

# Updated Covid 19 Guidelines on Safe Return to Gaelic Games for Gaelic Games Coaching & Games Development Activity

April 2021

Following the recent announcement by the Irish Government to allow Gaelic Games players aged 18 years and under to return to Gaelic Games training in pods of 15 & non-contact activity from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021, please see below a copy of the updated Coaching & Games Development Activities Plan. This Plan reflects what activity is permitted to take place under Coaching & Games Development during Level 5 restrictions when underage training resumes on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

The Gaelic Games Covid Advisory Group has also issued updated Covid-19 Guidelines on Safe Return to Gaelic Games on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021 which should be read in conjunction with the Plan.

Some of the key points for implementation from the Gaelic Games Updated Covid-19 Guidelines on Safe Return to Gaelic Games are as follows:

## Advice for Clubs/Coaches/Players/Parents/Coaching & Games Development Staff Preparing for a Safe Return to Gaelic Games

### RETURN TO TRAINING

- As you are aware, non-contact training for underage teams in pods of 15 will be permitted from April 26<sup>th</sup> next in the 26 Counties. Specific information in relation to the Return to Gaelic Games for the Six Counties is included on page 7. "Underage teams" means any registered team at U-18 level or below.
- The key control measures remain completion of the [online education module](#) and completion of the [Health Questionnaire](#) before each session.  
Prior to each training session or game, and until further notice, players, parents/guardians and backroom personnel should complete the self-administered standard risk assessment health questionnaire through the Foireann Return to Play IT portal. Symptoms such as a high temperature, fever, cough, shortness of breath, and change in taste or smell will be identified.
- **The presence of symptoms, or temperature (over 37.5°C) precludes attendance at training or games.** In such circumstances, the individual should telephone their GP for advice and management. **DO NOT ATTEND THE GP SURGERY OR GAA FACILITIES.**
- It is also important to remember that all indoor facilities must remain closed at this time in all 32 counties.

### ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING

- In general, only players and coaches of the relevant team should attend any training session.
- One Parent or Guardian per child (or per family if more than one child is attending from a particular family) is permitted to attend in a safeguarding /supervisory capacity involving any team in the U-18 or below age group, should they consider it necessary.
- Strict social distancing and public health guidelines should be adhered to at all times. In particular, it is important that parents do not congregate in groups before or after sessions, outside of what is permitted in current Government regulations.
- Any person wishing to attend our underage training or games including coaches, parents, players and spectators shall be subject to the provisions of the Code of Behaviour (Underage).

## U20 / MINOR / ACADEMY SQUAD TRAINING

**GAA:** For clarity, Counties are asked to note that the current exemptions for underage club training and senior inter county teams **DO NOT** extend to U20, Minor or Academy squads; only players from a county's Senior Panel are currently covered by the player injury scheme. Return to Training dates for underage inter county panels are contingent on further relaxation of Government restrictions – the GAA will advise further once any new information is made available.

### LGFA: UNDERAGE INTERCOUNTY PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME TRAINING

For clarity, Counties are asked to note that the current exemptions for underage club training and adult inter county teams **DO NOT** extend to underage intercounty teams or player development programmes; only players from a county's Adult Panel are currently covered by the LGFA Injury Fund. Return to Training dates for underage inter county panels are contingent on further relaxation of Government restrictions – the LGFA will advise further once any new information is made available.

### Camogie Association: Minor/Academy Squad Training

For clarity, Counties are asked to note that the current exemptions for underage club training and adult/ senior inter county teams **DO NOT** extend to Minor or Academy squads; only players from a county's first and second (where relevant) panel are currently permitted to return to training, first and second 'adult' panel. This may include members who are under 18.

## PREPARATION OF FACILITIES

Dressing Rooms, Gyms and Social areas should remain closed until further notice.

### (a) Signage

Appropriate signage in line with public health guidelines should be placed at the entrance of club facilities, in car parks, at the entrances of toilets and pitch side. These signs should be clearly visible and easy to understand. Signs should emphasize the government recommended social distancing rules (2m at present), hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, avoidance of personal contact, shaking hands and spitting etc.

### (b) Hand gel dispensers

Hand dispensers should be provided in the car park, toilets, entrance to pitch and pitch side. Appropriate disposal bins for hazardous biological waste to be available and clearly marked.

### (c) Toilets

Toilets must be regarded as potentially contaminated areas. Ventilation is important, doors and windows should remain open in so far as is reasonable and appropriate. Basic hygiene etiquette adapted to the circumstances should be promoted: for example, use of elbows to open doors, and using paper towels to turn taps on and off. On exit of toilet, use hand sanitizer. There should be a regular cleaning programme with daily deep disinfection in place.

### (d) Pitch side

Signage regarding social distancing, personal contact, coughing, sneezing, spitting, hand sanitizing to be clearly visible. Only players and essential team personnel should gain access. Medical personnel (physios, doctors) should wear masks and other appropriate PPE. Facilities for disinfecting balls, slottars, hurleys, helmets, gloves etc to be available and to be used regularly.

### (e) Medical isolation room

In the unlikely event that a player becomes unwell during a training session, facilities will be in place for immediate isolation in a designated medical room (this could be a dressing room as they will not be in general use) containing the appropriate personal protective equipment. There will be a clearly defined protocol for linking up with the appropriate medical service - for example, local accident and emergency department (in the event of an injury), general practitioner or out of hours GP service.

## COVID SUPERVISORS FOR GAELIC GAMES

Each Club Secretary and Chairperson (or their nominees) must have completed the online module at some point in the last 12 months so that each Club understands both the Role and the purpose of Covid Supervisors.

Every team in the club must have someone nominated with responsibility for Covid Supervision present at each training session or game. These nominees must complete the online module which outlines their exact role. Covid Supervisors will be on duty and will be clearly identifiable (for example, standardized bib) at all times while facilities are open until further notice. [Click here to access the online education module.](#)

Broadly speaking the main duties of the Covid Supervisor will include:

- Ensuring players and backroom personnel complete the Health Questionnaire before each game and training session
- Ensuring sanitising of facilities is completed before and after each training session or game (e.g. Toilets, door handles, equipment etc.)
- Maintaining records of attendees (if players are completing the online Questionnaire, this will occur automatically on the system)

## EDUCATION

All players (parents or guardians in the case of underage players) should ensure they have completed the Gaelic Games online education module in the last 12 months. It can be viewed [here](#).

## THE HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

Prior to commencing training all players and personnel will be required to comply with the following requirements if they are going to attend training or games **until further notice**. Players and support staff will complete a standard risk assessment health questionnaire before their initial return to training. The online version of this can be accessed [here](#). In the case of underage players, the questionnaire should be completed (or signed) by a parent or guardian. The Questionnaire can be completed on-line preferably but can also be completed in hard copy, in which case it should be presented to the Covid Supervisor on entry to the facility.

If a player/member develops symptoms of COVID-19 (Coronavirus), the player should not attend a training session, skills practice session or game, and will need to self-isolate immediately and phone their GP for medical advice. The player should not attend the medical practice or surgery of their doctor, or pharmacy, healthcare clinic or hospital.

## TEMPERATURE CHECKING

It is the responsibility of the individual to monitor their own temperature. The presence of symptoms such as a high temperature (above 37.5c), cough, sore throat, general weakness, shortness of breath and change or absence in taste or smell prevents attendance at training with a recommendation that the player contacts their general practitioner.

## SANITISING OF FACILITIES

At the end of each training session, the Covid Supervisor should ensure all door handles, playing equipment (e.g. balls, hurleys, slottars etc.), the medical room and the Toilet(s) are sanitised before use by the next team or training group.

## ATTENDANCE RECORDS/DATA MANAGEMENT

The Covid Supervisor will ensure that the record of everybody attending each training session will be available in the event that contact tracing or other intervention is required. Data management will be consistent with GDPR guidelines.



## SCHEDULING OF ACTIVITIES

Timesheets should be used to clearly show what teams are using club facilities at what times. The principle of "get in, train and get out" will apply. There should be a time interval between teams departing having completed training and the next team arriving. Attendance will be limited to essential personnel. Compliance will be necessary to ensure efficiency and harmony.

All facilities should have appropriate dispersion measures in place at all entrances and exits and parents/guardians should be advised that there should be no congregation on or outside club grounds.

## PROTOCOL FOR PARTICIPATION

Players and team personnel should be provided with this document and have completed the Gaelic Games online education module within the last 12 months prior to participation. Participants are also required to change at home, travel separately (except family members), shower at home and where possible use toilet facilities at home. Strapping should be applied at home where possible. All players should use their own individual and clearly labelled water bottles.

## ADHERE TO BEST HYGIENE PRACTICE

- Frequent hand washing, sanitising, and regular cleaning and washing of gear and equipment.
- Avoid the following: spitting, sharing water bottles, touching high contact surfaces (e.g. door handles).
- Use of Face masks where applicable.



Observe Government advised social distance guidelines (currently 2m) until further notice.

## AVOID OR REDUCE BODY CONTACT TO A MINIMUM

- Shaking hands, clapping hands, 'high fives' and embracing should be completely avoided.
- Until measures are reduced, physical contact should be reduced where possible on field. Off field, players should observe government social distancing guidelines at all times.

## ENSURE SESSIONS TAKE PLACE OUTDOORS

- All Players and Teams must conduct their training sessions outdoors; dressing rooms, showers, clubhouses and other club buildings should remain closed until further notice.
- Toilets will be available on a controlled basis.

## TRAVEL TO AND FROM TRAINING

Follow Government social distancing advice in relation to all forms of transport to training and play.

- If possible, walk or cycle to the venue.
- If travelling by private vehicle, such as a car, only travel with members of the same household.
- Avoid the use of public transport where possible (if it is the only option, follow Government guidelines)

## REFRAIN FROM EVENTS SUCH AS TEAM MEETINGS

Eliminate all non-essential gatherings and put robust control measures in place for essential interaction.

- Team meetings can only be held outdoors or in spaces that allow for compliance with Government social distancing guidelines (currently 2 metres)
- All other meetings should be held online

## AVOID CONGREGATING BEFORE OR AFTER SESSIONS

All facilities should have appropriate dispersion measures in place at all entrances and exits and parents/guardians should be advised that there should be no congregation on or outside club grounds.

If you have any questions, ask for clarification from a Covid Supervisor.

## RESPONSIBILITY

It is essential that everyone in the club works together to ensure compliance with these guidelines.

- Each 'Club Executive' will be responsible for ensuring that a Covid Supervisor is assigned to each team, and will ensure the full cooperation of participating officials, coaches, mentors, players, medical and sports science and allied support personnel and parents.
- Each Covid Supervisor will be responsible for ensuring COVID-19 protocols, including completion of health questionnaires, and cleaning and sanitising of facilities are followed.
- Each Team Manager will be responsible for overseeing player and support personnel compliance.
- Each Mentor and Player shall ensure compliance with COVID-19 guidelines within their own area and for the health and safety of their colleagues.
- Parents/Guardians will be responsible for dropping underage players to, and collecting underage players from, training sessions or games until further notice and should avoid congregating.

## ENSURE SESSIONS TAKE PLACE OUTDOORS

- All Players and Teams must conduct their training sessions outdoors; dressing rooms, showers, clubhouses and other club buildings should remain closed until further notice.
- Toilets will be available on a controlled basis.

## WHERE CAN I GET ADDITIONAL COVID-19 CLUB INFORMATION?

For further Covid-19 Club Education related information, online training and resources please log on to <https://training.gaa.ie/covid19>.



## WHAT COACHING & GAMES DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY IS PERMITTED TO TAKE PLACE UNDER CURRENT GUIDELINES:

- Non-contact training in Pods of 15 for juvenile club teams in the 26 counties.
- Full squad training for youth & adult teams in the 6 counties. Please see page 7 for further details on return to squad training and competitive games in the Six Counties.
- Coach, Referee and Safeguarding Training courses are not permitted to take place either indoors or outdoors, but can still continue to be delivered online where applicable.

Please note the following Child Safeguarding Ratio's apply:

- SUPERVISION RATIOS: Playing and training activities must abide by a minimum ratio of 2 adults to 10 children, (2:10).
- This ratio requires at least one qualified coach and at least one other responsible adult to be present at all times
- Groups of 10-20 children must have a minimum of 3 adults present at all times

## GAELIC GAMES ACTIVITY IDEAS AND RESOURCES

- [The GAA Activity Planner](#) - Contains a section on social distancing friendly activities that can be delivered to players and teams. [Log on](#) for activities and coaching ideas.
- [Moving Well Being Well](#) - A large-scale project assessing fundamental movement skills (FMS) of young people participating in Hurling and Gaelic football. [Log on](#) for activities and coaching ideas.
- [Be Ready to Play](#) - The programme, in partnership with UPMC, and rolled out jointly across the GAA, LGFA and Camogie Association, is a holistic coaching and performance plan that will be of great benefit to all club coaches and players, male, female, adult, and youth alike. It will help them return to training post Covid in a way that will hopefully increase enjoyment, performance, and participation, while simultaneously reducing the risk of injury. The programme will initially be tailored to help people to be active in lockdown, then progress towards a development phase and a prepare to play phase before culminating in a prepare to perform phase which will help players be at their peak for important matches. [Log on](#) to register and access webinars.
- [Returning to Schools Coaching Programme & Support](#) - The Coaching Programme & Support document outlines a number of resources that can help Teachers in the planning and delivery of physical activity opportunities and the wider curriculum in the months ahead. [Log on](#) for access to the Returning to Schools Coaching Programme & Support resources.
- [Camogie Association](#) - For additional camogie-related Covid-19 club information and socially distanced training activities for camogie coaches, visit [camogie.ie](http://camogie.ie).



## Ulster GAA Updated Return to Gaelic Games Guidelines

### RETURN TO SQUAD TRAINING AND COMPETITIVE GAMES IN SIX COUNTIES Covid-19 Guidance from Ulster GAA

The NI Executive at their meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021 confirmed that squad training and competitive outdoor sport could return on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021.

This followed the first phase where 15 people (including coaches), could resume in the 'Six Counties' on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

As a result of the announcement Ulster GAA, following consultation with the GAA Covid Advisory Group and the Department for Communities/Sport NI, is providing the following guidance to our clubs in the 'Six Counties;'

1. From **23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021**, full squad training can resume for youth and adult teams in preparation for a return to the playing of our games.
2. From **1<sup>st</sup> May 2021**, challenge matches are permitted subject to County Committee and Provincial Councils being informed in advance through the proper channels. Such challenge games must be played in the 'Six Counties' and can only involve teams from the 'Six Counties.'
3. From **7<sup>th</sup> May 2021**, competitive games under the control of County Committees can re-commence for youth and adult teams.

The following regulations apply in relation to the playing of games in the 'Six Counties':

- a. The maximum number of personnel involved at games must not exceed 100 persons which includes players, team managers, officials, support personnel, medical etc under any circumstances.
- b. The attendance of spectators is strictly forbidden including parents at youth games. A parent transporting a child to a match/training who wishes to remain on-site must remain in their car during the activity.