



# News Release

Unified Government Public Relations

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **New Recommendations for Fall Sports in Wyandotte County**

*Health Department recommends “cohorting” school activities, remote learning*

The Unified Government Public Health Department (UGPHD) released recommendations today for local schools regarding cohorting students who choose to engage in group activities outside of the County. The recommendations also include guidance for non-school sports and activities, such as private clubs.

The UGPHD worked with local school districts to develop these guidelines, which are intended to promote COVID-19 safety during all in-person learning while student-athletes, and other activity groups, continue to compete outside of Wyandotte County.

This guidance applies to group activities in which students engage in practice, events, or competitions outside Wyandotte County (e.g. – sports play or practice sanctioned by their school, private club, or other activity involving close contact that may put participants at higher risk for COVID-19).

### **Recommendations for school activities:**

- **Maintain cohorts for the fall semester**

A “cohort” is a group of students and a limited number of faculty/staff that remain together for classroom instruction and school activities, without intermingling with students, teachers, and staff from other cohorts. It is best practice for students to stay in one cohort throughout the fall semester. Doing so reduces the mixing of students, and thus, the potential spread of COVID-19 should an outbreak of the virus occur (i.e. – if one cohort has a case of COVID-19, the other cohorts are at lower risk).

- **Cohort activity groups together for classroom instruction (e.g. - a sports team also has class together) OR consider remote learning**

The UGPHD strongly recommends student activity group cohorting for both sports and in-person academic programming. If this cannot be achieved, the UGPHD strongly recommends remote learning for students participating in Out-of-County activities.

- **Have activity coaches act as teachers/instructors for their activity cohorts**

An “activity cohort” is a group of students who practice and participate in the same sport or activity, who attend school together and are then grouped in classrooms with their teammates. These cohort classrooms should involve activity coaches as teachers/instructors. If this cannot be achieved, the UGPHD strongly recommends remote learning for students participating in out-of-county activities.

- **Allow students learning remotely to return to regular school cohorts after the activity season**  
It is best practice for those students to remain in a remote learning environment as long as they are participating in the club, extracurricular, or non-school sponsored restricted sports activities. They should only be allowed back into regular school learning cohorts after their season has ended, and 14 days have passed since they last participated in practices or competition.

### **Recommendations for non-school activities, such as private clubs:**

- **Opt into remote learning options**  
Remote learning modalities are strongly encouraged for students who engage in any club, extracurricular, or non-school sponsored activities currently restricted within Wyandotte County as an alternate option to activity cohorts. For those students, the UGPHD strongly encourages remote learning programs offered by that district.

“Our top priority in Wyandotte County is to allow our children to learn safely in an in-person environment,” said Dr. Allen Greiner, Chief Medical Officer with the Unified Government. “But we recognize that some parents want to allow their student-athletes to continue to compete outside of Wyandotte County. Today’s recommendations are our best effort to maintain safe in-person learning for the majority of students, while also creating a pathway for student-athletes to continue with both their education and their athletic pursuits.”

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) this week reported 1,328 new COVID-19 cases between Monday and Wednesday. That brings the total number of cases in Kansas to 43,490, including 15 sports clusters responsible for causing 119 cases.

On August 24, KDHE reported that statewide, there were 34 new cases reported in the 0-9 year old age group and 79 new cases statewide in the 10-17 age group. That KDHE data showed that, at that time, the 10-17 year old age group in Wyandotte County was testing positive at 18.1 percent, which was significantly higher than neighboring Johnson County, where youth 10-17 were testing positive at a rate of 6.81 percent. Several cases of COVID-19 in children have been traced to participation in youth sports.

“KDHE has tracked ten COVID-19 clusters in Kansas that were related to youth sports this summer, including one current cluster of five people associated with a Kansas City, Kansas volleyball team,” explained Dr. Erin Corriveau, Deputy Medical Officer with the Unified Government. “We recognize that student-athletes want to play and compete, and their parents want that for them. We feel that if this new guidance is followed by schools and student-athletes who are competing outside of Wyandotte County, we can further ensure a safe in-person learning environment for all children within Wyandotte County schools.”

The recommendations are intended to accomplish three objectives:

- Prevent a spike in positive COVID-19 cases due to exposure through certain sports and other activities in which it is difficult to maintain social distancing and/or wear masks the whole time
- Provide consistent guidance for all non-professional sports at all levels, and
- Reduce the possibility of more restrictive future measures

The community is reminded to limit social interaction wherever possible, maintain 6 feet of social distancing, and to wear a mask at all times when in public. By working together, we can limit the number of new positive COVID-19 cases in Wyandotte County.

Testing is available for individuals who live or work in Wyandotte County if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or have been in close contact (within six feet for at least 10 minutes) with

someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Testing is available at multiple community locations, including the Public Health Department at 619 Ann Avenue, and through weekly “pop-up” sites coordinated by the Wyandotte County Health Equity Task Force. To find the latest testing sites and schedules, visit [wycokck.org/COVID-19](http://wycokck.org/COVID-19).

For additional data and resources on COVID-19 in Wyandotte County, visit [wycokck.org/COVID-19](http://wycokck.org/COVID-19) or call 3-1-1.

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