



NORTH CAROLINA FC YOUTH RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOLS



INTRODUCTION

Our highest priority remains providing soccer opportunities in a safe environment. The policies below are developed by our COVID-19 Task Force made up of professionals in the soccer, medical, and education communities and in conjunction with support and input from various government agencies, healthcare providers, and governing bodies for soccer.

The policies below give parents, coaches, and players an idea of what to expect at the fields as well as the increased responsibilities we all will need to undertake to ensure all our participants can continue to play and develop safely. And, while we are confident that the steps below are in line with all directives we've received, parents should feel comfortable making the best decision for their player as it relates to participating in soccer at this time.

As we adapt and progress through North Carolina's phased re-opening approach, we expect to provide additional updates to these policies. The policies are subject to change to accommodate additional directives from the State of North Carolina, the NC Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and soccer's state and national governing bodies.

We look forward to seeing you on the field!

COMMONLY USED RESOURCES

[COVID-19 Incident Report Form](#)

[COVID-19 Medical Exemption Form](#)

Wake County is now conducting drive-thru and indoor COVID-19 testing at specific locations throughout the county. This free service provides an easy and efficient way for residents to learn if they have the virus. To guarantee you can be tested at your desired location, please check the Wake County COVID-19 Testing Website: <https://covid19.wakegov.com/testing/>

- Swinburne Parking Lot Drive Thru Testing: 2845 Kidd Road, Raleigh, NC 27610
- Departure Drive Building Drive-Thru Testing: 5809 Departure Drive Raleigh, NC 27616
- Radeas Labs Drive-Thru Testing: 907 Gateway Commons Circle Wake Forest, NC 27587



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SOCCER FACILITY POLICIES

- Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected daily. Commonly touched surfaces will be routinely cleaned throughout training sessions. Sanitizing Stations will be present at fields and common areas. In order to maintain social distancing policies, some urinals and sinks will be closed.
- Any activities that require a line, such as a check-in or medical service queue will have designated markings 6 feet apart to allow individuals to maintain social distancing guidelines while waiting in line.
- Academy Locker Rooms, Team Room, and Clubhouse Rooms remain closed to players, coaches, and the public while Return to Play Policies are active.
- Wake Ortho is permitted to conduct physical therapy sessions by appointment only, and the space is limited to Wake Ortho staff, individuals receiving treatment, and one guardian per individual.
- WRAL Medical Room access is restricted to NCFC medical staff, 4 individuals receiving care and one guardian per individual. All individuals in the Medical Room are required to wear masks at all times.
- In the case of inclement weather including a lightning strike in the near vicinity of the complex, all players at all complexes should return to their vehicles. In the case a player is without a vehicle at WRAL, we would enable that individual to wait in our Upstairs Clubhouse or Fitness Center while abiding by all social distancing practices.
- All sites will have signage posted throughout the facility to ensure participants/parents/coaches are aware of current NCFC Return to Play policies.

FIELD OF PLAY POLICIES

- All fields with defined access points will be marked with designated entrances and exits to ensure one-way traffic where possible.
- Players may assist Coaches in moving goals on turf fields, cones, and other coaching equipment provided they sanitize their hands prior to and after moving the goal, and they remain 6 feet apart while moving the move any equipment.
- NCFC will not provide water at any of our sites, as players will be expected to provide their own water for training and games.



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COACHES/SUPPORT STAFF POLICIES

- All Coaches and Staff will complete a Symptom Screening Questionnaire prior to each training night and/or game.
- Coaches and Staff must immediately report any symptoms through our COVID-19 Incident Form in addition to their direct supervisor or program director.
- Coaches exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19 are not permitted to execute training sessions or coach games until they meet all Returning to Coach/Play criteria.
- Coaches who consider themselves to be in the at-risk population or have concerns regarding returning to the fields should contact their supervisor.
- All coaches and staff at soccer facilities are required to wear masks while on NCFC soccer facility properties, regardless of social distancing. Masks are to be washed prior to coaching each day.
- One designated staff member will be present at each training site each day to enforce team training policies and will have the authority to shut down operations of an individual team or site if policies are not being followed.
- Coaches should ensure that players are actively social distancing when conducting non-soccer related activities and placing gear at least 6 feet apart.
- Any coach who wishes to use their soccer balls during training must ensure all soccer balls are sanitized prior to each session.
- Pinnies may be used by coaches provided all pinnies are washed prior to the session and each pinnie is used by only one individual. Players are instructed to bring their game jerseys in order to provide color options without the use of pinnies.
- Prior to the start of each session, coaches must complete the Symptom Screening Questionnaire for each player within the session. Any player answering YES to any of the screening questions should immediately be sent home and instructed to have their parent complete the COVID-19 Incident Form.
- Coaches must track attendance for each session through Playmetrics.
- Equipment should be sanitized thoroughly at the end of each game.
- To minimize the amount of contact, player cards are to be held by the coach or team manager during team check in. For substitutions, players will be asked to show their card to the referee and place it on the ground several feet from the sideline to be collected by the coach.



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PLAYER POLICIES

- Players aged 5 and older who do not have medical exceptions are required to wear masks while engaged in any activity where a player may be within 6 feet of an individual outside their household. This includes walking to/from the fields, while warming up, and during all soccer activities including training and games. This is done in accordance with NCDHHS' Interim Guidance for Youth and Amateur Sports Programs.
- Players who have medical exemptions from wearing masks while playing can apply for Medical Exceptions through the Medical Exemption form located in Playmetrics.
- Players must bring their own ball, game jerseys, hand sanitizer, and water to trainings and games and store their belongings 6 feet apart from other players' belongings.
- It is recommended that players sanitize their soccer ball prior to each training session.
- Players should remain in their vehicle until the field has cleared from the previous session.
- Players may assist in moving goals on turf fields, cones, and other coaching equipment provided they sanitize their hands prior to and after moving the goal, and they remain 6 feet apart while moving the move any equipment.
- Players are to enter the field through a designated entry point. If there is only one entrance/exit to the field, players should wait until the previous session has cleared the field prior to entering. Maps of each complex will be provided via email and www.ncfcyouth.com.
- Should players be experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, they will not be permitted to train in accordance with our COVID-19 Incident Management Protocols.
- Prior to the start of each session, coaches must complete the Symptom Screening Questionnaire for each player within the session. Any player answering YES to any of the screening questions should immediately be sent home and instructed to have their parent complete the COVID-19 Incident Form.
- Players should arrive at the complex no earlier than 30 minutes prior to their game time and allow individuals from the previous game to vacate the field prior to entering.
- Players must refrain from handshakes, fist bumps, and contact within goal celebrations at any time during training sessions and games.
- Following the completion of a match, all teams are expected to complete post game conversations and vacate the technical areas within five minutes of the conclusion of the game to allow for the next group to enter the field.



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- No team or group photos are allowed on NCFC Youth facilities outside designated photography spaces. As staged group photos are not considered a soccer activity, all individuals must maintain social distancing for the duration of the activity.

PARENT/SPECTATOR POLICIES

- Parents are to monitor their children for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to attending each soccer event, including checking temperatures on the day of training sessions and games. Players who exhibit COVID-19 Symptoms should not be allowed to participate in any NCFC activities.
- Parents are required to notify NCFC of any symptomatic players using our COVID-19 Incident Report Form in order to allow NCFC Youth to properly manage groups and players that may have been at risk for spreading the virus.
- Parents are expected to either remain in their vehicle or take advantage of walking trails available at each site for the duration of training sessions.
- Parents may not congregate around or immediately outside the field of play during training sessions. During games, 2 spectators per child are permitted inside the marked spectator area.
- It is expected that Parents wear masks while within 6 feet of anyone outside their household or remain spaced more than 6 feet apart from other households. Parents are required to wear face coverings while any areas where social distancing is not possible in accordance with North Carolina Phase 3 Executive Orders.
- When travelling to away games and events, Parents are expected to uphold all NCFC protocols in addition to the policies adopted by the host club.



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REFEREE AND STAFF POLICIES

- Referees are required to wear masks upon arrival to fields, while setting up for game play, during play, and at the end of the game.
- All referees must perform a temperature check and conduct a health screening prior to attending any NCFC Youth hosted games or events.
- Referees are asked to maintain social distancing guidelines during match play and while conversing with other coaches and staff.
- To minimize the amount of contact, referees will be asked to not hold player cards. Player cards are to be held by the coach during team check in. For substitutions, referees will track substitutions without holding player passes.

TRAINING SESSION POLICIES

- A maximum of 4 11v11 teams, 5 9v9 teams, and 6 7v7 teams are permitted to train on a full-sized field at one time.
- Teams are permitted to organize scrimmage activities between NCFC teams inside training sessions. In order to do so, a game must be added within Playmetrics to denote the mixing of groups.
- Sessions can be designed for full contact within the training environment. Players should remain 6 feet apart when not engaged in soccer training activities. Team huddles, handshakes, high-fives, and other non-essential forms of contact are prohibited during training sessions.
- Goalkeeper Training sessions may take place provided all soccer balls used within the session are provided by the club and sanitized prior to the session.
- Players will use their game jerseys as differentiating colors during training sessions. Coaches may elect to use pinnies instead provided all pinnies are washed prior to the session, and each pinnie is assigned to one player.



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GENERAL HEALTH GUIDELINES

- Take the following everyday steps to help avoid the spread of all respiratory viruses:
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, throw the tissue away, and then wash your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects or surfaces such as remote controls and doorknobs. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if you are sick. Call your doctor if you develop fever, cough, or difficulty breathing.



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COVID-19 INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

- The COVID-19 Incident Form is provided for NCFC staff, coaches and families to report any COVID-19 symptoms or positive tests. All individuals reported through the form are immediately considered to be in our Incident Management system and may not participate in soccer activities until clearing NCFC Youth's Return to Play Protocols.
- To comply with HIPAA regulations, personal information on the form will be confidential and allow NCFC Youth to quickly inform potentially connected individuals of possible contact within an NCFC session.
- Within 24 hours of receiving a submission, our Medical Staff will alert the applicable Age Group Director, Group Training Coach, League/Event Organizers, Team Representatives the group competed against, and any players who are reasonably believed to have encountered the individual within the last 7 days.
- Players who develop symptoms are required to isolate until meeting all Return to Play Parameters below. It is recommended that any players experiencing symptoms get tested for COVID as soon as possible.
- Players who have had Direct Exposure, which as defined by the CDC as being within 6 feet, with one individual unmasked, for 15 minutes with a COVID-19 positive individual, are expected to refrain from training until clearing NCFC's Return to Play Parameters.
- Given concerns for cardiac and renal complications after COVID infection, it is recommended that all COVID positive players are seen and evaluated by their pediatrician, including cardiac testing, prior to return to play.
- As information continues to evolve regarding the transmission of COVID-19, NCFC Youth's Medical Staff reserves the right to provide additional recommendations to families or terminate team training sessions if needed.



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RETURN TO COACH/PLAY PARAMETERS

- All individuals who have had Direct Exposure should wait until 5 days following the last date of exposure to get tested, unless symptoms are experienced prior.
- Individuals are entered into our Return to Play Protocols if they meet one of the three criteria:
 - The individual has had Direct Exposure to a COVID Positive individual
 - The individual has developed symptoms attributed to COVID-19
 - The individual has tested positive for COVID-19
- A coach/player has had **Direct Exposure** to a COVID Positive individual may return to play if:
 - The individual has tested negative (with test performed on/after 5 days post exposure) and 7 days have passed since the last known date of Direct Exposure - OR -
 - The individual has not experienced symptoms since being exposed and 10 days have passed since the last known date of Direct Exposure.
 - If the individual develops symptoms or has a positive test during this time, the individual's Return to Play status will follow the Positive Test or Symptom pathway as applicable.
- A coach/player that has **Experienced Symptoms** of COVID-19 may return to play if:
 - The individual has tested negative for COVID-19, and has experienced improvement of symptoms, including no fever for the last 24 hours -OR-
 - The individual has experienced improvement of symptoms and 10 days have passed since the symptoms began.
 - If the individual later tests positive during this time, the individual's Return to Play status will follow the Positive Test pathway.
- A coach/player that has **Tested Positive** for COVID-19 may return to play if:
 - The individual has experienced improvement of symptoms, including no fever for the last 24 hours, and 10 days have passed since the date of the Positive Test. It is recommended that all players with a Positive COVID test be evaluated by their Pediatrician for cardiac evaluation prior to returning to play.



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- The coach/player can return to activity without meeting the above criteria and without a negative COVID-19 test result IF they have a doctor's note allowing them to return to soccer activities. Doctors notes must be submitted to Jason Bailey at ATC@NCFCYouth.com.

SYMPTOM SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Have you had close contact (within 6 feet for at least 10 minutes) in the last 14 days with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, or has any health department or health care provider been in contact with you and advised you to quarantine?
 - Yes
 - The player/coach should not participate. The individual can return 14 days after the last time they had close contact with someone with COVID-19, or as listed below.
 - No
 - The player/coach can participate if they are not experiencing symptoms.
2. Since you last played, have you had any of these symptoms?
 - Fever or Chills
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - New cough
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Congestion or Runny Nose
 - Headache
 - Muscle Pain
 - Sore Throat
 - Fatigue
 - Nausea or Vomiting
 - Diarrhea

If a player has any of these symptoms, they should go home, stay away from other people, and have a guardian call their health care provider.

3. Since you last played, have you been diagnosed with COVID-19?
 - Yes
 - No



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If a player/coach is diagnosed with COVID-19 based on a test or their symptoms or does not get a COVID-19 test but has had symptoms, they should not play and stay at home.