



**TULARE COUNTY  
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY**

Timothy W. Lutz, MBA  
Agency Director

Karen M. Elliott, MBA • Director • Public Health Branch Director  
Karen Haught, MD, MPH • County Health Officer

November 11, 2021

### **Interim Considerations for K-12 Extracurricular Indoor Sports**

Given the sustained high levels of COVID-19 transmission in Tulare County, the following are interim operational considerations to support schools in infection prevention planning and application of state guidance during the evolving pandemic. Tulare County follows California Department of Public Health guidance. Any additional CDPH guidance after this date, particularly if specific or stricter than is stated here, supersedes the following recommendations.

As per current CDPH guidance, all individuals are required to wear a mask when indoors at a K-12 school setting regardless of vaccination status.<sup>1,2</sup> This includes participants and visitors for school-sponsored extracurricular activities, sports, and other on-campus events. For indoor sports specifically: *Masks are required for all persons while playing indoor sports 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.*<sup>1</sup> Indoor sports previously identified were wrestling, gymnastics, competitive cheer, and water sports. Given concerns with mask sweat saturation and physical contact during intensive play, indoor basketball and volleyball may also be considered for this allowance.

CDPH advises that these activities where wearing a mask may pose a health hazard either be conducted outdoors and/or that at least once-weekly screening testing be performed with either PCR testing (1:1 or pooled PCR) or antigen testing of all individuals, including those who are fully vaccinated.<sup>1</sup> Given frequent proximity to student participants, schools are encouraged to include coaches and adjunct team support persons such as referees in screening testing programs. CDC advises areas of substantial-to-high community transmission test twice per week for participation in high-risk sports (defined as those that cannot be done outdoors or with masks).<sup>3</sup> Currently, Tulare County falls within the "high" level of community transmission.<sup>3</sup>

Appropriate contact tracing, quarantine, and isolation procedures should be followed for any positive test results. Schools are reminded that unmasked exposures to COVID-19 that may occur during play will disqualify students from modified quarantine as per current CDPH guidance.

Indoor sports participants should remain masked at all times, except when actively in play, as mask use may only pose a temporary health hazard while actively in play. Active play includes "on-court" or "playing" time and excludes "bench" time or time between matches. Active players should wear a mask when entering/exiting the building, while on the sidelines, during shared transit, and in locker rooms. All other individuals (coaches, employees, referees, volunteers, non-employee contractors, spectators, visitors, other students or participants not in active play, etc.) are still required to wear a mask per current CDPH guidance. While inclusion in a screening testing program is strongly recommended to gain full benefit of screenings, screening testing should not preclude this masking requirement for those not in active play. Schools are



**TULARE COUNTY  
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY**

Timothy W. Lutz, MBA  
Agency Director

---

Karen M. Elliott, MBA • Director • Public Health Branch Director  
Karen Haught, MD, MPH • County Health Officer

encouraged to implement as many layers of protection as possible to protect students and staff; deviations from masking guidance requirements may risk transmission of COVID-19 in the school community.

1. California Department of Public Health. COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2021-2022 School Year.

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/K-12-Guidance-2021-22-School-Year.aspx>

2. California Department of Public Health. Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings.

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/guidance-for-face-coverings.aspx>

3. Centers for Disease Control. Testing Strategies for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools.

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html#anchor\\_1625662107144](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html#anchor_1625662107144)