



Return to Netball

GUIDANCE FOR  
SCHOOLS, COLLEGES  
& ACADEMIES

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

#RISEAGAIN

## Introduction

During the COVID-19 lockdown period, many young people were less active, became more isolated and had feelings of loneliness as well as increased anxieties and worry. Collectively we all want to support young people to thrive and as we emerge from lockdown, physical activity and sports such as netball can be brilliant tools to help achieve this. England Netball are committed to supporting schools to return a programme of netball within a broad and balanced curriculum as well as after school provision.

England Netball submitted plans to Government to return netball to courts, which on 18<sup>th</sup> August were approved. Netball can re-commence with modifications to the rules as well as additional hygiene and sanitisation procedures in place.

In every sport and leisure activity there are risks of COVID-19 and team sports in particular pose slightly increased risks.

COVID-19 is transmitted in 3 ways;

- Droplet transmission when in close contact with others
- Fomite transmission by sharing equipment like netballs and bibs
- Airborne transmission which is a risk particularly when indoors

Thinking about netball specifically;

- It's a game that can be fairly static in nature
- You have 3 sections to pass the ball, or 4 seconds within Bee Netball
- We defend face to face at 3 foot (0.9m) distance
- A netball is passed by hand continuously around multiple people
- It is a game that is often played indoors

All these things combined mean there are regular breaches to social distancing during 'normal' netball that lead to significant periods of time during a PE lesson, after schools club or match that carry increased risk. These breaches would be managed in other part of day to day life currently and is therefore the reason why modifications must be introduced.

With the COVID-19 rule modifications and other considerations Schools, academies and colleges can therefore return netball to their school in the following ways;

Schools, academies and colleges can therefore return netball to their school in the following ways;

Activity	Date	Information required
PE curriculum time	From 1 <sup>st</sup> September	Aligned to this guidance & school policies and procedures
After School Club activities	From 1 <sup>st</sup> September	Aligned to this guidance & school policies and procedures
School matches	From 26 <sup>th</sup> September	Aligned to this guidance and Competition Organisers guidance

School tournaments	TBC	See School netball matches and competition section for more information.
Hire facilities to Community Netball organisations	From 18 <sup>th</sup> August	Venue guidance is read & understood Community Organisation hiring has a COVID Officer, read and actioned the Re-start guidance and completed a risk assessment & risk mitigation plan

England Netball has shared its [Restart Guidance](#) for community netball, however it is recognised that a proportion of this guidance will already be being considered as part of the extensive planning individual schools, academies and colleges have undertaken. Decisions regarding specific schools and colleges will be made by School/College Leadership teams. This will include how groups are managed in ‘bubbles’ to maintain consistent social groupings. This guidance should be used in conjunction with school/college own policies, procedures and operational plans to more broadly manage the risk of COVID-19 alongside guidance from DfE [here](#) Schools will not be required to;

- Appoint a COVID-19 Officer specifically for netball activity. We do recommend however that a member of staff takes a lead role in ensuring the information and guidance is fully understood and, where necessary, consults with and informs the relevant school leader responsible for COVID-19 risks management.
- Conduct test & trace, health screening or ‘opt in’ procedures within netball activity providing similar processes are in place within the school’s procedures.

All schools, colleges and academies will be required to;

- Complete a risk assessment, this should be aligned to school/college policy. It should be reviewed on a regular basis in line with the school or college policy and aligned to DfE guidance [here](#)
- Ensure all staff and others involved in netball activity are aware of the risks associated with netball and the transmission of COVID-19, see Appendix A within this document. If necessary they should share this with school or college member of staff with responsibility for COVID-19 risk management
- Deliver all netball activity in line with England Netball’s COVID-19 rule modifications, see Appendix B within this document.
- Lessons or after school activities should be carefully planned and the risks of COVID-19 transmission considered within this. These plans should be considerate of this guidance as well as schools procedures.
- Ensure hand and equipment sanitisation protocols are followed, detailed in Appendix C within this document.
- There should be no more than 30 people on a full size netball court area

- Where possible, it is preferred that netball activity takes place outdoors. If using an indoor space, additional risk mitigations, such as consideration of ventilation as well as sanitisation and hygiene should be undertaken.

### Primary Schools (& those schools catering for 4 – 11 year olds)

Netball activity within primary schools should follow all the guidance listed in this guidance, however it should be noted that the recognised and authorised form of netball for this age group is [Bee Netball](#) (a progressive scheme available from year 1 – year 6). Any activity should apply the COVID-19 rule modifications to Bee Netball 4 a side or 5 a side rules (dependant on age & stage of pupils).

In our testing of the COVID-19 rule modifications, primary school aged children found compliance with the modifications more challenging to remember than other groups; teachers, coaches and others involved in netball activity within primary schools should therefore regularly remind pupils of the rule modifications.

If using a netball court area on a primary school, it should be noted that a full size netball court is 15.25m x 30.5m. If the court area at your school is smaller than this, teachers should consult with those responsible for COVID-19 within their school to determine an appropriate number of pupils able to participate on a single court. We recommend a limit of 1 person per 15m<sup>2</sup>

Outdoor netball courts or playing area is preferable

### Secondary Schools and colleges (those catering for 12 – 18 year olds)

Netball activity within secondary schools should follow all the guidance within this guidance.

It should be noted that a full size netball court referenced is 15.25m x 30.5m. Most courts in secondary school adhere to this. If however the netball court is smaller than this, teachers should consult with those responsible for COVID-19 within their school to determine an appropriate number of pupils able to participate on a single court. We recommend a limit of 1 person per 15m<sup>2</sup>

Outdoor courts are preferable to use for netball activity.

## School Netball matches and competition

Netball competitions can re-commence from 26<sup>th</sup> September 2020. Individual schools and colleges will be able to determine the exact date for their school or college for the resumption of these, on or after this date.

Prior to any competition commencing, teachers and coaches should be confident that there has been appropriate training and preparation activity completed by all participants to avoid injury.

Tournaments are not permitted at this time whilst current measures are in place. This is due to the nature of the way these competitions are delivered, which often includes large numbers of people gathering at a single site and teams playing multiple matches over a short period of time, which presents a greater risk of COVID-19 spreading.

All competition (friendly or competitive) must be played using the COVID-19 rule modifications. Standard netball rules can be played again when all social distancing measures are removed by the Government.

Particular attention should be given to transport to any netball matches. There is updated DfE guidance around transport [here](#) which should be used to develop a schools individual policy, which in turn should be adhered to for any travel to netball competitions

The National Schools competitions that ordinarily commence early in the Autumn term are currently under review. England Netball continues to monitor this and will consult with both schools and competition organisers at county and regional rounds before making any final decisions. We will endeavour to run this competition, but are aware of challenges this may bring to schools.

## Other School Netball related activity

### Coaches & community clubs supporting in schools

School and college leadership teams will determine when it is appropriate for coaches or community clubs to return to support the delivery of curriculum or extra-curricular activity.

When schools are working with a netball coach or netball club, they should ensure the following;

- They have fully read the Restart guidance provided by England Netball as well as being fully aware and trained in the school specific policies and procedures
- They deliver any netball activity in line with the COVID-19 rule modifications
- Are members of England Netball and coaches have relevant Lead Coach qualifications

### Young Leaders

School and College leadership teams will determine the role young netball leaders can play.

If young leaders are involved in any delivery of activity to their peers or younger age groups, they must be aware of the COVID-19 rule modifications and sanitisation protocols.

School staff will be responsible for the safe supervision and support of young leaders during any activity they lead.

### Blended Netball

There are 1.3m SEND children in mainstream schools. Many of which do not receive the same level of PE that their mainstream peers do. As we look to return to court, SEND pupils, who have been most impacted by the lockdown restrictions, must be supported to get active. However, we recognise that everyone's circumstances and level of risk will be different. For people who may be more vulnerable to Covid-19 the specific guidance continues to apply.

Blended Netball activity can commence within schools and colleges when school/college leaders are satisfied it is safe to do so.

Schools and colleges should ensure they fully understand this guidance and the information regarding Blended Netball before commencing any delivery.

Blended Netball may involve students from different 'bubbles' interacting. School leaders will need to determine if this is appropriate and possible. This may mean some elements of Blended Netball can not be delivered immediately within schools or colleges.

Young leaders should be made aware of COVID-19 Rule modifications alongside any school/college specific guidance. School staff remain responsible for the activity and young leaders must be supervised during any Blended Netball activity.

### School facilities being used by community netball organisations

In line with Government guidance, schools are permitted to make their sites accessible to community clubs and coaches for Stage 4 modified netball activity. England Netball strongly encourages schools and colleges to open their sites and provide the wider netball family with places to play. We do however, fully understand that schools and colleges must be satisfied that it is safe to do so and be able to operationally manage this.

England Netball has facility guidance available [here](#) for any venues who are considering hiring their netball courts to a third party. This guidance includes what you need to consider and do before reopening your netball courts for community lettings.

Please be assured that England Netball's member clubs and registered leagues have access to extensive [guidance](#) and materials to ensure they are able to safely manage their activity. England Netball has also delivered a series of online training forums to further support this guidance for England Netball members.

When ready, we would recommend that schools and colleges consider hiring their facilities to England Netball member clubs and registered leagues, be prepared to share your School's venue risk assessment for the space being accessed, and ask those who enquire the following questions;

- Are you a member of England Netball / are you booking on behalf of a member Club or registered organisation?
- Have you read the Re-Starting Netball [guidance](#)?
- Who is your COVID-19 Officer?
- Where will your COVID-19 Risk Assessment be shared?
- Have you completed the Risk Mitigation plan for this activity?

### Useful Links

- [England Netball Re-start Community Netball guidance](#)
- [Youth Sport Trust](#)
- [Association for PE guidance](#)
- [Government guidance on returning schools](#)



## Appendix A – Risks associated with netball

In every sport and leisure activity, there are risks of COVID-19 and team sports in particular pose slightly increased risks.

COVID-19 can be transmitted in 3 ways;

- Droplet transmission when in close contact with others
- Fomite transmission by sharing of equipment like netballs and bibs
- Airborne transmission which is a risk particularly when indoors

When thinking about netball specifically:

- It is a game that can be fairly static in nature.
- You have 3 seconds to pass the ball, or 4 seconds if you're a walking netball or Bee Netball participant.
- We defend face to face at a 3 foot (0.9m). distance
- A netball is passed by hand continuously around multiple people.
- It is also a game that is often played indoors
- The netball family are a very friendly group and have traditions such as 3 cheers, hand-shakes and high fives in close circles.

All these things combined mean there are regular breaches to social distancing during 'normal' netball that lead to significant periods of time during a training session or netball match that cause increased risk. These breaches would not be allowable in other parts of day to day life currently and is therefore the reason why modifications must be introduced.

Netball therefore carries a greater risk than other activities and as part of the return to community netball, we need to mitigate some of the risks to both protect the netball family, as well as ensure that netball is not responsible for an increased transmission of COVID-19 more broadly. This guidance document covers many of these mitigations.

To ensure that our sport could return, a number of modifications to the rules of netball have also been made. These rules modifications have been created with two key principles in mind;

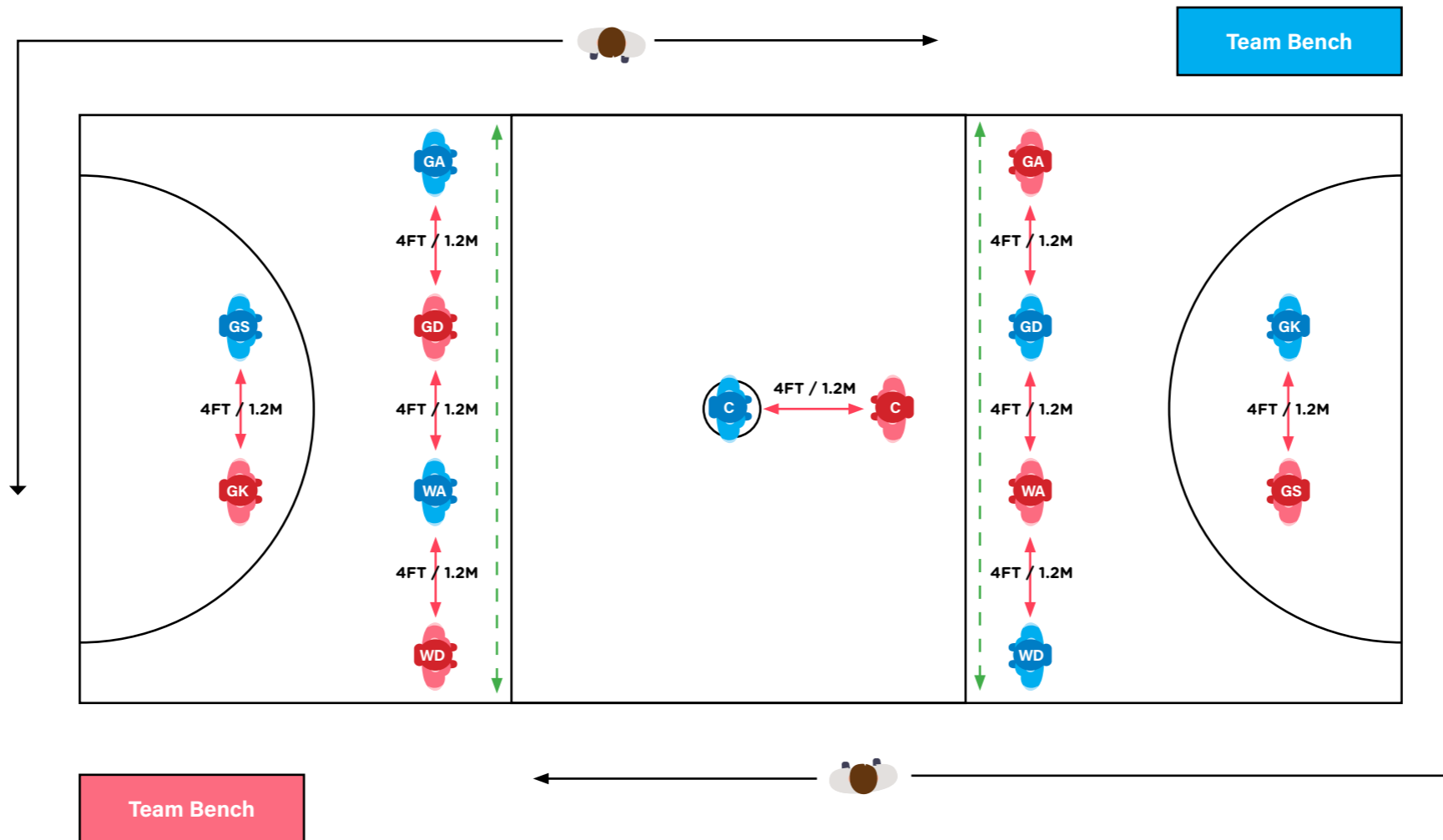
- To protect the netball family by reducing the incidences where face to face contact at less than 1m distance occurs particular when this is 'non-fleeting' contact (3 seconds or more)
- To maintain a game that is not too far away from the usual rules of netball
- England Netball has created the COVID-19 rule modifications, These modifications have been approved by Public Health England and Government and represent the ONLY allowable form of the game currently.
- All involved in netball must familiarise themselves with these rule modifications and they must be utilised in all netball activity.
- These COVID-19 rule modifications will be temporary, however it is unknown how long they will be applied in England. Any updates will be shared with England Netball members and posted on the England Netball website.

## Rule modifications

- 4ft spacing for the start of play
- 4ft marking
- 4ft position of penalised player
- Removal of toss ups
- Removal of idle interactions

## Umpires

- 2 umpires must be used during training and matchplay
- Must ensure players are adhering to the rule modifications
- Maintain 4ft away from players at all times
- Do not deliver the ball at centre pass



## Positions for the start of play

- All players must not position within 4ft (1.2m) of any other player
- GA/GD/WA/WD can position as normal at any point along the transverse line but must maintain a distance of 4ft (1.2m) from each other
- GS/GK are required to start inside the Goal Circle 4ft/1.2m apart
- Centres can position as normal but must maintain a distance of 4ft (1.2m) either at the Centre Circle or if the Centre decides to mark at the transverse line

## Compliance

All who take part in this version of Netball have a responsibility for ensuring that they adhere to the modifications put in place.

These modifications have been introduced to significantly reduce the number of face to face interactions that may occur but players should ensure that they actively seek to remove these from the game.

Any persistent breaches of these modifications will result in players being dealt with under Game Management rules which could be accelerated to protect the safety of other players.

## Hygiene and safety measures

- Players are required to sanitise their hands at the start and end of each quarter
- A freshly cleaned/sanitised ball should be used for each quarter (same ball can be used but must be cleaned at quarter times)
- Spare 'clean' ball to be kept in reserve if the match ball enters a spectator area
- Match Officials and Scorers will now be required to be at least 2m from activity where possible, with 2m distance between chairs.
- Those sitting on team benches will be 2m or 1m+ apart with risk mitigation in place where 2m is not possible.
- Team talks should be conducted in socially distant circles on the court to avoid congesting the bench area
- Social norms including handshaking, goal celebrations, high 5's etc are not permitted
- The post protector at each goal end should be sanitised prior to the start of the match
- Players are actively discouraged from touching the post
- Shouting is not permitted
- No sharing of water bottles and these should be clearly marked
- A clean set of bibs should be used with no sharing

## Appendix C – Sanitisation Protocols in netball

Sanitisation and hygiene are critical parts of the procedures that all netball organisers must have in place at every netball session, training activity and match (competitive or friendly).

Sanitisation breaks should be designed into every training session and competition organisers should allow time for sanitisation within the match timings.

### Hand Sanitisation

All attendees must;

- Wash/sanitise hands before travelling to netball
- Sanitise hands upon arrival at netball activity
- Hands must be sanitised a minimum of every 15 minutes within the session or match
- Hands must be sanitised as departing netball activity

### Netball sanitisation

Netballs can now be shared, this should however be reduced and where possible players should use their own netball. Where netballs are shared for example in game play, the following must happen;

- Sanitise netballs prior to each netball session or match
- A minimum of every 15 minutes, the netball must be sanitised using the follow 4 steps;
  - Sanitise hands
  - Wipe the netball using an antibacterial wipe
  - Dispose of the wipe in the bin
  - Sanitise hands
- For matches a spare 'clean' netball should be available

### Bib Sanitisation

Bibs should not be shared

Bibs should be washed following any washing instructions after each session or match.

### Netball post and other equipment sanitisation

The netball post should be sanitised before any session or match using an antibacterial wipe following the same 4 steps as Netball sanitisation

The netball post should be sanitised immediately if the umpire or a player makes contact with the netball post using an antibacterial wipe following the 4 step above

Netball posts must be sanitised at the end of every session or match

Any other equipment e.g. spots, cones, ladders used within a training session or a netball match must be sanitised both before and after every training session. The 4 steps listed above in the netball section should be used.