



# 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](#)

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/>

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## **SOCCER FACILITY POLICIES**

- NCFC meeting spaces, including WRAL Clubhouse and Athletic Lab Fitness Center, may be used for team functions and educational purposes. All commonly used surfaces will be sanitized prior to new groups using these spaces. Academy Locker Rooms are not open for use at this time.
- All individuals are required to wear a mask while using NCFC indoor meeting spaces. Vaccinated individuals may wear a mask if they choose to do so.
- 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.
- All individuals are required to wear masks while in the NCFC Medical Room.

## **COACHES/SUPPORT STAFF POLICIES**

- 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.
- All coaches are required to wear a mask while conducting indoor team activities. Coaches are always permitted to wear a mask outdoors if they choose to do so. All coaches are expected to follow NCDHHS Guidelines.
- 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 to provide color options without the use of pinnies.
- Coaches must track attendance for each session through Playmetrics.

## **PLAYER POLICIES**

- All players are expected to follow NCDHHS Guidelines while at NCFC Youth activities. Currently, there is no requirement to wear a mask while outdoors. Players are always permitted to wear masks if they choose to do so.
- While at indoor team functions, players are required to wear a mask when not eating. Players are always permitted to wear masks outdoors if they choose to do so.
- Players are expected to bring their own ball, game jerseys, hand sanitizer, and water to trainings and games and are encouraged to store their belongings 6 feet apart from other players' belongings.
- Should players be experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, they will not be permitted to train in accordance with our COVID-19 Incident Management Protocols.
- Players should refrain from handshakes, fist bumps, and contact within goal celebrations at any time during training sessions and games.

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## 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 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. During games, parents may either spectate from a designated spectator area or open area near the field of play. Where fences surround a field, spectators are not permitted inside fenced areas unless bleachers exist inside the fence or otherwise noted at the field.
- All parents and spectators are expected to follow NCDHHS Guidelines while at NCFC Youth activities. Currently, there is no requirement to wear a mask while outdoors. Spectators are always permitted to wear masks if they choose to do so.
- When travelling to away games and events, Parents are expected to uphold all policies adopted by the host club and State in which the events occur.

## TRAVEL POLICIES

- Teams travelling together should attempt to keep rooming designations consistent throughout the year, mirroring any carpool arrangements where possible.
- Where possible, it is recommended that team functions, including meals and team bonding events, be held outdoors or in locations that allow ample spacing indoors. Where team functions occur indoors, individuals are required to wear masks unless actively eating.
- When travelling to away games and events, teams are expected to know and uphold our policies and any additional adopted by the host club and State in which the events occur.

## REFEREE AND STAFF POLICIES

- All referees are expected to follow NCDHHS Guidelines while at NCFC Youth activities. Currently, there is no requirement to wear a mask while outdoors. Referees are always permitted to wear masks if they choose to do so.
- All referees must perform a temperature check and conduct a health screening prior to attending any NCFC Youth hosted games or events.

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## TRAINING SESSION POLICIES

- Teams are permitted to organize scrimmage activities between NCFC teams inside training sessions. To do so, a game must be added within Playmetrics to denote the mixing of groups.
- Players may 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.

## COVID-19 INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

- The [COVID-19 Incident Report 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 an individual who has tested positive 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 not been fully vaccinated and 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 non-vaccinated 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 and has not been fully vaccinated
  - 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. -OR-
  - The individual has received all doses of a vaccine established to protect against COVID-19.
  - 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. Vaccinated individuals who experience symptoms are still required to quarantine until clearing one of the two parameters for individuals who have symptoms.
- 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.
- 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](mailto:ATC@NCFCYouth.com).

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## SYMPTOM SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Have you had direct exposure (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) in the last 10 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 until clearing NCFC Youth Return to Play Protocols unless they have been fully vaccinated.
  - 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/coach has any of these symptoms, they should go home, stay away from other people, and have a guardian call their health care provider. The player/coach should not participate until NCFC Youth Return to Play Protocols

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

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