



SPÓRT ÉIREANN
SPORT IRELAND

Information Note: Guidance for sports regarding Level 5 Covid-19 restrictions

Ireland is now at Level 5 of the Framework for Restrictive Measures. Level 5 is expected to be in place for the next 6 weeks.

The Government's guidance on Level 5 is clear, with the risk to public health meaning that individuals are asked to stay at home, with certain exceptions.

With regard to sport, the restrictions applicable in Level 5 are as follows:

1. No training or matches should take place with the following exceptions:
 - Non-contact training can continue for school aged children, outdoors in pods of 15
 - Professional, elite sports and senior inter-county Gaelic games, horse-racing and greyhound racing are permitted to continue behind closed doors
2. All other training activities should be individual only.
3. No exercise or dance classes are permitted.
4. Gyms/leisure centres/swimming pools closed.
5. Exercise within 5 kilometres of home.

Facilities

As they are not recognised as essential services, the decision of Government is that all gyms, leisure centres, swimming pools and other sports facilities must close in the Level 5 restrictions. This includes both indoor and outdoor sports facilities.

It is permitted to open sports facilities for training sessions and scheduled matches for the exempted categories of sport, i.e. high performance, professional and senior inter-county Gaelic games. It will also be permitted to open outdoor sports facilities for structured training sessions by school aged children, i.e. those aged 18 years and younger, in pods of no more than 15, under the supervision of designated coaches and in compliance with approved COVID-19 protocols and all relevant public health guidance.

During these training sessions it will only be permitted for participants and relevant coaching and support personnel to be present. In the case of children's sport, parents will be permitted to

attend for child safeguarding purposes, however they will be required to comply with social distancing and other public health advice.

Professional & Elite Sport

Professional and elite sport must adhere to comprehensive protocols, which ensure extraordinary levels of control and compliance are in place. Professional and elite sport is defined as follows;

- Professional sports people or sports people who participate within professional competition.
- A Member of a high performance team funded by Sport Ireland.
- Those who compete at major international events including European and World Championships, Olympic and Paralympic Games. It is advised that these are senior athletes only within one of the following categories:
 - Athletes on the 2020 International Carding Scheme
 - Players on the 2020 Team Ireland Golf Scheme
 - Senior riders in Show-Jumping, Eventing & Dressage
 - Senior team players in Hockey, Cricket, and Rugby Sevens.

Inter-county sport refers specifically to senior competition organised by the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Ladies Gaelic Football Association or the Camogie Association.

It is important to note that protocols as they apply to each sport will be prepared and communicated directly by the respective National Governing Bodies.

Guidance for Non-Contact Training for School-Aged Children

The Government has agreed that non-contact training can continue for school-aged children, outdoors in pods of 15. This is outside of the existing provision of Level 5.

- The concession relates to sports involving the ongoing regular training of groups of young people.
- It relates only to non-contact training activities in which you can comfortably maintain a 2-metre distance from others while participating i.e. team or group-based practice within your community practicing drills, skills etc, without physical contact between participants;
- Applies to school-age children (i.e. aged 18 years and under) operating in pods of 15 and outdoors.
- Excludes the use of any indoor facilities, club houses, changing rooms (or any related “touch” points) which should be closed.
- Training sessions must not exceed the duration time normally associated with the activity.

The training must be supervised by a coach or a trainer accredited by the National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs). The National Governing Bodies will have responsibility for approving the training activities to be undertaken. Sport Ireland is available to provide guidance to NGBs where required.

One parent or guardian per child may attend where it is considered necessary for safeguarding or supervisory purposes.

There is already detailed guidance as regards measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in sports from children and young people including in respect of going to and coming from the event; personal hygiene measures; social distancing measures; and cleaning and disinfection measures. National Governing Bodies must give an assurance that these protective measures will be strictly adhered to and that they have the resources locally to ensure that they are enforced rigorously, as part of their submission. This must

include managing congregation of parents, children and young people on side lines before, during, and after training.

Clubs/National Governing Bodies should review their existing protocols and guidance to ensure that they are suitable for Level 5 restrictions.

Any club or group that is not in a position to apply these measures or enforce them should not hold training sessions.

Any local club or group found to be in breach of these measures will result in the club being excluded from the exemption.

This continues to be on an opt-in basis for participants.

Rationale:

Government made this decision based on the feedback received from children and young people in which they emphasised the importance of friends and social aspects of their lives. More than a third of young people missed their friends. In terms of positives which they wanted to bring forward from the COVID crisis, around a quarter of young people were keen to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

It is not possible to allow all activities which meet the needs of every young person while trying to reduce congregation overall in society. However, it is intended that this measure along with school provision and the provision of youth work services funded by DCEDIY will provide protective factors for a great many young people.”

[Feedback from How's Your Head ? National consultation with young people on mental health and wellbeing on the COVID crisis]”

Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
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