

**TUSTIN WESTERN LITTLE LEAGUE
COVID-19 MITIGATION GUIDELINES (6/16/20)**

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TUSTIN WESTERN LITTLE LEAGUE

COVID-19 MITIGATION GUIDELINES (6/16/20)

I. Our Decision to Play Ball

2020 has been marked by a series of unprecedented events. The COVID-19 pandemic has wrought our country with chaos, fear, and conflict—not only owing to the staggering numbers of infected and the tragic loss of life, but as a result of the attendant hoarding, economic meltdowns, school and business closures, and stay-at-home orders. Recent weeks have brought a new round of social upheaval, ranging from peaceful protests to criminal rioting. We are living in an era of extraordinary division. At times, it feels as if the fabric of our society is unraveling.

In the shadow of pandemic and political division, the Western Little League of Tustin (“Tustin Western Little League” or “TWLL”) TWLL Board of Directors chooses to play ball —because we can’t keep our children inside forever, and because nothing brings a community together like Little League.

The Board’s decision to resume the 2020 baseball and softball season was made after considerable reflection and debate. The health, safety, and welfare of our players and their families is our foremost concern, and we recognize that interpersonal contact and/or close proximity to others presents a heightened risk of contraction and transmission of COVID-19. At the same time, participation in recreational baseball and softball promotes healthy child development. A decision to abandon the 2020 season would deprive our players of the opportunity to participate in a sport they enjoy and which is designed to advance their physical, social, emotional, and civic development; a decision to resume affords that opportunity to those parents/guardians who *elect* for their children to participate.

Therefore, we conditioned the resumption of play on adoption of guidelines to mitigate the risk of community transmission of COVID-19. These guidelines were developed after careful review and consideration of a variety of published resources including those of the CDC, State of California, and Little League International. They are subject to revision, and you are invited to share any thoughts or comments you may have about them by contacting our [League President, Chris Blevins](#), or our [League Safety Officer, Jason Wells](#).

Participation in the remainder of our modified 2020 season is entirely voluntary. The Board has published a partial refund policy for those who elect not to resume playing this year. By choosing for their children to participate in the remainder of our modified season, parents/guardians will be assuming the heightened risk of contraction and transmission of COVID-19, and they will be required to join in our effort to mitigate that risk by complying with the guidelines set forth below.

We expect that despite employing our best efforts to craft thoughtful guidelines, some will argue our mitigation measures are an overreaction; others will claim resuming play under any circumstances is reckless. If you choose to join us, we ask that you refrain from undermining these guidelines, similar to how we ask you to refrain from undermining your son or daughter’s coach. The guidelines are mandatory, and will be enforced—like all of our rules.

II. General Guidelines for All League Participants and Visitors

- The safety of our community starts at home. All players, coaches, family members, umpires, field crew, and other league participants must comply with the following guidelines before entering the Tustin Western Little League facilities:
 - Stay home when sick or having symptoms of becoming sick (i.e., symptoms of respiratory illness, fever, or cough)
 - Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, dispose of the tissue and wash hands immediately after. If tissue is not available, cough or sneeze in elbow

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- Do not touch eyes, mouth, or nose with unwashed hands
- Avoid contact with people who are sick or who are exhibiting symptoms of being sick
- Avoid sharing items
- Always maintain the recommended minimum of 6 feet separation from others
- Recommended to wear a face covering when unable to practice 6 feet of social distancing
- Sanitize frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Be kind to others and respectful of their stance on the situation
- All league members and visitors will be reminded of the importance of social distancing while at the fields as well as in all other environments:
 - A minimum of 6 feet of social distancing should be maintained at all times
 - Face coverings are recommended to be worn to increase protection when unable to socially distance
- Please assist the Board with continued efforts to sanitize facilities, equipment, common areas and items of common touch points

III. Social Distancing in the Dugout; Equipment-Sharing Prohibited

- Team roster shall not exceed 13 players per team on any given game or practice day
- Players will be provided designated personal areas designed to maintain 6 feet of distance from teammates, when feasible. These personal areas may be within team dugouts, in the bleachers outside the dugout, and/or in such other locations as may be deemed appropriate.
- The manager or coach shall be responsible for designating each player's personal area. Players shall place their equipment bag in their designated personal area, either below the bench or hanging on the fence, and the player's personal bat, helmet and other equipment shall be kept in the player's designated area until required for use. Players shall remain in their designated personal area within in the dugout while waiting their turn to bat or when not playing in the field when their team is on defense.
- Face coverings are recommended but not required at this time. Nevertheless, when maintaining 6 feet or distance between players is not feasible, players, coaches, managers, and umpires are encouraged to wear face coverings, and therefore encouraged to include at least one face covering in their equipment bag.
- Players, coaches, managers, and umpires are encouraged to follow hand washing/sanitizing procedures.
- With the exception of the baseballs, softballs, catcher's gear, and team bats, players may only use their own equipment—sharing of gloves, helmets, and other equipment is prohibited.
 - If a team bat must be used, the bench coach must wipe the bat down with a sanitizing wipe after each player's use.
 - If catcher's gear must be shared, it must be wiped down and/or sprayed with sanitizing solution after each player's use.

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- Managers and coaches shall set a good example for their players by following the guidelines herein without complaint or ridicule. Managers and coaches shall enforce the social distancing of players on their teams.
- The rule limiting adults in the dugout may be suspended if an adult volunteer is required to enforce these rules and/or to communicate batting order to players sitting in the bleacher area as a result of social distancing.

Tee Ball, Coach Pitch, Rookie, Minor A, and Challenger Divisions

- Due to the age, developmental level, and physical abilities of players in the Tee Ball, Coach Pitch, Rookie, Minor A, and Challenger Divisions, additional approved adult volunteers are permitted, but not required, to assist the official coaching staff.
- There will be a maximum of 4 approved volunteers (1 Team Manager, 2 Dugout Coaches, 1 Adult Volunteer)
- For Challenger Division, there may be special circumstances requiring additional one-on-one assistance to players
- Board of Director approval will be required to include additional volunteers during games and practices (as needed to play), unless otherwise approved in the TWLL Local Rules.
- As guidelines require, may wear face covering when players are in dugout and are encouraged to wear face coverings when unable to practice 6 feet of social distancing. Managers and coaches shall set a good example for their players to follow proper safety protocols.

IV. Other Adult Roles

Umpires

- The plate umpire (required for all competitive games) will set up and call balls and strikes from behind the mound (6 feet behind the pitching rubber)
- As guidelines require, umpires may wear face covering while on the field of play and are encouraged to wear face coverings when unable to practice 6 feet of social distancing.
- The umpires must discuss each umpire's responsibility for covering plays in their pre-game meeting

Scorekeeper (required for all competitive games)

- One designated scorekeeper for each game—no exceptions
- Scorekeeper to sit in score booth or designated scorer's area—only one person in the score booth
- The scorekeeper will also keep the pitch count
- A family group member may be used as a pitch counter
- As guidelines require, are encouraged to wear face coverings when unable to practice 6 feet of social distancing.
- Pencils and other scorekeeper supplies will be supplied by the league only when requested. If league supplies are used, they should be sanitized after each person's use. Scorekeeper is encouraged to bring their own pencils, erasers, pens

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- Use of Gamechanger shall be discussed by the Board at its next meeting

Board Member on Duty (Minimum of one board member per game time slot)

- Board Member on Duty will manage the entire operation of the field(s) on game days
- Board Member on Duty will be assisted by a Safety Coordinator when there are multiple games scheduled during the same time slot
- Teams shall provide one volunteer per game to assist the Board Member of the Day and Safety Coordinator in enforcing social distancing guidelines
- As guidelines require, Board Member on Duty is encouraged to wear a face covering when they are unable to practice 6 feet of social distancing during interaction with others
- Player & Spectator Management
- Traffic control to limit congregation of groups
- Remind spectators of social distancing guidelines —6 feet apart; encourage face coverings when unable to adhere to social distancing guidelines
- During game, remind players, coaches and umpires about social distancing plan and protocol with equipment

Safety Coordinator (Assistant to Board Member on Duty on game days)

- The league Safety Coordinator will be one adult designated to assist the Board Member on Duty during game days when there are multiple games scheduled during the same time slot
- Safety Coordinator will educate and enforce social distancing among players and spectators
- Safety Coordinator will communicate with all participants of the game and all spectators in a friendly, yet firm, manner that all social distancing protocol must be adhered to during their time at the field
- As guidelines require, Safety Coordinator is encouraged to wear a face covering when they are unable to practice 6 feet of social distancing during interaction with others

V. Equipment Protocol

Player Equipment

- Players are not to use bat racks or helmet racks. They are to keep personal equipment in their designated spots.
- Bats, helmets, gloves are not to be shared between players
- If a player is using a “team” bat, that bat will be kept in the bat rack and will be cleaned with a sanitizing wipe after each use.
- Each catcher must have his/her own equipment
- League can provide gear for each game that is used by only one player per day, unless the equipment is sanitized after each player’s use
- Borrowed league’s catcher’s gear is to be wiped down with sanitizing wipe prior to reuse

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- Players to keep their own equipment in their own bag
- Bats are retrieved by player if out at first
- Bats are retrieved by dugout coach if player reaches base safely—dugout coach to wipe down bat with sanitizing wipe and set on side of dugout for player to retrieve upon reentering dugout and place in their own equipment bag

Umpire Equipment

- Umpires are encouraged to use their own umpire gear. The umpire calling balls and strikes will be positioned six-feet behind the pitcher and will not be issued gear from the league.
- If any items are provided to the umpires (such as count clickers, etc) the items must be wiped down with sanitizing wipe prior to reuse of gear.

VI. Pregame & Postgame—Players & Spectators

- As required by applicable guidelines, visual wellness checks of all managers, coaches, volunteers and players will be completed upon arrival at the beginning of each team activity with a no-touch thermometer. If a thermometer requiring a touch-method is the only type available, it should only be used when a fever is strongly suspected. Only the person being screened from their household should place a touch thermometer in their mouth. Thermometers must be cleaned and disinfected after each use, and protective sleeves should be used.
- Players to arrive to the game site no more than 30 minutes before the game time for warm-ups, unless part of a team activity where players are able to socially distance and avoid congregating as set forth herein
- Players are not to congregate within a group prior to taking the field to warm up, except as set forth above
- Home team to warm up on left field
- Visitor team to warm up on right field
- Each team to follow social distancing guidelines during warm-ups
 - Stretching—separate in a space to allow 6 feet apart
 - Running—run as a team spaced 6 feet apart
 - Throwing—ensure throwing distance is at least 6 feet apart
 - Defense warm-up—when taking grounders, players awaiting their turn should be spaced from the other players at least 6 feet apart
 - Pitcher/catcher warm-ups in bullpen only; coach is to maintain a distance of 6 feet from players during instruction; coach to wear face covering at all times while in the bullpen

VII. Starting the Game

- For the Pledge of Allegiance and/or Little League Pledge—players will line up along their dugout side baseline, spread out down the baseline, at least 6 feet apart, to recite both pledges

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- Managers and coaches will line up behind their players, closer to the dugout; managers/coaches to remain 6 feet from each other and minimum of 6 feet from their players
- Umpire to stand at home plate during pledges at a minimum distance of 6 feet from a player or adult
- For the plate meeting, managers from both teams will meet the umpire at the plate—all parties are required to wear a face covering during the plate meeting

VIII. During the Game

- Players are encouraged to use hand sanitizer as frequently as possible during the game
- Players should have a personal bottle of sanitizer kept in their equipment bag
- No group gatherings at home plate following a home run
- No high fives or handshakes following a play or game
- Dugout coaches shall wipe down bats and other equipment used by more than one player between uses
- Players are to bring their own water/Gatorade for use during their game—no team water jugs or ice chests are permitted; players are not to share their drinks or snacks with anyone
- Sunflower seeds are not allowed at any time
- In the event of an injury, managers and coaches should continue to follow social distancing protocols unless a situation requires immediate first aid attention and parents and/or guardians are unavailable to provide such care

IX. Conclusion of the Game

- We will replace the traditional postgame handshake line with a coordinated “hat-tip”: Players will line up along their dugout side baseline, spread out down the baseline standing 6 feet apart, and tip their caps to the opposing team
- Manager/Coach to say a few words to their team while their players are lined up on baseline to acknowledge good play and sportsmanship, thank the umpires and the volunteers
- Congregation of teams/players is not allowed at the game site—there is to be no after-game team meeting at the game site unless social distancing protocols can be maintained
- Players and families should leave the game site within 20 minutes of the game concluding

X. Spectators

- Spectators are defined as parents, caregivers, siblings and other family members, and anyone else observing games or practices. Nonessential visitors and volunteers can be restricted so that gatherings are limited to those groups that can maintain physical distancing and support proper hand hygiene.
- Spectators should try to limit their time at the field prior to game time when possible, based on child’s age and needs
- Spectators are recommended not to congregate in a group outside of their stay-at-home family group

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- Spectators will not be allowed to stand behind the home plate area within 6 feet of the backstop unless maintaining proper social distancing
- Bleachers may be closed to spectators if appropriate social distancing cannot be maintained; bleachers will be given priority to be used as an extra area for players, managers, and coaches who are participating in a game.
- All spectators will sit outside the field fence at least 6 feet away from the dugout/field entrance. Chairs, blankets, etc., may be set up by spectators
- Designated Distancing areas will be marked along foul lines and behind the home run fences if Bleachers are unavailable
- Unless guidelines allow for larger groups, there should be no more than 10 people sitting together in a “family group;” the “family group” is only to include their stay-at-home family
- There should be at least 10 feet between each “family group” along the fence line

XI. Food & Beverage

- Food or concession sales will be allowed at facilities if permitted by applicable local guidelines. Safety protocols and guidelines must be followed
- Families are encouraged to bring their own snacks
- There will be limited outdoor seating areas available in an effort to limit any congregation (picnic benches or tables)
- Hand sanitizer will be available at the facility

XII. Field Maintenance on Game Days

- Field maintenance equipment shall include, but not be limited to, rakes, field drags, shovels, paint/chalk sprayers, and hoses. Field maintenance equipment will only be handled by a maximum of two league members per team who will be designated as the “field crew”
- Field crew to be the only person(s) to use the field maintenance equipment
- Field crew to wear gloves during all field maintenance or to hand sanitize prior to working—including set up and tear down
- Field maintenance equipment to be wiped down after each use
- Paint/chalk sprayer push handle to be wiped down with sanitizing wipes after use

XIII. Facilities—Fields and Surroundings

Field Facilities

- All restrooms will be serviced and wiped down regularly and will be stocked with soap for hand washing
- Trash cans will be touchless; lids will remain open when field site is open to players/spectators
- Facilities entered by the public will be wiped down at the beginning and end of the day

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Field Surroundings

- Informational signage will be posted throughout the field(s) regarding infection control, social distancing and the use of face coverings if within 6ft of another individual and gloves
- No visitors who are unrelated to a player or sales representatives or outside distributors will be allowed at the field
- Drinking fountains will be removed or covered or converted into a hand washing station

XIV. Practice Protocol

- Team practice protocol shall align with all game day guidelines and protocol
- No sharing of equipment
- Proper social distance spacing during warm-up, practice drills and batting
- Hand sanitizer to be used by players before and after use of any equipment and transition of offense and defense drills
- As guidelines require, players to wear a face covering if they are unable to practice standard social distancing
- Enforcing social distancing, use of face coverings and sanitizing equipment shall be the sole responsibility of each team manager, team coach(es) and/or other approved adult league volunteer that is organizing a team practice
- Player's participation in team practice is at the sole discretion of the player's parent/caregiver; there will be no repercussion on game day for any player who does not attend a team practice

XV. Ongoing Monitoring Protocols

- Board Members and league officials will maintain ongoing communication with all members of the league to include all players/managers/coaches/spectators at the field to limit any violation of the safety protocols
- All players/managers/coaches/spectators will be reminded that any violation of the social distancing and safety protocols will jeopardize the continued operation and opening of Little League games
- Any player/manager/coach/spectator who refuses to adhere to the protocols after sufficient notice and warning will be asked to leave the field site. This may be enforced by any TWLL Board Member.

XVI. League Guidelines Approval

- These guidelines were established to allow our children the opportunity to play baseball and softball. They reflect the recommendations and views of the community and health care providers. Youth sports and local businesses are required to follow COVID-19 safety and preventive guidelines to remain open and active.
- The following persons may be contacted regarding this protocol:

Name	Position	Email
Chris Blevins	TWLL President	chris.blevins@twll.com

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Jason Wells	TWLL Safety Officer	jasonwells@twll.com
Denny Curran	District30 Administrator	dist30lb@aol.com

DRAFT

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Parent/Guardian COVID-19 Acknowledgment & Waiver

1. I, the undersigned parent or guardian of the child(ren) listed under my name, enter this **Parent/Guardian COVID-19 Acknowledgement and Waiver** individually and on behalf of the child(ren) listed under my name below.
2. I understand and acknowledge the following information is reported by public health agencies including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the California Department of Health with respect to COVID-19 (also known as the “novel coronavirus” or the SARS- CoV- 2 virus):
 - a. COVID-19 is a serious and potentially fatal illness. There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.
 - b. The virus spreads mainly from person-to-person between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet). This occurs by respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Surfaces can also get infected.
 - c. Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions like hypertension, obesity, heart or lung disease, diabetes or asthma seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness.
 - d. The disease is transmitted more frequently when any group of people gathers. For this reason, gathering in groups or being in close contact with others has been discouraged by public health agencies.
3. I understand and acknowledge that there is presently a significant element of risk of COVID-19 transmission when any group of people gathers. I have reviewed and understand the risks reflected in the local, state, and federal alerts and guidelines, including, but not limited to, the information published at the following websites:
<https://covid19.ca.gov/>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
<https://covid19.ca.gov/industry-guidance/>
4. **Assumption of Risk.** By executing this COVID-19 Acknowledgment & Waiver, I am assuming all risks to myself and to the child(ren) listed under my name, known and unknown, arising from the child(ren) listed under my name resuming participation in Tustin Western Little League baseball or softball activities and arising from my participation as a spectator, coach, volunteer or other participant at Tustin Western Little League activities, including risks of contraction/transmission of COVID-19. I assume full responsibility for any sickness, hospitalization, bodily injury, death, loss of personal property, quarantines, and all related costs and expenses of any person arising from my participation and/or the participation of the child(ren) listed below my name in Tustin Western Little League baseball or softball activities.
5. **Waiver and Release of Claims.** To the fullest extent permitted by law, I release Tustin Western Little League and the Tustin Unified School District, its affiliated campuses, and Tustin Western Little League’s and Tustin Unified School District’s respective governing boards, affiliates, subsidiaries, divisions, administrators, directors, officers, employees, agents, and volunteers (collectively referred to herein as the “Released Parties”), from and against all claims and causes of action, for any injury or harm of any kind which may arise from or out of my participation and/or the participation of the child(ren) listed below my name in Tustin Western Little League baseball or softball activities, including risks of contraction/transmission of COVID-19. This release is intended to discharge the Released Parties against

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any and all liability arising out of or connected in any way with my participation and/or the participation of the child(ren) listed below my name in Tustin Western Little League baseball or softball activities. I understand that by signing this Agreement, I am releasing claims and giving up substantial rights, including my right to sue, and acknowledge that I am doing so voluntarily. No representations, statements, or inducements, oral or written, apart from the foregoing written statement, have been made.

6. I understand and agree that I, and the child(ren) listed below my name must comply with the Tustin Western Little League COVID-19 Mitigation Guidelines in order that we or any of us may participate in Tustin Western Little League baseball or softball activities. I further understand that refusal to comply with these guidelines may prevent Tustin Western Little League from remaining open for play. I acknowledge and understand that I, or the child(ren) listed below my name, may be asked to leave the Tustin Western Little League facility if I/we/the child(ren) do not abide by these guidelines.

Parent/Guardian, individually and on behalf of the
child(ren) listed below Parent/Guardian's name

Dated: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Parent/Guardian's Printed Name

Child's Printed Name

Date of Birth

Child's Printed Name

Date of Birth

Child's Printed Name

Date of Birth