



## Stamford American Little League

### Guidelines for Playing Baseball in the COVID 19 Environment

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Stamford American Little League is strictly adhering to [State of Connecticut's current guidelines for youth sports as of February 15, 2021](#). These guidelines may change as the Spring 2021 season approaches, and SALL will amend the league's protocols accordingly.

The following Executive Summary provides a high-level overview of SALL's COVID-19 safety procedures. Full protocols can be found below. SALL followed similar protocols during the Summer and Fall 2020 Seasons. As a result, the **league experienced ZERO positive cases of COVID-19 as a result of baseball activities.**

#### **PERSONAL HEALTH SCREENINGS**

All coaches and umpires must conduct daily symptom assessments (self-evaluation). **Parents are asked to conduct the same assessment for players.** [Click here](#) to refer to Stamford Public Schools' Daily Safety Checklist. Staff, coaches, officials or players who have experienced any COVID-19 CDC-defined symptoms, including fever, cough or shortness of breath, must stay home. Any individual exhibiting such symptoms will be asked to leave immediately. If any staff member, coach, official or player lives with or has been in close contact with someone who has had recent COVID-19 symptoms; and/or has had a recent positive COVID-19 test result; and/or is presently being quarantined or otherwise ill or exposed to COVID-19, that individual must stay home.

#### **TEMPERATURE CHECKS/HAND SANITIZATION**

SALL requires that all coaches, players and umpires must have their body temperature measured prior to stepping onto the field of play. Any person with a **body temperature of 100.4 or higher will not be permitted to participate.** All players, coaches and umpires must sanitize their hands before entering the field of play. SALL recommends reapplying hand sanitizer regularly.

#### **MASK USAGE**

All players, coaches and umpires must bring their own mask/face covering to all SALL practices and games. Players must utilize their cloth face coverings when in close contact areas and in places where recommended social distancing is challenging or not feasible, such as in dugouts. Coaches and umpires

must wear masks at all times. Further, players and coaches must wear masks at all times during potential indoor pre-season practices.

### **DUGOUT CONFIGURATION**

Only three players and one coach are permitted in dugouts. All others must sit behind the fence in spaced, designated bleachers or chairs. It is recommended that players bring their own chairs to all games and practices. See below for field-specific guidelines.

### **SHARED EQUIPMENT**

The sharing of equipment (gloves, bats, helmets, etc.) is prohibited, except for league-issued catchers gear. League-issued catchers equipment will be sanitized prior to use and after each half inning.

### **SPECTATORS**

Parents are encouraged to watch their children play baseball during the 2021 season. However, all spectators at all SALL fields (Vine Road, Northrop, Kane Avenue and Davenport) must be masked at all times and remain six feet apart.

## **2021 COVID-19 Safety Protocols**

These guidelines have been compiled from best practices promulgated by Little League International (LLI). Further Stamford American Little League's (SALL) protocols are based on resources and direct guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), and The Aspen Institute, among others. In addition, Stamford American will continue to follow all directives and guidance from the state and city government.

All Stamford American Little League managers, coaches, umpires, league officials, and families must review and adhere to these guidelines to ensure the safety of all. Stamford American Little League (SALL) will continue to update these guidelines as information is further developed around COVID-19 mitigation. Managers, coaches, league officials must sign an acknowledgment of their agreement to follow these guidelines during league activities associated with all Stamford American Little League 2021 seasons (i.e Spring, Summer Travel, Summer Friendship, Fall). All families with a player participating in the aforementioned seasons will also be required to sign a waiver.

***NOTE:** These guidelines are considered to be a "living document" and are subject to change as additional safety recommendations are released from state, local and national officials. SALL appreciates everyone's flexibility and fluidity as we continue to ensure a safe environment for our players, coaches, families and umpires.*

### **A. GENERAL GUIDANCE**

**The general guidance listed in this section includes actions, behaviors, and general facts about COVID-19. Awareness of and adherence to these items will help to limit the spread of COVID-19 during League Activities. All participants in all Stamford American Little League 2021 seasons are required to follow this guidance to the maximum extent practicable.**

**Wash Your Hands Often:**

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or about the time it takes to recite the Little League Pledge twice, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Players are required to bring their own hand sanitizer for personal use.

**Cover Your Mouth and Nose with a Cloth Face Covering When Around Others:**

- You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- Everyone must wear a cloth face covering when they have to go out in public in accordance with Federal and State Guidance. This includes public areas in and around all SALL fields, parks, parking areas, viewing areas, common areas, etc.

**Cover Coughs and Sneezes:**

- If you do not have on your cloth face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or use the inside of your elbow.
- Throw used tissues in the trash immediately.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

**Social Distancing:**

- All players, coaches, volunteers, umpires and spectators shall practice social distancing of six feet wherever possible from individuals not residing within their household.

**Self-monitoring and Quarantine:**

- All individuals must measure their body temperature prior to attending SALL events to ensure that no fever is present prior to participating or attending each Little League activity. Any player with a **body temperature of 100.4 or higher should not attend any Little League activities.** Further, those with symptoms of cough, or worsening respiratory symptoms, or any known exposure to a person with COVID-19 should not attend any Little League activity until cleared by a medical professional.
- Any individual, including players, at risk for severe illness or with serious underlying medical or respiratory conditions should only attend Little League activities with permission from a medical professional and in accordance with the guidance of his or her medical professionals. Parents of players shall be solely responsible for monitoring these requirements during all SALL activities.

## **B. ON-FIELD GUIDANCE**

### **No Handshakes/Personal Contact Celebrations:**

- Players and coaches should take measures to prevent all but the essential contact necessary to play the game. Activities including handshakes, high fives, fist/elbow bumps, chest bumps, group celebrations, etc will not be permitted. At the conclusion of each game, each team will line up outside the dugout and tip their caps to the opposing team as a sign of good sportsmanship, while adhering to applicable social distancing requirements.
- Players and families must 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, within 15 minutes of the conclusion of their game to allow for the next game or activity to proceed.

### **Drinks and Snacks:**

- Athletes, managers/coaches, and umpires must bring their own personal drinks to all team activities. Drinks should be labeled with the person's name.
- Individuals must take their own drink containers home each night for cleaning and sanitation or use single-use bottles.
- There shall be no use of shared or team beverages.
- Teams shall not share any snacks or food. Players must bring individual, pre-packaged food, if required.

### **Pre-Game/Practice Screening**

- Each team will have access to infrared thermometers. A designated coach or manager will take each player and coach's body temperature prior to entering the playing field.
- Should a player or coach register a body temperature of 100.4 or higher, he/she will be asked to sit in the shade in an isolated area for 5 minutes.
- If after 5 minutes, the player or coach's body temperature does not go down, he/she will not be permitted to participate in baseball activities for the day.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):**

- All players must bring their own masks/face coverings to all games and practices.
- All managers/coaches, volunteers, umpires, etc., shall wear face coverings.
- Players must utilize their cloth face coverings when in close contact areas and in places where recommended social distancing is challenging or not feasible, such as in dugouts.
- Players are not required to wear protective medical gloves on the field during game play.
- Players are not required to utilize their face coverings while on the field during game play. Rather, they should be worn around their necks for necessary use. Players will be permitted to wear a cloth face covering on the field during game play, if physically able to do so, based on any directive of a medical provider or individual determination of the player/ parent/guardian/

caretaker. Players are permitted to wear alternative face coverings provided by his or her family as long as they meet the requirements of Federal and State Guidelines and are readily accessible when their use is required with no assistance from SALL managers / coaches.

**In Game Hygiene:**

- All players and coaches must use hand sanitizer upon arrival of the field. All players should have their own hand sanitizer, however each team will have a supply.
- All players, managers and coaches must reapply hand sanitizer regularly as possible.

**Vine Road/Northrop Dugouts:**

- No more than three players and one coach will be allowed in the dugout at one time. The other players will be watching the game behind the fence and maintain proper social distancing practices.
- It is recommended that each player bring his/her own chair to sit in while their team is at bat.
- During each team's time at bat, only the next three players in the batting order will be permitted in the dugout, along with a designated coach.
- All other players will remain in an area outside of the dugout and behind their baseline fence. Those players will sit in a row of acceptably spaced chairs or on existing bleachers.
- A designated coach or parent will accompany non-batting players to cycle those players onto the field and into the dugout as the batting order continues.
- Managers/coaches and players should be assigned spots in the dugout or on the bleachers so that they are at least six feet apart and must be placed behind a fence.
- Players are to stay at their assigned spots when on the bench or while waiting their turn to bat.
- Players and managers/coaches must wear a cloth face covering while in the dugout.

**Kane Ave./Davenport Dugouts:**

- Due to limited space and/or the absence of a formal dugout structure, players at Kane Avenue and Davenport fields (i.e. AAA, AA, A and Tee Ball) must bring their own chair to all games and practices.
- Chairs will be spaced at least 6 feet apart from each other, and players must sit in them when not on the field of play.

**Player Equipment:**

- 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. Markings will be provided to guide the players where to place his or her equipment.
- Players must have his or her own individual batter's helmet, glove, batting gloves and bat. Catcher's equipment is optional and personal catcher's equipment shall not be shared with other team members.

- Sharing equipment shall be avoided with the exception of league-issued catcher's equipment. SALL provided catcher's equipment will be cleaned using a disinfectant wipe before each inning.
- 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 must be cleaned first and then disinfected against COVID-19 and allowed sufficient time to dry before being used by a new player.
- Increased attention should be paid to complete cleaning of all equipment directly contacting the head and face (catcher's mask, helmets).
- It is highly recommended that all player's equipment (e.g. bags, helmets, bats, gloves, etc.) be cleaned and disinfected after each use by a parent/ guardian/caretaker, where applicable.
- Individuals disinfecting equipment are encouraged to use gloves while using disinfectants and follow the manufacturer's directions for use. All disinfectants should be stored properly, in a safe area, out of the reach of children.

#### **Baseballs:**

- Baseballs will be rotated and sanitized every half-inning to prevent the spread of germs. Pitchers and catchers must use hand sanitizer at the conclusion of every half-inning in which they played in the field.
- Umpires should limit their contact with the ball, and catchers should retrieve foul balls and passed balls where possible.
- Balls used in infield/outfield warm-up should 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 should retrieve the ball.

#### **Spitting, Sunflower Seeds, Gum, etc.:**

- Sunflower seeds, gum, etc., shall not be allowed in dugouts or on the playing field.
- All players and coaches may not spit during baseball activities in all common areas, including but not limited to the dugout and player seating areas and on the playing field.

### **C. GAME OPERATIONS AND UMPIRE GUIDANCE**

#### **Pre-Game Plate Meetings:**

- If possible, plate meetings must be eliminated unless as directed by the umpire. Face coverings will be used and social distancing will be employed to the maximum extent practicable.
- Social distancing of six feet between individuals will be implemented during all pre-game plate meetings between teams and umpires.
- Plate meetings will only consist of one manager or coach from each team, and game umpires.
- All participants shall wear a cloth face covering during these meetings.
- No players shall not be a part of plate meetings.

**Equipment Inspection:**

- Players will place their individual equipment in a well-spaced out manner for inspection. Umpires should avoid direct contact with equipment where possible but, when required, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol after the inspection of each individual piece of equipment.

**Limit League/Game Volunteers:**

- For each game, there should only be the required team managers/coaches, umpires, and one (1) league administrator (i.e. Safety Officer, player agent, etc.) in attendance.
- During games, additional volunteers will be necessary to help support the coaches in moving the players in and out of the dugout and to help with cleaning and disinfecting baseballs, equipment and general areas.
- Practices should be limited to the managers/coaches and players, unless a medical condition of a player requires ongoing monitoring by a parent / guardian or household member.
- Press boxes used for scorekeeping must have ample room for social distancing to occur within them. Players are not allowed in the press box for any reason at any time.

**Field Preparation and Maintenance:**

- Fields should be mowed, raked, and lined prior to teams and spectators arriving at the complex and after they depart. It is encouraged that volunteers already participating in the game (managers/coaches, umpires, and league administrator) perform these tasks to limit individuals at the site.
- Shared field preparation equipment be sprayed or wiped with cleaner and disinfectant before and after each use.

**Umpire Placement:**

- Umpires are permitted to be placed behind the pitcher's mound to call balls and strikes.
- Umpires are encouraged to keep a safe distance from players as much as possible and wear protective gloves.
- If physically able, umpires are encouraged to wear cloth face coverings while umpiring.

**D. FACILITY, FAN AND ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDANCE**

**Clean and Disinfect Shared Equipment and Surfaces:**

- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily and in between all facility uses, including practices and games. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, facility equipment, dugouts, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- If surfaces are visibly soiled or dirty, they should be cleaned with a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

**Spread Out Scheduling of Practices and Games:**

- SALL will schedule sufficient time between practices and games to facilitate the complete evacuation of individuals from a previous practice or game from the premises before the next group enters.
- Players/families/spectators are requested to not show up to fields more than 60 minutes before game time.
- If there is a game or practice prior to your event, families and spectators are encouraged to stay in their vehicles or at recommended social distances until the start of their game play to prevent overcrowding of spectator spaces and walkways.
- On-field warm-up should be limited as much as is reasonably possible and no more than 30 minutes.

**Spectator Attendance:**

- All spectators should follow best social distancing practices — stay six feet away from individuals outside their household and avoid direct hand or other contact with players/managers/coaches during play.
- Due to limited space and the need for players to utilize bleacher space during games, it's recommended that spectators bring their own chairs and space them apart appropriately.
- 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 or known direct contact with an individual testing positive for COVID-19
- Fever or 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.

**Public Restrooms:**

- Access to public restrooms will be limited to a “one-in-one-out” policy, where only one individual is permitted within the restroom at one time.
- Restrooms will be professionally cleaned and disinfected twice each week.
- Public water fountains or refillable water stations will be turned-off to discourage use.

**Concession Stands:**

- Families are encouraged to bring their own food/beverages.
- The status of the Vine Road Snack Bar is TBD for the 2021 season



**Post Information to Promote Everyday Preventative Actions:**

- SALL will display signs at the fields to remind visitors to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19.