

*Hello Portland High Families,*

*We're happy to announce that state officials have approved a high school winter sports season – to begin Monday, Dec. 14. However, please be aware that all athletes will have to wear masks while practicing and competing. Also, please note that the timeline could still change if the number of cases of COVID-19 in our state and county continues to increase.*

*The Maine Principals' Association (MPA), Maine School Superintendents Association, Maine School Boards Association and Gov. Janet Mills' administration released the winter school sports schedule on Nov. 6. The schedule will help us to plan for the winter season, even as the MPA continues to work on finalizing guidance for the season.*

*The MPA is updating its "School Sports Guidance: Return to Competition for Competitive Athletics and Activities in Maine" for winter sports and will be issuing requirements for particular sports in the coming weeks.*

*That guidance will include the requirement that participants in school sports wear face coverings during practices and competition. That is in line with Gov. Mills' new executive order this month that everyone must wear a mask when outdoors, regardless of distance from others. The face-covering requirement for school sports took effect this past Friday, Nov. 6, for the remaining fall school sports season.*

*The [COVID-19 Prevention Checklist for Community Sports](#) has been updated to reflect the same schedule, recommendations, and requirements. It became effective on Nov. 6.*

*As with fall sports, specific sports are categorized as low, medium, or high risk and assigned corresponding levels of play. The six levels of play are based on several factors: the activity level's own risk (ranging from skill building to competition); protocols to allow activity to happen safely; and the circumstances around COVID-19 in Maine. The winter sports start dates for these levels are as follows:*

- Dec. 7, 2020: Level 1: Skills and drills sessions at home, alone or with household members*
- Dec. 14, 2020: Level 2-3: Practices and competitions (e.g. intra-squad scrimmages) within teams*
- Jan. 11, 2021: Level 4: Competition among teams from the same geographic area*

*The Dec. 7 and Jan. 11 start dates allow for time to pass after holidays when people may be travelling or attending gatherings that increase the risk of COVID-19 spread.*

*Start dates for Levels 5 and 6 of competition will be determined in January. The Jan. 11 start date for Level 4 competition will also be reviewed in early January, based upon the status of the public health situation at that time.*

*We welcome this opportunity to hold high school winter sports activities because we know how important sports are to the health and well-being of our students. Meanwhile, as we wait for the winter season to begin, let's ensure we all stay safe and healthy by wearing masks,*

*washing our hands and practicing social distancing, not only in school but also outside of school and particularly during the holidays. That's the best way to help make sure that we all are able to keep to this timeline.*

*Thank you,  
Lance Johnson  
Co-Curricular Director  
Portland High School*