



HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOLS UNDER CDC'S COVID-19 GUIDANCE

The Pennsylvania State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, Inc. (PSAHPERD- Soon to be SHAPE PA) is a non-profit organization in which part of its mission is to provide guidance for health education and physical education programs in schools. Our membership is made up largely of health and physical educators at the K-12 level as well as the higher education level. PSAHPERD would like to offer a plan for schools to use when preparing for and responding to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). This plan is intended to provide strategies and recommendations for schools to implement safe health and physical education programs under CDC's guidance.



INTRODUCTION

Health and Physical Education teachers are prepared to be at the forefront of helping school students navigate through these unprecedented times. Current conditions call for a shift to social and emotional learning, health education concepts and individual fitness goal development. In physical education social distancing plans can be easily devised and followed. Physical education teachers are very accustomed to maintaining student safety and compliance with rules during class. Modifications to physical education lessons can be made so that our students can continue to receive much needed physical education instruction and activity in a safe, controlled way during Pennsylvania's recovery from the health pandemic.

Some people may have the perception that physical education is limited to sports and games which require close physical contact. Given the circumstances of COVID-19, the physical education program recommended by this plan is focused on lifetime fitness and wellness to positively address the health and well-being of our students. The goal is to develop students who are physically literate, which is "the ability to move with confidence and competence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole person" (SHAPE America).

Health education in public schools changes as different health issues and trends arise. Our students need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills that enable them to apply health content. When addressing re-entry in schools, health education topics that must be included in the curriculum are: risk factors, hygiene, infectious disease, mental and emotional health, and stress management that includes content in bullying, conflict, violence and abuse.

Health skills must be taught and practiced. These skills are: accessing information, analyzing influences, interpersonal communication, decision making, goal setting, self-management and advocacy.

Health education is an effective vehicle for implementing health initiatives, CDC and school guidance, and legislation (Act 71-Adopting Youth Suicide and Prevention- mental and emotional health; Act 211- The Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs- vaping, opioids).

Of all subject areas taught in schools, Health and Physical Education are the ONLY two that address the "physical" aspects contributing to developing a well-rounded student. The goal is to teach students to be individuals who are health literate, which is "the ability to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services to make appropriate health decisions which is essential to promote healthy people and communities" (SHAPE America). Focusing on lifetime fitness, wellness, hygiene and social and emotional learning will help our students develop both physical literacy and health literacy in these uncertain times.

A photograph of a classroom with several rows of white-topped desks and blue chairs. The desks are arranged in a grid pattern, and the chairs are tucked under them. The floor is a dark red color.

PRIOR TO SCHOOL REOPENING CHECKLIST

THE HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAN:

- ☒ Establish a “return to school” team (health and physical educators, school counselors, school nurses, and the director of the Student Assistance Program).
- ☒ Return to School Team plans for ways to support students’ mental health, emotional health, or any drug and alcohol issues caused by the impact of the pandemic (PowerPoints/videos to help students and staff transition back into school; plan for listening circles in classrooms encouraging students to talk about their experiences and feelings during the pandemic; encourage students to hear and listen to one another).
- ☒ Inventory health and physical education equipment to determine what can be easily and effectively disinfected. An inventory of available disinfectants should also be completed. Investigate cleaners that do not have to be wiped off and dry quickly (Ex. Clear Gear Sports Spray).
- ☒ Inventory available physical education class space(s) to plan for how social distancing guidelines can be met by utilizing those multiple spaces (gymnasium, auxiliary gym, weight room, multi- purpose room, outdoors, etc.)
- ☒ Develop modified lessons, keeping in mind social distancing, equipment, class space and the weather for outdoor activities.
- ☒ Collaborate with school nurses on instruction that should occur regarding hygiene.
- ☒ Collaborate with school counselors and school psychologists on social and emotional learning strategies.
- ☒ Modify lessons to intensify instruction in curricular concepts and skills related to communicable diseases, hygiene, stress, emotional/mental health, risky behavior and other topics suggested by school nurses or guidance counselors.



SCHOOL REOPENING CHECKLIST

ELEMENTARY LEVEL PHYSICAL EDUCATION - STRATEGIES AND MODIFICATIONS

- Prior to beginning physical education, students' hands are sanitized
- Physical education teacher directs students to designated personal space spots in gymnasium following social distancing guidelines to wait to receive instruction on the concept (standard) they will be working on before the activity portion of the class begins. These personal space spots can also be used throughout the lesson if reminders about social distancing need to be reinforced for the group as a whole
- Social distancing signage is posted in physical education/physical activity areas.
- Physical education teacher uses equipment that can be disinfected between classes (non-porous equipment such as coated balls, synthetic sports balls, vinyl bean bags, plastic/resin striking implements, plastic scooters, plastic/vinyl targets, plastic hula hoops, poly rope handles for parachute use, rubber floor spots/cones, etc.)
- Physical education teacher continues to utilize the program modifications and specially designed instruction contained in a student's IEP, or the aids, services or accommodations recommended by a student's 504 plan (Chapter 15 service agreement) to support students with disabilities. Some students with disabilities may have difficulty adjusting to a change in the way activities are presented or a change in class routine. It may be prudent to prepare the student ahead of time for these changes.
- Physical education teacher devises movement activities that can be safely performed within the social distancing guidelines (Perform exercises or skill practice at personal space spots ; allow part of the class to move while others do movements without traveling from their personal space spots; utilize games that occur in zones to eliminate close contact between participants; station work; hold classes outdoors; etc.)
- Students sanitize hands when leaving physical education class.
- Physical education teacher disinfects equipment before the next class arrives.



SCHOOL REOPENING CHECKLIST

SECONDARY LEVEL PHYSICAL EDUCATION - STRATEGIES AND MODIFICATIONS

- Focus instruction on outdoor activities (weather permitting) that promote lifelong fitness, stress relief, and healthy diet. This focus is more important now than ever as we see the rise in the effects of COVID-19 in people with comorbidities.
- Encourage students to come to school dressed for physical education activities on the days they are scheduled for health and physical education to eliminate the need for changing in the locker rooms.
- If locker rooms need to be used, the Physical Education teacher supervises entry into the locker room, allowing a designated number of students to enter at a time and using a limited number of lockers that are spaced out, while other students wait outside the locker room door.
- Students sanitize hands in the locker room before entering the gymnasium.
- Students socially distance throughout the gymnasium and wait for instruction.
- Physical education teacher instructs the concept (standard) that students will work on and how social distancing will be carried out during that specific lesson.
- Physical education teacher uses various modifications to maintain social distancing guidelines (Utilize outdoors; utilize multiple class spaces like the auxiliary gym and the weight room; divide students into smaller groups; assign groups to multiple spaces; have groups rotate in a controlled way).
- Physical education teacher dismisses part of the class 5 minutes early so they can disinfect their equipment and to lessen overcrowding in locker rooms. The remaining students disinfect their equipment while the locker room clears. Students sanitize hands before leaving the locker room.
- Physical education teacher utilizes activities that focus on student wellness such as mindfulness, stress release, fitness and outdoor pursuits that accommodate social distancing.



SCHOOL REOPENING CHECKLIST

ELEMENTARY LEVEL HEALTH EDUCATION - STRATEGIES AND MODIFICATIONS

- Health education teacher maintains the social distancing arrangement that the school has established for classroom spaces.
- Health Education teacher intensifies instruction of skills related to hygiene and communicable diseases (hand washing, don't touch face, cover when coughing).
- Health education teacher instructs students on health-related skills for managing stress, fear and other emotions (mindfulness, deep breathing, journaling, etc).
- Health education teachers develop distance learning lessons (PDE SAS COVID-19 Resources) that students can utilize if school closes.

SECONDARY LEVEL HEALTH EDUCATION - STRATEGIES AND MODIFICATIONS

- Health education teacher maintains social distancing in the classroom as established by the school.
- Health education teacher reinforces habits that prevent the spread of communicable disease and hygiene habits in classroom (hand sanitizer, cough in elbow, garbage bags for used tissues/wipes).
- Health education teacher instructs students on health skills related to emotional and mental health, managing stress (mindfulness, journaling) and risky behaviors.
- Health education teachers develop lessons or access resources (PDE SAS COVID-19 Resources) to provide distance learning in health.

IDEAS TO GET STARTED-SECONDARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES UNDER CDC GUIDANCE CONDITIONS

The examples of activities listed below are basics to help teachers get started. They focus on lifetime fitness and wellness and can be easily performed under social distancing requirements. With resources and creativity, there are many more possibilities.

Walking	Walking Routes, Hiking Trails
Jogging	Track, Cross Country Trails, Wheelchair Mobility
Fitness Trails	
Fitness Apps*	Strava, MapMyRun, Nike Training
Orienteering	
Geocaching	
Frisbee Golf	
Biking	Mountain Biking, Adaptive Bikes
Dance*	Line Dances (no physical contact)
Mindfulness Exercises*+	
Yoga* (no mat)	
Flexibility Exercises*	Dynamic Flexibility Warm-ups, Range of Motion Exercises
Skill-Related Fitness*	Plyometrics, Speed and Agility Drills, Agility Ladders
Body Weight Exercises*	Planks, Mountain Climbers, Squat Thrusts, Calisthenics
Aerobic Workouts*	Cardio, Zumba, Group Fitness, Spinning, Treadmills, Single Rope Jumping
Physical Fitness Exercises	Fitness machines, equipment such as Kettle bells, Dumbbells, Exercise Tubing (if enough for each student in group.) Wall Squats, Crunches, Push-ups,
Team Challenges*	Transfer Platform-Teamwork (no physical contact)
Game Playing Skills (no physical contact)	Zone kicking games (feet only), Cornhole, Mini Golf Obstacle Course, Portable Shuffleboard (if enough for each student in group) Focus on offense, defense, sportsmanship, etiquette, cooperation, teamwork, etc)

*Outdoor or Indoor

+Activities for any space including a classroom

IDEAS TO GET STARTED-ELEMENTARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES UNDER CDC GUIDANCE CONDITIONS

The examples of activities listed below are basics to help teachers get started. They focus on lifetime fitness and wellness and can be easily performed under social distancing requirements. With resources and creativity, there are many more possibilities.

Spatial Awareness*+	Personal space, Levels, Pathways, Directions
Non-Locomotor Skills*+	Obstacle Course- Bend, Stretch, Twist, Squat, Duck
Fundamental Motor Patterns (Locomotor)	Warm-ups- Walk, Run, Jump, Slide, Leap, Gallop, Hop, Skip
Fundamental Motor Skills (Manipulative)	Station Work, Self Toss/Strike, Wall Rebound- Underhand/Overhand Throw, Catch, Kick, Dribble, Strike
Scooter Activities*	Maneuvering Obstacles, Scooter Relays
Single Rope Jumping*	Single Rope Jump Skills
Mindfulness Exercises*+	
Dance Activities*+	Line/Circle Dances- Chicken Dance, etc.
Game Playing Skills	Taking Turns, Cooperation, Teamwork, Leading, Following, Offense, Defense



HEALTH CURRICULAR CONCEPTS EMPHASIZED UNDER CDC GUIDANCE CONDITIONS

- **Stress Management:** Relaxation techniques (Deep breathing, mindfulness, rest).
- **Managing Emotions:** Acknowledge feelings, Express feelings (Journaling).
- **Infectious Disease:** Prevention, transmission, treatment.
- **Personal Hygiene:** Hand washing, not touching face, cover cough.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULAR CONCEPTS EMPHASIZED UNDER CDC GUIDANCE CONDITIONS

- **Components of Physical Fitness:** Muscular Strength, Muscular Endurance, Cardiorespiratory Endurance, Flexibility, Body Composition.
- **Personal Health:** Individual Fitness Plan, Physical Activity Guidelines, Rest.
- **Principles of Training:** FITT, Overload, Progression, Specificity, Reps/Sets, Aerobic/Anaerobic, Interval.
- **Skill-related Fitness:** Power, Speed, Agility, Balance.
- **Scientific Principles of Movement:** Force, Static/Dynamic Balance, Rotation, Levers, Newton's Laws of Motion, Gravity, Friction, Projectile Motion, Kinetic/Potential Energy, Velocity, Acceleration, Momentum.



ONLINE RESOURCES

In the event that schools need to abruptly close due to an outbreak of COVID-19 cases within the school community, health and physical education teachers need to prepare now (during the school open phase) for distance/remote learning. Click on each link below to utilize the sources:

- [PSAHPERD \(Soon to be SHAPE PA\) #Support4U Resource Site](#)
- [PDE SAS COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [SHAPE America](#)
- [OPEN Phys ed](#)
- [Catch Global](#)
- [PE Central](#)
- [PE Central - Adapted Physical Education](#)
- [National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability \(NCHPAD\)](#)
- [Special Olympics](#)
- [Disabled Sports](#)

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