

PA DISTRICT 14 LITTLE LEAGUE 2020 LEAGUE COVID-19

Participant Guidance

In response to the current national health crisis and in conjunction with local, state, and federal health and governmental policies, District 14 Little League, in conjunction with all local leagues, has adopted the following recommended safety protocols for Leagues, players, coaches, and spectators for the 2020 Little League spring season.

It is recognized that participation by all individuals, players, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents, spectators is fully a voluntary act. These guidelines have been developed in accordance with Little League International “Best Practices” and the CDC “Considerations for Youth Sports” and they are exactly that, guidelines and implementation is to be guided by what is practical under the circumstances. It is the responsibility of all participants to self-regulate and self-monitor with respect to the safety guidelines provided in order to protect not only themselves but others. It is further recognized that the recommendations and guidelines employed by PA District 14 and the individual leagues is intended to provide a framework by which we can minimize the risk of coronavirus to a manageable and acceptable risk level in order to provide the players with the wholesome benefits of youth sports. Any individual whose behavior or actions are deemed to increase the coronavirus risk for the players will be given a chance to correct the behavior and should they choose not to do so may be asked by league officials to leave the premises. Any individual who has concerns that the implementation of the guidelines is not satisfactory for them and/or their child are encouraged to take respectful steps to address the concern, reach out to their league officials and/or remove themselves and their player from an environment they feel is unsafe.

GENERAL PARTICIPANT GUIDANCE (Players, Coaches, Officials, Volunteers, Parents, Spectators)

1. All participants shall follow all local and state guidelines and directives.
2. All participants are encouraged to review and familiarize themselves with Little Leagues published “Best Practices Guide” <https://www.littleleague.org/downloads/best-practices/>
3. All active participants (Players, Managers, Coaches, Umpires, League Officers) of PA District 14 Interlock programs shall be required to sign the “PA D14 LL waiver/release for communicable diseases” document.
4. No league provided food or concessions will be available, families are encouraged to bring their own food/beverages. Independent licensed food services operations are the only concessions that may be available.
5. All participants are encouraged to practice social distancing to the greatest extent possible. Person-to-person contact should be limited wherever practical. For situations where players are engaged in sports activity see On-Field Guidance below.
6. All individuals are requested to measure their body temperature to ensure that no fever is present prior to participating or attending each Little League activity. Anyone with symptoms of fever, 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.
7. Any player or participant who has tested positive for Covid-19 or has had close contact with a person testing positive for Covid-19 is required to notify their leagues Covid-19 Point of Contact or safety officer as appropriate so necessary follow up can take place.
8. Any player who is experiencing Covid-19 symptoms, has tested positive for Covid-19, or has recently had close contact with a person with Covid-19 WILL NOT BE PERMITTED to participate in practices or games. Coaches have the authority to send a player home immediately if they are exhibiting any symptoms.
9. Any individual, including players, at risk for severe illness or with serious underlying medical or respiratory condition should only attend Little League activities with permission from a medical professional.
10. 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.
11. Players and families are asked to vacate the field/facility as soon as reasonable at the conclusion of the game/practice and minimize unnecessary contact with others.

PARENT GUIDANCE:

- 1) Parents are encouraged to:
 - a) Provide their players with antibacterial wipes and hand sanitizer to clean hands and equipment between innings.
 - b) Provide their players with a folding camp-style chair to help coaches “expand the dugout”.
 - c) Provide their players with personal drinks for all activities. Drinks should be labeled with the person’s name.
 - d) Clean and Disinfect their players’ equipment after each practice and game.
 - e) Practice appropriate social distancing and wear cloth face coverings when applicable as spectators.

COACH GUIDANCE:

1. Coaches are encouraged to wear cloth face coverings when in the dugout, at plate meeting and when applicable.
2. There should be no shared team beverages or snacks.
3. Determine player seating assignments in the dugout, on the bleachers or in seating outside the field of play, in an effort to maintain social distancing. An expanded dugout is encouraged however players must be placed behind a fence.
4. It is recommended that any shared field preparation equipment be sprayed or wiped with cleaner and disinfectant before and after each use.
5. Coaches will be responsible for ensuring that equipment is adequately spaced and visible prior to the game for a “visual only” equipment check by the umpires.
6. Coaches are required to:
 - a. Disinfect hard surface areas (benches, high touch areas, etc) upon first arrival.
 - b. Clean dugout of all trash and other items after game.
 - c. Disinfect hard surface areas (benches, high touch areas, etc) prior to leaving. *This complies with CDC recommendation of a two-step process for cleaning and disinfecting.*

UMPIRE GUIDANCE:

1. Encouraged to eliminate the plate meeting if possible.
2. Umpires are encouraged to wear cloth face coverings during the plate meeting. Maintain six feet social distancing.
3. Plate meetings should only consist of one manager or coach from each team, and game umpires. No players should ever be part of the plate meetings.
4. Umpires are encouraged, if physically able, but not required, to wear cloth face coverings during the game.
5. Balls and strikes will be called from behind home plate, however at the discretion of the umpire call balls and strikes may be called from behind the mound.
6. Umpire equipment inspection will consist of a visible inspection only, equipment is to be adequately laid out by the teams to facilitate a “visual only” inspection. Any questions or concerns will be addressed directly with the coach.

PLAYER GUIDANCE:

1. Players and coaches should take measures to prevent all but the essential contact necessary to play the game. This should include refraining from handshakes, high fives, fist/elbow bumps, chest bumps, group celebrations, etc.
2. Players should wear cloth face coverings, if possible when in close contact areas and in places where recommended social distancing is challenging or not feasible, such as in dugouts.
3. Players should not wear protective medical gloves on the field during game play.
4. Players will be permitted (but are not required) 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.
5. Players are to remain at their assigned spots (designated seating location) while awaiting their turn at bat or while on the bench on defense.
6. No personal player bat bags/equipment bags should be allowed in the dugout. Player equipment should be spaced accordingly outside the dugout to prevent direct contact.
7. Players should have their own individual batter’s helmet, glove, bat, and catcher’s equipment. The use of shared equipment should be minimized or avoided when feasible.

SPECTATOR GUIDANCE:

1. Spectators should wear cloth face coverings if possible and maintain 6 foot social distancing to the maximum extent practical, and avoid direct hand or other contact with players/managers/coaches during play.
2. Spectators should bring their own seating or portable chairs when possible
3. 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:
 - a. Active COVID-19 infection
 - b. Known direct contact with an individual testing positive for COVID-19
 - c. Fever
 - d. Cough
 - e. 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:
 - i. Those with a serious underlying medical condition, including heart disease, morbid obesity, diabetes, lung disease, immunocompromise, chronic kidney disease, and chronic lung disease.
 - ii. Those currently residing in a nursing home or long-term care facility
 - iii. Those over 65
4. Should Not touch or return foul balls to play

ON-FIELD PROTOCOL

1. Eliminate the plate meeting if possible
2. The pre-game managers meeting at home plate, if necessary, is limited to one coach from each team plus the umpires, no players. Social distancing and cloth face coverings are encouraged.
3. The Little League pledge will be conducted prior to every game. In lieu of the traditional lining up closely on the foul line the players should line up on their respective foul lines and use an “arm’s length” measurement to stand 6 feet apart. In the event that the line extends beyond 1st or 3rd base it should continue along the 1B/2B or 2B/3B baselines to form a box. Only one player should lead the pledge from the mound.
4. Teams should spread out as much as practical during practices and games. Expand the dugout area when room permits and ONLY IF PLAYER SAFETY WILL NOT BE COMPROMISED. Expansion of the team dugouts will need to be determined on a field by field basis based on available safety fencing. Player seating must be behind a fence.
5. Only one head coach and two assistant coaches are permitted in the dugout area with the players.
6. Each player will be required to provide their own helmet, bat, glove, and other equipment (sunglasses, batting glove). Shared equipment should be minimized to maximum extent possible and if necessary “shared equipment” sanitization procedures should be followed.
7. All players wishing to catch are highly encouraged to provide their own catching equipment. Where individual equipment is not possible, team equipment will be provided. Coaches shall disinfect all shared equipment in between each inning.
8. Baseballs and softballs should be rotated through on a regular basis, at least every two innings, to limit individual contact.
9. Each team will provide 2-3 balls to be used while that team is defense. These balls will be alternated each half inning to limit cross contact of balls between teams.
10. Balls used in infield/outfield warm-up should be isolated from a shared ball container.
11. Player equipment should be spaced out to prevent direct contact.
12. Umpires shall limit contact with balls, catchers shall retrieve foul balls and passed balls wherever possible.
13. All foul balls shall be retrieved by participants. Spectators shall not retrieve foul balls.
14. In lieu of the traditional post-game handshake line, teams should line up in front of their dugouts and tip their caps to the opposing team after each game.
15. No shared “team” snacks or drinks are permitted. Each player shall bring their own water bottle for during a game and snack/drink for after a game if desired.
16. Use of sunflower seeds, gum, etc. is prohibited.
17. All players and coaches are to refrain from spitting at all times, including in dugout areas and on the playing field.
18. Bat retrieval will be by the bench coach who will grab the bat by the barrel.