

GHA Clubs Festivals Covid-19 Guidance

This document is intended to provide guidance to Clubs attending GHA U8 Mixed, Under 10 and Under 12 girls and boys Festivals during the 2020 – 21 season with the Covid-19 global pandemic. All participants must follow the latest guidance issued by England Hockey on the return to hockey and UK government on the safe return to sport. This version of document covers the April U12 Festivals, changes from previous versions of the document are in blue.

1. All clubs must have a Covid officer and their contact details must be provided to the GHA Festival Organiser, clubs will not be able to participate unless this information has been provided.
2. The contact details for all Covid officers from participating clubs will be provided to all other clubs. This because for the Festivals GHA does not manage teams directly so will not have a Covid officer.
3. It is the responsibility of the clubs to ensure that all teams entered into GHA Festivals follow the EH guidance and adhere to the appropriate protocols. Aspects such as attendance registers and the EH Player Participation agreement are the responsibility of the club and their respective Covid officer.
4. It is recommended that each team entered into a Festival has an appropriate complement of team coach, team manager, umpire, goalkeeper supporter (section 7) and first aider to ensure the wellbeing of the children (section 9) at this difficult time consistent with EH policies on safeguarding. Given that EH guidance allows no more than 30 in a defined area, 10 players and 5 officials in each team would be within this limit.
5. Since it is an EH requirement that equipment is not shared teams must uniquely identify their equipment including balls and ensure only one designated person touches that equipment. Short corner masks must not be shared, they should be uniquely identified so only one player for the duration of the Festival can wear that mask. If sanitizing of equipment between users is planned clubs must check with the equipment manufacturer for material compatibility.
6. Players should ensure their own sticks, water bottles and any other personal equipment is identified and no one else allowed to touch it. These must be removed at the end as no one else can touch anything left behind.
7. In the case of goalkeepers it is a requirement for Under 10 and Under 12 teams that they must play with a fully kitted goalkeeper. The goalkeeping equipment should only be touched by the child wearing it and a parent, carer or member of their support bubble, this is particularly important with young goalkeepers who frequently need their kit adjusting. If a goalkeeper is injured and cannot continue and there is no replacement goalkeeper or kit then that team must halt their participation in the Festival, the kit must not be shared.
8. It is the responsibility of clubs to ensure they have the appropriate items in their first aid kits and have procedures in place to ensure no contamination of the kits can occur during use nor transmission between casualties. This may include PPE. Clubs should also familiarize themselves with the latest guidance on first aid during the Covid-19 pandemic.

9. In order to keep the overall numbers at the Festivals to a minimum spectators are not allowed. Parents, carers or other member of their support bubble must drop off their respective children at the start, returning to collect them at the end. It is recognised that this may raise concerns over the physical, mental or emotional wellbeing of some children. Therefore it is recommended that teams have a full complement of officials, see section 4. See also section 14 regarding the need for social distancing by officials at all times. When moving around the sites players and officials must observe social distancing and avoid standing in any of the one way systems that may be established, space around the pitches in some places is constricted. Those managing a venue will have the authority to ask people to leave if social distancing is not being observed, if this is not effective then they should abandon the Festival immediately. The safety and Covid security of all participants is paramount.
10. The timing of the pitches to be available and the start of matches will be arranged to balance the amount of waiting time against having numbers arriving together. Clubs must make provision to ensure that arrivals are spread out over the available time. Please check the playing schedules and inform your coaches, parents / carers appropriately.
11. On arrival at the Festivals players should make their way directly to where their teams will be congregating. This will be on the pitch where they will play their first game as this will allow space for social distancing. (See section 18 for details of venues and one way systems). Whoever is dropping off the child should not enter the pitch, but leave the child to enter on their own and join their team. This to ensure a one way system operates. A member of the club running the venue will be on hand to direct people.
12. At the end of Festivals the venue needs to be vacated quickly. Teams officials though must ensure that their children are safely collected by a parent, member of their support bubble or the person with whom they will be travelling home(EH guidance no longer allows for children to travel together). It is recommended that the location from which they are to be collected is such that social distancing can be observed.
13. EH guidance provides for all individual players to have hand sanitizer so all players should regularly sanitize their hands and particularly after touching any surfaces where there is a risk of transmission such as gates. It is recommended players sanitize their hands when they first meet up with their team and further both before and after using the toilets.
14. During the Festivals teams when not playing must socially distance from each other and also within their teams. Similarly during matches and at breaks in play, particularly coaches, team managers and substitutes. No one should congregate in groups of more than 6 and be socially distanced at all times.
15. At the end of matches players should touch sticks and quickly leave the pitch, no hand shaking or three cheers.
16. EH provide posters and other material concerning all Covid-19 secure provisions, these can be downloaded from EH website and clubs are recommended to do this and to provide these to their players, coaches, parents, carers.
17. If goals are not in position then the club running the venue will be responsible for moving them provided the facility allows this. In this event the club should have available disinfectant spray for those surfaces where the goals will have been touched. If wipes are used then safe disposal means must be provided and the waste taken away. No other pitch equipment should be moved.
18. At each venue the dugouts should not be used as they offer too little space for social distancing. Each venue will have designated toilets and one way systems, further details of this will be provided, but in general:

- a. Cheltenham Ladies College – pitches have only one entrance / exit so care must be taken to ensure one way operation at all times with social distancing. Teams will mostly play on one pair of pitches, but if it is necessary to move between pitch pairs then those teams leaving must do so quickly and exit before the other teams enter. There will be toilets in the sports centre for emergencies and players will need to ask at reception for access, they will need smart phones to be able to read the QR code to report via the NHS Test and Trace app.
 - b. Dean Close – teams will enter from the gates at the changing rooms end of the pitches and leave by the gates at the far end when not playing. Information on which toilets to use and how to access them will be provided to teams ahead of the Festivals or from the member of Dean Close staff present at the Festival. Teams should try to make arrangements to keep the number of parents, carers coming on site to a minimum and for children to be collected with parents, carers remaining in their cars. Child safety though remains paramount.
 - c. Bournside – there is a defined one way system for use of the toilets, entry into the sports centre is unnecessary for teams to access the astro. There is plenty of space around the pitch for teams to socially distance when not playing.
19. Due to the need to socially distance if the weather forecast is for heavy rain or for it to last the entire period of a Festival then the event will be cancelled. The temptation to congregate in confined spaces to shelter is too great a risk.

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