



COLUMBIA
ATHLETICS

Columbia Return to Interscholastic Athletics

Winter 2021

Updated January 29, 2021

Table of Contents

| Focus Area | Pages |
|---|-------|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Rensselaer County Guidance | 3-4 |
| Winter Sports Season Schedule | 5 |
| Registration | 6 |
| Health and Safety Procedures | 8 |
| <i>Practice Guidelines</i> | 9 |
| <i>Game Day Guidelines</i> | 10 |
| Home Games | 11 |
| <i>Host Operations</i> | 11 |
| <i>Athletic Training Room</i> | 12 |
| <i>Concessions/Booster Clubs</i> | 12 |
| <i>Media</i> | 12 |
| Away Games | 13 |
| <i>Busing/Travel to and from Away Games</i> | 13 |
| <i>Spectators/Parents</i> | 13 |
| <i>Coaches</i> | 13 |
| Confirmed Cases and Return to School | 14 |
| Appendix A: Assessment/Release for Return to Play | 15-16 |

Introduction

On Friday, January 22, 2021 Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that school-sponsored “high risk” sports in all regions may begin to practice and play beginning February 1st with local county health department approval.

See Page 5 of the [NYS Interim Guidance for Sport and Recreation](#) for further details.

Effective February 1, 2021, participants in higher risk sports and recreation activities may partake in individual or distanced group training and organized no/low-contact group training and, further, may partake in other types of play, including competitions and tournaments, only as permitted by the respective local health authorities (i.e., county health departments).

- Local health authorities should consider the following factors in authorizing or continuing to prohibit higher risk sports and recreational activities as, in many areas, these factors may weigh against permitting such activities:
 - whether there has been a more-transmissible variant of COVID-19 identified in the area,
 - local rates of COVID-19 transmission or rate of positivity, and
 - local ability to monitor and enforce compliance.

Outlined below is a plan for East Greenbush Central School District and its return to Interscholastic Athletics for the winter of 2021.

During the return to Interscholastic Athletics the following two documents will be referenced:

- [NYS Department of Health Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation](#)
- [New York State Public High School Athletics Return to Interscholastic Athletics](#)

Rensselaer County Guidance

Rensselaer County has approved the return of scholastic sports under the following guidelines. The district has provided information in response to each recommendation.

- Consent from parents or guardian for the participation of a student in scholastic sports during 2021.
The school district has developed a consent form to be used and signed by parents/guardians prior to student participation in interscholastic practices or games.
- Approval from a school for a sport or activity during 2021.
Although the state and county have approved Higher-Risk winter sports starting February 1, 2021, the Superintendent of Schools will recommend approval to the Board of Education at a special public meeting on Tuesday, February 2, 2021.
- Social distancing to a total 50 percent reduced capacity for attendance by spectators and non-team personnel at all scholastic sports contests and activities during 2021
Higher-Risk sports will be starting the season with NO spectators. The district will organize one Senior Night where we will allow each athlete to invite two spectators. All spectators must wear masks at all times even if more than 6 feet apart from others. Spectators must strive to keep a minimum distance of six feet from everyone outside their household. They may briefly come within six feet of others if necessary to move to their seat or other safe area. Spectators will be screened before entrance to the athletic event. We may consider two spectators per athlete at future events.
- Regular sanitizing of all common surfaces, including benches, locker rooms, lockers, equipment, bleachers and surfaces regularly utilized or accessed by players, coaches, spectators and non-team personnel.
All cleaning, disinfection, and sanitizing will be conducted and performed by our maintenance staff before and after each event. All bench areas, game equipment such as basketballs and frequently touched surfaces such as door handles will be thoroughly cleaned between JV and Varsity contests. Outside disinfectant services are available if needed through Questar BOCES.
- Inspection of premises and sports contests and activities when needed by the county Health Department.
The district will comply with any inspection conducted by Rensselaer County Health Department. If an inspection is needed, the district will contact the Rensselaer County Health Department.

- Continue the weekly review and discussion between the county, county Health Department and school administrators to share information, data, guidance and advice regarding all school functions, including sports contests and activities.
The Superintendent will continue to meet weekly with the Rensselaer County Health Department. They share updates, data, guidance, and advice.
- Contact tracing will continue to be performed by the county in all confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the county. In the event there is a confirmed case involving a coach, player or spectator, a review will be undertaken by the county Department of Health, as has been done throughout the pandemic, to help the school determine an appropriate course of action based on level of exposure.
The district's COVID-19 Coordinator will work with Rensselaer County Health Department on all contact tracing.
- Coaches and players must be screened before each athletic event, contest or practice, including temperature checks and questions to determine potential exposure or health risk.
All of our coaches and players will conduct a daily health screening to determine potential exposure or health risks. This will include temperature checks and answering questions about contact with known cases of COVID-19 within the previous 10 days. All information will be documented.
- Spectators are recommended to be screened before each athletic contest or practice, including temperature checks and questions to determine potential exposure or health risk.
If spectators are allowed, all spectators will submit a health screening including temperature checks and complete a screening questionnaire that asks about COVID-19 symptoms and contact with known COVID-19 cases within the past 10 days. A district administrator will be in attendance at each event to ensure spectators comply with this policy.
- At all times, it is recognized that parents and guardians have the final say in whether a player competes in a contest or activity and a player cannot be compelled or induced to play in a contest or activity if reasonable concern is stated by a parent or guardian regarding exposure or risk.
All parents will have the final say as to whether or not a student athlete continues to participate in any athletic contest.

Winter Sports Season Schedule

The Winter 2021 Sports season will commence on Monday, February 1st and run through Saturday, March 13th. Seasons will conclude with a Suburban Council championship tournament in each sport, if applicable. *Section 2 Athletics has determined that during the Winter 2021 sports season, no sectionals will be conducted.*

Schedules:

Each varsity and junior varsity team in each sport will play a reduced number of games. For the Winter of 2021. No team will be permitted to travel outside the boundaries of Section 2 unless otherwise approved by the Director of Athletics.

The Suburban Council has reduced league schedules to the following number of scheduled contests:

- Boys and Girls Basketball – max of 14 league games plus tournament
- Ice Hockey – max of 12 league games plus tournament (pending other schools' participation)
- Cheerleading – 4 competitions max
- Wrestling – TBD

Play Dates:

League schedules will focus on having schools play 3 days a week for boys and girls basketball, 2 days in hockey, 2 days in wrestling and 1 day in cheerleading.

Standardized start times will be:

- Boys and Girls Basketball: Weekday start times will be 4:30 for Junior Varsity and 6:15 pm for Varsity. Saturday game times will be standardized as 11am and 12:45pm for Junior Varsity and Varsity Games
- Wrestling - 4:30 pm for JV and 6 pm for Varsity
- Ice Hockey - TBD depending on availability of rink time
- Cheerleading – TBD

Game times can be changed by mutual agreement of member schools.

Registration

Students in grades 7-12 will be able to sign up for winter sports starting Saturday, January 30, 2021. Please write the student's name, grade and sport on an envelope and enclose the [Health History Form](#) and [Parental Consent Form](#) with parent signatures. Registration can be submitted at the following times:

- Saturday, January 30, 8 a.m. - Noon, Columbia High School front lobby foyer
- Monday, February 1 - Wednesday, February 3 - During School Hours, Columbia High School front lobby foyer

Health Screening:

The NYSED has extended the validity of school sport physicals through the end of the 2021 school year. Any student-athlete who had a physical in the 2018-2019 or 2019-2020 sports seasons can get medically cleared for Winter 2021 season with an updated Interval Health History form to be submitted within 30 days of the start of the season. Any student-athlete who did not have a sport physical during that time frame **MUST** obtain a new one.

Health History:

Beginning with the start of the Winter 2021 season, Columbia students are required to update their health history **which includes questions regarding Covid-19 infections and diagnosis**. These questions will be used by school health care providers to identify those student-athletes who may require additional medical screening before being cleared for sports. Recommendations for these changes can be found in the [NYSPHSAA Return to Athletics](#) document.

Roster Size:

For the Winter 2021 season, coaches should consider limiting the roster size in each sport to be able to accommodate transportation restrictions. Each school agrees that only 3 non-athletes or coaches (scorekeeper, statisticians) will be allowed to accompany teams.

Promotion:

For the Winter 2021 season, it is recommended that once the first league game starts, coaches at each school track all promotions to ensure proper contact tracing should it be needed. The Suburban Council Promotion rule is suspended for the Winter 2021 season.

Athletic Placement Process:

For the Winter 2021 season, students-athletes in grades 7th and 8th, must be approved through the Athletic Placement Process and our district's medical director to be eligible to try out.

[APP Parent Packet](#)

Health and Safety Procedures

Mandatory Mask Protocols:

Acceptable face coverings **must be worn at all times**. In accordance with NYSDOH guidance, a distance of at least six feet must be maintained among individuals at all times, whether indoor or outdoor, unless safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance. If a player is unable to tolerate a face covering for the physical activity, written notification from the athlete's health care provider is required for a waiver and must be kept on file in the health office.

Health Screening:

Students - All student-athletes will be required to complete the daily self-assessment and get their temperature checked prior to practice/contest. Student-athletes will line up by the main entrance to the gym lobby for their temperature to be checked by the Athletic Trainer or coach. All athletes and coaches must have their temperature checked before practice or competitions regardless of being in the building that day.

Coaches - all coaches will fill out the self-assessment form each day prior to their arrival on campus.

Team and Individual Photo Sessions:

Team photos are NOT allowed.

IMPACT testing:

Sean Leggett, our Athletic Trainer, will coordinate any type of IMPACT testing.

Locker Rooms:

There will be no gathering of student-athletes in locker room areas. Student-athletes should attempt to come to practice ready to go and not need to use the locker room. If a locker room is needed, student-athletes and coaches are expected to wear masks at all times and adhere to social distancing guidelines.

- Locker rooms are to be used for changing areas and not storage during practice. Equipment bags will be stored in the morning in the wrestling gym.
- Must wear a mask at all times.
- After changing, no storage of bags or personal items. Place bags 6ft apart:
 - Basketball – lining the bleachers
 - Wrestling – lining the hallway under trophies

- Cheer – lining the gym
- No visiting teams allowed in locker rooms.
- Locker rooms will not be open after practices or games.

Practice Guidelines:

Student athletes are expected to report to their team's designated location at a designated time. Coaches should be able to identify the student athletes who were together at any time (keeping accurate attendance and group members). Acceptable face coverings must be worn at all times. In accordance with NYSDOH guidance a distance of at least six feet must be maintained among individuals at all times, whether indoor or outdoor, unless safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance. If a player is unable to tolerate a face covering for the physical activity, written notification from the athlete's health care provider is required for a waiver and must be kept on file in the health office.

- Virtual and hybrid student athletes must come prepared for practice and will not be allowed in the locker rooms.
- All athletes must take personal items and bags to practice (locker rooms will not be open after practice) and store them 6ft apart.
- Wash or sanitize hands before going to practice and during practice breaks (hand sanitizer will be readily available)
- Take med kits with extra masks and hand sanitizer
- Athletes and coaches are required to bring their own filled water bottles (limited supply of extra bottles)
- No sharing of clothes, pinnies, food, or water
- Equipment not shared unless able to be sanitized in between uses
- During practice or when full team competition is taking place, when a distance of less than 6 feet cannot be maintained, student athletes must wear masks. If a player is unable to tolerate a face covering for the physical activity, written notification from the athlete's health care provider is required for a waiver and must be kept on file in the health office.
- When sitting on sidelines, must be six feet apart AND wearing face covering
- Wash/sanitize hands after practice
- All personal equipment should be taken home and disinfected at the conclusion of each practice/contest.
- Immediately shower when arriving at home
- As student-athletes waiting to be picked up at the conclusion of practices/contests should wait in the gym lobby while wearing their face covering and maintaining a distance of at least six feet.

Game Day Guidelines:

- Virtual and hybrid student athletes must come prepared for competition and will not be allowed in the locker rooms.
- All athletes must take personal items and bags to competitions (locker rooms will not be open after games) and place bags six feet apart:
- Wash or sanitize hands before going to competitions and during competition breaks (hand sanitizer will be readily available)
- Take med kits with extra masks and hand sanitizer
- Athletes and coaches are required to bring their own filled water bottles (limited supply of extra bottles)
- No sharing clothes, pinnies, food or water
- Equipment not shared unless able to be sanitized in between uses
- Acceptable face coverings must be worn at all times. In accordance with NYSDOH guidance a distance of at least six feet must be maintained among individuals at all times, whether indoor or outdoor, unless safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance. If a player is unable to tolerate a face covering for the physical activity, written notification from the athlete's health care provider is required for a waiver and must be kept on file in the health office.
- When sitting on sidelines, must be six feet apart AND wearing a face covering
- Wash hands after competition
- All personal equipment should be taken home and disinfected at the conclusion of each practice/contest
- Immediately shower when arriving at home
- As student-athletes waiting to be picked up at the conclusion of contests, should wait in the gym lobby while wearing their face covering and maintaining a distance of at least six feet.
- Scoring table is limited to essential personnel (home team scorer and timer).
- Officials are responsible for game management, which does not include monitoring activities on the sidelines, such as social distancing, face coverings, hand washing, symptoms of illnesses and other such issues. This monitoring obligation remains with the responsible parties. In accordance with NYSDOH Guidance (Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Sports and Recreation), responsible parties must ensure a distance of at least six feet is maintained among individuals at all times, whether indoor or outdoor, unless safety or the core activity (e.g. practicing, playing) requires a shorter distance. If a shorter distance is required, individuals must wear acceptable face coverings, unless players are unable to tolerate a face covering for the physical activity and a written waiver from their health care provider is on file, however, that coaches, trainers, and other individuals who are not directly engaged in physical activity are required to wear a face covering. (Pg. 5)

Home Games

Host Operations:

Each head coach needs to make sure to have an administrative contact for all events. In the event of an issue, the coach should contact the Director of Athletics, a Faculty Manager or the Athletic Trainer. The Columbia Athletic Office will communicate ahead of time with the incoming schools and officials about its procedures, policies and guidelines.

Examples to be covered include but not limited to, the following:

- Parking, where to enter facility;
- What equipment should the visiting team bring;
- Water availability
- Bench area seating (how many players can be accommodated to maintain social distancing);
- How will game day paperwork be handled (electronic exchange of rosters between coaches prior to game time is preferred).

The Columbia coach should walk their facility to ensure that it has been properly sanitized before the visiting team has arrived. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and equipment. Please contact the Director of Athletics, Facility Manager, or Athletic Trainer if there is an issue regarding your game day facility. Contact the Athletic Trainer if someone starts to display or say they have symptoms.

Visiting teams must bring: emergency contact list, med kit, disinfected equipment, water (limited supply of extra water bottles at CHS), extra supply of masks and hand sanitizer, and supplies for stats/scorer person.

Locker rooms will not be available for visiting teams. Restrooms are available in the gym lobby.

At the completion of every contest, Coaches and players are expected to leave the facility immediately.

Coaches are reminded that pre, during, and post contest handshakes, hugs, fist bumps etc., are prohibited.

Protocol if Symptoms are Displayed:

1. Contact Athletic Trainer
2. Keep athlete and personal belongings away from teammates and other staff
3. Contact parents
4. Notify Nurse
5. Form filled out by ATC or Nurse for sending athlete home with symptoms

Athletic Training Room:

- Masks Required
- Up to 3 Athletes at a time; if need to wait, wait in chairs in athletic hallway
- Must leave when treatment is complete

During the school day, athletes:

- By appointment only; Sean Leggett LegettSe@egcsd.org
- Cannot come down during lunch, Gym or study halls without an appointment
- Cannot come down with late arrivals or early dismissal

Concessions/Booster Clubs:

There will be no concessions at any contests until further notice. Post-contest meals are prohibited until further notice. This includes weekend or team gatherings, which are not part of the instruction process (i.e. pasta parties).

Senior recognition ceremonies are allowed, but must follow all COVID-19 protocols and be coordinated with the coach and approved by the Athletic Department.

Media:

Media members should contact school prior to the event to discuss protocols.

Away Games

Student athletes should change prior to departure and have all of their belongings and equipment with them when they leave Columbia High School's campus. Columbia student-athletes and coaches are expected to follow all of the guidelines and procedures of other member schools upon arrival on their campus.

Busing/Travel to and From Away Contests:

Coaches need to make sure they are in compliance with all Columbia Transportation Department guidelines during COVID-19. All coaches need to have an updated roster, emergency contact list, and med kit with them at all times.

In lieu of passing around a sign out sheet, parents need to either confirm via email or text with the head coach that they are driving their child to, or signing their child out from, an away contest. Coaches can set up a Google document, instead of the email/text procedure, if they prefer. Students should not be released without electronic documentation.

Spectators/Parents:

As of January 26th, all Suburban Council athletic contests held indoors will be conducted without spectators. The issues of allowing limited spectators will be reviewed at a later date.

Coaches:

In accordance with [NYSDOH Guidance](#) (Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Sports and Recreation), responsible parties must ensure a distance of at least six feet is maintained among individuals at all times, whether indoor or outdoor, unless safety or the core activity (e.g. practicing, playing) requires a shorter distance. If a shorter distance is required, individuals must wear acceptable face coverings, unless players are unable to tolerate a face covering for the physical activity and a written waiver from their health care provider is on file, however, that coaches, trainers, and other individuals who are not directly engaged in physical activity are REQUIRED to wear a face covering. (Pg. 5)

Confirmed Cases & Return to School

NYSDOH Guidance ([Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Schools](#)) states:

Responsible Parties must establish protocols and procedures in consultation with the local health department(s), about the requirements for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screened positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the in person learning environment at school. This return to school protocol shall include at minimum documentation from a health care provider following evaluation, negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result and symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation Responsible Parties should refer to DOH's '[Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure](#)' regarding protocols and policies for faculty and staff seeking to return to work after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after the faculty or staff member had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19. (Pg. 3)

Furthermore, NYSDOH guidance ([Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Schools](#)) states: If school is closed for in-person education during the school year due to an increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases, school-sponsored sports must be suspended until in-person education is resumed; provided, however, that this restriction does not apply to schools that are conducting only remote instruction. (Pg. 4)

Once a student has been cleared for participation following a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, schools should reference the following NYSPHSAA Handbook information:

“The Handbook Committee recommends that each incidence of prolonged absence should be reviewed individually by the coach and the athletic director, consulting with the school physician when necessary, and a reasonable amount of practice time and playing time be established based on the athlete's readiness for safe return to competition.”

Student-athletes MUST have a written clearance from their physician before starting the RTP progression. It is a 5 stage progression, lasting 7 days. They will be able to participate in practices but in a limited capacity until day 7.

Assessment/Release for Return to Play

Patient: School:

DOB: Sport:

PCP:

-

Date of onset of COVID symptoms:

Date of COVID positive test:

Date of resolution of COVID symptoms:

Symptoms longer than 4 days?: N Y

Hospitalization due to COVID symptoms?: N Y

H/o cardiac abnormalities followed by cardiology?: N Y

Recent symptoms:

Chest pain at rest or with exertion? (not musculoskeletal or costochondritis): N Y

Shortness of breath with minimal activity? (unrelated to respiratory symptoms): N Y

Excessive fatigue with exertion?: N Y

Abnormal heartbeat or palpitations?: N Y

Syncope or near-syncope?: N Y

Normal cardiovascular exam?: Y N

Cardiology referral indicated?: N Y

Cleared for gradual return to sports?: Y N

Signature:

Printed Name:

Date:

Suggested gradual return to sports progression*

(adapted from Elliott N, et al, infographic, British Journal of Sports Medicine, 2020):

Stage 1: 2 days minimum, ≤ 15 minutes, light activity (walking, jogging, stationary bike), no resistance training.

Stage 2: 1 day minimum, ≤ 30 minutes, add simple movement activities (eg. running drills).

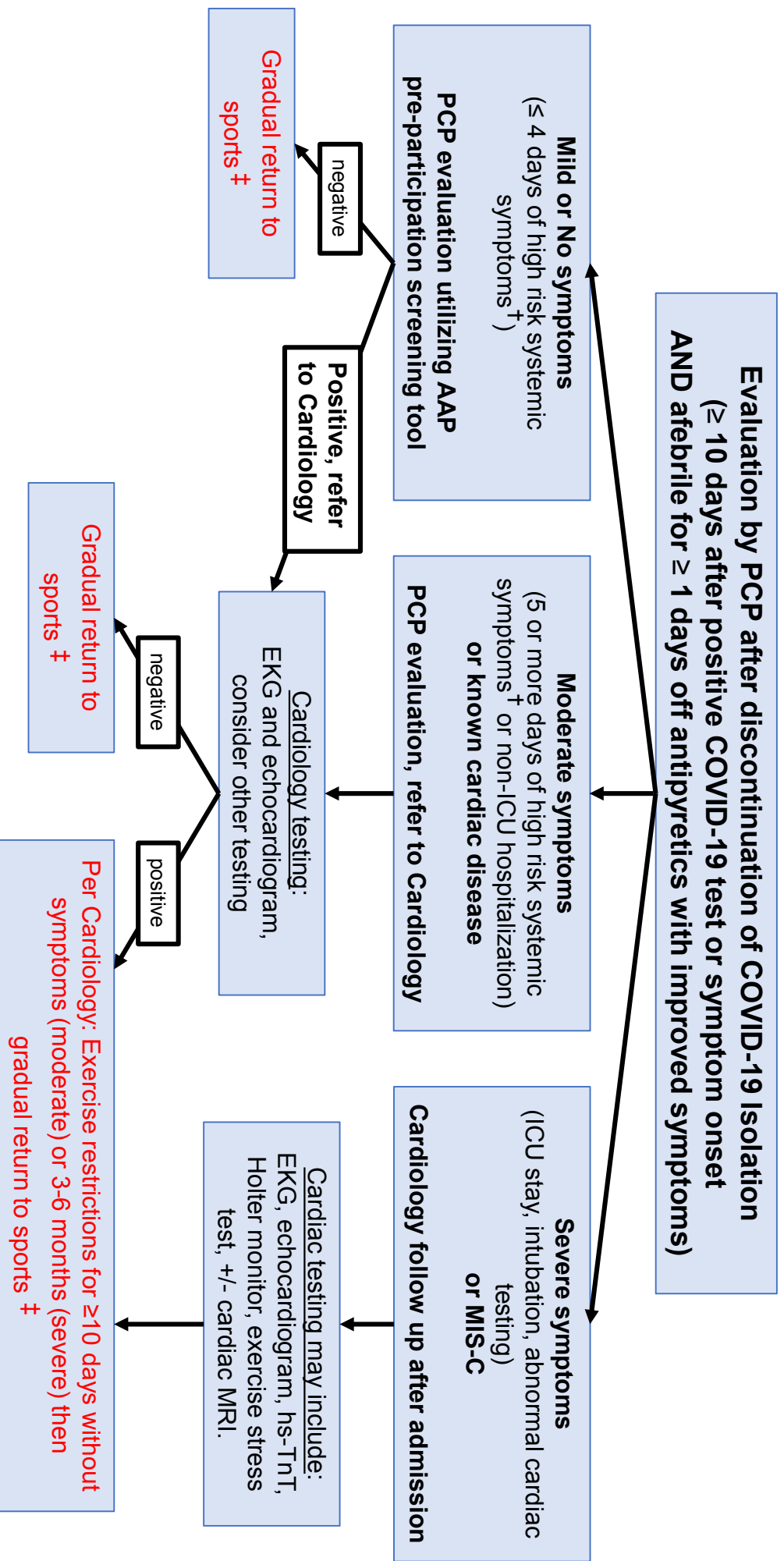
Stage 3: 1 day minimum, ≤ 45 minutes, progress to more complex training, may add light resistance training.

Stage 4: 2 days minimum, 60 minutes, normal training activity.

*Patient should be symptom free before progressing to next stage.

Return to Play Related to COVID-19 Infection in Pediatric Patients (K-12)*

This document contains interim suggested guidance based on current information available to inform assessment and risk stratification for release to participation in physical education, sports and moderate to vigorous play for pediatric patients.
Note, patients with close contact exposure to COVID-19 are restricted from participation for ≥ 14 days (same duration as quarantine).



* Published by UR GCH COVID Pediatric RTP Workgroup on 12/15/2020 using the AAP Updated Guidance on Returning to Sports Activities: <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-interim-guidance-return-to-sports/>

[†] High risk systemic symptoms are: fever >100.4, myalgia, chills, or profound lethargy

[‡] Gradual return to sports can begin immediately (Mild or No symptoms) or ≥10 days after the end of symptoms and should be over at least 7 days with no return of symptoms. An AAP-suggested protocol is on the attached page.