



## Best Practices Related to Physical Education for Schools During COVID-19

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues to be a great uncertainty for schools across the country. Schools are challenged with figuring out how to open their doors and provide instruction for students while keeping everyone safe from COVID-19. One essential course of study that is particularly challenging is physical education.

Physical education is vital to providing students with the knowledge and skills they need to help them be physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy.

Whether in school or at home, here are some important tips\* for your school to practice to ensure safe and successful physical education instruction:

### Location:

- Evaluate the space of the classroom or gym and be sure to allow extra space due to increased respiration of students.
- Use outdoor spaces when possible, but avoid using playground equipment, benches, or other permanent structures.
- If you're forced to be indoors, use a space that allows doors and/or windows to be open to provide sufficient air flow and adequate social distancing.
- Work with a COVID-19 response team to ensure the building has a proper working ventilation system.
- Consider having the physical education teacher rotate through different rooms, but ensure they are familiar with the room and plan their activity accordingly based on the space.
- If students are going to the gym, make sure they are aware of and follow directions and procedures to socially distance while walking through the building.

### Personal Hygiene:

- Students and staff should wash hands as they enter and leave classrooms or the gym.
- Staff should wear face coverings and students should be encouraged to wear face coverings when physical distancing is not possible.
- Face coverings can be challenging for younger students to wear all day and are not recommended for anyone who has trouble breathing, asthma, or other underlying conditions.

### Activities:

- Consider implementing games or activities that require no physical contact and do not require students to be in close physical proximity to each other.
- Consider changing the location of activities that take place in school weight rooms or swimming pools and/or consult local COVID-19 guidelines on usage of these facilities.
- Instead of traditional team sports or activities, consider focusing your physical education classes on individual pursuits or skills, such as dancing, track and field, or martial arts.

## Distance Learning:

- Keep students' availability to equipment and space in mind when it comes to virtual activities.
- For students who are at home, encourage them to work on activities for age appropriate motor skill development
- Provide encouraging opportunities and messaging to motivate students, possibly through videos of the students' physical education teachers.
- Provide activities that the students can perform with parents but allow optimal time to complete.

Taking these measures into consideration will help to keep students safe while staying healthy and active. If you have any questions, please contact our Certified School Risk Manager **Mike Centrone** at [michael.centrone@uticanational.com](mailto:michael.centrone@uticanational.com).

*\*A portion of these tips were provided by [shapeamerica.org](http://shapeamerica.org).*

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