



DANNIS WOLIVER KELLEY

Attorneys at Law

COVID-19 Alert



California Department of Public Health Updates Its Guidance for Youth and Adult Recreational Sports

February 26, 2021

On February 19, 2021, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) released an updated guidance for Youth and Adult Recreational Sports that went into effect on February 26, 2021. CDPH provided the following guidance for all K-12 school-based athletics:

- **Color Tier System:** The State's county-based color tier system is still being used to determine which sports can be played by a school. Physical conditioning and training can still be conducted outdoors regardless of case rate or sport.
- **Exception to the Color Tier System for Outdoor High Contact Sports:** The guidance now provides an exception to the county-based color tier system. Outdoor high-contact and outdoor moderate-contact sports can be played in counties in the purple or red tier with an adjusted case rate equal to or less than 14 per 100,000 as long as:
 1. School provide students and families with informed consent; and
 2. Antigen or PCR testing is provided to participants and coaches weekly (with test results being made available within 24 hours of play) for football, rugby, and water polo.
- **Limitations for Competitions:** Competitions, races, or meets between schools are only permitted if:
 1. Both teams are located in the same county and the sport is authorized under the color tier system; or
 2. Teams are located in immediately bordering counties and the sport is authorized in both counties under the color tier system.
- **Local Health Departments:** School districts are expected to notify their local health departments regarding any competitions that cross county lines. Local health departments have the discretion to deny the competition at any time in their jurisdiction. Teams are expected to follow the more stringent rules if the participating teams are at different case rate thresholds.

The entirety of the guidance, which includes instructions on physical distancing, face coverings, hygiene and equipment sanitation, and transportation can be accessed here: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/outdoor-indoor-recreational-sports.aspx>.

Considerations Moving Forward

Schools could consider working with their legal counsel to create an informed consent form for participating athletes and families. Also, as schools move forward in implementing their athletics programs, school districts should work closely with their local health department to make sure they are taking the steps necessary to maintain a safe environment for sports. Finally, schools should ensure that sports programs are being rolled out in an equitable matter to allow equal opportunity to both girls and boys.

For more information regarding the impact of COVID-19 on your district's operations, please visit our COVID-19 Resources page at <https://www.dwkesq.com/covid-19-resources-page/>. If you have any questions about this issue or other student matters, please do not hesitate to contact a DWK attorney in our Students and Special Education practice group.

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