



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.

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Public Health Update

COVID-19 Interim Guidance for K-12 School and Youth Performing Arts, Sports and Extracurricular Activities in Marin County (Updated)

Background

On September 1st, California Department of Public Health (CDPH) updated its [K-12 Schools Guidance 2021-2022 Questions & Answers](#) to provide guidance on school-based and non-school based extracurricular activities. On September 10th, Marin County Public Health issued additional guidance in response to a surge of COVID-19 activity due to the Delta variant. On November 24th, CDPH issued updated Section 16 (Section 16, School-Based Extracurricular Activities) of the [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California](#). Notably, this guidance was developed and issued prior to the identification and designation of the variant B.1.1.529 (Omicron) as a variant of concern.

Omicron

The global spread of the new Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2, first detected in Southern Africa in mid-November, is a source of concern in our local pandemic response. Marin County Public Health is working closely with CDPH to monitor the variant. Given the high levels of infectivity, the Omicron variant is expected to be present regionally in the coming days. Important features of this variant are not yet well understood, including severity of illness and the level of protection conferred by current vaccinations or history of prior COVID-19 infection.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has suspended travel for non-U.S. citizens who have been present in South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia or Zimbabwe within the last 14 days.

Guidance Regarding Youth Activities

Marin County Public Health is aligned with CDPH's updated guidance for high-risk activities.

High-risk activities are those in which increased exhalation occurs, such as activities that involve singing, shouting, band, or exercise, especially when conducted indoors.

High-risk sports include basketball, boxing, field hockey, football, ice hockey, lacrosse, martial arts, rowing (non-singles), rugby, soccer, squash, volleyball, water polo, and wrestling.

- 1. Vaccinations:** Vaccines continue to be our best way through the pandemic by safely protecting us against severe illness from COVID-19 and its variants. All participants who are eligible for vaccination, including teachers, referees, officials, coaches, staff, volunteers, spectators, and observers, should be fully vaccinated. Everyone over the age of 18 who is eligible should get a [COVID-19 booster dose](#).

Groups, leagues, teams, and tournaments/events should require that all participants and personnel be fully vaccinated for COVID-19.

- 2. Mask use:** Marin County urges all people to wear masks while in an indoor public setting regardless of vaccination status, unless wearing a mask during play has been determined to pose a choking hazard by a well-recognized health authority, such as the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#).

CDPH states: When actively practicing, conditioning, or competing in indoor sports, masks are required by participants even during heavy exertion, as *practicable*. The introduction of the phrase “as practicable” allows individual districts, schools, and groups to determine what is “practicable” during heavy exertion.

Indoor sports have been a source of COVID-19 outbreaks in Marin County. Marin County Public Health strongly recommends wearing a mask even during heavy exertion, unless it poses a choking hazard.

If a district, school or group opts not to wear masks as recommended, they should:

- Verify vaccine status of all participants and players.
- Implement a weekly testing program for all participants and players regardless of vaccination status.
- Communicate their masking policy with other teams / groups prior to games, events, or tournaments.
- Encourage safer socializing outdoors or masked, whenever possible, before and after practice, games and events (incl. carpooling)

- 3. Testing:**

If it is not feasible to limit participation to fully vaccinated individuals, unvaccinated participants should be tested regularly per below. If it is not practicable to wear masks during heavy exertion, perform regular COVID-19 screening testing in participants and personnel.

Testing Types and Frequency:

- a. Once a week if using a molecular test (e.g., PCR, NAAT).
- b. Twice a week if using a rapid antigen test (e.g. BinaxNOW).

References:

[CDPH Fact Sheet: Omicron Variant](#) (November 28, 2021)

[CDC Statement on B.1.1.529 \(Omicron variant\)](#) [November 26, 2021]