



**Return to Play Plan  
2020**



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## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide the details of the Return to Play Plan (“RTP” Plan) for Merriman Soccer. This plan is intended to be read in parallel with the guidelines of governing bodies within government and within soccer. This plan and all referenced material are intended to support informed decision-making by our members, volunteers, coaches, and other representatives of the Club related to their participation in the Club’s programs.

*This guide will be modified as we change phases or new information comes available. Please continue to check for updates.*

## 2. Return to Play Guidelines

In August 2020, two very important documents were released related to the soccer community’s return to play. These documents are referenced and linked below and provide the foundation and guidelines that are included in this Return to Play Plan.

- **Friday August 28th:** [BC Soccer Return to Play Phase 2 FAQ](#)
- **Monday August 24th:** [BC Soccer Phase 2 Recommendations](#)
- **Monday June 1st:** [ViaSport Return to Sport Guidelines](#)

## 3. Technical Programs

From the guidelines set by ViaSport and BC Soccer, Merriman Soccer created the following Return to Play Plan. ***We recommend that all families carefully review the processes outlined (along with the associated checklists and waivers) to fully understand the measures we are taking as a Club to mitigate the risks associated with returning to play.***

It is imperative that all participants abide by all staff instructions communicated prior to and during sessions. Collectively, we must work together to get back on the field safely. All programs are considered voluntary, and anyone feeling uncomfortable with the current risks, should either not register or remove themselves from the program.

**Merriman Soccer is excited to take this first step back to the playing field!**



#### 4. Current State / Phase

Currently we are in the “Progressively Loosen” phase of BC Soccer’s Return to Play plan. Within this phase, we are allowed to train with modified training activities, under physical distancing measures and other protocols.

|                        | Strictest Controls<br>Prior to May 19, 2020   | Transition Measures<br>Approx. May 19th to Sept  | Progressively Loosen<br>Future date TBC   | New Normal<br>Future date TBC   |
|------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Restrictions In Place  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain Physical Distance (2m)</li> <li>No non-essential travel</li> </ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain Physical Distance (2m)</li> <li>No non-essential travel</li> <li>No group gatherings over 50 people</li> </ul> | Refer to PHO and local health authorities   | Refer to PHO and local health authorities   |
| Enhanced Protocols     | Increased hand hygiene  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased hand hygiene</li> <li>Symptom Screening in place</li> </ul>   | Increased hand hygiene  | Increased hand hygiene  |
| Facility               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdoor or within home</li> <li>Facilities and playgrounds closed</li> </ul>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdoor is safest</li> <li>Indoor facilities slowly re-opening</li> </ul>   | Outdoor/Indoor  | Outdoor/Indoor  |
| Participants           | Individual activities   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small Groups</li> <li>No or limited spectators</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groups sizes may increase</li> <li>Limited spectators</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large groups allowed</li> <li>No restrictions on spectators</li> </ul> |
| Non-contact Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low risk outdoor activities can occur (biking, running, etc).</li> <li>Virtual activities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fundamental movement skills</li> <li>Modified training activities, drills</li> </ul>                                    | Expansion of training activities  | No restrictions on activity type  |
| Contact Activities     | Should not occur  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should not occur</li> <li>Contact sports should look for non-contact alternatives to training</li> </ul>                | Introduction to pair or small group contact skills  | No restrictions on activity type  |
| Competition*           | Should not occur  | In club play or modified games may slowly be introduced  | Interclub or regional game play may be considered   | Provincial competitions and larger scale events may return  |
| Equipment              | No shared equipment   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal shared equipment</li> <li>Disinfect any shared equipment before, during and after use</li> </ul>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some shared equipment</li> <li>Enhanced cleaning protocols in place</li> </ul> | Shared equipment  |

*“Sport Activity Chart” from ViaSport British Columbia*

Merriman Soccer will continue to operate under the protocols and guidelines of the “Transition Measures” phase until such time as the Provincial Medical Officer, BC Soccer and the Town of Ladysmith announce a change in phases.



## 5. Providing a Clean, Safe Environment

Fortunately, soccer is predominantly an outdoor sport in British Columbia and therefore, fields are one of the safer environments for sports activity. To ensure the environment in which we are all participating is safe for players, technical staff and volunteers, Merriman Soccer has implemented the following health and safety precautions in providing a clean and safe environment:

### 5.1 Fields

- The field will have one entrance and one exit only.
- Session start and end times will be staggered to permit coaches and players the opportunity to attend training sessions within appropriate physical distancing requirements within the guidelines of health authorities.
- Player backpacks will be placed in designated spaces along the fence only, physically distanced from any other player's bag in adherence to the requirements and guidelines of health authorities.
- Washing stations with soap/sanitizer will be available at every session for the continuous hand sanitizing of players, technical staff, and volunteers.

### 5.2 Change Rooms

- All change rooms will be unavailable to players, and may be used by Merriman Soccer for the sanitization of equipment, when necessary.
- One washroom will be open to minimize the number of high touch areas in the facility.
- A hand washing / sanitizing station will be set up at the Check-in Point (entrance to field).

### 5.3 Equipment

- Equipment will be sanitized by Merriman Soccer after every session with recommended products.
- Equipment may not be handled by an individual other than the session coach at any time.
- Equipment will be stored in the same, secure location after the final session of each day.



## 6. Measures to Keep People Safe

### 6.1 Check-In Requirements

All players, technical staff and volunteers attending any programming will be asked to check in onsite – the purpose of this is for Contact Tracing in the event of a secondary outbreak. In addition to our standard registration form which gathers most of the relevant information required for a family/player, we will be taking attendance and having check-in activities at each session. At check-in, the attendant will record the:

- Player Name
- Time of check in / check out

Again, this will assist the health officials in the event of any COVID-19 outbreak.

### 6.2 Illness Policy

Merriman Soccer has issued a new “Illness Policy” document that must be followed by all individuals in attendance at or participating in any way in programming or events. Failure to abide by the terms of the policy will result in removal from the session and in the most blatant cases, removal from the program for either the remainder of the program or the season, at Merriman Soccer’s sole discretion.

### 6.3 Players

All adult players and parents/guardians of youth players must complete a “Return to Play Participant Agreement (Waiver)” before they will be permitted to participate in any program or event. Failure to complete this Agreement will restrict players from participation in any Merriman Soccer program or event.

Players are asked to use the “Pre-Session Player Checklist” to remind themselves of the steps they must take to participate in programs before, during and after every session. This checklist includes the requirement for players to dress at home and arrive in their kit and cleats. This checklist also includes the requirement for all players to have their belongings in a single bag/backpack with a personal water bottle and their own hand sanitizer clearly labelled with their name for all training sessions to avoid use by any other individual.



## 6.4 Technical Staff

All technical staff must complete the “Return to Play Agreement – Coaches & Volunteers” before they will be permitted to participate in any Merriman Soccer program or event. Coaches and Managers are also asked to use the “Pre-Session Coach/Manager Checklist” to remind themselves of the steps they must take to participate in programs before, during and after every session. This includes the requirement for a self-assessment prior to attending any program or event.

Technical Staff will be educated on all sanitization requirements. Personal Protective Equipment kits have been assembled for any instance a technical staff member find themselves unable to socially distance in an emergency (i.e., an injury on the field).

## 6.5 First Aid

In the event that first aid is required to be administered during an activity, all persons attending to the injured individual must first put on a mask and gloves.



## 7. Outbreak Plan

Early detection of symptoms will facilitate the immediate implementation of effective control measures. ViaSport BC defines an “outbreak” as two or more cases of COVID-19. In the event of a suspected case or outbreak of influenza-like-illness, the protocol is to immediately report and discuss the suspected outbreak with the Medical Health Officer (or delegate) at the local health authority. If an outbreak is reported, then the modification, restriction, postponement, and/or cancellation of activities will be assessed and decided upon by Merriman Soccer.

If staff (including volunteers) or a participant reports that they are ill and are at the workplace / activity place, the Town of Ladysmith will be contacted immediately so that they can implement enhanced cleaning measures to reduce the risk of transmission. We will also implement our Illness Policy and advise individuals to immediately report and discuss the suspected outbreak with the Medical Health Officer (or delegate) at the local Health Authority.

If we are contacted by a Medical Health Officer in the course of contact tracing, we will cooperate fully with local health authorities.

## 8. Disclaimer

This Return to Play Plan is intended to be used for the purposes set in this document. While we have written this RTP Plan with relevant and timely information, information known about the COVID-19 coronavirus and recommended health and safety measures can rapidly change; therefore no guarantee can be given as to completeness of any information provided in this RTP Plan.

In the event of any ambiguity or conflict between this RTP Plan (including its referenced documents) and the Public Health Act, regulations or orders thereunder, then the Public Health Act, regulations and orders will prevail.

Nothing in this document is intended to provide legal advice. Anyone choosing to participate in any Merriman Soccer program does so at their voluntary and sole risk. Choosing to participate is a personal decision that must be made with full information. Where a participant is identified as a “high risk”, the individual’s doctor’s permission is strongly recommended before participation in any Merriman Soccer activities.





## APPENDIX A: Covid-19 Transmission Basics

### COVID-19 Transmission & Symptoms

COVID-19 is transmitted via liquid droplets when a person coughs or sneezes but also potentially when they are talking in very close proximity to another person. The virus in these droplets then can enter the body of another person when that person breathes in the droplets or when the droplets touch the eyes, nose or throat of that person.

This requires you to be in close contact – less than the so-called physical distancing of three to six feet. This is referred to as ‘droplet’ transmission and is believed to be the primary way COVID-19 is transmitted.

COVID-19 can also be transmitted through droplets in the environment if someone touches a contaminated area then touches their face without cleaning their hands. The virus does not enter the body through skin, it enters through the eyes, nose or mouth when the person touches their face. Unfortunately, human beings touch their faces very often throughout the day, much more than they realize. **This is why regular handwashing and cleaning of high-touch surfaces is so important.**

For COVID-19 there are some emerging indications that there are people who can shed COVID-19 virus 24 to 48 hours prior to symptom onset, but at present, it is not known whether this is a significant risk factor for transmission.

Droplet transmission is much more likely when in close contact in an indoor setting. Transmission is less likely in an outdoor setting, where there is more space for people to keep physically distanced. However, in the context of sports, even outdoors there can be risks from high-touch surfaces because many sports involve objects that are normally shared among participants, coaches or volunteers (balls, equipment, etc.).

Families should familiarize themselves with the symptoms associated with COVID-19 by reviewing the symptoms page on the BC CDC website:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/symptoms>



## APPENDIX B: Session Walkthrough for Players & Parents

### Arrival/Departure:

- Players/Parents will arrive at the Field **no earlier** than 15 minutes before the session begins. This will allow individuals from the previous session suitable time to leave the field and parking lot.
- Only one parent/guardian should drop off their player at the field.
- Players should be dressed for the session, with cleats and shin pads already on, and a water bottle with their name on it.
- Players will line up at designated cones along the fence, on the seating area side of the field, 6 feet apart, before entering the field.
- As each player enters the field, a Merriman Soccer Monitor will take their name for attendance. Each player will use the hand sanitizer provided before entering the field.
- At the end of the session, each player will exit the field one at a time, and will use the hand sanitizer provided as they exit. Players will leave the facility immediately at the end of the session.

### During the Session:

- Players will be socially distanced for the duration of the session within at least a 5-square-meter area per player, designated with cones.
- High-fives, fist bumps and other physical contact with other players will not be allowed during the session, or before/after entering the field/facility.
- Handling of the ball or any other equipment by the players is discouraged.

**Please refer to the “Merriman Soccer – Player Checklist” and the “Merriman Soccer – Coach and Volunteer Checklist” for further information.**