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Welcome Back! As we return to play, our mission continues to be providing the most fun and memorable experiences in youth baseball for children of all ages. In order to do so, we encourage all of our parents, players, coaches, and fans to join us in returning to play responsibly in 2020 and following our new safety guidelines for this season.

## 2020 Norwalk Little League Return to Play Safety Guidelines (Summary):

### **The Basics**

- **Hand Washing** – Wash your hands often with soap & water. When soap and water are not available, hand sanitizer will be provided for your frequent use. All players, coaches, and fans are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer for personal use.
- **Social Distancing** – All players, coaches, volunteers, and fans should practice social distancing of six feet wherever possible from individuals not residing within their household.
- **Face Coverings** - Everyone is encouraged to wear a cloth face covering when out in public and around our Little League fields and parks, traveling to/from the venue, walking in/out of the venue, and not actively participating. (Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.) Continue to keep six feet between yourself and others. The cloth face covering is not a substitute for social distancing.
- **Cleaning & Disinfecting** – Please be patient as we will be performing more frequent cleanings. Please help do your part by keeping your area clean and disposing of trash.
- **Health Monitoring** – Daily self-evaluations must be conducted by all organizers, coaches, players, umpires, and spectators.
- **Scheduling** – Games & practices will be scheduled accordingly to allow sufficient time to facilitate the complete evacuation of individuals from a previous practice or game from the premises and allow for proper cleaning/disinfecting before the next group enters.

### **Field and Fan Guidance**

- Players/families/spectators will be instructed not to show up to fields more than 40 minutes before game time.
- Where possible, individuals will check in and enter our complex through one point of entry and exit through another.
- If there is a game or practice prior to another, families and spectators will be encouraged to stay in their vehicles or at recommended social distances until the start of their game play to prevent overcrowding.
- Games will be scheduled with at least a 30-minute buffer to prevent overlap of participants.
- Please bring your own seating as the bleachers and other public seating areas are likely to be closed.
- Please bring your own food or beverages as any concession areas will be closed.
- Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned AND disinfected daily and in between all field uses, including practices and games.



- All spectators are to follow best social distancing practices; wear a cloth face covering; avoid direct hand or other contact with players/managers/coaches during play.
- Individuals shall not congregate in common areas or parking lots either before or after a game or practice.
- Access to the public portable restrooms may be limited or prohibited, please plan accordingly.
- All managers/coaches, volunteers, umpires, etc., will wear Personal Protective Equipment whenever applicable and possible, such as cloth face coverings and protective medical gloves when cleaning.
- For each game, there will only be the required team managers/coaches, umpires, and one (1) league administrator in the “on field” area.
- Sunflower seeds, gum, or any food product, etc., will not be allowed in dugouts or on the playing field.
- All players and coaches are to refrain from spitting at all times, including in dugout areas and on the playing field.
- A spectator with any of the following conditions should not attend a practice or game until evaluated by a medical provider and given clearance to do so: Active COVID-19 infection; Known direct contact with an individual testing positive for COVID-19; Fever; Cough.
- Those at higher risk for severe disease should consider consultation with their medical provider before attending a game and should ensure the strictest adherence to guidelines regarding face coverings, distancing, and handwashing. Such groups include: Those with a serious underlying medical condition, including heart disease, morbid obesity, diabetes, lung disease, immunocompromise, chronic kidney disease, and chronic lung disease; Those currently residing in a nursing home or long-term care facility; Those over 65.

## **Pre-Game**

- On-field warm-up will be limited as much as possible and no more than 30 minutes.
- Coaches will begin each practice or game by asking each player to report their current and recent medical symptoms and any symptoms experienced by those in the player’s household.
- Athletes, managers/coaches, and umpires should bring their own personal drinks to all team activities. Drinks should be labeled with the person’s name. There will be no use of shared team beverages or snacks.
- Home Plate meetings will only consist of one manager or coach from each team, and game umpires (if have the meetings). All participants will wear face coverings.

## **Game Play**

- Managers/coaches and players will be assigned spots in the dugout or in the bleachers/bleacher area so that they are at least six feet apart and behind a fence.
- Players and managers/coaches will wear face coverings while in the dugout/dugout area.
- Players, especially younger divisions, are not required to wear a cloth face covering while on the field playing defense during game play. (Players will be permitted to wear a face covering on the field during game play if desired)
- No personal player bat bags/equipment bags will be allowed in the dugout. Player equipment should be spaced accordingly outside the dugout to prevent direct contact.
- Players should have their own individual helmet, glove, bat, and catcher’s equipment.



- Please do not share equipment. Measures will be enacted to ensure athletes do not share equipment when possible. If shared, clean and disinfect frequently.
- Some critical equipment may not be able to be obtained by every individual. When it is necessary to share critical or limited equipment, all surfaces of each piece of shared equipment will be cleaned first and then disinfected with an EPA-approved disinfectant and allowed sufficient time to dry before used by a new player. Increased attention will be paid to detailed cleaning of all equipment directly contacting the head and face (catcher's mask, helmets).
- Umpires will be permitted to be placed behind the pitcher's mound to call balls and strikes. Umpires will keep a safe distance from players as much as possible and wear protective gloves.
- If physically able, umpires will be encouraged to wear cloth face coverings while umpiring.
- Baseballs will be rotated through on a regular basis, at least every two innings, to limit individual contact.
- Umpires will limit their contact with the ball, and catchers should retrieve foul balls and passed balls where possible.
- Balls used in infield/outfield warm-up will be isolated from a shared ball container.
- Foul balls landing outside the field of play should be retrieved by participating players, coaches, and umpires. No spectators will retrieve the ball.
- Balls will be disinfected before and after every practice and game.
- Players and coaches should take measures to prevent all but the essential contact necessary to play the game. This will include refraining from handshakes, high fives, fist/elbow bumps, chest bumps, group celebrations, etc. Players will not huddle at any point during the game/practice.

## Post-Game

- In lieu of handshaking lines Norwalk Little League participants will line up outside the dugout and tip caps to the opposing team as a sign of good sportsmanship after a game.
- There will be no team meetings after the game.
- Players and families are to vacate the field/facility as soon as is reasonably possible after the conclusion of their game to minimize unnecessary contact with players, coaches, and spectators from the next game.
- Dugouts will be cleaned and disinfected before and after every use.

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❖ *The information provided in this document is a summary of Norwalk Little League's 2020 Return to Play & Reopening Plan. For the full document please visit our website, [www.NorwalkCTLittleLeague.com](http://www.NorwalkCTLittleLeague.com), and see our 2020 Reopening Plan.*