**<Club> Football Club**

**Covid-19, Return To Football (RTF) Policy**

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**1 – Introduction**

This document has been prepared in line with the following documents provided by The FA:

Covid-19 Guidance On Re-Starting Outdoor Competitive Grassroots Football, For All (version 1.0, published 18th July 2020)

Covid-19 – Guidance On Re-Starting Football Activity, For Providers Of Outdoor Football Facilities, Including Clubs (version 1.2, published 18th July 2020)

This document should be read in conjunction with the UK Government’s latest Covid-19 guidance and is based on the UK Government’s framework for a return to recreational team sport. It is written with men’s 11-a-side football as its main focus.

For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this RTF Policy nor in The FA guidelines replaces, reduces or affects in any way the obligations imposed by the UK Government.

For the purposes of this document ‘the club’ refers to <Club> Football Club and ‘members’ refers to the players, volunteers, coaches and spectators etc of the club.

This is a ‘live document’ and is subject to change as and when new information and guidance is provided by the UK Government or The FA.

**2 – Ensuring a safe return**

IMPORTANT:

If you are showing symptoms of the virus or have been in contact with someone displaying symptoms within the last two weeks, then you must stay home until an NHS practitioner advises you that you no longer need to remain in isolation.

All members are to be sent the RTF Policy prior to the resumption of training/matches. All members are to confirm that they have received, read and understood the guidelines within this Policy.

**Covid-19 self-assessment**

In line with the UK Government’s guidance; all members should self-check for symptoms of Covid-19 before every match/training session. No one should leave home to participate in football activities if they or someone in their household has any of the following:

* A high temperature (above 38ºC)
* A new, continuous cough
* Breathlessness
* A loss, or change to, their sense of smell
* A loss, or change, to their sense of taste

Should a member demonstrate any such symptoms they must not participate in football activities, they should follow NHS and Public Health England (PHE) guidance on self-isolation.

If an individual is symptomatic and/or living in a household with possible Covid-19 infection they should remain at home and follow UK Government guidance. In addition, any members who have been asked to isolate by NHS Test and Trace because they are a contact of a known Covid-19 case must not exercise outside their home or garden and must not exercise with others.

**Tracking & registration**

In order that the club and any oppositions can track and trace members in the event of a potential outbreak of the virus, all members are to be registered on The FA’s Whole Game System (WGS) prior to taking part in any football activity. Should a member not be registered on WGS an individual must provide details that are sufficient for their registration. Failure to provide these details will result in the club refusing participation for the individual.

**Social distancing**

In all settings before and after sessions and during breaks in play, members should practice social distancing in line with UK Government guidance. The preferred distance between members is 2m. Where this is not possible members should be at ‘one metre plus’.

**Group sizes**

In line with The FA’s guidance, training sessions are to be in groups of no more than 30 participants. There may be multiple groups of 30, but only if these groups can be appropriately distanced from each other. Members must adhere to the group that is allocated to them.

**Behaviour between training/matches**

Members should comply with public health restrictions and avoid high risk behaviours to reduce the risk to themselves and limit the risk of potentially spreading Covid-19 to all fellow participants. **3 – Code of conduct**

This code of conduct has been put in place by The FA and adopted by the club to ensure that the return to football is safe for every participant. Members should adhere to this code before, during and after football activity.

Covid-19 is a highly infectious and dangerous disease. A resumption of contact play is only achievable if those involved create and maintain a controlled environment that minimises the threat of infection.

Risk in sport cannot be completely eradicated but with caution and care the risks can be reduced.

Each member will need to decide when to return to contact football, based on their own circumstances and the arrangements that have been put in place for a safe return. This is particularly the case for members from the BAME communities or those with underlying health conditions.

All those returning to competitive grassroots football must adopt the following code of behaviour:

* **Be aware of your own personal health.** If you show any of the Covid-19 symptoms you must stay at home, inform the NHS Test and Trace and seek medical advice.
* **Be responsible.** Read the guidance provided by The FA and by the club so that you are aware of the changes to the game and what is expected of you. This will include things like being prepared to wash your own kit, bringing your own labelled water bottle and being aware of changes to the meet-up times.
* **Practice good hygiene.** Wash your hands regularly and before, during and after a game.
* **Where possible maintain social distancing.** This will not always be possible in a competitive match environment (for example, when tackling an opponent) and that is acceptable. However, before and after a game you should maintain social distancing.
* **Support NHS Test and Trace.** You’re likely to be asked to provide your details so that in the event of a Covid-19 outbreak those potentially infected can be traced. This is to everyone’s benefit so please co-operate.
* **Do not spit.** Spitting and the rinsing out of mouths is now a recognised risk to health and must not be done. Avoid shouting or raising your voice if face-to-face with other players.
* **After the game.** Be aware that other users may be waiting to use the facilities. Changing rooms and showers are likely to be closed and any socialising must follow the UK Government’s guidance or social distancing.

**4 – Before and after training/matches**

**Self-assessment of Covid-19 symptoms**

Members should self-assess for the symptoms of Covid-19 prior to each training session/match and should not take part in or travel to any facility if they or anyone in their household is showing symptoms.

Further information on self-assessment can be found in section 2.

**Player registration (tracking members)**

Members are to be registered on WGS before taking part in any football activity. Further information on tracking and registration can be found in section 2.

**Travel to/from the training/match venue**

Members should follow best practice for travelling, including minimising the use of public transport. Members travelling in their own vehicles is the club’s preferred option, with cycling or walking the preferred alternatives.

If members have to travel with other members from outside of their household or support bubble they should try to:

* Share the same transport with the same member each time
* Keep to small groups of people at any one time
* Open windows for ventilation
* Face away from one another
* Clean the vehicle between journeys using standard cleaning products – including door handles and other surfaces that are touched
* Wear face coverings
* Consider the seating arrangements to maximise distance between people in the vehicle
* Limit the time spent in petrol stations, garages or service stations

**Hygiene (hand washing)**

Hands should be washed or sanitised at the earliest opportunity. Personal equipment should be washed or wiped down with disinfectant following use at each session.

**Facilities**

Information on facilities and what to do/expect can be found in section 6.

**Playing kit and personal equipment**

Members should arrive changed and ready to play/train.

Members should take their kit home to wash it themselves, rather than one person handling a large quantity of soiled materials.

Where playing kit absolutely has to be shared or kept together (last minute stand-in players, shortage of kit etc) each person handling it must wash/sanitise their hands immediately after. Appropriate cleaning arrangements for shared kit must be made.

Members are advised to bring their own drink(s)/refreshments in a named bottle/container. Under no circumstances should any water bottles, drinks or food be shared with any other member.

**Warm ups/cool downs**

Members should always observe social distancing during the completion of warm up/cool down activities.

**Payment of match and other subscription fees**

Payment of match and other subscription fees should be cashless, if possible.

The club has in place a system by which members can pay subscription fees by monthly standing order. The current rate is £xx a month for full members and £xx a month for student members. The club recommends that members sign up to pay subscription fees by the method of standing order.

**Post-match hospitality**

Members should avoid congregating at a facility following the conclusion of a match or training session.

Groups in clubhouses and hospitality facilities must be restricted to 6 persons who should all follow social distancing procedures.

**5 – During training/matches**

**Handling equipment**

Equipment (cones, corner posts/flags etc) is to be handled as infrequently as possible. Where possible the same member is to handle the same equipment through a session. The equipment is to be cleaned with sanitizing wipes before being put back into storage.

The use of bibs is to be avoided where possible.

The ball should be handled as infrequently as possible. Retrieving the ball should be done with the feet rather than the hands, where possible. During breaks in play when the ball has been handled it should be disinfected.

**Pre/post match handshakes**

Handshakes should not take place.

**Spitting**

Everyone should refrain from spitting and chewing gum.

Members should sneeze/cough into a tissue or the crook of their elbow and sanitize immediately after.

**Goal celebrations**

Goal celebrations must be avoided.

**Shouting**

Members should avoid, if possible, shouting or raising their voices when facing or near to each other.

**The restart of play**

**Free kicks**: players are encouraged to get on with the game and not unnecessarily prolong set play set-up, such as setting a defensive wall.

**Corner kicks**: corner kicks should be taken promptly to limit prolonged close marking.

**Throw ins**: the time the ball is spent in the hand should be limited. The ball should be retrieved using the feet and throw ins should be taken promptly.

**Half time and refreshment breaks**

All participants should be socially distanced during breaks in play.

Members are advised to bring their own drink(s)/refreshments in a named bottle/container. Under no circumstances should any water bottles, drinks or food be shared with any other member.

**Interaction with match officials**

Interactions with match officials should only happen with members observing the ‘one metre plus’ social distance.

Payment of match fees, if possible, should be cashless.

**Treatment of injuries**

Injuries during play should still be treated – the health and safety of members is of the utmost importance.

If a member becomes injured, a member of their household can assist if present and appropriate but other members will still need to socially distance themselves. The exception is whether the injury is life or limb threatening which would necessitate compromising guidelines to provide emergency care.

Those members who are trained to provide first aid should acquaint themselves with updated medical guidelines and ensure that they have the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) prior to treating any injury.

Should a member administer first aid they should immediately clean their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer. Any PPE used should be disposed of as clinical waste.

**Spectators**

Spectators (including substitutes, parents and other members) should remain socially distanced. They must stand in socially distanced groups of no more than 6, in line with UK Government guidance. They should allow sufficient space for coaches and assistant referees to complete their duties without compromising social distancing guidelines.

**6 – Facilities**

For the purpose of this section; the term ‘facilities’ refers to the pitches and associated buildings at a match/training venue.

The club does not own or control the operation of its own facilities. It hires facilities from the following organisations:

* <venue>

Prior to the resumption of football activities at these facilities the club will seek assurances from the owners/operators that they have read and understood The FA’s guidance which specifically relates to facilities for football activities. The club will also seek assurances that the facilities have put in place the necessary precautions to ensure that they are as Covid-secure as possible.

**Away fixtures and alternative facilities**

When members are utilising a facility not named above they should observe and follow signage and guidelines as directed by the owners/operators of those facilities.

The below guidelines should be used as information for members as to what they should expect to find and do when attending a facility where football activity is taking place.

**Arrival and departure from facilities**

Arrival times may be allocated with kick off times amended to suit allotted arrival times. Members may be asked to arrive at a facility inside of a 10 minute window to avoid congestion at facilities. Members should make every effort to arrive during their allocated window. Should they arrive early members could be asked to remain in their vehicle until their arrival window commences.

Members should depart from a facility promptly following the conclusion of a training session/match.

**Hand washing and hygiene (including social distancing)**

Hand sanitizers should be provided at entrances/exits with members also advised to bring their own hand sanitizer, marked with their name, in order that hands can be cleaned upon entry/exit from a facility.

When at facilities members should practice social distancing in line with UK Government guidance. The preferred distance between members is 2m. Where this is not possible members should be at ‘one metre plus’.

**One way systems**

Members may be directed to follow a one way system at a facility. It is important that members follow any one way signage in order to maintain social distancing.

**Changing rooms (including showers)**

Changing rooms are viewed as an area of increased risk and transmission. They are to remain closed, where possible.

Members should arrive changed and ready to play/train. Members should not use showers at a facility and should shower at home.

**Toilet facilities**

Toilets should be open prior to and during any match/training session. They should remain open for 30 minutes following the completion of the match/training session.

Members should attempt to only enter toilets one at a time.

**Bars and catering facilities (including post-match hospitality)**

It is expected that bar and catering facilities will remain closed, despite UK Government guidance permitting their opening.

Members may be asked to queue outside and/or at socially distanced intervals when queuing.

Serving hatches or screened serving points may be in use at a facility and members should respect these.

At a pay point members should try to avoid paying with cash, the use of contactless card payments are encouraged.

Groups in clubhouses and hospitality facilities must be restricted to 6 persons who should all follow social distancing procedures.

**Appendix A**

**Agreement to the RTF Policy**

**<Club> Football Club member consent from Covid19**

Dear member,

As our ongoing commitment to your health and safety, we are required to ascertain that you have read and understood the information presented to you in the club’s RTF Policy.

Our club acknowledges that:

* Nothing in the club’s RTF policy nor The FA’s guidance replaces, reduces or affects in any way the obligations imposed on the member by the statute and/or common law in the field of medicine, occupational health and/or health and safety
* This agreement is non-contractual but a ‘best practice’ guide
* I (as a member) have read and understood the <Club> FC Return To Football Policy and understand the basics of how to comply with the policy and play football safely
* Our policy broadly follows The FA’s Covid-19 Guidance On Re-Starting Outdoor Competitive Grassroots Football, For All (version 1.0, published 18th July 2020)
* I (as a member) understand that I can opt out of the club’s Return To Football Policy by informing the Club Secretary that I wish to do so. In such circumstances, I shall not be permitted to attend a facility or take part in any football activity with the club

Signed:

Print name:

Date:

**Appendix B – Covid-19 specific risk assessments**

The risk assessments in this section are specific to Covid-19 and therefore do not include the other risks associated with participation in physical sport. While knowledge of Covid-19 is ever increasing these risk assessments cannot cover every risk or scenario which could lead to transmission of the virus.

A ‘risk rating’ is provided against each listed risk. A score of 5 indicates a high risk, while a score of 1 indicates a low risk.

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| **Before and after training/matches, including facility use**  |
| **Hazard** | **Person(s) at risk** | **How they may be harmed** | **Current prevention measures** | **Risk rating** | **Control measure(s) put in place** | **Review date/period** |
| Not self-assessing for Covid-19 | Members  | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission  | N/A | 5 | What to look for when self-assessing is described in Section 2. Importance of self-assessment to be stressed to members. Members to agree to self-assessment prior to returning to football activities with the club  | Ongoing |
| Asymptomatic members attending club events  | Members | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 5 | What to look for when self-assessing is described in Section 1. Measures taken to reduce risk of virus transmission to be in place: social distancing, hand washing etc | Ongoing |
| Breach of social distancing  | Members  | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 4 | Social distancing to be strictly adhered to | Ongoing  |
| Travelling to/from facilities in shared vehicles  | Members | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 3 | See Section 4 for current measures/guidance  | Ongoing |
| Travelling to/from facilities on public transport  | Members | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 4 | See Section 4 for current measures/guidance | Ongoing |
| Travelling to/from facilities on your own by car/bicycle  | Members | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 1 |  | Ongoing |
| Congregation before/after training/matches  | Members & other facility users  | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 3 | Arrival times may be allocated. Members will be encouraged to depart from a facility promptly following the conclusion of a training session/match | Ongoing |
| Use of WC facilities | Members & other facility users  | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 3 | Members should attempt to only enter toilets one at a time | Ongoing |
| Use of changing facilities & showers | Members & other facility users  | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 4 | Changing rooms remain closed with members arriving and departing in their kit. Members are to shower at home  | Ongoing |
| Contamination in WC and changing facilities  | Members & other facility users | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 4 | Members to wash hands immediately after using the WC. Facility providers to have cleaning routine in place | Ongoing  |
| Not observing one way systems  | Members & other facility users | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 4 | One way systems within facilities to be clearly marked  | Ongoing  |
| Sharing playing equipment  | Members  | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 4 | Playing equipment not to be shared or handled by multiple members. Equipment to be cleaned before be placed into storage | Ongoing |
| Washing playing equipment  | Members  | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 4 | One person is not to be solely responsible for washing soiled playing kit. Members are to wash their own kit  | Ongoing |
| Payment of subscriptions fees in cash  | Members  | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | Monthly standing order subscription payment method  | 3 | The club is to further encourage payment of subscription fees by the standing order method |  |
| Acceptance of post-match hospitality  | Members  | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 5 | Post-match hospitality to be refused when offered and not to be offered by the club | Ongoing |
| Attendance of unregistered participants  | Members & potential members  | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 5 | Sufficient details to be collected from participants and stored for no longer than 21 days | Monthly |

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| **During training/matches**  |
| **Hazard** | **Person(s) at risk** | **How they may be harmed** | **Current prevention measures** | **Risk rating** | **Control measure(s) put in place** | **Review date/period** |
| Breach of social distancing during breaks in play  | Members  | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission  | N/A | 4 | Social distancing to be strictly adhered to | Ongoing |
| Handshakes  | Members, match officials & opponents | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | Handshakes should not take place, an alternative should be used if necessary | 3 | Continue with current measures  | Ongoing |
| Spitting | Members, match officials & opponents | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 5 | Members should not spit or rinse out their mouth  | Ongoing  |
| Goal celebrations  | Members  | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 5 | Goal celebrations are to be avoided  | Ongoing |
| Shouting  | Members, match officials & opponents | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 3 | Members should avoid, if possible, shouting or raising their voices when facing or near to each other | Ongoing |
| Retrieving the ball | Members  | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 3 | Retrieving the ball to be done with the feet and not hands. Balls should be sanitized during breaks of play  | Ongoing |
| Sharing playing equipment  | Members  | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 4 | Playing equipment not to be shared or handled by multiple members. Equipment to be cleaned before be placed into storage | Ongoing |
| Set plays and restarting the game | Members, match officials & opponents | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 3 | Restarts of play are not to be unnecessarily delayed, as per Section 5 | Ongoing |
| Interactions with match officials, members and opponents  | Members, match officials & opponents | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 3 | Interactions should only happen with members observing the ‘one metre plus’ social distance | Ongoing |
| Use of drinking containers  | Members  | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 5 | Drinks containers are to be labelled with a members name and are not to be shared  | Ongoing |
| Consumption of food  | Members | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 5 | Any food brought to a match/training session to be consumed by the member who brought it and not shared  | Ongoing |
| Treatment of injuries  | Members | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A | 5 | See Section 5 for current measures/guidance  | Ongoing |
| Disposing of any PPE used in the treatment of injuries  | Members  | Increased risk of Covid-19 transmission | N/A  | 5 | PPE used to be disposed of as clinical waste  | Ongoing |