



# WHO WE PLAY FOR

Athens ISD cares about your child's heart health, so we are partnering with Who We Play For to screen students with an ECG (electrocardiogram). An ECG, also known as an EKG, can detect issues in the heart that can be missed in a standard physical. Please consider signing up your child for this very important screening.

## Here are some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on heart screening:

### Why should my child get a cardiac screening?

A simple cardiac screening can help detect problems before they become major medical issues. While we recommend all active students get an ECG, you should definitely be screened if you:

- compete in high impact sports which increase your heart rate for long periods of time
- have a family history indicating a heart disease risk
- get dizzy during athletics
- experience fainting spells or weakness while participating
- get shortness of breath that does not clear quickly
- get chest pain while participating

### How is the cardiac screening done?

Cardiac screening can detect a variety of potentially catastrophic genetic diseases. The simplest level of testing is an ECG, which looks at the electrical signals of the heart. An ECG involves placing electrodes on the chest around the heart to record those signals. The test is easy, painless, non-invasive, and takes less than 5 minutes. It does not involve needles, blood work, radiation exposure or sedation.

### How often do you find a problem?

On average 97% of all those screened have a normal ECG and are considered at low risk for cardiac issues. In less than 3%, results are inconclusive or suggest something that requires further testing. Most often an Echocardiogram (Echo) is recommended. The Echo is used to get a picture of the heart similar to an ultrasound to look at a baby during pregnancy. The Echo looks for valve and vein structure, muscle thickness, and proper operation of the heart. Most rarely, but most importantly, our statistics show that 1 in 1000 of those we screen will be flagged as high risk with a severe abnormality on their ECG.

### Will I see the results of my child's ECG?

Yes. The interpreted ECGs will be returned to the school within 3 business days with a designation of low risk, follow-up or high risk, as well as information about particular ECG findings, when applicable.

### Who reads the ECG?

Every ECG is read by board-certified Cardiologists who are among the most experienced and qualified doctors in the country. Their experience means more accurate interpretations.



For more information, visit [www.whoweplayfor.org](http://www.whoweplayfor.org) or call (682)747-6459.



## Are boys and girls screened together?

No, arrangements are made for privacy. Boys will remove their shirts. Girls should wear a regular bra, which will not need to be removed.

## How much will this cost?

It's FREE, thanks to a generous donation from the Cody Stephens Foundation. A typical doctor's appointment with ECG normally costs \$100 and up, so Athens ISD is happy to offer our families this important heart screening at a huge savings.

## What if my child needs a follow up?

An abnormal ECG will be flagged for follow up, which means additional testing is needed to see what is causing that abnormality – think of it as a yellow caution light. It will include documentation on what the potential problem might be. Even if your child is flagged for a follow-up, he or she can continue participating in sports and other activities. **You'll just need to have your child visit a Cardiologist within 3 months** for follow up.

## What if my child is considered high risk?

If your child is flagged as *high risk*, it is like a red traffic light. He or she should not participate in sports or high-energy activities in any way (practice, games, scrimmages, etc.) until he or she has seen a specialist and received clearance or treatment. If you don't have one already, we will offer the contact information of Cardiologists in your area.

## Isn't this covered with the annual physical?

The annual physical exam asks family history questions, and requires a doctor to listen to the student's heart with a stethoscope. Studies have shown that this is just 1% effective in catching heart issues. An ECG can detect up to 95% of the conditions that cause SCA.

## Do we need to do this every year?

Cardiac screening should be part of a physical at least once while in middle school and once in high school. If your child is considered low risk then those are the only two times recommended to get an ECG before adulthood.

## Where can I find out more information?

You can visit [www.whoweplayfor.org](http://www.whoweplayfor.org) or call (682)747-6459 to find out more.

**The ECG screening will be held at the school on April 24th during school hours. The screening is open to all student athletes, band, cheerleaders, and drill team for 9-12 grades.**



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