



MCPS ATHLETICS

RETURN to R.A.I.S.E.

Vaccination Requirements - FAQs

The following are answers to frequently asked questions regarding the vaccination requirements for student-athletes, coaches, athletic trainers, and other athletic department personnel. Requirements are listed first, followed by the FAQs and answers.

Vaccination Requirements

Student-Athletes

Beginning with the start of the winter sports season, November 15 for high school, and December 7 for middle school, all high school and eligible middle school student-athletes will be required to submit proof of full COVID-19 vaccination prior to participation. This requirement applies to the winter and spring sports seasons, as well as all out-of-season activities conducted through MCPS Athletics.

Only medical exemptions will be permitted. Religious exemptions will not be permitted. Religious exemptions are not being permitted due to the direct threat of COVID-19 transmission to the health and safety of student-athletes and staff in close-contact sporting events and activities.

MCPS Form 560-30A: *COVID-19 Vaccine Medical Exemption Request for Student-Athletes* must be completed by a licensed health care provider and submitted during the registration process for athletics. The form is available in [English and Spanish](#).

Stipend (Paid) Coaches and Athletic Department Personnel

Consistent with MCPS requirements for staff members, coaches and athletic department personnel must submit proof of vaccination. All staff employed by MCPS must provide verification that they have received at least the first COVID-19 shot by **Friday, Oct. 15, 2021**, and verification of the second shot by **Monday, Nov. 15, 2021**, unless staff receive an exemption. If an exemption is granted, the employee must submit to regular COVID-19 testing as required by MCPS. Employees requesting an exemption can submit them in the following ways:

- **Religious Exemption:** Email [this form](#) to Heather_Dublineske@mcpsmd.org or submit electronically [here](#).
- **Medical Exemption:** Email [this form](#) to Khalid_D_Walker@mcpsmd.org or use the process outlined below and at [this link](#).

Volunteer Coaches and Athletic Trainers

Beginning Friday, October 1, 2021, all volunteer coaches and athletic trainers will be required to complete an additional new module via their myMCPS Classroom/Canvas account called *COVID-19 Vaccination Attestation* in order to volunteer/serve within our school district. The new module will consist of a volunteer a) attesting to being fully vaccinated, b) uploading their Certificate of COVID-19 Vaccination from the Maryland Department of Health, and c) agreeing to specific expectations of masking and social distancing while in MCPS facilities.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q - Why is MCPS requiring vaccinations?

A - MCPS' top priority is keeping schools open and students and staff safe. Vaccinations play a critical role in supporting this priority and minimizing interruptions to in-person learning and program activities. Furthermore, with the indoor activities offered in the winter season, vaccinations will be key to ensuring that activities continue in the safest environment possible. Vaccinations are the best path forward to promoting the R.A.I.S.E. core values of academic excellence and safe competition in all settings.

Q - Who supports the decision to require vaccinations?

A - This requirement is supported by the COVID-19 Task Force for MCPS Athletics, which includes representation from the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, along with multiple MCPS departments. This requirement also aligns with recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine.

Q - What is the definition of fully vaccinated?

A - The [CDC defines](#) fully vaccinated as:

- Two weeks after a second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, **OR**
- Two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as the Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine.

Q - When is the deadline for student-athletes to be fully vaccinated?

A - Student-athletes must be fully vaccinated by Monday, November 15, 2021, for winter sports and all other activities that begin as of this date (fall student-athletes are exempt). This means all winter student-athletes must have received their second shot (or first Johnson & Johnson) no later than Monday, November 1, 2021.

Q - Will students be able to tryout for winter sports on Monday, November 15, 2021, if they have not been fully vaccinated?

A - No. Students must be fully vaccinated in order to participate in tryouts.

Q - What percentage of the Montgomery County population is fully vaccinated?

A - [As of October 14, 2021](#), 89.9% of the 12 and older population in Montgomery County is fully vaccinated and 99.4% of all eligible residents have received one dose.

Q - Are fall student-athletes required to be vaccinated?

A - No. The requirement does not apply to fall student-athletes; however, all eligible student-athletes participating in the fall season are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated.

Q - Are there exemptions to the vaccination requirement?

A - Yes. Students may be exempted from immunization requirements if an authorized health care professional certifies that there is a medical reason not to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Q - How do I submit a request for a medical exemption?

A - MCPS Form 560-30A: *COVID-19 Vaccine Medical Exemption Request for Student-Athletes* must be completed by a licensed health care professional and submitted during the registration process for athletics. Forms may be uploaded electronically during the online registration process or, for those utilizing paper forms, a hard copy may be submitted to the athletics specialist (high school) or athletic coordinator (middle school) at the local school. The form is available for printing at these links - [English and Spanish](#).

Q - Can student-athletes apply for a religious exemption?

A - No.

Q - Why are religious exemptions not allowed?

A - Religious exemptions are not being permitted due to the direct threat of COVID-19 transmission to the health and safety of student-athletes and staff in close-contact sporting events and activities. Guidance from the CDC recommends that all eligible K-12 students be vaccinated. The CDC specifically recommends that student-athletes be vaccinated due to increased exhalation that occurs during physical activity and the sustained close contact of sports that puts individuals at an increased risk for getting and spreading COVID-19. Further, the risk of COVID-19 spread increases the more time athletes, coaches, teachers, staff and spectators spend in close proximity or in indoor group settings. This includes time spent traveling to/from sporting events, meetings, meals, and other settings related to the events. MCPS implemented the student-athlete vaccine mandate in accordance with Maryland Department of Health and State Board of Education joint COVID-19 guidance, which states, "Each local school system, nonpublic school, and childcare program may set their own policies and procedures for their schools, students/ children, teachers and staff."

Q - Can I register for winter or spring sports without being fully vaccinated or without proof of a medical exemption?

A - No. Students must be fully vaccinated or submit proof of a medical exemption in order to complete the registration process.

Q - How will student-athletes submit proof of vaccination? How about proof of exemption?

A - Proof of vaccination/exemption will be submitted during the online registration process through [ParentVUE](#).

Q - Where can I go to print my vaccination certificate?

A - Vaccination certificates can be downloaded and printed at this [link](#). Individuals who received vaccinations at a Montgomery County DHHS Vaccination Clinic can request a copy by email at c19vaccination@montgomerycountymd.gov, or otherwise contact the provider where the vaccination was administered. Official vaccination records from an authorized health care provider are valid.

Q - What forms are acceptable for verifying vaccinations?

A - Vaccination cards, certificates, or approval from an authorized health care provider.

Q - Are there vaccination clinics available?

A - Yes. Information regarding clinics is available [here](#).

Q - Is there a testing option for student-athletes?

A - No. Students must be fully vaccinated or have submitted an approved medical exemption in order to participate in the MCPS interscholastic athletics program.

Q - Will MCPS teams be able to compete against other schools and school systems that do not require vaccinations.

A - Yes.

Q - Where can I find the latest guidance regarding the COVID-19 operating procedures and protocols for MCPS Athletics?

A - Updates and guidance are available on the [COVID-19 Athletics Information webpage](#).