

Physical Education + Extracurricular Activities

**In-Person Learning Resources for Parents and Caregivers
at Chicago Public Schools** — A Resource Created by Healthy
Schools Campaign for Parents and Caregivers in Chicago
Public Schools

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**HEALTHY SCHOOLS
CAMPAIGN**

EVERY CHILD DESERVES TO LEARN + THRIVE

Physical Education + Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities and physical education classes are important parts of the school experience for students at all ages. However, these activities also pose challenges to infection control because of close physical contact, difficulty wearing masks while participating and the intermingling of students outside of designated pods.

What Experts Say

Being in close contact, breathing heavily, and sharing equipment increase risk of COVID-19 transmission but there may be ways to safely participate in extracurriculars like sports and music, and physical education classes. Best practices for these activities include:

- Indoor sports are riskier than outdoor sports, so extra precautions should be taken for indoor practices or games and activities should be moved outside whenever possible.
- Physical education classes should be held outdoors whenever possible.
- Masks should always be worn by teachers, coaches and whenever possible by students.
- Practices may be conducted individually or in small groups and huddles or team meetings should be eliminated.
- The number of competitions may be reduced or limited to only local teams.
- The accumulation of virus-laden particles due to screaming or yelling should be reduced by educating coaches and restricting spectators.
- Activities such as theater, singing or playing a wind instrument increase particle emissions from the respiratory system and therefore increase transmission risk. Moving these activities outdoors, reducing group sizes, maintaining physical distance between students and frequent cleaning are all important risk-reduction strategies.
- Particularly risky activities may be held online or replaced with safer alternatives.
- Additional distancing and ventilation will be needed if riskier activities are to take place indoors. Masks should be worn at all times for singing, theater, string and percussive instruments and for wind instrument players except when actively playing the instrument.

What CPS Says

CPS does not yet have much written about extracurricular activities, including music groups and sports. Physical education will be conducted while practicing physical distancing, with mild to low intensity physical activity and while all involved are wearing masks. For dance, teachers will ensure each student wears a mask. Class will have at least 60 square feet of space to ensure physical distancing.

Parents and Caregivers Should Know

Parents may have further questions about physical education and extracurricular at their students' schools. Some of these questions could include:

- During PE, will contact activities and sports be prohibited (ie: basketball, soccer, football etc)?
- Will masks be required during PE?
- What kind of mask break will be allowed safely should my child need one after physically exerting him/herself?
- Will it be possible for PE classes to be conducted outdoors, weather permitting?
- If my student plays an instrument or sings in the choir, will he/she they still be attending practices and lessons?
- How will music be managed to make it safer? Will we have the opportunity to choose virtual options for these activities, even if our student is attending school in-person?
- Will sports be taking place? How will student participation in sports affect pods and quarantining if necessary?

The best practices in this document are based on guidelines provided by the Harvard [T.H. Chan School of Public Health](#) and the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).