

FA Announcement on return of football – immediate action required by all AFC clubs

Dear AFC Club Secretary,

The AFC Special Working Group, working on behalf of the AFC Executive Committee, have met to discuss the FA Guidelines, regarding the safe start of Grassroots football. This working group consists of members of the Fixtures Committee (myself & James Whitmarsh), Referees Committee (Rod Davies), Clubs Committee (Henry Warne–Dorkinians), plus 4 nominated club representatives/Secretaries (Matt Lane – Woking, John O'Brien Ignatian, Ashley Rogers – Latymer & Ed Glover - Meads) and is chaired by Martin Armstrong (AFC Vice Chairman - Old Sutts).

A new page has been created <http://www.amateurfootballcombination.com/covid-guidelines.html> on the AFC website under the AFC tab. This page has various risk assessment templates to enable all clubs to create their own risk assessment document by simply adding their own club details throughout the document . Many clubs may need to contact their pitch provider in order to obtain the providers own risk assessment. Relevant FA publications are also include on this page.

It cannot be underestimated the work required by club officers in order to ensure that everyone is safe to start playing competitive football once again. The following points need to be read and acted upon. We will be supporting clubs as much as possible but clubs must realise that the onus is on them to start work on these document immediately.

- 1. All clubs will be required to complete a Risk Assessment and provide a copy to the AFC – League Secretary Ian Andrews.** We will not be approving these Risk Assessment's but they will be used as a record to ensure all necessary steps have been taken by our clubs to ensure Covid-19 regulations are adhered to. Please note that NO league games will be allocated to your club until the AFC have received a copy of the club risk assessment. "All clubs will be required to prepare Covid-19 guidance and to complete a risk assessment. Clubs should provide a copy of such guidance/risk assessment to the AFC League Secretary Ian Andrews. A template risk assessment is provided on the page on the AFC website, as well as a number of specific club examples to also assist. Clubs may use the template or may wish to use their own bespoke guidance and risk assessments. The league will not be approving such guidance/risk assessment's but they will be used as a record to ensure all necessary steps have been taken by our clubs to ensure Covid-19 regulations are adhered to. **Please note that NO league games will be allocated to your club until the AFC have received a copy of the club guidance/risk assessment.**
2. Clubs should explore the possibility of staggered kick offs if possible, to ensure that players arrive and leave the ground in a safe manner, providing social distance/covid-19 guidelines are strictly adhered to. The fixing of kick off times is at the joint agreement of both teams and referee.
3. **Current Government guidelines recommend changing rooms and showers are only used if essential.** The AFC have deemed that changing facilities & showers should not be used at all until at least 31st October or until any further changes to the current FA/Government guidelines are published. Only in circumstances where access to toilet facilities are required or access for vulnerable people, should the changing rooms be opened.
4. As part of completing a Risk Assessment all clubs should have a named Club Covid-19 Officer. This person will be responsible that all the necessary protocols are followed. Please note that they can delegate responsibility to others to ensure that all of your games are covered. **The name & contact details of the Club Covid-19 Safety Officer must be provided to the League Secretary, before your club has fixtures allocated and you restart playing.**
- 5 Clubs are obliged to assist the NHS by supporting the Test & Trace guidelines by keeping a temporary record of attendees for 21 days. The data that needs to be collected from all attendees is name, email address (if possible), mobile number and date and time of the match,

so that each person can be contacted. (Players playing in the games will already have these details on WGS) - Please see guidelines below-

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 - Every Team is required to keep a record of attendance for anyone present at a match, this includes players, coaches, match officials and any spectators. Clubs should also keep a record of attendance for anyone visiting an away ground, in addition to their actual players, which could be supplied to the home club on request if required.
 - Players personal details must be maintained on Whole Game System (WGS) so each team should keep a record of all non-players, attending the match with any of that teams members, present during their match, in case they need to be contacted due to test and trace. **Please note team sheets for ALL games will need to be completed without fail. Fines** will be issued, to any clubs who do not complete a match day team sheet and pass to the referee in good time before ko. Referees will also be asked to keep the team sheets (should they be required by the AFC A revised AFC Official Team Sheet is available on the web site <here> . Full Time (FT) must be updated as per AFC Rules with all players/substitutes. NO REMINDERS or CHASERS will be sent, as this process must become part of weekly duties for every AFC team.
6. Please inform your players to leave plenty of time for journeys to ground. There seems to be more traffic on the road and less trains on public transport. The AFC League Match Secretaries will try as much as possible to arrange local fixtures in the opening few weeks of the season so as to limit travel. Staggered arrival times will ensure the use of toilet facilities and movement in car park does not result in over-crowding.
 7. Clubs will not have to provide post-match hospitality to oppositions and officials until guidelines on social distancing changes. However, clubs will need to carry out their own risk assessment on whether bars and other facilities serving refreshments can be safely run following Government and FA guidance.
 8. Start of the season will be the 19th September providing you have a pitch available otherwise we will be looking to slot games in as when clubs have pitches available. **- a further email regarding pitch availability will follow in a few days, with full details of the information required.**
 9. See below information from the AFA regarding Public Liability insurance and the fact that the cover provided by your PL Insurance should suffice. However clubs are urged to check their Covid cover with their insurer (if not provided by AFA)

Subject: FW: Public Liability in relation to Covid-19

I can confirm that if someone takes Legal Action against any club for anything the action will be defended. However I must point out that Covid 19 is a viral illness the same as chicken pox. A solicitor would have to prove negligence on behalf of the club, which is nigh on impossible because you could get the infection anywhere.

The Personal Accident Policy is for injuries only whilst playing and training and NOT illness

Kevin Culley Managing Director **The Admin Bureau Ltd, t/a Sportsguard**
t. [01604 644277](tel:01604644277) | e. kevin@sportsguard.co.uk |

Regards

Ian Andrews

AFC Secretary

07845 389916