

AGBU Montreal Sports - **Return to Play Policy**

➤ **Introduction**

Across the country, sports programs are gradually resuming. After 6 months off, we are eager to do the same. However, today's environment is without question completely different than in previous years and requires a new approach.

That's why we have worked to produce this *Return to Play Policy* which establishes guidelines and requirements for all sports members. The purpose of these guidelines is to create a safe environment to protect players, coaches and families, while allowing for sports to resume. These guidelines are inspired by recommendations from the *Ministère de l'Éducation du Loisir et du Sport* and *Basketball Québec*.

➤ **Requirements**

All AGBU sports members are required to comply with these guidelines. Every member should take the time to read, understand and familiarize themselves with these new changes. Failure to follow these guidelines will not only result in the immediate suspension of the entire group but it jeopardizes the health of the entire AGBU community, the school and may compromise the entire sports program.

➤ **Summary of new measures**

- Understanding the risk
- Wearing a mask
- Physical distancing
- Team bubbles
- Gradual return
- Entry and exit
- Team manager
- Triage when entering
- Attendance
- Auto questionnaire
- Hand sanitizing
- Limited shared space
- Gym disinfection
- Procedure if outbreak

➤ Understanding the risk

- Sports are associated with a risk of being infected with COVID-19. While the safety measures implemented in this policy will reduce the risk of being infected, they will not completely eliminate the risk. **All sports members – players, coaches and parents of minors - must sign a consent waiver** confirming that they accept the risks associated with participating in sports.
- There may be different levels of comfort when it comes to resuming sports. Some people may be eager to return, resistant to return, or indifferent. Some people may have been severely impacted by the pandemic through illness or the death of a loved one or loss of employment. Be aware of these different emotional possibilities and have emotional awareness of others around you. Your level of comfort is not necessarily the same level as others’.
- While anyone can become infected with the virus, some people are more vulnerable to developing severe illness or complications from COVID-19^{1,2}. **People at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, and those who live with them, should strongly consider not playing** until the pandemic is resolved. In particular, although children and adolescents are less affected by COVID-19 than adults, **parents should consider their own health risk** before deciding whether their children will participate.

Tool to help assess whether you are at a high risk :

1. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/people-high-risk-for-severe-illness-covid-19.html>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>

➤ Wearing a mask when indoors

- Wearing a mask is **mandatory when indoors** for everyone ages 12 and up. It is suggested but not mandatory for children under the age of 12.
- Wearing a mask is mandatory **at all times except when you are playing.**
 - You must arrive wearing your mask
 - You must keep your mask on while getting ready until practice starts
 - You must exit wearing the mask
 - You should only remove your mask when you are fully ready and when the basketball practice or hockey scrimmage is about to start.
 - During practice you don't need to wear a mask when you are "subbing" or sitting on the bench, but you must maintain a 2 meter distance with other players on your team who are also subbing.
- **Your mask must cover your mouth and nose** at all times. Don't touch and adjust your mask as you walk, speak or wait. **Take the time needed to adjust your mask properly in your car before entering the gym.** Don't place your mask under your chin or under your nose at any time.
- Forgot your mask? Go back home and get one. If you are not wearing a properly fitted mask, you are not permitted to enter the gym. No exceptions.

➤ Physical distancing

- Everyone present in the gym must **maintain a 2 meter distance**, except players on the court while they are playing.
- COVID-19 is an airborne virus that is most easily transmitted when you have close contact (less than 2m) with an infected person for an extended period of time (more than 15min). Basketball and hockey are team sports that cannot be played while continuously maintaining a physical distance. However, **it is possible and mandatory to maintain a 2 meter distance** and therefore reduce the risk of transmission during the following moments :
 - a) when you **enter** the gym
 - b) when you **exit** the gym
 - c) while you **wait to access** the court
 - d) while you are **getting ready** or dressed
 - e) while you are **subbing or sitting** on the bench during practice
 - f) while doing certain **skill development drills** such as dribbling
- Do not engage in behaviour that encourages the spread of germs
 - a) No handshakes. No high fives. No hugging. No huddles ☹️
 - b) No sharing of personal items such as water bottles
 - c) Do not touch players in the face with your hands
 - d) Do not lick your fingers and touch the basketball (even after Covid!)
 - e) Do not put your fingers in your mouth (even after Covid!)
 - f) Do not spit (even after Covid!)
 - g) Be mindful of not excessively yelling or screaming because that favours the transmission of this airborne virus.

➤ Team bubbles

- Similar to how schools have placed students into bubbles, **each team will operate in their own bubble**. The idea is to limit the number of interactions with other people not in your group, so that if someone is infected, only the members in the bubble or in that team will be potentially impacted.
- Each team must have a **set roster** of players and coaches. Players cannot play on more than one team. Previously some teams would call “subs”, some players would practice with multiple basketball teams or some players would participate in both floor hockey and basketball. That is no longer allowed. Only registered members who have completed consent forms can participate.
- There will be **strict hours of entry and exit** for each team. This is especially important for youth teams, kids cannot enter the gym before their practice time.
- There will be **no overlap between teams** which means all members of one team will no longer be in the building before the next team enters the gym. Before a new team enters, the gym will be sanitized (more below).
- Only players and coaches that are on a team’s roster are allowed in the gym. **Parents or guests are not permitted to enter the school**. However, for young children, there will be a special process for entering the school (more below).
- The pandemic and the environment under which we will resume playing is constantly evolving. More than ever, it’s important for communication to be quick, easy and effective. It’s very possible that a practice is cancelled last minute, or that the school is closed or that the government imposes a pause or that a potential case breaks out, etc. For most people the fastest and easiest way to communicate is through cell phones. That’s why **every team will have a WhatsApp group (cell phone application that is free) for players, coaches and parents to get live updates**. The usual methods of communication such as email and calling will still be used but everyone should verify WhatsApp before each practice to see if there are any updates for your specific team.

➤ Gradual return

- The return to play will be a **gradual** process.
- As we begin, only practices will take place. Specifically for the youth basketball teams, the focus will be on skill development and working in small groups in 2v2 and 3v3 settings. Each team will only practice once a week.
- Gradually, if the guidelines are respected and there are no outbreaks, we will progressively expand the activities. If things go well, we will consider adding a second practice or adding games on a gradual team-by-team basis, reducing some of the restrictions, etc. **This is a new era for everyone, we're going to proceed slowly and with caution.**

➤ Limited shared space

- **Sports members will only have access to the gym.** In accordance with the current public health recommendations, the use of other areas of the school beyond the gym is prohibited. **There is no access to showers, bathrooms or anywhere beyond the gym** except in the case of an emergency (ex : injury). Plan ahead. Exceptions will be made for young children who absolutely need to go to restroom but please encourage them to go at home before practice.
- **Arrive at the practice already dressed.** Plan ahead. Basketball players should arrive already wearing their shorts and shirt underneath their clothes, because they won't have access to the restrooms. Hockey players are encouraged to do the same, but they can put on their extra protective gear (gloves, shin pads) once they are inside the gym. Hockey goalies are exempt from this, they can arrive and get fully dressed inside the gym as they normally would.
- **Bring your own water bottle.** There will be no access to the water fountain.
- **For the floor hockey players.** Tables can be moved around the gym to setup for the sport but it is **not permitted to move tables outside the gym in the corridor** because access is limited to only the gymnasium. All tables must be returned to their original position.

➤ Entry and exit

- **ADULT teams : must enter and exit the school from the side of the gym** (the door near the stage that leads to the backyard). The objective here is to limit access to the gymnasium only, and to avoid other areas of the school.
- **YOUTH teams : must enter from the main entrance of the school and must exit from the side of the gym** (the door near the stage that leads to backyard). Kids will therefore briefly be in the school corridor when they arrive but only to complete the triage process, after which they will immediately enter the gym.
 - During the drop-off, parents can accompany their kids until the main entrance but cannot enter the school.
 - During the pick-up, parents should be in the school backyard to greet and pick up their kids.

➤ Increased cleaning of the gym

- **Before and after each practice, there will be a disinfection process of the common surfaces used in the gym, particularly benches, handles, the stage area and the basketballs.**
- As mentioned, there will be strict hours of entry and exit for each team, and there will be no overlap between teams. Once a team has fully exited the gym, the disinfection process will begin. The next team will only be allowed to enter once the disinfection process is complete. The scheduling of practices will be staggered to allow a buffer time between one session and the next session.

► Triage

- Beyond any other safety measure in place, the most important factor in preventing the spread of COVID-19 and creating as safe an environment as possible is each member accepting **personal responsibility** about their health. **Simply put, no one should enter the gym if they, a household member or close contact are feeling sick.**
- **Before each practice, all participants including coaches must complete an auto-questionnaire confirming that they are fit to be present on that day.**
 - A. If you have any flu-like symptoms, you must stay home**

The symptoms of Covid-19 are not exclusive to this disease. A common cold, the flu, allergies, asthma, the side effects of a vaccine and gastroenteritis all have symptoms in common with Covid-19. Since these illnesses all share common symptoms and that it is *impossible* to distinguish them from one another strictly based on the way you feel (only a Covid-19 test could confirm that you are not infected), if you have any of these symptoms => stay home.
 - B. If you have been in contact with someone with a suspected, probable or confirmed case of Covid-19, you must stay home**

See section “what if there’s a confirmed or suspected case” for more details on the length of time you must stay away.
 - C. If you or a household member are returning from a trip outside Canada during the last 14 days, you must stay home.**
- **Before entering, all participants including coaches must get their temperature checked.** This will be done and noted by the team manager.
- **Before entering, all participants including coaches must wash their hands with hand sanitizer.**

➤ Team manager

- **Every team must have a team manager** with many crucial responsibilities :
 - A. **Entering the gym first and being responsible for the triage process.**

The team manager must be first person to arrive, and must take charge of the triage process for the entire team. No one else can enter before the team manager has arrived and before having gone through the triage.
 - B. **Taking attendance of each person attending that practice** and having each person's name, cell phone and email.
 - C. **Ensuring each person has completed the auto questionnaire.**
 - D. **Taking the temperature of each person** before they enter.

Returning the thermometer in its proper place afterwards.
 - E. **Ensuring each person is respecting the protocols during practice :**

physical distancing, mask wearing, hand sanitizing, proper entry and exit, limiting access to only the gymnasium, etc.
 - F. **Communicating** with the group and sports committee in case of a problem
- Although every team must have at least 1 person assigned as their team manager, we strongly suggest that each team have 2 people who can share the task, in case the team manager is unavailable on a given week.
- **For youth basketball teams, the team manager must be a parent.** The original plan for this season was for **each youth team to have 1-2 parents serve as assistant coaches** to help coach Fadi during practices. **The new procedures in place due to the Covid-19 pandemic make it even more essential to have parents serve as assistant coaches**, to help with the team manager tasks listed above, to assist Fadi during practice and to be able to replace coach Fadi if he himself is unavailable due to these restrictions.

➤ What if there's a confirmed or probable case ?

🔴 If you have a confirmed case of Covid-19 or suspect that you are infected, it goes without saying that you should quarantine at home. You should inform your close contacts and relatives, and if needed seek medical help.

In addition, as members of AGBU Montreal, you have a responsibility to immediately inform the community by following the protocol below.

- **Any member with a confirmed or probable case of Covid-19 must immediately inform the team manager.**
- **The team manager must immediately notify all members of that team AND must also immediately notify the sports committee** who in turn will inform the school, other teams and the Direction de santé publique de Montréal.
- **The entire team will be on pause for at least 14 days.** What's next?
According to the current Canadian health guidelines as of Sept 10 2020, anyone who had close contact with someone infected or suspected to have Covid-19 must quarantine for at least 14 days from the date you had close contact. This means **all members of the team should quarantine**. Even if you test negative for Covid-19 or feel healthy, you should stay home (quarantine) since symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus.
- **After the 14 day pause :**

Players who **NEVER had symptoms** during that time can **return**.

Players who **HAD SYMPTOMS AT ANY POINT must wait until they have no symptoms for 14 consecutive days before returning**. The team manager will have to document the dates and validate the return. In this context, it is **strongly recommended** that anyone exhibiting symptoms pass a Covid-19 screening test and confirm that they tested negative before returning.

Breaking this protocol in any way will result in a 2 year ban from sports

➤ Pricing

- Membership cost **until the month of January** :
 - For 1 adult : **125 \$** (100\$ + 25\$ Covid-19 surcharge)
 - For 1 child : **125 \$** (100\$ + 25\$ Covid-19 surcharge)
 - For 2 children : **200 \$** (for each : 75\$ + 25\$ Covid-19 surcharge)
 - For 3 children : **300 \$** (for each : 75\$ + 25\$ Covid-19 surcharge)
- All payments must be **made online before** the start of the season.
- The only accepted methods of payment this year are :
 - **e-transfer** (preferred method because AGBU avoids credit card fees)
 - **credit card** (must call AGBU secretary during weekly working hours)

➤ Conclusion

- We understand that for many members, this is the first time you will be seeing your friends in many months. We understand the natural urge to loosen up and forget about all these restrictions, sit next to each other, high-five, etc. However, you simply can't do that for the time being.

All activities are monitored by video. One bad apple will ruin this opportunity for everyone and can compromise the safety of the entire AGBU community.

Appreciate the opportunity to resume playing sports, respect these guidelines and let's return to play safely and securely.