

Lexington Little League Fall 2020 Safer Play Guidelines

Purpose: This document was prepared by Lexington Little League (LLL) Board and its consultants. Its purpose is to provide guidelines for a safer return to competitive baseball and softball for the Lexington Little League in the context of the SARS-COV2 pandemic, and to adhere to guidelines issued by the state and town.

Scope: This document addresses the guidelines for LLL participants during phase 3, Part 1 of the Massachusetts four-phase reopening plan and has been updated as of August 26, 2020. Another revision will occur when the state enters phase 3, Part 2, and phase 4 (“new normal”).

Personal Responsibility

1. Parents and players will sign a waiver at the beginning of the season acknowledging the potential risks of COVID-19 infection and agreeing to abide by all safety rules.
2. Should any conditions change after the waiver is signed, parents must communicate immediately with both LLL Coach and LLL Safety Officer, Dr. Bill Kormos (781) 724-4469 and wkormos@gmail.com.
3. Prior to each practice or game, a Lexington Little League (LLL) representative will document that every coach, player, and umpire was asked the following questions: Any symptoms within the past 10 days consistent with COVID-19 infection, any known close contact* to a COVID-19 infected person, and any family members currently ill with symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Current list of symptoms is available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
 - a. Any player or coach with any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 within the past 10 days will be required to obtain a medical clearance to return to play or remain out of play for at least 10 days from onset of symptoms (including no fever for 3 days and symptoms have improved). If testing completed and COVID -19 positive, restriction is 10 days after date of test.
 - b. Any player or coach who has had any close contact* with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19, including but not limited to household members, will be required to remain out of play for 14 days.
 - c. Any player or coach who has a family member with symptoms of potential COVID-19 will be required to remain out of play until an evaluation has been completed (and is negative) or 14 days has passed.
 - d. Coaches will not perform temperature checks, but parents will be responsible for monitoring symptoms at home and reporting to coaches.
4. Acknowledgement of responses to the above questions will be documented by the designated LLL representative on the team.
5. For tracing purposes, the LLL representative must also keep a log of all participants attending each event, including coaches, players, parents, spectators/chaperones and other volunteers.
6. Coaches will be provided appropriate training prior to the season, including symptoms of COVID-19, transmission of COVID-19, and appropriate physical distancing and face mask use.
7. If any individual develops symptoms of COVID-19 during an activity, player/parent should promptly inform organizers and must be removed from the activity and instructed to return home and seek medical advice. Parent or manager should also communicate news to LLL Safety Officer.

* Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 10 minutes while that person was symptomatic, starting 48 hours before their symptoms began until their isolation period ends.

8. Participants, organizers, spectators, volunteers and facility employees in high risk categories will be asked to not participate or attend organized sport activities. List of high-risk categories available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>
9. Face Coverings *: Players are required to wear secure face coverings (covering mouth and nose) when social distancing is not possible. This will include all time in the “dugout” area.
10. Face Coverings: Players will be required to wear face coverings when at bat or on base, and will be allowed to wear a covering when playing the field.
11. Face coverings: Participants may remove face coverings while participating in practice and drills, provided they are able to maintain at least 6 feet of distance from all other persons present.
12. Face coverings: Face coverings are required for all coaches, volunteers, and officials. Coaches, volunteers, and officials must also maintain physical distancing of 6 feet from players, other coaches, and spectators. (EEA Document, Section IV, effective August 17, 2020).
13. Players are encouraged to have personal hand sanitizer at each game/practice.
14. No shared food or drink during any activities for participants or spectators
15. Participants and coaches must achieve proper hand hygiene at the beginning and end of all activities, either through handwashing with soap and water or by using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Player equipment

1. A player will be expected to have his/her own glove, helmet, bat, water bottle, and when applicable fielding mask. The league will have a limited supply to loan for the season (but players will need to return gear at the end of the season). Players will not share personal equipment.
2. For any player catching at all during the season, he/she will have a designated set of catchers' equipment (and will bring to and from events on their own). LLL will have multiple sets of catchers' gear to provide at start of season to any/all players catching (if he/she doesn't have his/her own) for that player to use exclusively during season. Parents will return borrowed catcher's gear to the League when the season ends.
3. Parents are asked to wipe down all gear at home after each event (including water bottles and catcher's equipment).
4. Player equipment and bags will be spaced accordingly to prevent direct contact with other players.

Coaches/umpires

1. Coaches must be responsible for maintaining social distance among players, coaches, officials and spectators.
2. No more than 3 coaches (including the manager) will be allowed in the players' area during a game. When needed for younger players, additional adults will be allowed for practices to maintain safety.
3. One coach will be designated to monitor player behavior and encourage hand hygiene, social distancing. This coach should wipe down gates before and after game.
4. Coaches meetings should be limited to one coach from each team and umpires (no players allowed) and all participants must stand 6 feet apart and wear masks. Coaches can show lineups to the umpire, and umpire may verbally approve and ask any questions about lineup.

*Exceptions will be allowed for players with medical reasons.

It is recommended that lineup cards be exchanged via photo or text when possible. Coaches should verify opposing team has a recorded lineup of participants, and all have verified the ability to play.

5. Mound visits by coaches should be avoided, and limited to injuries or substitutions.
6. Coaches are responsible for following all guidelines and creating a safe environment for participants.
7. Coaches or their representative will maintain a log of player attendance and screening question responses at every league activity.
8. Coaches or their representative must attend a league sponsored training prior to the season.
9. Coaches must do their best to educate all participants and spectators on the applicable protocols for the relevant activity, protocols for entering/leaving the facility, and any other hygiene requirements.
10. During Middle-Essex summer softball games, umpires will be positioned behind home plate consistent with USA Softball guidelines.

Practice requirements

1. During phase 3, practices will be limited to cohorts of 25 participants (including players and coaches).
2. Team practice should only involve one team.
3. During phase 3, practices should continue to limit drills where players are in close contact and players should be kept at minimum 6 feet apart when possible.
4. Parents and spectators are asked to maintain a safe distance from all activity during practices.
5. Use of equipment and balls will follow same requirements as noted in 'Player Equipment' and 'Game Requirements' sections.

Game requirements

1. Game ball will be wiped by coaches with a sanitizer wipe before each inning. Each team will provide its own game ball for its players.
2. Players will be allowed to take the field for warm ups no more than 10 minutes prior to game time.
3. Warm up balls will be wiped down by coaches after each inning.
4. Dugouts will not be used per Lexington Town Recreation Department requirements (Phase C, effective July 10, 2020). Players are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and maintain social distancing. Players not on the playing field must remain behind a protective fence.
5. High fives, handshakes, and fist bumps should be avoided. Once the game is completed, teams will lineup on their respective sides and offer a tip of the cap to the opposing team as a show of sportsmanship.
6. No use of public water fountains if present on site. Participants and spectators should only drink from their own containers.

Spectators

1. Spectators should not congregate and they should adhere to social distancing guidelines.
2. Families will generally be encouraged to limit attendance to allow proper social distancing and remain in compliance with crowd limits.
3. If social distancing is not possible, spectators may be asked to wait at a distance until practice/game is completed (e.g, wait inside car, etc.).
4. The total number of people (excluding players, coaches, and umpires) should not exceed 50 people.

5. Spectators must wear face covering. Exceptions will be allowed in case of medical conditions. (EEA Document, Section V, Part A, effective August 17, 2020).
6. Spectators must remain in designated areas and will not be permitted near players' area or behind backstop.
7. Spectators should not retrieve foul balls.
8. Spectators will be informed not to attend games/practice if they have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection. Self-isolation recommendations will follow CDC guidelines.

League

1. Organizers of activities are responsible for following all guidelines and creating a safe environment for participants.
2. LLL will schedule practices and games to avoid overlap in teams (allow first game to end and exit field before next team arrives for warm-ups).
3. In the event of a diagnosis of COVID-19 in a player, coach, or umpire, LLL will reach out to the appropriate individuals to assess exposure risk and advise individuals to seek medical advice from their health care provider if appropriate. LLL Safety Officer will maintain a log of COVID-19 confirmed and probable cases that involved LLL activities.
4. Coaches will be provided with hand sanitizer and spray disinfectant for use during games and practices.
5. Field equipment will be disinfected between use but personal equipment will not be shared.
6. Facilities shall institute one-way entrance and exits where appropriate.
7. All high touch surface areas must be wiped down at the end of each activity.
8. Dugouts are closed indefinitely for use in Lexington due to proximity of players inside dugout and challenges in sanitizing dugouts.
9. Lexington Rec Dept has already posted visible signage at all Lexington fields to remind visitors of hygiene and safety protocols (and dugout closures).
10. In Lexington, all public bathrooms will remain closed (and no portable bathrooms installed) so participants will need to plan accordingly (and duration of practices considered, etc.).

Thank you in advance for following these important safer play guidelines, as the safety and health of our players and all participants is our top priority during fall 2020 and beyond. Should you have any questions about the guidelines, please contact LLL Safety Officer (see page 1 for contact info).