in person learning, and safely returning to school this fall for in person instruction is a priority."

### CDC Strategies for keeping kids safe at school:

1. Vaccination is the leading public health strategy to end covid-19 pandemic. Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in person learning as well as, extracurricular activities and sports.
2. Universal indoor masking and ongoing cleaning.
3. Maintain a 3-foot physical distance from others.
4. Screening, contact tracing or testing.
5. Good ventilation
6. Staying home when sick.
7. Keeping kids in pods or consistent groupings.

The above-mentioned strategies are talked about as "layering strategies" resulting from combining multiple strategies to keep kids safe at school.

### CDC Summary of Changes as of Aug. 4, 2021

- Recommendation for universal indoor masking for all students, teachers, visitors in K-12 schools regardless of vaccination status.
- Recommendation for fully vaccinated people who have known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 to be tested 3-5 days after exposure regardless of symptoms.

### CDC Recess and Physical Education Recommendations

Generally masking is not necessary when outdoors (ie. recess, and PE activities)

However, the unvaccinated should wear a mask when outdoors in a crowded setting with close contact.

The recommendation for indoor physical education and recess is to wear a mask.

### Athletics

Coaches and sports administrators should consider specific **sports related risks**:

Setting of the sporting event- When possible, keep physical distancing guidelines in place ie. move benches to maintain a 6-foot distance when possible.

Physical Closeness- Sustained close contact in sports like football, hockey or wrestling.

Number of people- The risk of covid spread increases the larger the crowd or group size.

Level of intensity- Intensive sports activities increase the risk factor.

Duration of time- the more time athletes are together in close proximity the greater the risk. ie. travelling to and from games, meals and like settings.

Presence of people with severe illness- people at increased risk should be considered.

When the risks increase in the outdoor environment then laying CDC strategies should be implemented.

CDC Website for K-12 School Guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance>