



MALTA FA **Return to Play** **Protocol**

AMATEUR & GRASSROOTS

Measures and guidelines

SEPTEMBER 2020

In Competition

National Amateur League, Women's Football Competitions and Festivals, Youth and Grassroots Competitions and Festivals 2020-21 (including Youth FA Competitions and Festivals)

Disciplinary matters for Competitions and Festivals organised by the Malta Football Association

Malta FA COVID officer shall signify such person nominated by the General Secretary of the Malta Football Association to occupy such position.

Club COVID officer shall signify such person nominated by the Football Club to occupy such position.

COVID Testing shall signify any public health recognised and approved for the detection or otherwise of COVID-19.

1. A registered player or club staff member is to inform the Malta FA COVID officer of any COVID testing undertaken by not later than 24 hours. They should inform the COVID officer by not later than three (3) hours following the issuance of the official result.
2. The registered member shall adhere to all instructions issued by the Health Department and the Malta FA COVID officer, without reservations and to the fullest extent possible.



- 3.** Every club shall ensure that all players and staff members who have undertaken COVID-19 testing inform the Malta FA COVID officer within 24 hours from such testing.
- 4.** Every player and club staff member who test positive for COVID-19, shall self-isolate and not participate in any football activity, up until such person is given clearance by the Public Health Authorities to end the self-isolation period.
- 5.** Every club shall ensure that players or staff members deemed positive to COVID-19, shall self-isolate and not participate in any football activity, up until such member is given clearance by the Public Health Authorities to end the self-isolation period.
- 6.** Any player or club staff member who has been found guilty of an offence against these regulations by the Disciplinary commissioner, shall be suspended from football activity for two (2) months.
- 7.** Any club that has been found guilty of an offence against these regulations by the Control and Disciplinary committee, shall have a deduction of three (3) points in the national league with immediate effect.

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Key points for all clubs

1

Clubs must appoint a COVID-19 Officer.



2

Clubs are to ensure that the maximum number of attendees is not exceeded.



3

Hand sanitising facilities to be made available for participants in advance of match.



4

For clubs with U18 teams, advise parents that at present, the Malta FA guidance does not allow for spectators at match and therefore they should not gather on the sidelines or in the vicinity of the pitch.





5

All equipment including balls, cones, goal posts and corner flags to be sanitised before and after use.



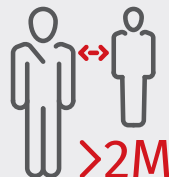
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Changing facilities must remain closed but access to toilet facilities should be provided with door handles and toilet flush mechanisms to be regularly sanitised.



7

Social distancing guidance should be adhered to when not on the field of play. Substitute area is to be arranged to allow for social distancing. Where this cannot be accommodated in the technical areas, other arrangements should be made – e.g. use of stands, seats spread out along the side line.



8

Use of showers/ice baths is not permitted.



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Guidance for Coaches and Players

ALL MATCHES TO BE PLAYED WITHOUT SPECTATORS

- Coaches should be familiar with all safety and hygiene arrangements and communicate them to players, other coaches and parents/guardians.
- Coaches should not return to football individually; check with the Club COVID-19 Officer and ensure the club wishes to re-start coaching and all preparations are in place.
- Coaches should remind anyone attending the match venue that if they are showing symptoms of COVID-19 infection or have been in contact with someone displaying symptoms or diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last two weeks, to not attend and seek medical advice.
- Before each match, the coach should ask all participants if they have displayed any of the attached symptoms (<https://covid19malta.info/>)





BEFORE MATCHES

- If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are displaying any of the symptoms detailed <https://covid19malta.info/> you must not attend training or matches.
- If a member of your household has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is displaying these symptoms you must not attend training or matches.
- Do not car share on the way to or from matches with anyone outside your household.
- Practise good hand hygiene always.

DURING MATCHES

- Players should bring their own water bottles and maintain social distancing during breaks.
- Drinks should not be shared.
- Ensure all equipment is sanitised prior to match including goal posts and balls.

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Guidance for Coaches and Players CONTINUED

- No physical contact during goal celebrations.
- No handshakes between teams.
- Refrain from spitting or clearing of nasal passages; if you need to sneeze or cough, use a tissue and put it in the bin or use the crook of your elbow.
- In relation to First Aid – all efforts should be made to maintain social distancing and allow player to self-treat; where this cannot be achieved please ensure that First Aid kits are stocked with appropriate PPE to support with this, including gloves and face masks.
- If a player becomes symptomatic during the match, they should be immediately removed from the match and taken home; Public Health guidance should be followed.
- Some facilities may have one way or parking systems in place; find out what these are in advance and comply with all guidance.



AFTER MATCHES

- There should be no post-match handshakes.
- Use of showers/ice baths is not permitted.
- No congregating post-match – leave the venue promptly and adhere to social distancing guidelines.
- Used water bottles, tape, strapping etc to be removed and disposed of by who used them.
- Ensure that social distancing guidance continues to be adhered to.

MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

- If your wellbeing has been affected by COVID-19, the Malta FA can help you. Send an email to covid@mfa.com.mt and you will be guided accordingly. All information will be confidential.

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Guidance for Parents/Guardians

- Each club will have to decide when it is right for them to return, based on factors such as the ability to comply with Malta FA guidance. Be aware of the protocols and processes within your child's club. If in doubt or not comfortable about your child(ren) returning to football, there is no pressure to do so.

IN ADVANCE OF MATCHES TAKING PLACE

- As we progress through the Malta FA plan, there will be changes in football activity including the introduction of new arrangements and unfamiliar restrictions; support those who are providing a safe re-introduction to football in line with the guidance by the Malta FA and the club/venue. Ensure your child is familiar with what is expected of them.
- Make yourself aware of the measures being taken to provide a safe environment; if you are not happy with the arrangements, remove your child from that environment and send an email to covid@mfa.com.mt.
- If your child has additional disability or medical needs, discuss this specifically with the club and coach; you can then agree how/if these needs can be met within current guidance.



- Young children are more likely to struggle to maintain social distancing; please continue to do your best to help your child recognise what social distancing means, looks and feels like – this could be related to relevant arm spans or standing jumps for example.
- In line with the Malta FA guidance on travel, you or another adult from the family should travel with the child to the venue; consider all other forms of transport before using public transport and no car-sharing with anyone outside your household.
- Currently, spectators are not permitted at matches. This will mean that you will collect your child from the venue after the match.



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Guidance for Parents/Guardians CONTINUED

DURING MATCHES

- Ensure that your child practises good hand hygiene; wash/sanitise hands before all activity.
- Remind your child that they should refrain from spitting or clearing of nasal passages; if they need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue and put the tissue in the bin or use the crook of their elbow.
- Ensure that your child brings his/her own water bottle that is clearly recognisable.
- Children should maintain social distancing when not on the field of play; including in the technical area, on the sidelines and during water breaks.
- Your child should be reminded that there should be no physical-contact goal celebrations.
- There will be no handshakes between teams.



AFTER MATCHES

- Do not congregate; collect your child and leave the venue quickly.
- Ensure that social distancing guidance continues to be adhered to.
- Use of showers/ice baths is not permitted.
- All water bottles, tape, strapping etc to be removed and disposed of by who used them.
- Follow any exit systems in place at the venue.
- Remind your child to wash/sanitise hands as soon as possible after the match.
- Current guidelines require Players to wash their own playing kit. Please ensure this happens and the kit is returned to the club by the child for the next game.
- If you have any safeguarding concerns, access the Malta FA Safeguarding policy here – <https://www.mfa.com.mt/downloads/17902/pdf.pdf> – and send an email to safeguarding@mfa.com.mt

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Guidance for venues in relation to hosting of football matches

- All matches to be played without spectators.
- Risk assess match facilities to ensure that guidelines, for example social distancing, good hand hygiene can be adhered to.
- Display signage at the entrance and around the facility to promote prevention measures.
- Hand sanitising facilities to be made available for participants in advance of match.
- Consider entry and exit procedures i.e. a one-way system with separate drop-off and pick up points may be beneficial if required.
- All equipment should be sanitised before and after each match – this includes goal posts and corner flags.
- Changing facilities must remain closed, however access to toilet facilities can be provided with door handles and toilet flush mechanisms to be regularly sanitised.





MALTA FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

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