



# Merritt Youth Soccer Association

## **RETURN TO SOCCER PLAN**

April 2021

## Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	3
<b>COVID-19 AND TRANSMISSION - ViaSport</b> .....	3
<b>RETURN TO PLAY SPECIFICS</b> .....	4
<b>Restrictions in Place as of March 2021</b> .....	4
<b>5 Principles of MYSA's Return to Play Plan</b> .....	5
Enhanced Protocols / Personal Hygiene .....	5
Stay Home If You Are Sick .....	5
Environmental Hygiene .....	6
Safe Social Interactions .....	6
Physical Modifications.....	6
<b>Outdoor Play: Field Details</b> .....	6
Participants .....	6
Non-Contact Activities.....	7
Contact Activities.....	7
Competition .....	7
<b>PROGRAM REGISTRATION</b> .....	7
<b>ON-FIELD PLAN</b> .....	7
<b>Appendix A: MYSA Agreement to Compete Daily Health Check – Player</b> .....	9
<b>Appendix B: Return to Sport: Transition Measures</b> .....	11

## **INTRODUCTION**

Merritt Youth Soccer Association's (MYSA) Return to Soccer Plan will outline the steps our association is taking to maximize the safety of all players and coaches who will be participating in MYSA programming. All information presented here aligns with ViaSport's *Return to Sport Guidelines* and BC Soccer's *Return to Play Plan*.

On December 2, 2020 the BC Health Authority and specifically Dr. Henry announced added restrictions that impact soccer in BC. These fall under the Provincial Health Authority Order so we must comply. These restrictions were extended in early January 2021 and again on February 5, 2021. Adult indoor and outdoor soccer is suspended.

Youth indoor and outdoor soccer can occur under [BC Soccer's Phase 1 Soccer Guidelines](#) with the following restrictions:

- Physical distance is now classified as 3 metres.
- No spectators on playing surfaces.
- Players may travel to their home club/team.

MYSA will be working closely with the BC Soccer and the City of Merritt to ensure safe operations at both city and school district facilities while adhering to direction from the Public Health Officer.

Additionally, all participants (players and coaches alike) will understand their responsibility in following COVID-19 protocols and their role in maintaining a safe playing environment for their teammates and volunteers.

MYSA will ensure this safety plan is available to membership by posting the most up to date information on the MYSA website ([www.merrityouthsoccer.com](http://www.merrityouthsoccer.com)) and distribute updates via email.

## **COVID-19 AND TRANSMISSION - ViaSport**

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 players, coaches or volunteers (balls, equipment, etc.).

## RETURN TO PLAY SPECIFICS

We are currently in **Phase 2 of ViaSport's Return to Sport** plan, which is **Phase 1 BC Soccer's Return to Play** plan. All programming will follow the measures outlined in the table below and will progressively loosen with each phase.

It is important that MYSA membership understands each of the above phases in terms of the guidelines, responsibilities and the associated protocols so that participants are aware of “what to expect” upon arrival at the field.

## SPORT ACTIVITY CHART

**PHO Orders supersede the guidance in this chart.**

This chart outlines the types of activities that can be considered in the various return phases.

	Strictest Controls Phase 1	Transition Measures Phase 2	Progressively Loosen Phase 3	New Normal (Future date TBC)
<b>Restrictions in Place</b>	<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 (3m)</li> <li>No non-essential travel</li> <li>No group gatherings over 50 people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to PHO and local health authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to PHO and local health authorities</li> </ul>
<b>Enhanced Protocols</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased hand hygiene</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased hand hygiene</li> <li>Symptom Screening in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased personal hygiene, cleaning protocols and symptom screening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased hand hygiene</li> </ul>
<b>Facility</b>	<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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants should maintain physical distance while not on field of play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdoor/Indoor</li> </ul>
<b>Participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small Groups</li> <li>No spectators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groups sizes increase based on sport type (i.e. level of contact).</li> <li>Participants and spectators must adhere to 50 people max per event public health guidance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large groups allowed</li> <li>No restrictions on spectators</li> </ul>
<b>Non-contact Activities</b>	<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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where feasible, limit contact (i.e. coming within two metres) in training and sport activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No restrictions on activity type</li> </ul>
<b>Contact Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should not occur</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should not occur</li> <li>Contact sports should look for non-contact alternatives to training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cohort model introduced for sports that cannot maintain 2m physical distancing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No restrictions on activity type</li> </ul>
<b>Competition*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should not occur</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In club play or modified games may slowly be introduced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competition slowly introduced.</li> <li>Regional competition for sports in cohorts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provincial competitions and larger scale events may return</li> </ul>
<b>Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No shared equipment</li> </ul>	<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>Enhanced cleaning protocols in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared equipment</li> </ul>
<b>Travel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unlimited</li> </ul>

\*Introduction of competitive activities should be in alignment with sport-specific guidelines.

## Restrictions in Place as of March 2021

- Physical distance is now classified as 3 metres.
- No spectators on playing surfaces.
- The player to coach ratio is 10:1, thus, MYSA will assign teams accordingly.
- Players may travel to their home club/team.
- MYSA is committed to ongoing communication and adherence to BC Soccer's recommendations and staying current on the guidelines from the Public Health Officer.
- A minimum of 3 metres of physical distancing is to be maintained upon entry to the field.
- Coaches will be responsible for ensuring that players and volunteers follow this safety guideline.
- MYSA will provide entrance and exit signage on fields that have the potential for “bottle necking” to reduce contact between groups.

- Central Elementary: Entrance Playground side- Exit point on Voght Street.
  - Participants are required to wear a mask until they get to their designated area with their coach.
- On fields where there are multiple entry points (Voght, for example), participants will be reminded to practice social distancing.
- Each regular size field will have no more than **50** participants (players, coaches, and volunteers) on the field.
- Soccer activity will include skill development only and will remain no contact under **BC Soccer's Phase 1** guidelines. No game play will be permitted under these restrictions.
- Practices will be scheduled with 15-minute intervals between practices to lessen the gathering of people and cross-over.
- Participants are to arrive no more than 10-minutes prior to practice time and must exit the field within 10-minutes of conclusion of activity.
- Players must arrive to field fully dressed.
- **All players must bring their own pre-filled water bottle.**
- **There will be no group snacking permitted (for example, oranges) this season.**
- There will be no tournaments scheduled and no traveling outside of the community connected to soccer activity.

## 5 Principles of MYSA's Return to Play Plan

The measures that will be taken by MYSA during Phase 1 will follow the Five Principles from BC's Restart Plan and are outlined below. This list is not exhaustive and additional measures may be in place when you attend your program.

### Enhanced Protocols / Personal Hygiene

- Players, volunteers and coaches must self-assess prior to arriving at the field as instructed in "**MYSA Agreement to Compete Daily Health Check – Player**" form found [HERE](#).
- Signed forms must be completed and returned to coaches prior to player participation with MYSA activities.
- MYSA to provide a host to facilitate entry on to the field and provide direction to players and volunteers. Hosts will be identified by a **High-Visibility Vest**.
- Athletes are required to follow proper hand hygiene protocols prior to and during activities, including hand sanitizing before and after.
- All participants will verbally confirm to their coaches that they are healthy and symptom free upon arrival.
- Coaches will indicate on a DATED attendance sheet that:
  1. Player was in attendance
  2. Player verbally confirmed that they are healthy and symptom free
 These steps will aid in contact tracing if needed.
- Athletes are required to follow proper hand hygiene protocols prior to and during activities, including hand sanitizing before and after.
- Hand sanitizer will be available at the field.
- Social distancing measures will be in place at the field before, during, and after soccer activity.
- Participants will refrain from physical contact with all other individuals (who do not live in their household) while at the field.
- Participants are expected to cough / sneeze into their elbow and not their hands.

### Stay Home If You Are Sick

- Participants must assess their own state of health before leaving home to attend programming

- Players will be required to check-in with the designated coach) upon arrival at all programming and verbally confirm with their coaches that they are healthy and symptom free before participating as noted above.
- Parents/Guardians and Players have agreed to this measure by signing the **MYSA Agreement to Compete Daily Health Check – Player ([HERE](#))** prior to participation. Coaches will retain copies of the signed agreement.

### **Environmental Hygiene**

- All training equipment (balls, cones, goal posts, etc.) will be sanitized after use.
- Pinnies will not be used. Activities should be planned with this in mind.
- No heading or throw-ins. In place of throw ins, kick-ins will be implemented.
- Minimal sharing of program equipment whenever possible.
- No heading or handling of the ball (except in the case of goalkeepers)
- No sharing of water bottles or any other personal equipment
- GKs are not to share gloves or spit into their gloves.

### **Safe Social Interactions**

- Players are to arrive at the field ready to play and are not to get changed at the field.
- Players will have a designated personal training space.
- Participants will maintain 3m physical distancing from all others at all times (except with members of the same household).
- Any activity leader that must move within 3m of physical distance to tend to a participant will wear a mask and, in the case of physical contact, gloves.
- Reduced volume of participants on a field (12 per ¼ of an 11v11 field – per BC Soccer guidelines).
- Non-contact activities during Phase 1.

### **Physical Modifications**

- Designated Ingress / Egress points / paths specific to each field and area of play on fields that may experience bottle necking, for example, Central Elementary School.
- Clearly defined training areas for each group of participants.
- Players, coaches, and designated staff at the field only
- Spectators not permitted near the play area and are asked to watch from afar while maintaining appropriate physical distancing.
- **PLEASE NOTE: The following age groups require one parent/ guardian to remain at the field (preferably in their vehicles) in the U5, U7, U9 for safety reasons.**

### **Outdoor Play: Field Details**

- All MYSA soccer programming will take place outdoors on the City of Merritt Voght Park and at local elementary school fields.
- Signage will also be put up to remind about physical distance and field number limits.
- Details regarding entry and exit points where required will be available to all parents/participants once scheduling is finalized.

### **Participants**

- Reduced volume of participants of no more than **50** participants (players, coaches, and volunteers) on a field.
- **A 10:1 player to coach ratio will be implemented.**
- Players will not be permitted to transfer or move between fields.

- All participants (players, coaches, & volunteers) will abide by and follow the agreements, policies, and procedures outlined below. These items have been developed to ensure the safety of all participants and of our community as a whole. This is required reading from every individual who may be present at one of our programs.
- In the case of younger children, parents are expected to outline their responsibilities to them prior to the commencement of any program.
  - **MYSA Agreement to Compete Daily Health Check – Player** [HERE](#)
  - Signed Return to Play Plan for Coaches and Volunteers
- Under this phase of play, no spectators are permitted on playing surfaces.
- Any coach or first aid attendant that must move within 3 meters of physical distance to tend to a participant will wear a mask and, in the case of physical contact, gloves.

### **Non-Contact Activities**

- Focus will be placed on station-based approach drills/activities to limit physical contact.
- Avoid line ups and use of player’s benches.
- Coaches will refer to BC Soccer and Canada Soccer recommended low-contact drills and session plans that can be found [HERE](#).
- Additional resources from BC Soccer can be found [HERE](#).

### **Contact Activities**

- No contact will occur during this phase of play.
- Cohort model recommended by BC Soccer & Canada Soccer as soccer is considered a “contact” sport.
- Players will be kept in their assigned cohort/team groups and will not transfer between groups.

### **Competition**

- No competition will take place in BC Soccer’s Phase I Return to Play plan.

## **PROGRAM REGISTRATION**

- Registration for all current MYSA soccer programs will be done online.
- Players/parents will be required to sign and bring to the first day of soccer the **MYSA Agreement to Compete Daily Health Check – Player**.

## **ON-FIELD PLAN**

MYSA may use different fields for its soccer programs depending upon registration and availability from City of Merritt and School District 58 and this may impact scheduling.

### **Entry and Exit Field Plans**

Fields that require marked entry points will receive increased signage. Signs will mark each entry and exit and participants will be informed of entry/exit via signage, email communication and a MYSA host.

Due to fencing, Central Elementary School has an increased risk for bottle necking and will receive increased attention from MYSA to ensure safety. Entry/Exit points will be marked by the following:

- Entry: West side of the field by the playground.
- Exit: East side of the fields on Voght Avenue.

### **Upon arrival at the field**

- All participants will be asked to sanitize

- All coaches will take note of players in attendance for record keeping and contact tracing if required. (Coaches will be provided with attendance sheets that are inclusive of names, dates, and verbal confirmation of health check)

**Spectators/Parents are not permitted on the field (playing surfaces).**

**First Aid kits will be provided to each team in their equipment bag.** All First Aid kits will be stocked with gloves and masks in the event of an injury that requires an attendant to move within 3 meters of a participant.

In the unlikely event of an injury the following protocols will be followed:

- The coach will communicate with the player to assess the injury verbally, at the minimum 3-meter physical distance
- Depending on the injury, the following may occur:
  - The player will sit out until they feel better to re-join
  - The player will receive first aid treatment from the coach using gloves and a mask
  - If required, emergency services will be contacted.

#### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

We are following all recommended steps to ensure the safety of all participants. In addition to the guidelines outlined above, MYSA will be implementing the following measures to mitigate risk:

- ✓ Monitor advice and direction from health and sport authorities
- ✓ Manage any contact tracing reports
- ✓ Oversee all program implementation to ensure compliance



## Appendix A: MYSA Agreement to Compete Daily Health Check – Player



### Merritt Youth Soccer Association Agreement to Complete Daily Health Check - Player

This form indicates the family’s agreement to assess their child(ren) for symptoms of COVID- 19 daily and to ensure their child does not attend any MYSA functions if they have symptoms or answer yes to any of the daily screening questions.

During the 2021 soccer season, parents/guardians and caregivers must assess their child(ren) daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory diseases before sending them to MYSA functions. **If a child has any symptoms, they must not participate in any MYSA activities.**

Players who experience seasonal allergies or other COVID-19-like symptoms that are related to an existing condition can continue to attend MYSA functions when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal. If they experience any change in symptoms, they should seek assessment by a health care provider.

Players may still attend MYSA functions if a member of their household has cold, influenza, or COVID- 19-like symptoms, provided the player is asymptomatic. It is expected that the symptomatic household member is seeking assessment by a health care provider.

Our team volunteers will monitor all players for symptoms throughout the session. If a player develops symptoms while at the field, parents/guardians will be contacted to pick the player up and take them home until symptoms have passed. If the symptoms get worse, parents/guardians should contact their physician or call 811 for further instructions.

MYSA will continue to follow all guidelines from the BC Soccer, VIA Sport and the Provincial Health Officer. Please note that guidelines may change and MYSA will monitor these changes closely.

You will be asked to self-assess daily and to sign a declaration.

Player name(print): \_\_\_\_\_

Division: \_\_\_\_\_

Coach: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Merritt Youth Soccer Association Agreement to Complete Daily Health Check - Player

Please keep this page somewhere it can be easily accessed daily. You must answer the following daily screening questions BEFORE your child(ren) comes to the arena.

If you answer yes to any of the below questions, your player must stay home.

If you answer “YES” to any of the below question, call 8-1-1, use the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#), or contact a health care professional and take instruction from there. You must immediately contact your coaching team and provide any information or direction given by public health.

Daily Screening Questions	YES ✓	NO ✓
Has your child been ill or had any symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 24 hours?		
Has your child or anyone in your household returned from travel outside of Canada in the last 14 days?		
Is your child or anyone in your household a close contact of a person confirmed to have COVID-19? (Public Health will alert you if this is the case)		

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever
- Chills
- Cough or worsening of chronic cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Runny nose / stuffy nose
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Muscle aches Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Dizziness, confusion
- Abdominal pain
- Skin rashes or discoloration of fingers or toes

Check BCCDC’s Symptoms of COVID-19 regularly to ensure the list is up to date.

## Appendix B: Return to Sport: Transition Measures

Please note the following amendments effective February 2021:

- Physical distance is now classified as 3 metres.
- No spectators.
- Players may travel to their home club/team.



### PHASE 2 RETURN TO SPORT: TRANSITION MEASURES

In mid-May, B.C. entered into what is being referred to by the provincial government as Phase Two (2). In this phase, sport was able to operate under enhanced protocols including:

1. Allow for participants to maintain physical distancing
  - Two meters apart from one another
  - Non-contact activities only
  - No handshaking, high fives, hugging, etc.
2. Look to reduce touch points with respect to equipment
  - See next section for further details
3. Focus on skill development or low risk activities
  - Activities should be those typically done in practice and/or training environments
  - Individuals will have had limited exposure to physical activity for the last six+ weeks while confined to their homes. Ensure that activities consider their ability that day (not where they previously may have been) and have injury prevention top of mind
4. Remain community focused
  - Stay within the home sport community or club(s) where participants are members
  - Avoid cross-regional, inter-provincial or cross-country travel. Note that non-essential travel within B.C. and Canada is currently very strongly discouraged (this is expected to change later in the summer). International travel is subject to quarantine rules and raises other risks including unpredictable flight schedule changes and cancellations, and the potential for sudden changes to border controls.



Not in scope during this phase are:

- activities that cannot maintain physical distancing (including contact activities)
- activities that have a high risk of injury
- competitive activities that encourage large group gatherings
- large public events or gatherings of over 50 people
- activities that require travel

Examples of possible sport-specific modifications:

- For team sports – focus on drills and training exercises in small groups
- For contact sports – move to non-contact skills training in small groups or shadow sparring
- Use of side by side courts/lanes/sheets of ice – limit the number of people per court/lane/sheet of ice, create directional flow of traffic, consider use of only alternating lanes

For higher risk activities or programming where a sport decides that it is not feasible to reopen at this time based on the number of modifications required, online or at-home strategies could be considered.