



Opportunity to Participate in Free In-School COVID-19 Screening Testing

Date: _____

Dear students and their parents, caregivers, and guardians,

In an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Chesapeake Public Schools have been working closely with the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to implement a **free COVID-19 screening testing program for our student athletes and athletic staff for the winter and spring sports seasons. This program, sometimes referred to as ViSSTA, provides routine testing of individuals who do not have COVID-19 symptoms.**

Many COVID-19 infections come from contact with a person who does not have symptoms. Screening testing can help identify infected people who may be contagious as early as possible, so measures can be taken to keep the virus from spreading. Testing is an extra layer of prevention combined with vaccination and other mitigation strategies at our school such as masks, social distancing, hand hygiene and ventilation. Each of these steps, and especially all of them working together, can help keep students, teachers, and staff healthy and in school. The school testing program will be open to all student athletes and athletic staff. Although testing programs are primarily intended for people who are not fully vaccinated, **vaccinated individuals may also participate. Testing will be completely free.**

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the program and to receive your permission to enroll your student athlete. This would involve regular COVID-19 testing as part of the program at our school. **Testing will be required for unvaccinated athletes, and a signed parent consent form will be kept on file.** To allow your student to participate, and to receive free COVID-19 testing, please complete the attached consent form, and return it to your school nurse by [Date]_____.

We are extremely grateful to our committed staff and families that continue to show great flexibility and resilience as we navigate through this school year. We are excited to add screening testing as another mitigation strategy for our school community as we continue to work together to keep students and staff safe and in school.

Attached is a Frequently Asked Questions document, which may answer many of your questions. If you have other questions, please contact your school nurse or Health Services at 757-494-7628.

If your student feels ill or has symptoms of COVID-19 prior to the school day, we ask that you please keep your student home from school. When a sick child goes to school, this puts others in our school community at risk. Please take your student to get a COVID-19 test at one of the testing sites in our community or to your own healthcare provider. You can search for a testing site near you at the Virginia Department of Health page here: [COVID-19 Testing – Coronavirus](#).



Frequently Asked Questions Regarding COVID Testing for Middle and High School Athletes

Chesapeake Public Schools (CPS) will test all athletes weekly unless proof of a COVID-19 vaccination is provided. This practice will apply to all student athletes participating in all winter and spring Chesapeake Middle School League (CMSL) and Virginia High School League (VHSL) sports for the remainder of the 2021-22 school year. If changes are made by VDOE or VDH in vaccine protocols, such changes may affect the information provided herein.

1. What is the timeframe for vaccination and/or testing as a high school athlete?

*The timeframe for unvaccinated athletes to avoid testing completely has already passed. Athletes wishing to be vaccinated and not submit to weekly testing must be fully vaccinated. Fully vaccinated is defined as 14 days after receiving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine or the 2nd dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine. The first day of winter tryouts is **November 8, 2021**. If your student plans to participate in a winter sport and will not be fully vaccinated by November 8, at least initially weekly testing will be required. To avoid additional weekly testing he or she should be vaccinated as soon as possible .*

*To avoid weekly testing, spring sports participants must be fully vaccinated by the first day of spring tryouts which is **February 21, 2022**.*

2. What is the timeframe for vaccination and/or testing as a middle school athlete?

*The timeframe for unvaccinated athletes to avoid testing completely has already passed. Athletes wishing to be vaccinated and not submit to weekly testing must be fully vaccinated. Fully vaccinated is defined as 14 days after receiving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine or the 2nd dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine. The first day of winter tryouts is **November 8, 2021**. If your student plans to participate in a winter sport and will not be fully vaccinated by November 8, at least initially weekly testing will be required. To avoid additional weekly testing he or she should be vaccinated as soon as possible .*

To avoid weekly testing, spring sports participants must be fully vaccinated by the first day of spring tryouts which is March 7, 2022.

3. Are coaches and sponsors required to submit proof of vaccination or weekly testing?

No, but coaches and sponsors are required to wear a mask while not actively engaged in an activity and maintain six feet of physical distance.

- 4. Is there a preferred shot?**
No, availability is based on FDA approval based on age. Currently available vaccines are Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, and Moderna. Any of these three vaccines are accepted, with age approval for vaccination.
- 5. Can my student still try out if he or she has received the first dose of a two dose requirement, and the second dose will not be received until after the beginning of tryouts?**
Yes, your student can participate in tryouts. Once teams are selected, team members will have to submit to weekly testing or provide proof of vaccination.
- 6. My student has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days. Does my student-athlete still have to get vaccinated?**
If your student-athlete has tested positive in the past 90 days, he or she may provide proof of vaccination or of a positive test result. After the 90 day period has passed, then he or she will be required to submit to weekly testing or provide proof of vaccination to remain eligible for participation in high school or middle school athletics. COVID-19 positive test results should be submitted to the athletics office in your athlete's school as you do any other health forms and vaccination information for athletes.
- 7. If my student-athlete already has an exemption from vaccinations, will this exemption apply to the COVID-19 vaccination requirement for sports?**
Yes, this would qualify in this situation as well. If this applies to your student, then he or she will be subject to weekly testing for participation in high school and middle school athletics.
- 8. How does a parent submit vaccination verification for their student-athlete to participate in VHSL or middle school athletics?**
Students should submit their proof of vaccination to their school health advisor.
- 9. What if my student-athlete has lost his or her vaccination card?**
If a student received his or her vaccination at one of the public vaccination sites in Virginia, you can request a copy of the vaccination card from the Virginia Department of Health. If your student received his or her vaccine from another source, you should contact that source and request a copy.
- 10. Does this testing program include VHSL activities other than sports?**
Not at this time. These students are required to wear masks while participating in these activities and must maintain six feet of social distance, to the greatest extent possible.
- 11. Does this testing program include clubs?**
Not at this time. These students are required to wear masks while participating in these activities and must maintain six feet of physical distance, to the greatest extent possible.

- 12. What if my student-athlete is on a high school cheer team that was selected in the fall?**
Students that were selected for cheer teams in the fall and will continue to cheer in the winter must consent to testing or may provide proof of vaccination. High School cheerleaders who are not vaccinated will begin testing on Monday, November 15, 2021. This same date applies for cheerleaders who wish to submit proof of vaccination.
- 13. What if my student-athlete is on a middle school cheer team that was selected in the fall?**
Students that were selected for cheer teams in the fall and will continue to cheer in the winter must consent to testing or may provide proof of vaccination. High School cheerleaders who are not vaccinated will begin testing on Monday, November 15, 2021. This same date applies for cheerleaders who wish to submit proof of vaccination.
- 14. What are my options as a parent if I want my student-athlete to participate in VHSL athletics but not be vaccinated for COVID-19?**
This will require you and your student-athlete to provide consent to participate in the weekly testing offered at each high school.
- 15. Is parent consent required for weekly testing?**
Yes, parental consent is required for participation in any free COVID-19 screening testing program offered by CPS and/or through the ViSSTA Program. If a parent refuses to provide consent for testing by CPS, then the student must test at an approved testing location and submit the results to the athletic department each Monday by 9:00 A.M. to remain eligible for participation.
- 16. Does this program apply to student-athletes participating in “out of season practice”?**
Not at this time.
- 17. What if my student-athlete does not provide proof of vaccination or submit to weekly testing?**
Students have the opportunity to provide a weekly negative test result given by CPS or by an approved source. If not provided, students will not be allowed to practice or participate in any CMSL or VHSL athletic contests.
- 18. What happens if my student-athlete tests positive during weekly testing?**
The student-athlete will not be permitted to practice or play for 10 days following the date of the test and resolution of the symptoms.