



COVID-19 Guidance: Use of School Fitness Facilities

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide general principles and examples that apply to fitness facilities that are somehow related to school districts or accredited nonpublic schools. This guidance is necessary in light of [Governor Reynolds's April 27, 2020 disaster proclamation](#) allowing fitness facilities in certain areas to open under certain circumstances.

Principles

First, the first key deciding factor is the ability to control access. If a school does not have the right to grant or refuse access, the fitness facility is—for this purpose—not considered part of the school and would be permitted to reopen. If a school has the right to grant or refuse access to a fitness facility, then further factors must be considered to determine if the facility may reopen.

Second, the next key deciding factor is the nature of the expected use. During this governor-ordered school closure, a school's fitness facility may not be reopened to be used for physical education instruction, interscholastic athletics, intramural athletics, or other school-sponsored activity. To the extent that the school's fitness facility is a community benefit or an enterprise, it may permissibly reopen.

Third, and related to the previous factors, if a fitness facility associated with a school is permitted to open, members of the school community (students, teachers, other employees) shall not be permitted to use the facility unless they have a right to use the facility independent of their relationship with the school (such as residing in the community allowed to access the facility for no charge, paying dues to the facility, or as a benefit of employment).

Fourth, if a fitness facility associated with a school is permitted to open, the school (as well as any partners) needs to have a clear policy or procedure describing who is responsible for maintaining compliance with Governor Reynolds's order allowing fitness facilities to open including: supervision of required capacity limits, supervision of required class size and group size limits, supervision of required social distancing practices, and sanitization and hygiene requirements.

Fifth, a school district that jointly owns or manages a fitness facility with another entity may consider temporarily revising that agreement to facilitate community access to the fitness facility.

Sixth, if the fitness facility is permitted to reopen, access to the remainder of the school building is not permitted.

Finally, for examples not listed here, if there is any irreconcilable conflict between complying with Governor Reynolds's order allowing fitness facilities to reopen and complying with Governor Reynolds's order requiring schools to remain closed, resolve this conflict by remaining closed.

Examples

Example 1

A school has a fitness facility that it permits only students to use at no charge. The facility must remain closed.

Example 2

A school has a fitness facility that it permits only members of athletic teams to use at no charge. The facility must remain closed.

Example 3

A school has a fitness facility that it permits members of the public to use at no charge. The facility may open.

Example 4

A school has a fitness facility open to members of the public, and it charges dues or fees for its use. The facility may open.

Example 5

A school jointly owns a fitness facility with another entity (such as a city or community college) and the school has limited authority to control access, such as the ability to use the facility only during a specific time period. To the extent that the school does not have the ability to control access, the fitness facility may reopen, such as outside the time period for which the school may control access.

Example 6

The fitness facility shares a building with the school but is owned or leased by another entity (such as a city or a nonprofit organization). The school has no ability to control access to the facility. The fitness facility may reopen.

Example 7

The fitness facility shares a building with the school but is owned or leased by another entity (such as a city or a nonprofit organization). The school has some ability to control access, such as by using the facility for school purposes during certain times. To the extent that the school does not have the ability to control access, the fitness facility may reopen, such as outside the time period for which the school may control access.

Additional Questions and Information

For more information on this topic, please contact [Thomas Mayes](#) at the Iowa Department of Education.