

Epping School District Athletics

Fall 2020 Reopening Plan

Objective

Develop procedures for Epping Middle School and Epping High School sports teams to practice and compete in athletics during the fall of 2020.

Resources

[NH Safer at Home - COVID Reopening](#)

[NHIAA Reopening Guidance](#)

[NFHS Guidance for Reopening Athletics](#)

Preface

Currently, statewide athletics are permitted under the Governor's Reopening Task Force Guidelines for Amateur and Youth Sports. Epping athletic teams have held voluntary summer workouts adhering to these guidelines since early July. With the approval of the School Board, Epping Athletics will continue to operate during the fall of 2020 under the guidelines from the NFHS, NHIAA, and the Governor's Task Force, which can be found above.

Epping Athletics is committed to the promotion of the physical, mental, and social well-being of our student-athletes. Participation in athletics improves physical fitness, promotes lifelong healthy habits, provides opportunity for cooperative learning, helps students develop strong social bonds and interpersonal and leadership skills.

Participation in Epping Athletics is strictly voluntary. Families will have the opportunity to make the decision about whether or not to participate, and reserve the right to withdraw from participation at any time.

In the absence of fall sports, our student-athletes may participate in other activities during the time that would normally be devoted to athletics. There are potential risks associated with COVID-19 inherent in these other activities, including working and/or playing club sports.

Proposal

The status of Epping Athletics will align with the phases developed in the [ESD Reopening Plan](#).

Epping School District	EMS/EHS Athletics
Phase One (Full Remote Learning)	Athletic teams will halt all in-person operations.
Phase Two (Partial Remote)	Athletic teams are permitted to practice in accordance with statewide protocols and the guidelines outlined in this document . No contests/games will be played.
Phase Three (In-Person with Restrictions)	Athletic teams are permitted to hold practices and compete in contests in accordance with statewide protocols and the guidelines outlined in this document.
Phase Four (In-Person, No Restrictions)	Athletic teams are permitted to practice and compete in contests without restriction.

EMS Athletics

-Begin practices/tryouts no sooner than Monday, September 14th for the following sports: cross country, girls soccer, boys soccer, and volleyball. Of these sports, cross country is listed by the NFHS and NHIAA as a “Low Risk” sport. Soccer and volleyball are categorized as “Moderate Risk”.

EHS Athletics

-Begin practices/tryouts starting Tuesday, September 8th for the following sports: cross country, girls soccer, boys soccer, Unified soccer, volleyball. Of these sports, cross country is listed by the NFHS and NHIAA as a “Low Risk” sport. Soccer and volleyball are categorized as “Moderate Risk”.

EHS Football

-Football is categorized as a “High Risk” sport by the NFHS and NHIAA. Due to this categorization, the Newmarket School Board has decided to withdraw from high school football for the fall of 2020. With Newmarket’s withdrawal, our co-op program is now facing a shortage of players. In addition, the status of football statewide, and particularly in Division IV, remains unclear. Given these circumstances, Epping will withdraw from tackle football for the fall of 2020, and focus instead on team workouts, and possibly participate in 7-on-7 outdoor leagues, if made available.

EHS Spirit/Cheer

-Fall spirit is also classified as “High Risk” by the NFHS and NHIAA. Due to this categorization, fall spirit tournaments are currently up in the air. Epping has also had low levels of interest in fall spirit, and could not form a competition team with current sign-up numbers. Given these factors, EHS will not form a competitive fall spirit team. Alternatives will be explored for Epping students interesting in spirit.

Schedules and Opposing Schools

-Epping Athletics will pursue a full schedule of games/contests for all teams. However, it is important to note that scheduling contests with opposing schools cannot be guaranteed. Many school districts have not reached a final decision on fall sports, and it is possible that schools may withdraw from sports midseason.

- Contests may be scheduled against teams out of division, as regular season records will not be kept for standings purposes.
- The status of postseason tournaments is to be determined.
- When traveling, athletes, coaches, and spectators must be prepared to meet the expectations of opposing schools. There is likely to be a wide range of expectations in regards to spectator attendance and protocols.

Alternative Programming

- In the event that games/contests are not being played, Epping Athletics will explore other options to create intramural and/or club sports at the school level.

General Procedures

Prior to Participation

- All students interested in participating must register online with the athletic department.
- Participants must have a COVID-19 participation waiver signed by parent or guardian.

Coaches/Staff Training

- All coaches and staff will be required to review the guidelines for reopening from the NFHS, NHIAA, and the Governor's Task Force.
- Coaches and staff will complete NFHS course titled 'Covid-19 for Coaches and Administrators'.
- All coaches and staff will receive in-person training on screening and other pertinent procedures.

Screening Procedures

- Coaches/staff will screen themselves and establish a check-in point for athletes prior to all practices and games, including away games.
- Athletes and staff will wear masks during the screening process.
- Screening will include a questionnaire and onsite temperature check.
- After screening, participants will check-in and be logged into an attendance database. Separate databases will be established for each team.
- Athletes who do not pass screening will be sent home and parents will be contacted.

Participant Expectations

- Athletes must bring their own water bottle. No common drinking sources will be provided.
- All participants must bring and wear a face covering when around others and not engaged in athletic activity. This includes all transitional periods, including when congregating in locker rooms.
- Athletes must not share equipment or clothing and shall keep belongings separate from one another.
- No spitting, chewing gum, licking fingers, and chewing/spitting sunflower seeds, etc.
- Frequent hand hygiene using hand sanitizer will be encouraged including, but not limited to, hand hygiene upon arrival, before and after meals or snacks, before and after going to the bathroom, before and after touching a person's face or face covering, and prior to leaving the activity.
- Participants will be required to leave sessions in a timely manner, without congregating afterwards. Outdoor athletes should not enter school buildings after a session. Indoor athletes should not travel to other areas of the building after a session.
- Participants are encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing upon returning home.

Training Session Procedures

- Participants will maintain a distance of at least 3-6' feet from others whenever not involved in physical activity. In circumstances where closer proximity for brief periods of time is necessary, face coverings must be worn.

-All equipment will be cleaned and disinfected at the end of all athletic sessions. This responsibility will fall on coaches/staff. Student-athletes are asked to help coaches/staff organize the equipment for cleaning immediately following a session. All cleaning sessions will be in compliance with recommended guidelines and in accordance with Epping School District facilities standards.

-Spectators will not be allowed during practice sessions.

Facilities

-Portable toilets will be located near the high school game field and SAU practice field.

-Toilet facilities shall remain locked when not in use and cleaned at the end of each training session. This cleaning responsibility will be delegated to facilities.

-Commonly touched surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected prior to use and at the end of each event.

Athletic Contests

Epping Athletes and Staff

-All staff and volunteers will be screened prior to participating in athletic contests. For away games, participants must be screened prior to leaving EMS/EHS. Any student-athlete not screened and cleared by athletic staff prior to travel will not be allowed to participate.

Spectators

-Spectators will be allowed at both indoor and outdoor contests to the extent that social distancing is maintained.

-All spectators entering buildings will be screened upon arrival in accordance with Epping School District screening procedures. Spectators will be logged into an attendance log unique to the athletic contest.

-Indoor spectators will be required to wear a mask for the duration of the event.

-Outdoor spectators will be required to wear a mask during any transitional time and/or when within 6 feet of other spectators. We will follow the state guidance for events with over 100 participants that require all participants to wear masks.

Officials

-Officials will adhere to the same expectations as spectators, including screening and mask expectations.

Visiting Athletes

-Visiting athletes will be screened at their school and logged into a database maintained by the visiting school district. This database will be made available to Epping athletic personnel upon request.

-Visiting athletes will adhere to the same expectations as Epping athletes regarding masks and equipment.

Transportation

-Athletes transported by bus will adhere to the expectations for school bus travel, including mask wearing and maintaining social distancing wherever possible.

-Every effort will be made to transport only one team on a bus. In instances where multiple teams are sharing a bus, the teams will enter and exit the bus separately and remain separated during transit.

-Parents will be permitted to bring their children to and from away games in order to reduce the number of people traveling on the bus.

Equipment

-Visiting teams competing in Epping are expected to provide their own equipment for warm-ups.

-Epping teams will travel with their own equipment and sanitize at the end of athletic contests before traveling back to Epping.

Concessions

-Concessions may be operated in accordance with New Hampshire guidelines and school guidelines. All concession operations must be approved by the Athletic Director in accordance with school principal prior to use.

Athletic Director, Athletic Trainer, Coaches, and other Epping Athletics Personnel may all assume responsibility for monitoring activities to ensure compliance with procedures outlined above.