



CULLERCOATS FOOTBALL CLUB

Covid19 Operational Policy Return to Football Training (U7 to U18 Players)

PHASE 1

Gary Stephenson (Chairperson) / 4 June 2020

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1. BACKGROUND

Following the categorisation of the Covid19 outbreak as a public health pandemic, Cullercoats Football Club Management Team took the decision to close down the Links Avenue site and cease all training and games with effect from Saturday 14 March 2020. The site was subsequently placed on lockdown, with all equipped being placed in storage.

During the week commencing Monday 18 May 2020, Government restrictions were relaxed to allow two people from different households to meet outdoors. This enabled Club staff and coaches to commence maintenance work at Links Avenue, with a view to clearing and updating the site and buildings.

A further relaxation of Government restrictions on Monday 1 June 2020, has enabled the FA to issue guidance regarding grassroots football and informal football activity outside the professional game. The guidance includes the following:

- Playing football individually e.g. practice of individual skills, or fitness activities;
- Playing football with your family, or other people living in your household;
- Football training, or fitness activities in groups of no more than six, keeping two metres apart at all times. Sharing of equipment should be kept to a minimum and strong hand hygiene practices should be in place before and after. Physical contact with anyone outside of your household is **not** permitted, therefore, playing of any games (small-sided, or full) is also **not** permitted at this time. Avoid meeting in groups of six in busy, or overcrowded areas, if it is so busy that it is not possible to maintain social distancing at all times;
- Football coaches can now undertake small group sessions with up to six people (including the coach), but are reminded to follow The FA safeguarding policy when coaching/working with children. This must include risk assessing the activities, gaining consent from parents/carers and ensuring you are in sight of another adult, e.g. parent/carer, or another coach, and that the ratio of coach to different age-groups of children is appropriate. For clarity, the additional parent/carer, or coach is not included as part of the group of six, but must remain in sight of the activity.
- It is permissible for coaches to organise a training session that has two, or more groups of six (including the coach) involved as long as the groups of six are kept separate, everyone is socially distancing, and strict hygiene measures are in place with any equipment.

Training will resume in a two phase process;

Phase 1 - Individual and small group training, observing social distancing at all times, with no more than five players per (half) pitch. Only essential non-playing staff to be on site during this time.

Phase 2 – Full team training and maintaining social distancing where possible. Where the nature of the training makes it impossible to maintain social distancing, players and staff should reposition themselves to a minimum of two metres as soon as the training practice, or drill allows.

This policy relates to Phase 1 of the ‘return to football training’ and must be reviewed prior to the implementation of Phase 2.

The aims and objectives of this policy are:

- To minimise the risk of the transmission of the virus to the players and coach(es)
- To minimise the risk of the transmission of the virus to non-playing staff required at Links Avenue
- To maintain the readiness and fitness of the players in preparation for full pre-season training for new season 2020-2021 (games programme will commence from 12 September 2020 – subject to confirmation)

2. TRAINING ARRIVAL AND PREPARATION

- Travel to training:

Players, coaches and staff must travel to and from training in their own vehicle. There will be no sharing, save people from the same household. Public transport should be avoided unless absolutely necessary.

- Links Avenue Environment:

Links Avenue has been maintained in recent weeks, in readiness for the return to training for grassroots football. Playing areas have been prepared and the buildings have been subject of deep clean and lockdown. All equipment has been stored securely and untouched throughout the lockdown period. Footballs, cones and poles will be sanitised prior to each training session. Coaches will use their own allocated footballs and cones.

- Parking:

Parking is permitted on site (access via Whittingham Road) and behind the changing room / compound (Whittingham Avenue). Parking is not permitted on Links Avenue, or The Broadway (to west of changing room)

- Medical Provision:

There will be First Aid trained staff present at all training sessions at Links Avenue. In the event that first aid treatment is required, staff will wear PPE (gloves, mask, visor) and dispose of same after single use. Visors (only) can be sanitised and re-used.

PLEASE NOTE THAT FIRST AID WILL BE ADMINISTERED ONLY IN URGENT CASES – MINOR INJURIES AND AILMENTS WILL BE ADDRESSED BY PARENTS WHEREVER POSSIBLE TO PREVENT UNNECESSARY PHYSICAL CONTACT BETWEEN STAFF/COACHES AND PLAYERS.

In the event that physiotherapy treatment is available on site and required, the physiotherapist will also wear PPE (gloves, mask and visor) and dispose of same as outlined above.

AS PER FIRST AID – PHYSIOTHERAPY WILL BE RESTRICTED TO URGENT SITUATIONS ONLY, IN TERMS OF PAIN RELIEF, SAVE SENIOR SECTION PLAYERS, WHERE APPOINTMENTS MAY BE INTRODUCED (SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY OF THE SERVICE).

- Communal Areas

The communal areas within the buildings at Links Avenue will remain closed during training sessions, save the male and female toilets within the changing room. Every person using the toilets is responsible for sanitising them after use. Relevant sanitising material will be provided. Club staff will sanitise the toilets at the end of each training session.

The canteen will be utilised for registration purposes. However, when staff are available, drinks and snacks will be sold from the window (no entry allowed). All sales will involve use of disposable items, e.g. cups, spoons, sugar and milk sachets, bottles and cans.

3. TRAINING PROCEDURE AND PROGRESSION

- Clothing and drinks:

Players, coaches and Club staff will arrive dressed ready for training and will carry their own drinks.

- Training Format:

Sessions will be carried out in small groups of five players and one coach, using a quarter pitch area. The quarters will be marked out, numbered and allocated by staff by way of a site plan and schedule - **see Appendix 'A'**. They will last for a maximum of 75 mins. There will be no contact at any time and players and coaches will maintain social distancing of two metres throughout the session.

Coaches will use gloves to set up the training session, in terms of handling equipment, which includes cones, footballs and goals. Club staff will be present to assist with this. Gloves will be disposed after single use.

Goals will be allocated to training sessions by staff when it is deemed safe to do so.

- Training Sessions:

Coaches will prepare appropriate sessions to ensure that social distancing is maintained at all times. Session plans and video clips will be made available to coaching staff by way of the Club WhatsApp group.

4. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

As previously stated, PPE will be provided for use by coaches and Club staff.

5. LINKS AVENUE HYGIENE

It is essential that hygiene standards are maintained at all times by players, coaches and Club staff. This includes sanitising hands upon arrival and exit from Links Avenue for all training sessions. Where people use the toilet facilities, they must sanitise the toilet seat and handle AND then sanitise their hands after every visit.

As previously stated above, all equipment must be sanitised prior to AND after use by coaches / Club staff.

6. FAMILIARISATION OF PLAYERS, COACHES AND STAFF

All senior section players, coaches and Club staff have given written consent to take part in training session, which commenced in June 2020. The same process will apply to younger players. Those under 16 years of age will require written consent from a parent, carer, or responsible adult. They must report to the canteen entrance at Links Avenue (15 mins before the session start time) and sign the Club consent form / register. The area will be clearly marked and set out to maintain social distancing

Initial training sessions for the senior section commenced from Saturday 6 June 2020.

Coaches briefing sessions for the U7 to U18 groups will be held during the week commencing Monday 6 July 2020.

Training sessions will commence from Saturday 11 July 2020.

The Club 'Return to Training' plan has been subject of a comprehensive risk assessment – **see Appendix 'B'**.

The Club will revise this policy for Phase 2, as and when the Government restrictions are relaxed to allow full team training. The date for this is not yet known.