

# COVID-19 Case Policy

## 1. Scope of Policy

This Policy is applicable to the NIFL Premiership, Championship and Premier Intermediate League.

## 2. Covid-19 Case

- a) In the event that a player or players of a club are placed into mandatory quarantine or required to self-isolate in accordance with the regulations or mandatory guidance issued by the Public Health Agency the match involving that club will go ahead as scheduled as long as the team has at least 13 players (including at least one goalkeeper) available for selection on the IFA Comet system and compliant with the respective competition rules.
- b) If, however, a club is not in a position to field a team, with the above mentioned number of players (13 players including at least one goal-keeper available for selection on the IFA Comet system and compliant with the respective competition rules), or the home venue of such club has been closed on the direction of the Public Health Agency, the match will be re-scheduled upon request to a date to be fixed by the relevant League Management Committee, or appointed Sub Committee, who shall have power to assign and re-schedule the match to a neutral venue if it is deemed it appropriate.
- c) In the event that the match is re-scheduled the home club will remain responsible for all of the organisation of the re-scheduled fixture and all related costs. In the event that a match cannot be played or completed on the date appointed for the re-scheduled fixture the relevant League Management Committee, or appointed Sub Committee, will have authority to make a decision on the matter. The club that is responsible for the match not taking place or not being played in full will be declared to have forfeited the match unless the relevant Committee comes to the conclusion that both or neither of the clubs are responsible for the match not taking place or not being played in full. In this event the match will not be declared as forfeited and the outcome of the match will be decided by drawing lots (with a scoreline of 1-0 awarded) carried out by the relevant Committee.
- d) Neutral venues will be determined by the Managing Director and Chair of the Relevant League Management Committee who will aim to ensure fair and reasonable costs.

## 3. Independent Panel

- a) If a Club requests a postponement for any COVID-19 related matter (The Request), which cannot be determined in article 2 (above), it will be referred to an appointed Independent Panel (The Panel). The Panel reserves the right to seek independent medical advice where it deems necessary.
- b) The Request must provide a detailed description including all relevant dates, medical information, contact tracing and persons involved. The request must provide the following evidence:
  - i. A player(s) has been contacted through Track and Trace, and have booked a test and/or;

- ii. A player(s) has been contacted through Track and Trace and advised to self isolate for a period of 14 days and/or;
- iii. A player(s) are awaiting a test result or;
- iv. A player(s) have had a positive test result.
- v. A venue has been directed to close by the Public Health Agency.
- vi. The panel may also request further information as they deem necessary.

\*GDPR considerations must be taken into account throughout this process and clubs must receive the individual players permission to share such information.

- c) The request must be submitted in writing to formally request a postponement, accompanied by a fee of £500 (Premiership clubs), £250 (Championship clubs) and £100 (Premier Intermediate Clubs). The fee shall be paid to NIFL via Bank Transfer within 48 hours of the request. Such deposit shall be returned if the Panel recommends a postponement.
- d) The Panel may refer the matter back to the relevant League Management Committee for consideration if they deem the request to be frivolous in nature. Where it is proven that a club has attempted to misuse this policy for their benefit they shall be subject to a points deduction as determined by members of the NIFL Board who have no conflict of interest in the league or competition under consideration.

#### *4. Role of the Panel and Decision*

- a) The role of The Panel is to consider The Request and to make an informed recommendation based on all of the information provided. The Panel will notify the NIFL Managing Director of its recommendation in writing as soon as it has been made. If the match is to be played within 48 hours, the Managing Director will liaise with the panel for an urgent decision.
- b) If a request is submitted on the day of a match the club submitting its request shall use its best endeavours to provide the Panel of the information listed in 4a) above. The Panel reserves the right to postpone the match if sufficient information is received from the applicant club which raises concern for player or public welfare.
- c) The NIFL will use electronic communications (Email, Conference Call or text) to communicate the recommendations or final decisions referenced a) where so necessary due to time constraints.

#### *5. Status of an unfulfilled fixture due to a Positive COVID-19 Test*

- a) Any Club refusing or failing to play a scheduled fixture on a date fixed by the relevant League Management Committee or appointed Fixtures Sub Committee (except for reasons due to circumstances relating to the COVID 19 Pandemic which are particularly set out in article 2 above) and without sufficient reasons for so doing, shall be adjudged to have lost the match, with their opponents awarded three points in respect of that match and a score-line of 3-0 recorded in its favour, and will be otherwise dealt with as the Committee may determine.
- b) Should both clubs refuse or fail to play a scheduled fixture on a date fixed by the relevant League Management Committee or appointed Fixtures Sub Committee (except for reasons due to circumstances relating to the COVID 19 Pandemic which are particularly set out in clause 2 above) and without sufficient reasons for so doing, neither club will be awarded

any points for the fixture and both clubs shall have a minus three (-3) goal difference recorded against them.

#### *6. Amendment to Policy*

The NIFL Board reserves the right to review this policy and make amendments throughout Season 2020/21 as the Covid-19 pandemic evolves.