



Fairfax Little League

COVID-19 Return to Play Guidelines

Every manager, coach, board member, parent, and player MUST read this document and adhere to the guidance in this document at all times. Please note that local, state, and federal guidelines and guidance also apply to all Fairfax Little League activities, games, and practices.

General Guidance - applicable while Virginia remains in a state of emergency:

1. This document relies upon guidance provided by the following entities and will continue to be revised as those organizations, and others, refine their guidelines, rules, and regulations:
 - a. Little League International
(<https://www.littleleague.org/player-safety/coronavirus-update/>)
 - b. CDC
(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>)
(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/contact-tracing.html>)
 - c. State of Virginia (<https://www.virginia.gov/coronavirus/>)
 - i. Governor's Executive Order 72 (5th Amended)
([https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/executive-actions/EO-72-FIFTH-AMENDED-and-Order-of-Public-Health-Emergency-None-Easing-of-Commonsense-Surge-Restrictions-Due-to-Novel-Coronavirus-\(COVID-19\).pdf](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/executive-actions/EO-72-FIFTH-AMENDED-and-Order-of-Public-Health-Emergency-None-Easing-of-Commonsense-Surge-Restrictions-Due-to-Novel-Coronavirus-(COVID-19).pdf))
 - ii. Phase 2 Guidelines
(<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/Virginia-Forward-Phase-Two-Guidelines.pdf>)
 - iii. Phase 3 Guidelines (updated 3/23/2021)
(<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/3.23.21-Forward-Virginia-Guidelines.pdf>)
 - iv. Considerations for Recreational Sports
(<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/schools-workplaces-community-locations/sports/>)

2. All Parents/guardians MUST sign a waiver for each player before the player participates in any Fairfax Little League event. This waiver may be included as part of the registration process, to be acknowledged prior to completion of registration.
3. Parents are strongly encouraged to supply their players with antibacterial wipes and hand sanitizer for wiping down and cleaning shared playing equipment and hands pre/post game and between innings.
4. PPE (Personal Protective Equipment):
 - a. All managers/coaches, volunteers, umpires, etc., MUST wear cloth face coverings (masks) in dugouts, on the field of play, and wherever social distancing is not possible.
 - b. Players MUST wear cloth face coverings when they are not actively participating in the game or practice. This means all players need to wear a cloth face covering when arriving to the field, when departing after an event, and any time they are on the sidelines during games or practices.
 - c. Players are not required to wear a cloth face covering while on the field during game play or while actively participating in a practice.
 - d. Players will be permitted to wear a cloth face covering on the field during game play or while actively participating in a practice, if physically able to do so, based on any directive of a medical provider or individual determination of the player/parent/guardian.
 - e. During Phase 3, all spectators MUST wear cloth face coverings and are not permitted in the dugouts or on the field of play. Any spectator who is asked to volunteer during a game or practice MUST wear a cloth face covering while doing so.
5. Pre/post Practice/Game:
 - a. Any parent or coach who is preparing the field before an event, or cleaning the field after an event MUST wear a cloth face covering. All equipment should be wiped down and cleaned prior to and following use.
 - b. The managers meeting at home plate should be limited to one coach from each team plus the umpires. All people should stand six feet apart. No players should be at the plate meeting.
 - c. Where possible, consider options for limiting lineup card exchanges in order to reduce person-to-person contact.
 - d. Teams MUST clean their dugout of all trash and other items after each game and practice.

- e. Players and families should 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.
 - f. Post-game/practice conferences should be limited in duration and adhere to all social distancing requirements. All individuals should stand six feet apart .
 - g. Post-game team snacks and drinks are not permitted.
 - h. Practice/Game fields MUST be exited completely before new teams enter the field and dugouts. Players should remain in their vehicles while waiting for previous teams to vacate.
6. Scoreboard should only be used by one person. Equipment must be cleaned before and after use. Multiple people should not be in any press box, unless they are members of the same family.
7. Dugout Conduct:
- a. Managers/coaches and players should be assigned spots in the dugout, on the bleachers, or along the fence so that they are at least six feet apart and must be placed behind a fence. Expansion of the team dugouts should not be done into foul ball areas in the field of play.
 - b. Players are to stay at their assigned spots when on the bench or while waiting their turn to bat. At the younger levels, it may be necessary to have a parent or guardian remain in the assigned spot with the player to ensure social distancing. If a parent or guardian is in the assigned spot, the parent or guardian MUST wear a cloth face covering.
 - c. When their team is batting, the next two batters (“on deck” and “in the hole”) may be in the dugout rather than in their assigned spot. When in the dugout, those players MUST maintain social distancing of six feet .
 - d. Players should keep their equipment in their assigned spots.
 - e. Managers/coaches MUST wear a cloth face covering while in the dugout.
 - f. Scorekeepers may be located near home plate (behind the fence) so long as they are wearing cloth face coverings and are maintaining 6 feet of social distance. Depending on the situation, best practice may be to have a coach keep the scorebook instead of a parent.
8. Player Equipment:
- a. Players should have their own individual batter’s helmet, glove, bat, and catcher’s equipment. Fairfax Little League will work with parents to provide needed equipment. All such equipment must be returned to Fairfax Little League after the season.

- b. 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 wiped down and cleaned before being used by a new player. Increased attention should be paid to detailed cleaning of all equipment directly contacting the head and face (catcher's mask, helmets).

9. Practices:

- a. Practices must adhere to the same social distancing requirements as games.
- b. Managers should attempt to keep small groups of players together and rotate them through drills. When waiting to take part in a drill, players should maintain six feet of distance from other players where practicable .

10. Drinks / Snacks:

- a. Athletes, managers/coaches, and umpires MUST bring their own personal drinks to all team activities. Drinks should be labeled with the person's name and should remain with their parents/guardians or with their equipment at all times.
- b. Teams should not share any snacks or food. Players should bring individual, prepackaged food, if needed, and should remain with their parents/guardians or with their equipment at all times.

11. Players, managers, coaches, umpires, spectators should refrain from spitting, especially in dugout areas and on the playing field. Sunflower seeds, gum, and any other food or snack that encourages spitting are not permitted for players, coaches, or spectators.

12. Team/player handshakes and team/player high fives, fistbumps, etc., are eliminated. Alternatively, players and coaches should tip their caps to the opposing team.

13. Teams should not line up for the Little League pledge prior to games.

14. Umpires:

- a. Umpires MUST wear a cloth face covering when on the field of play.
- b. Base umpires will keep distance in set-up positions.
- c. Umpires at 90' fields MAY be positioned behind the pitcher rather than behind the catcher.
- d. Umpires at 60' fields MAY be positioned behind the pitcher upon approval of Fairfax Little League Chief Umpire. If so positioned, the umpire MUST wear an umpire's face mask and may wear a chest protector and/or shin guards. If the umpire positions behind the plate, a cloth face covering must be worn.
- e. When locating behind the pitcher, umpires should be to the left side of a right-handed pitcher and the right side of a left-handed pitcher.

- f. Once an umpire is considered “fully vaccinated” under CDC guidance, that umpire MAY call balls and strikes from the normal position behind the plate rather than from behind the pitcher. All other requirements remain in effect.
- 15. The catcher shall be positioned during a player’s at-bat to allow for social distancing where practicable. At the tee ball and machine pitch levels, the catcher position MAY be eliminated and replaced with a net placed behind the batter box.
- 16. Baseballs:
 - a. The defensive team will provide baseballs for their half inning and will collect after the half inning.
 - b. Umpires should limit their contact with the ball. Catchers should retrieve foul balls and passed balls where possible.
- 17. Spectators
 - a. During Phase 2 in Virginia, only family members of coaches, players, and umpires are allowed at events. During Phase 3 in Virginia, spectators are limited to 500 people.
 - b. Spectators are encouraged to bring their own chairs and seating and refrain from sitting in the bleachers. All spectators MUST be seated at least six feet apart from individuals not residing in their household .
 - c. During Phase 3, spectators MUST wear cloth face coverings at all times. Spectators are not permitted in the dugout or on the field of play during games.
- 18. COVID-19 symptom testing/self screening
 - a. All participants MUST have their body temperature measured and conduct a self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms prior to participating or attending each Little League activity.
 - b. Anyone with a positive COVID-19 test; or anyone with symptoms of fever (100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher) or a sense of having a fever; a new cough, new shortness of breath, new chills, new sore throat, or new muscle aches that cannot be attributed to another health condition or specific activity (such as physical exercise); or anyone with a known “close contact” to a person with COVID-19 should not attend any Little League activity until cleared by a medical professional.
 - c. According to CDC guidance, a “close contact” is “any individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection).”
 - d. Each team shall have a COVID Coordinator at all practices and games to help enforce all Return to Play Guidelines within this document, including social distancing, wearing cloth face coverings, and cleaning of equipment and

facilities. The COVID Coordinator is separate from the manager and two on-field coaches. Multiple parents may serve in this role at different times, but each team MUST have someone serving as COVID Coordinator at each practice or game.

- e. Each Manager, assisted by their COVID Coordinator, MUST confirm that all participants, including players, coaches, umpires, and other volunteers, have conducted a self screening and did not have any symptoms related to COVID-19 or any known “close contact” to a person with COVID-19 prior to participation. Each Manager, assisted by their COVID Coordinator, MUST keep a record of players, coaches, umpires, and other volunteers who attended and/or were involved in each practice and game, to be destroyed 14 days after the final team gathering. The home team is responsible for receiving the self screening acknowledgement from the umpires.
 - f. Any individual who tests positive for COVID-19 should inform Fairfax Little League to aid in any contact tracing efforts by local or state health officials. Within 24 hours of receiving the positive test information, Fairfax Little League will inform each team that had interacted with that individual the day of illness onset or the positive test sample, 1 day before, and 2 days before (per CDC guidelines). The name of the individual will not be disclosed.
 - g. Any individual, including players, at risk for severe illness or with serious underlying medical or respiratory conditions should only attend Fairfax Little League activities with permission from a medical professional.
19. Any game that cannot be played because a team has insufficient players will consider the game to be delayed, not forfeited. Fairfax Little League will attempt to reschedule all such delayed games.
20. Thunder/Lightning
- a. Parents/guardians are expected to monitor weather conditions and should be at their player’s practice/game field if thunderstorms are forecasted.
 - b. If they cannot be there, parents/guardians are expected to have designated another parent who will take responsibility for their child if thunder or lightning causes the fields to be cleared of players and volunteers.