



# Guidance for Tennis Coaches in England

COVID-19: RETURN TO MANAGED PLAY

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TENNIS  
FOR BRITAIN

## PLAY SAFE GUIDELINES - RETURN TO MANAGED PLAY

These guidelines apply to England only and from Monday 1 June 2020. They have been produced in line with the Government announcement on Thursday 28 May on the easing of lockdown restrictions and the subsequent Government guidance on [gatherings, public spaces, and outdoor activities](#) and the [phased return of outdoor sport and recreation](#) published on the Gov.uk website.

Guidelines for playing tennis in Scotland can be read [here](#). Tennis courts in Wales should currently remain closed.

### INTRODUCTION

We know tennis coaches will be keen to offer sessions for customers as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so. By its very nature, tennis is an activity whereby close person to person contact can be avoided, with the Government saying tennis is a good example of an activity that can be undertaken in a way compliant with social distancing restrictions.

Based on our continued discussions with Government and following the further easing of restrictions, the LTA has developed this updated set of practical guidelines for coaches to follow so that tennis can be played in England, where the local environment allows.

We have indicated the key additions and updates to these guidelines with **[NEW]** and **[UPDATED]** on the following pages.

These guidelines apply to both tennis and padel, and outline adaptations and considerations so that tennis activity can be enjoyed in a way that is in line with Government advice and helps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. They include measures to maintain hygiene and minimise unnecessary interactions with others.

Coaches and coaching providers across the country are all different and operate in different local contexts. Making an assessment of whether a safe exercise environment can be provided depends on a range of factors, which apply differently at each venue. It is the responsibility of each tennis provider, coach and facility to make that assessment based on their local environment.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the guidelines for players and venues, and all elements of the guidelines should be considered to ensure activity can be delivered safely.

Should you have any questions, [please refer to the FAQs on the LTA website](#).

Alongside these guidelines, venues should read any updated information published by [Sport England](#) and on [Government guidance for personal trainers and coaches](#).

# GUIDELINES FOR TENNIS COACHES

## COACHING ACTIVITY

- All activity should be consistent with the government guidance regarding health, travel, social distancing and hygiene at all times
- Coaches and coaching organisations must consider safety first, particularly minimising the risk of infection/transmission. A thorough risk assessment must be undertaken (or updated if one previously completed), and appropriate measures put in place to ensure participants, staff and volunteers are protected - you are advised to liaise with your venue when doing this. A risk assessment template is available from the COVID-19 section of the venue [Resource Library](#) on the LTA website
- Guidelines will be updated as we progress through the different phases of Government measures - the LTA remains in discussions with Government and so we recommend you check the official LTA position at [www.lta.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.lta.org.uk/coronavirus) on a regular basis to stay abreast of the latest recommendations
- Any measures coaches put in place to enable tennis activity to resume need to be capable of being flexed or changed quickly if tighter movement/social distancing is reintroduced in the future or when the restrictions are further relaxed

## COURT LIMITS

- **[NEW]** Coached sessions should be limited to group sizes of no more than six, including coach(es)
- You can meet with different clients in a single day as long as it is in gatherings of no more than six and you are maintaining social distancing

## MAINTAINING SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Social distancing between players, and between the coach and players should be maintained at all times
- **[NEW]** Coaches should ensure this is emphasised to participants at the start of each session, and that they are clear on how they should maintain social distancing for each drill before starting it
- **[NEW]** With small group coaching now permitted, adaptations to drills and how you provide feedback/instruction will be needed to ensure social distancing guidelines can be safely adhered to. The LTA will be providing guidance as to adaptations for LTA Programmes can be made – including LTA Youth Tennis for Kids drills and adult programmes such as Cardio Tennis, Tennis Xpress and Tennis Tuesdays
- **[NEW]** Coaches should encourage players to avoid running down balls within an exercise if it could compromise the 2m rule

## HEALTH, SAFETY & HYGIENE

- Ensure usual access to first aid and emergency equipment is maintained (in some cases this may require access to the clubhouse being arranged)
- Guidance on delivering first aid during the coronavirus pandemic is available on the [St John Ambulance website](#)
- **[NEW]** Hand hygiene is imperative - use alcohol gel to clean your hands after touching a shared surface

- Avoid touching your face
- If you need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue or upper sleeve
- **[NEW]** If a player you have coached develops symptoms of COVID-19, they should be directed to follow the Government's 'test and trace' guidelines, which can be read on the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website

## EQUIPMENT

- **[NEW]** Coaches do not now need to use new or fresh tennis balls for each lesson
- It is still advised that where possible the coach should be the only person to touch the tennis balls and players use their feet/racket to return them
- **[NEW]** Where new or fresh balls aren't used, and where players need to handle tennis balls (e.g. serving toss, young children who need to self-feed using their hands) then extra care must be taken to ensure the coach and players do not touch their faces during play, and you should all clean your hands before the session and immediately after finishing (use alcohol gel if required)
- **[UPDATED]** Players should bring their own equipment where possible – it is advised not to allow racket sharing but use of communal rackets can be done subject to thorough cleaning processes between uses
- Any coaching equipment used (e.g. cones) should be cleaned and wiped down afterwards
- Ensure all equipment is removed from the court at the end of the session

## BOOKINGS & PAYMENT

- Operate online booking for coaching sessions where at all possible, or alternatively phone bookings
- Implement a short buffer period (e.g. 10 minutes) between session booking slots or finish sessions slightly early to allow time for players to leave before the next players arrive
- Take any payments online, and avoid handling cash

## COMMUNICATION & VENUE LIAISON

- Coaches should liaise with the venue to ensure an agreed approach to activity that is feasible to deliver safely, and explore how coaches can be supported to deliver sessions
- Communicate with your customers clearly and regularly, making them aware in advance of the measures you are putting in place for your sessions, and guidelines they should follow when attending

## COACHING YOUNG CHILDREN

- The same guidance applies for coaching children as for adults, with group sessions of no more than six (including coaches)
- **[UPDATED]** Red court guidance: The same guidance applies for coaching 'red stage' children as for adults. A maximum of three red courts should be set up per full sized adult court. Adequate space and care should be provided around these smaller courts to maintain social distancing - consider using a safe barrier between courts (e.g. barrier tape)
- **[NEW]** If you feel your youngest groups would be unable to reasonably maintain social distancing with five players plus a coach on court, consider

not re-commencing those sessions until restrictions are further lifted and prioritising sessions with older children first

- **[UPDATED]** Guardian (non-participant) or carer attendance is permitted and is not counted as part of the maximum group size of six, but should be off court and limited to one per child where possible, with social distancing strictly observed while watching the session

## COACHING IN SCHOOLS **[NEW]**

The LTA has developed this section in line with guidance from The Department for Education (DfE), Association for Physical Education (afPE) and ukactive.

The 'Planning guide for primary schools' published by DfE on 14th May advises school leaders to 'limit external visitors to the school during school hours'. In addition, they have also provided the following position statement to ukactive, specifically relating to children's activity providers:

*"Given that it is vital to minimise travel and maintain social distancing, schools should only have staff from external organisations on site where it is absolutely essential to enable them to stay open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children and to ensure those children are safe. Before going to a school you should check with them whether or not your presence is essential. Schools should not be asking you to attend if it is not essential."*

The ultimate decision about pupil safety will depend on context and geography, and is therefore for individual Head Teachers to make, in consultation with their Governing Boards.

- The LTA advises tennis coaches not to make proactive approaches to schools, to offer their services during this phase. However, to maintain a strong relationships and club links with your existing schools, it could be worthwhile 'checking in' with your school contacts, recognising what a difficult time is for them, you're here if they need any support and you look forward to working with them again in the future. In addition, it is a good opportunity to signpost to the personal development and cross curricular LTA Youth Schools content online at: [www.lta.org.uk/schools](http://www.lta.org.uk/schools)
- However, you may find that a small number of school leaders may make the decision to invite you into school to support the delivery of PE & School Sport through tennis. In this instance, we would advise that you have a conversation with them to determine if your presence is essential, as per DfE's guidance referenced above. In addition, you could also refer to [afPE's guidance published on 21st May](#), initially asking the following three questions:
  1. Have they reviewed their risk assessments before re-commencing PE / school sport?
  2. Does the proposed activity meet the Government requirements?
  3. Are their plans consistent with the requirement of any whole school/employer expectations which may have developed in response to the national guidance?

afPE's guidance goes on to provide a self-review tool around 9 areas including: protective measures and hygiene, teaching areas and self-distancing within lessons. The LTA would encourage schools to use this tool to plan and prepare for any PE / school sport activity.