



A RETURN TO THE EVERYDAY GAME

UPDATED 24 MAY, 2021



CONTENTS

Training

Guidance for clubs in advance of return to football activity **page 3**

Guidance for Covid-19 Officers **page 4**

Guidance for coaches **page 5**

Guidance for players **page 7**

Guidance for parents and guardians **page 9**

Playing

Clubs **page 11**

Covid-19 Officer **page 12**

Coaches **page 13**

Players **page 15**

Parents and guardians **page 17**

Venues **page 19**

Match officials **page 20**



TRAINING

GUIDANCE FOR CLUBS IN ADVANCE OF RETURN TO FOOTBALL ACTIVITY

- Each club should decide when it's right for them to return based on their ability to comply with NI Executive guidance; please check any insurance you have in relation to your football activities to ensure it remains in place during the pandemic and if so, you are not breaking any of its terms
- Assign a Covid-19 Officer who will be responsible for having club oversight of adherence to the Irish FA and NI Executive guidance
- Risk assess training facilities to ensure that guidelines, for example social distancing, good hand hygiene can be adhered to
- Communicate processes and responsibilities to all coaches and club volunteers – ensure that tasks such as sanitising equipment are assigned
- Communicate processes to all players and parents/guardians to ensure familiarity with the requirements
- If you are responsible for your own training facility, display signage at the entrance and around the facility to promote good hand hygiene, social distancing
- Hand sanitising facilities to be made available for participants in advance of training
- Consider entry and exit procedures i.e. a one- way system with separate drop-off and pick up points may be beneficial if required
- For clubs with U18 teams, consider the ratio of coach-to-children; the Irish FA Safeguarding policy should be adhered to as a minimum however it may be practical to have a lower ratio for younger age groups to allow new processes to embed
- All equipment including balls, cones and goal posts to be sanitised before and after use; see below re cleaning advice
- Changing rooms and shower facilities can be opened, but you should avoid or minimise use where possible (for example, by arriving in kit and showering at home) and minimise time spent in the changing area. Social distancing must be maintained at all times whilst in the changing/shower areas which may mean staggering the number of players permitted in at a time. Pre-match and half-time team talks should take place outside.
- Cleaning should be carried out where reasonably practical with single use disposable cleaning equipment such as disposable wipes, or the cleaning material (for example the cloth or sponge) is either placed in a disinfectant solution effective against Covid-19, or it is discarded and not reused; in all cases, the cleaning product used should be effective against Covid-19
- 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
- Any additional facilities, for example, gyms, social clubs and cafés, should comply with the relevant government guidance and are not covered by the detail contained in the Irish FA protocols
- Covid-19 guidance <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-overview-and-advice>
- **Ensuring adherence to the Irish FA and NI Executive protocols is the responsibility of everyone.**
- **Each club must communicate clear consequences for non-adherence to these protocols. Examples of this could be players, coaches or parents being excluded from football activity with the club for a period of time, banned from the club or dropped from the team. Any consequences should be clear, communicated to all and managed consistently across the club.**



TRAINING

GUIDANCE FOR COVID-19 OFFICER

Each club will appoint a Covid-19 Officer. The role of this person is to remain familiar with the most up to date Irish FA and NI Executive guidance and ensure that this is communicated throughout coaches, players and parents/guardians (for clubs with U18 teams)

Like Safeguarding, ensuring adherence to the Irish FA and NI Executive protocols is the responsibility of **everyone** and the role of the Covid-19 Officer is to oversee this

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Ensure coaches, staff and volunteers are aware and adhere to Covid-19 guidance and protocols while at training
- In advance of return to football activity, each club is responsible for ensuring that the facilities they will use, regardless of ownership, are adequate and enable all Irish FA and NI Executive guidance to be met. This includes social distancing and good hand hygiene practice
- Keep updated with all new NI Executive guidance and Irish FA guidelines on Covid-19; update and communicate club plans as necessary
- Carrying out a risk assessment will help support the decision to return to football activity
- An example of a completed simple risk assessment is included on this page. The considerations and mitigants detailed in the example are not exhaustive.

Risk	Increased spread of Covid-19 due to NI Executive guidelines not being adhered to
Mitigants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social distancing guidelines can be adhered to in training facilities • Hand sanitiser supplied around training venue • Players instructed to bring their own hand sanitiser • No non-essential personnel present during training sessions • Equipment sanitised before and after all sessions • High touch point areas (door handles, toilet flush mechanisms) are sanitised frequently and before and after sessions as a minimum
Risk	Participants are not aware of the protocols to be followed resulting in an increased spread of Covid-19
Mitigants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club have agreed protocols to ensure all Irish FA and NI Executive guidance is met in advance of return to activity • All club staff have been advised and understand the club protocols • Club and venue protocols communicated to all participants and parents/guardians (for U18 teams) in advance of any return to activity • Parent/guardian written consent for children to return to training received including agreement to club protocols



TRAINING

GUIDANCE FOR COACHES

- 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
- 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 10 days, or if they should be in isolation for any other reason, they should not attend.
- 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 symptoms outlined in this link: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-overviewand-advice>
- Retain details of all participants at each session





TRAINING

GUIDANCE FOR COACHES

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. 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-faoundation/grassroots-and-youth-football/safeguarding> to remind yourself of ways to report concerns



TRAINING

GUIDANCE FOR PLAYERS

IN ADVANCE OF RETURNING TO FOOTBALL ACTIVITY

- Confirm with your club that you will only be taking part in activity that complies with the latest Irish FA and NI Executive guidance
- As we progress through the NI Executive roadmap, there may be changes in football activity including the introduction of new arrangements and unfamiliar restrictions; as a player, please support those who are trying to provide a safe re-introduction to football in line with the guidance and you can do this by following the guidance provided by the Irish FA plus measures introduced by your club/venue
- Make yourself aware of the measures being taken to provide a safe environment; if you are not happy with the arrangements that have been made, you should remove yourself from that environment
- If you have additional disability or medical needs, please ensure that you have discussed this specifically with the club and coach; you can then agree how/if these needs can be met within current NI Executive guidance

BEFORE SESSIONS

- If you have been diagnosed with Covid -19, are in a current isolation period, or are displaying any of the symptoms detailed <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-overview-and-advice> **you must not attend training**
- If a member of your household has been diagnosed with Covid-19 or is displaying these symptoms you must not attend training
- It is our recommendation, in order to reduce the spread of Covid-19, that you do not car share with anyone outside your home when travelling to training or matches. If this is unavoidable you should follow the safer travel guidance: <http://www.sportni.net/return-to-sport/advice-on-car-sharing> <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/safer-travel-guidance-public-transport-users-walkers-cyclists-drivers>
- Practice good hand hygiene always



TRAINING

GUIDANCE FOR PLAYERS

DURING SESSIONS

- Some facilities may have one way or parking systems in place; find out what these are in advance and comply with all guidance
- Practice good hand hygiene; wash/sanitise hands before all activity
- Refrain from spitting or clearing of nasal passages; if you need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue and put the tissue in the bin and if you do not have a tissue, use the crook of your elbow
- Equipment (footballs, cones etc) should be handled as little as possible
- Ensure that you bring your own water bottle that is clearly recognisable as yours
- If you suffer an injury, you will be encouraged to self-treat where appropriate; if there is a First Aider or other medical personnel present, they should be equipped with the appropriate PPE to protect themselves and others if they need to compromise social distancing guidelines to provide medical assistance
- If you become symptomatic during the session, you should immediately remove yourself from the session and return home as soon as possible; NHS guidance on further management of symptoms should be followed

AFTER SESSIONS

- Do not congregate and leave the venue quickly
- Ensure that social distancing guidance continues to be adhered to
- Follow any exit systems in place at the venue
- Wash/sanitise your hands as soon as possible after the session
- For some the experiences over the lockdown period and in relation to the Covid-19 situation may have been very difficult
- If your mental and emotional wellbeing has been affected as a result of the changes brought about by Covid-19, the Irish FA's Ahead of the Game programme can help you
- You can click here for material including a webinar and some support details; the guidance you'll find could help you, or anyone else you know who may be struggling: <https://www.irishfa.com/irish-fa-foundation/community-volunteering/ahead-of-the-game>



TRAINING

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

RETURN TO FOOTBALL ACTIVITY

- Each club will have to decide when it's right for them to return based on factors such as the ability to comply with NI Executive guidance; be aware of the protocols and processes within your child's club and what is expected of you and your child and if in doubt, or you're not comfortable about your child(ren) returning to football, there's no pressure to do so
- Discuss how the return will look with your child to ensure that they are familiar with what will be asked of them

IN ADVANCE OF RETURNING

- As we progress through the NI Executive roadmap, there may be changes in football activity including the introduction of new arrangements and unfamiliar restrictions; please support those who are trying to provide a safe re-introduction to football in line with the guidance and you can do this by following the guidance provided by the Irish FA and also the measures introduced by the club/venue as well as ensuring your child is familiar with what is expected of them
- As you will undoubtedly already know, young children are more likely to struggle to maintain social distancing; please continue to do your best to help your child recognise what social distancing means, looks and feels like – this could be related to relevant arm spans or standing jumps for example
- It is our recommendation that you do not car share with anyone outside your home when travelling to training or matches. If this is unavoidable you should follow the safer travel guidance: <http://www.sportni.net/return-to-sport/advice-on-car-sharing> <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/safer-travel-guidance-public-transport-users-walkers-cyclists-drivers>
- Make yourself aware of the measures being taken to provide a safe environment; if you are not happy with the arrangements that have been made, then you should remove your child from that environment
- If your child has additional disability or medical needs, please ensure that you have discussed this specifically with the club and coach; you can then agree how/if these needs can be met within current NI Executive guidance



TRAINING

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

DURING SESSIONS

- Some facilities may have one way or parking systems in place; find out what these are in advance and comply with all guidance
- Ensure that your child practices good hand hygiene; wash/sanitise hands before all activity
- Remind your child that they should refrain from spitting or clearing of nasal passages; if the need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue and put the tissue in the bin or use the crook of their elbow
- Ensure that your child brings their own water bottle that is clearly recognisable
- If your child gets injured, you, or a member of your household can assist them if present; clubs and coaches will ensure all efforts are made to maintain social distancing and allow player to self- treat and, where this cannot be achieved, they should have appropriate PPE to support with this including gloves and face masks

AFTER SESSIONS

- Do not congregate; collect your child and leave the venue quickly
- Ensure that social distancing guidance continues to be adhered to
- Follow any exit systems in place at the venue
- Remind your child to wash/sanitise your hands as soon as possible after the session
- If you have any safeguarding concerns, you can access the Irish FA Safeguarding policy including reporting mechanisms here <https://www.irishfa.com/irish-fa/foundation/grassroots-and-youth-football/safeguarding>



PLAYING

GUIDANCE FOR CLUBS IN RELATION TO A RETURN TO FOOTBALL MATCHES

Everyone has a role to play in the safe return to contact sports – it is the personal responsibility of each participant

- Each club should decide when it's right for them to return based on their ability to comply with NI Executive guidance; please check any insurance you have in relation to your football activities to ensure it remains in place during the pandemic and if so, you are not breaking any of its terms
- Clubs should appoint a minimum of one Covid-19 Officer
- Clubs have a responsibility to ensure that the maximum number of attendees is not exceeded
- A record of all club personnel including players, coaches and any medical staff, must be retained by each club for any match played. This information should be retained by the club and destroyed after 30 days (unless required for another lawful purpose as per UK GDPR)
- Communicate processes and responsibilities to all coaches and club volunteers – ensure that tasks such as sanitising equipment are assigned
- Communicate processes to all players and parents/guardians to ensure familiarity with new requirements
- Hand sanitising facilities to be made available for participants in advance of match
- All equipment including balls, cones, goal posts and corner flags to be sanitised before and after use; see below re cleaning advice
- Changing rooms and shower facilities can be opened, but you should avoid or minimise use where possible (for example, by arriving in kit and showering at home) and minimise time spent in the changing area. Social distancing must be maintained at all times whilst in the changing/shower areas which may mean staggering the number of players permitted in at a time. Pre-match and half-time team talks should take place outside.
- Cleaning should be carried out where reasonably practical with single use disposable cleaning equipment such as disposable wipes, or the cleaning material (for example the cloth or sponge) is either placed in a disinfectant solution effective against Covid-19, or it is discarded and not reused; in all cases, the cleaning product used should be effective against Covid-19
- Social distancing guidance should be adhered to when not on the field of play. Substitute area to be arranged to allow for social distancing. Where this cannot be accommodated in the technical areas, other arrangements should be made – eg use of stands, seats spread out along the side line
- 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
- Any additional facilities, for example, gyms, social clubs and cafés, should comply with the relevant government guidance and are not covered by the detail contained in the Irish FA protocols Covid-19 guidance <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-overview-and-advice>



PLAYING

COVID-19 OFFICER

Each club will appoint a Covid-19 Officer. The role of this person is to remain familiar with the most up to date Irish FA and NI Executive guidance and ensure that this is communicated throughout coaches, players and parents/guardians (for clubs with U18 teams)

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus>

Like Safeguarding, ensuring adherence to the Irish FA and NI Executive protocols is the responsibility of **everyone** and the role of the Covid-19 Officer is to oversee this

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Ensure coaches, staff and volunteers are aware and adhere to Covid-19 guidance and protocols while at training & during matches and have access to the appropriate equipment (sanitiser/disinfectant/gloves etc)
- Co-ordinate attendance record keeping for each training session and match, regardless of venue. This information should be retained by the club and destroyed after 30 days (unless required for another lawful purpose as per GDPR).
- Ensure that the club only uses facilities that allow Irish FA and NI Executive guidance to be met. This includes social distancing and good hand hygiene practice
- Keep updated with all new NI Executive guidance and Irish FA guidelines on Covid-19; update and communicate club plans as necessary
- Carrying out a risk assessment will help support the decision to return to football activity
- Clubs have a responsibility to ensure that the maximum number of attendees is not exceeded

An example of a completed simple risk assessment is on this page. The considerations and mitigants detailed in the example are not exhaustive

Risk	Increased spread of Covid-19 due to NI Executive guidelines not being adhered to
Mitigants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social distancing guidelines can be adhered to in training/match facilities • Hand sanitiser supplied around training/match venue • Players instructed to bring their own hand sanitiser • No non-essential personnel present during training/match sessions • Equipment sanitised before and after all sessions/matches • High touch point areas (door handles, toilet flush mechanisms) are sanitised frequently and before and after sessions/matches as a minimum
Risk	Participants are not aware of the protocols to be followed resulting in an increased spread of Covid-19
Mitigants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club have agreed protocols to ensure all Irish FA and NI Executive guidance is met in advance of return to activity • All club staff have been advised and understand the club protocols • Club and venue protocols communicated to all participants and parents/guardians (for U18 teams) in advance of any return to activity • Parent/guardian written consent for children to return to training/match received including agreement to club protocols



PLAYING

GUIDANCE FOR COACHES

Everyone has a role to play in the safe return to contact sports – it is the personal responsibility of each participant

- 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 match venue 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 10 days or if they should be in isolation for any other reason, they should not attend.
- For clubs with U18 teams, advise parents that at present, the NI Executive guidance allows for a parent/guardian to be present at matches. Social distancing guidelines must be followed at all times.
- Before each match, 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>
- A record of all club personnel including players, coaches and any medical staff, must be retained by each club for any match played. This information should be retained by the club and destroyed after 30 days (unless required for another lawful purpose as per UK GDPR)



PLAYING

GUIDANCE FOR COACHES

DURING MATCHES

- Ensure that players comply with the up-to-date guidance at all times including during matches – this includes no high fives, handshakes, spitting or clearing of nasal passages
- Players should bring their own water bottles; maintain social distancing as much as possible during water breaks
- Drinks should not be shared
- Ensure all equipment is sanitised prior to match including goal posts and balls
- Social distancing guidance should be adhered to when not on the field of play. Substitute area to be arranged to allow for social distancing. Where this cannot be accommodated in the technical area, other arrangements should be made – eg use of stands, seats spread out along the side line
- No physical contact goal celebrations
- No handshakes between teams
- 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 match, they should be immediately removed from the match and taken home as soon as possible; NHS guidance on further management of symptoms should be followed

AFTER MATCHES

- There should be no post match handshakes
- No congregating post match – leave the venue promptly and adhere to social distancing guidelines



PLAYING

GUIDANCE FOR PLAYERS

Everyone has a role to play in the safe return to contact sports – it is the personal responsibility of each participant

BEFORE MATCHES

- If you have been diagnosed with COVID 19, are in a current isolation period or are displaying any of the symptoms detailed <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-overview-and-advice> you must not attend training or matches
- If a member of your household has been diagnosed with Covid-19 or is displaying these symptoms you must not attend training or matches
- It is our recommendation, in order to reduce the spread of Covid-19, that you do not car share with anyone outside your home when travelling to training or matches. If this is unavoidable you should follow the safer travel guidance: <http://www.sportni.net/return-to-sport/advice-on-car-sharing> <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/safer-travel-guidance-public-transport-users-walkers-cyclists-drivers>
- Practice good hand hygiene always

DURING MATCHES

- Some facilities may have one way or parking systems in place; find out what these are in advance and comply with all guidance
- Practice good hand hygiene; wash/sanitise hands before all activity
- Refrain from spitting or clearing of nasal passages; if you need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue and put the tissue in the bin and if you do not have a tissue, use the crook of your elbow
- Ensure that you bring your own water bottle that is clearly recognisable as yours
- Maintain social distancing at all times when not on the field of play; including in the technical area, on the side-line and during water breaks
- No physical goal celebrations
- No handshakes between teams
- If you suffer an injury, you will be encouraged to self-treat where appropriate; if there is a First Aider or other medical personnel present, they should be equipped with the appropriate PPE to protect themselves and others if they need to compromise social-distancing guidelines to provide medical assistance
- If you become symptomatic during the match, you should immediately remove yourself from the match and return home as soon as possible; NHS guidance on further management of symptoms should be followed



PLAYING

GUIDANCE FOR PLAYERS

AFTER MATCHES

- No post match handshakes
- All used water bottles, tape, strapping etc to be removed from the venue and disposed of by the individual who used them
- Do not congregate and leave the venue quickly
- Ensure that social distancing guidance continues to be adhered to
- Follow any exit systems in place at the venue
- Wash/sanitise your hands as soon as possible after the match

‘MIND YOUR HEAD’

- For some the experiences over the lockdown period and in relation to the Covid-19 situation may have been very difficult
- If your mental and emotional wellbeing has been affected as a result of the changes brought about by Covid-19, the Irish FA's Ahead of the Game programme can help you
- You can click here for material including a webinar and some support details; the guidance you'll find could help you, or anyone else you know who may be struggling: <https://www.irishfa.com/irish-fa-foundation/community-volunteering/ahead-of-the-game>



PLAYING

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Everyone has a role to play in the safe return to contact sports – it is the personal responsibility of each participant

- Each club will have to decide when it's right for them to return based on factors such as the ability to comply with NI Executive guidance; be aware of the protocols and processes within your child's club and what is expected of you and your child and if in doubt, or you're not comfortable about your child(ren) returning to football, there's no pressure to do so
- Discuss how the return will look with your child to ensure that they are familiar with what will be asked of them

IN ADVANCE OF MATCHES TAKING PLACE



PLAYING

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

DURING MATCHES

- Some facilities may have one way or parking systems in place; find out what these are in advance and comply with all guidance
- Ensure that your child practices good hand hygiene; wash/sanitise hands before all activity
- Remind your child that they should refrain from spitting or clearing of nasal passages; if they need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue and put the tissue in the bin or use the crook of their elbow
- Ensure that your child brings their own water bottle that is clearly recognisable
- Children should maintain social distancing when not on the field of play; including in the technical area, on the side lines and during water breaks
- Your child should be reminded that there should be no physical contact goal celebrations
- There will be no handshakes between teams
- If your child gets injured, you, or a member of your household can assist them if present; clubs and coaches will ensure all efforts are made to maintain social distancing and allow player to self- treat and, where this cannot be achieved, they should have appropriate PPE to support with this including gloves and face masks

AFTER MATCHES

- Do not congregate; collect your child and leave the venue quickly
- Ensure that social distancing guidance continues to be adhered to
- All water bottles, tape, strapping etc to be removed from the venue and disposed of by the individual who used them
- Follow any exit systems in place at the venue
- Remind your child to wash/sanitise your hands as soon as possible after the match
- If you have any safeguarding concerns, you can access the Irish FA Safeguarding policy including reporting mechanisms here <https://www.irishfa.com/irish-fa-foundation/grassroots-and-youth-football/safeguarding>



PLAYING

GUIDANCE FOR VENUES IN RELATION TO HOSTING OF FOOTBALL MATCHES

Everyone has a role to play in the safe return to contact sports – it is the personal responsibility of each participant.

- Risk assess match facilities to ensure that guidelines, for example social distancing, good hand hygiene can be adhered to
- Display signage at the entrance and around the facility to promote good hand hygiene, social distancing
- Hand sanitising facilities to be made available for participants in advance of match
- Consider entry and exit procedures i.e. a one-way system with separate drop-off and pick up points may be beneficial if required
- All equipment should be sanitised before and after each match – this includes goal posts and corner flags
- Changing rooms and shower facilities can be opened, but you should avoid or minimise use where possible (for example, by arriving in kit and showering at home) and minimise time spent in the changing area. Social distancing must be maintained at all times whilst in the changing/shower areas which may mean staggering the number of players permitted in at a time. Pre-match and half-time team talks should take place outside.
- Cleaning should be carried out where reasonably practical with single use disposable cleaning equipment such as disposable wipes, or the cleaning material (for example the cloth or sponge) is either placed in a disinfectant solution effective against Covid-19, or it is discarded and not reused; in all cases, the cleaning product used should be effective against Covid-19
- Any additional facilities, for example, gyms, social clubs and cafes, should comply with the relevant government guidance and are not covered by the detail contained in the Irish FA guides





PLAYING

GUIDANCE FOR MATCH OFFICIALS

Everyone has a role to play in the safe return to contact sports – it is the personal responsibility of each participant

BEFORE MATCHES

- If you have been diagnosed with Covid-19, are in a current isolation period, or are displaying any of the symptoms detailed <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-overview-and-advice> you must not officiate at any match
- If a member of your household has been diagnosed with Covid-19 or is displaying these symptoms **you must not officiate in any matches**
- It is our recommendation that, in order to reduce the spread of Covid-19, you do not car share with anyone outside your home when travelling to training or matches. If this is unavoidable you should follow the safer travel guidance: <http://www.sportni.net/return-to-sport/advice-on-car-sharing> <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/safer-travel-guidance-public-transport-users-walkers-cyclists-drivers>
- Practice good hand hygiene always

DURING MATCHES

- You should arrive at the venue in your kit as changing area use may be limited.
- Some facilities may have one way or parking systems in place; find out what these are in advance and comply with all guidance
- Practice good hand hygiene; wash/sanitise hands before all match
- Refrain from spitting or clearing of nasal passages; if you need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue and put the tissue in the bin and if you do not have a tissue, use the crook of your elbow
- Ensure that you bring your own water bottle that is clearly recognisable as yours
- Ensure that you bring your own equipment
- Maintain social distancing at all times when not on the field of play
- No handshakes
- If you suffer an injury, you will be encouraged to self-treat where appropriate; if there is a First Aider or other medical personnel present, they should be equipped with the appropriate PPE to protect themselves and others if they need to compromise social-distancing guidelines to provide medical assistance
- If you become symptomatic during the match, you should immediately remove yourself from the match and return home as soon as possible; NHS guidance on further management of symptoms should be followed



PLAYING

GUIDANCE FOR MATCH OFFICIALS

AFTER MATCHES

- No post match handshakes
- Do not congregate and leave the venue quickly
- Ensure that social distancing guidance continues to be adhered to
- Follow any exit systems in place at the venue
- Wash/sanitise your hands as soon as possible after the match

'MIND YOUR HEAD'

- For some the experiences over the lockdown period and in relation to the Covid-19 situation may have been very difficult
- If your mental and emotional wellbeing has been affected as a result of the changes brought about by Covid-19, the Irish FA's Ahead of the Game programme can help you
- You can click here for material including a webinar and some support details; the guidance you'll find could help you, or anyone else you know who may be struggling: <https://www.irishfa.com/irish-fa-foundation/community-volunteering-ahead-of-the-game>





PLAYING

THESE ARE THE MAXIMUM NUMBERS
DEEMED ESSENTIAL TO RUN A GAME

Standard match	58
Cup semi final	70
Cup final	76

Personnel	Team 1	Team 2	Total
Players	11	11	22
Substitutes	7	7	14
Coaches	5	5	10
Medical team	4	4	8
Officials	4	4	4
In addition for cup semi final			
Admin staff & Committee members			6
Club Board/Committee/Management	3	3	6
In addition for cup final			
Admin staff, Committee members & Sponsors			12
Club Board/Committee/Management	3	3	6



www.irishfa.com

