

## COVID-19 Protocols for Northern Ireland clubs

Thanks to our clubs' diligence and adherence to COVID-19 protocols, along with the high uptake of COVID-19 vaccines throughout the country we can now look forward to a return to full training and competition soon. Clubs should continue to maintain a high level of vigilance and caution by encouraging club members to continue practising good hygiene and avoid attending training if they feel unwell.

Club committees, coaches, teachers, and COVID-19 officers should review this document and supporting information and contact their club support officer with any questions they may have.

The following protocols will come into effect from **20<sup>th</sup> September**. Click on the text below to skip directly to a section:

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## 1. General Overview

- Where car-pooling or public transport is being used individuals should take protective measures such as wearing face coverings.
- A register of attendance is required for every session for contact tracing and safeguarding purposes. The coach on duty should also have access to emergency contact details for all participants
- Clubs must have a COVID-19 Officer on duty at every training session. Clubs with under 18's must have a person on duty. One person may fulfil both of these roles if they meet the COVID-19 Officer requirements. In adult only clubs/ sessions the coach or a nominated athlete may act as the COVID-19 officer as part of their normal duties/ activities if they meet the COVID-19 Officer requirements.
- Social distancing requirements have been reduced from 2 metres to 1 metre for indoor training and events.

## 2. Declaration form and proof of immunity

- All club members attending training sessions, including athletes, coaches, COVID-19 officer, persons of duty etc. are required to complete and return the updated declaration form to their club by Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September, to enable clubs to best plan their ongoing training programme. **This is a once off form that will remove the requirement for daily self-report screening forms.**
- Declaration forms can be administered in paper or online format (online recommended).
- Club members from NI (over 18's only) attending training or events in ROI will be required to provide proof of immunity.
- COVID-19 immunity is defined on [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) as fully vaccinated or recovered from COVID-19 within previous 6 months.
- Your [COVID-19 certificate](#) is acceptable as proof of immunity. Facilities and clubs may also ask for Photo ID for verification purposes.
- Clubs should engage with their facility in advance to understand their procedures and advise members of any changes.

## 3. Club Activity (Swimming)

- The following protocols are effective from 20<sup>th</sup> September.
- Clubs should engage with their facility in advance to understand and agree procedures for the club. Members should be advised of any changes.
- Social distancing (at least 1 metre) should be maintained when swimmers are not engaged in activity, i.e., while on poolside, changing rooms etc.
- Social distancing is not required whilst in the swimming pool. Clubs should conduct a risk assessment to decide how many swimmers are suitable to be in each lane. This may vary between squad and sessions depending on:
  - Age of athletes
  - Ability of athletes
  - No. of coaches on deck
  - Type of session
  - Length of pool
  - Width of lanes

- Clubs and coaches should communicate any change to the current set up with their swimmers in advance.
- Personal training equipment should not be shared with others and should be clearly labelled.
- Shared equipment such as diving blocks should be cleaned between swimmers using them (chlorinated water will suffice).

#### 4. Club Activity (Water Polo)

- The following protocols are effective from 20<sup>th</sup> September.
- Clubs should engage with their facility in advance to understand and agree procedures for the club. Members should be advised of any changes.
- Social distancing (at least 1 metre) should be maintained when swimmers are not engaged in activity, i.e., while on poolside, changing rooms etc.
- Contact training and match play is permitted.
- All players over 18 from **Northern Ireland**, playing a match in the Republic of Ireland must provide proof of immunity to the facility.

#### 5. Club Activity (Diving)

- The following protocols are effective from 20<sup>th</sup> September.
- Clubs should engage with their facility in advance to understand and agree procedures for the club. Members should be advised of any changes.
- Social distancing (at least 1 metre) should be maintained when swimmers are not engaged in activity, i.e., while on poolside, changing rooms etc.
- Shared equipment such as diving platforms should be cleaned between divers using them (chlorinated water will suffice).

#### 6. Club Activity (Open Water Swimming)

- The following protocols are effective from 20<sup>th</sup> September onwards.
- Restrictions on outdoor group activities for participants will be removed.
- Swimmers should continue to exercise caution both in relation to COVID-19 and open water swimming when engaging in open water swimming.

#### 7. Swimming Lessons

- Swimming lesson providers can revert to pre-COVID-19 procedures, based on a 3-metre squared per swimmer bather load calculation and must risk assess accordingly.
- All lesson capacities must be based on a facility specific risk assessment.
- Swimming teachers may now work in closer proximity with swimmers but should continue to take protective measures.
- It is recommended that any lessons returning for the first-time following closures should have a water safety focus for the first few weeks. Lessons should focus specifically on core aquatic skills rather than stroke specific.

- Facilities are advised to continue staggered start times to ensure customers can move easily around the facilities whilst socially distanced.
- Lesson providers should continue to have a COVID-19 Officer on duty at all times. This individual can now also be responsible for teaching a class.

## 8. Facility Guidance

### General

- Most risk in facility/pool setting is linked to time spent out of the pool (arrival, registration, changing, showering, exiting etc.) compared to time spent in the pool. Clubs and individuals should minimise their time out of the pool, limit interactions, remove potential for congestion etc.
- Where possible, a one-way system should be implemented for transit through the facility (facility dependent)
- Access to changing rooms is permitted, with protective measures in place, such as wearing face coverings and maintaining social distancing (facility dependent)
- Spectator numbers are determined by a risk assessment carried out by each facility. Clubs should engage with their facility to understand their specific requirements.

### Entry and exit

- Clubs should formulate a staggered entry and exit system with their participants.
- Sufficient buffer time should be planned between different participants entering & exiting facility.
- Adhere to social distancing requirements (at least 1 metre) on entry and exit.
- Avoid loitering or congregating at facility entrance.
- On entry & exit, individuals should use the hand sanitizer provided.

### Changing Rooms and Showers

- Where possible participants should arrive ready to train, with swimwear on underneath clothes.
- Transit through changing rooms should be staggered and social distancing should be adhered to.
- COVID-19 officer should ensure shower protocols are fully communicated to all members where facility is allowing the use of showers
- Clubs should engage with their facilities to agree a well-managed, appropriate, and safe use of changing rooms.

## 9. Face Coverings

- COVID-19 is mainly spread through close contact and droplets that come from your nose and mouth. For example, when you cough, sneeze, or talk loudly. Wearing a face covering reduces the spread of these droplets and aerosols. It also helps stop the spread of the virus from people who may not know they have it.

- Face coverings are not recommended for children under the age of 13, but some children may choose to wear one.
- Any individual (13 years +) entering a facility should wear a face covering until they are ready to commence training. Some facilities may require all individuals to wear face coverings. Contact your facility in advance to ensure you understand their requirements.
- All persons on deck to wear face coverings until all participants have entered the water.
- Participants should wear a face covering if leaving the pool to use the toilet etc.
- It is recommended that participants bring a small zip lock or clip seal bag with their name printed on to store their face covering whilst in the pool.