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Donald Cameron, MSP
Governor Covid-19 Committee
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Dear Donald

Thank you for requesting further information following Mike Russell, Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs recent evidence session with the Covid-19 Committee. This letter provides a further update on the areas requested.

The physical education guidelines, following the advice published on 10 September, from the Covid-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues¹, state that physical education within primary and secondary school settings should only take place outdoors for the time being. This advice relate to all activities, not just contact sports. The advice goes on to state that "The re-introduction of indoor physical education should be in line with the plans for allowing over 12 year olds to participate in indoor contact sports."

Simultaneously, the Phase 3 'Coronavirus (Covid-19) guidance for the opening of indoor and outdoor sport and leisure facilities'², also published on 10 September, provided an indicative date of 5 October 2020 for the resumption of indoor contact sports and competition for those 12 years of age or older. Indoor contact and non-contact sports training, activity and competition could already be undertaken by children up to and including the age of 11 years. Physical education has continued to take place outdoors, while some contact and non-contact physical activity and sport for children and young people in sports clubs and the community has resumed indoors during the period August – October 2020.

The scientific advice considers the difference between a school setting and a sports club/leisure facility setting, and caution is required to keep children and young people safe.

¹ [Covid-19-advisory sub-group on education and children's issues advisory note on physical education, music and drama in schools](#)

² [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Guidance for the opening of indoor and outdoor sport and leisure facilities](#)

Tha Ministearan na h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus an Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

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However, in consideration of the changed position on infection and transmission rates, the evidence and experience of school re-opening between August and October 2020, and recent scientific evidence, the sub-group has concluded that its advice on indoor physical education may be brought into line with advice outwith school settings^[1], to avoid inconsistency in future, and therefore that:

- Children aged under 11 can play organised contact sport both indoors and outdoors.
- Organised outdoor contact sports such as rugby can re-start for people of all ages. For outdoor coaching sessions, there is a limit of 30 on the total number of people who can be coached at any one time.
- When in an indoor facility, those aged 12 and over should only participate in organised non-contact sport and should maintain physical distancing.

This advice should remain in line with advice in the community going forwards, in order to ensure consistency and better support compliance.

Schools have not returned to a suite of physical activity and sport extra-curricular activities, as all their focus has been directed towards safe curricular practice, for example, a system of monitoring which young people use spaces in changing rooms. Teachers have also referred to Governing Bodies of Sport advice for specialist insight to help them mitigate their practice in their own settings. The information above is pertinent to Broad General Education as well as Senior Phase.

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[1] <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-what-you-can-and-cannot-do/pages/sport-culture-and-leisure/>

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