



## UPDATE

### Guidance for coaches

#### In advance of training

- If coaching children, please ensure you have considered coaching ratios to the number of children involved; all activity requires careful planning to ensure this is maintained
- The approach taken by schools in only bringing back small groups of children is sensible, to help children to adjust to the new way of doing things in the school context; behavioural change takes time and so coaches are encouraged to consider work with one group of five children initially, to help children to adjust in the football context
- Coaches should be familiar with all safety and hygiene arrangements and communicate them to players, other coaches and parents / guardians
- Coaches should not return to football individually; check with the Club Covid -19 Officer and ensure that the club wishes to re-start coaching and has all the necessary Covid-19 preparations in place
- Coaches should remind anyone intending to attend the activity that, if they are showing symptoms of Covid-19 infection or have been in contact with someone displaying symptoms or diagnosed with Covid-19 within the last two weeks, they should not attend and should seek medical advice
- When planning a session, a decision should be communicated on whether you will permit the presence of parents/guardians at training; consideration will need to be given on how to ensure they maintain the social-distancing and hygiene arrangements required and this may differ depending on age of players (for example, it may be preferable for the parents of a younger child to remain)
- Before each training session, you should ask all participants if they have displayed any of the attached symptoms <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-overview-and-advice>
- Retain details of all participants at each session

#### During training

- Plan sessions to build up to ensure inclusion of a thorough ‘warm up’ and ‘cool down’ sessions should start at a low physical intensity with gradual progression to help decrease the risk of injury after a period of low or no activity
- Ensure that players comply with the up-to-date guidance during sessions – this includes no high fives, handshakes or spitting
- Players should bring their own water bottles; assign an area for each player to place water bottles during training to ensure that social distancing can be adhered to during water breaks
- Drinks should not be shared
- Ensure all equipment is sanitised prior to training
- Players should refrain from spitting or clearing of nasal passages; remind participants that if they need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue and put the tissue in the bin
- In relation to First Aid – all efforts should be made to maintain social distancing and allow player to self- treat; where this cannot be achieved please ensure that First Aid kits are stocked with appropriate PPE to support with this including gloves and face masks
- If a player becomes symptomatic during the session, they should be immediately removed from the session and taken home as soon as possible; NHS guidance on further management of symptoms should be followed.

### **Coaching children**

While coaching children during this period, it is essential to remember that you are also responsible for continuing to ensure that the environment is safe and that the clubs safeguarding policy is adhered to.

While some families will have coped well during the lockdown, there are other families who will have faced various difficulties and it is important that you know some children may be struggling for various reasons. These include being cut off from their friends and other social environments, fear of becoming ill and not knowing how to react in relation to the social distancing and other new measures.

You may have also seen in the media concerns raised in relation to potential increase in abuse (physical, mental etc) in the home and it is important to remain vigilant.

You may also be the first adult outside of the home environment that a child has contact with post the lockdown measures and you have an important role in safeguarding. If you are worried about a child as they return to football, it's vital you report your concerns. Doing nothing is not an option. Please check-in with the children you are coaching/working with and ask them how they've been and how they're doing.

Refer to the Irish FA Safeguarding policy here <https://www.irishfa.com/irish-fa-foundation/grassroots-and-youth-football/safeguarding> to remind yourself of ways to report concerns.