

Needham Baseball & Softball COVID-19 Massachusetts Phase III Reopening Plan

July 6, 2020

All Players, Coaches, Spectators and Officials must conduct symptom assessments prior to attending any practice or game (as well as any household members).

This document is our best guidance at the time of publication for Phase III, Step 1 of reopening. Additional guidance will be provided as applicable. We will continue to evolve these plans as we receive new information about best practices and requirements from government agencies. **NB&S reserves the right to remove players or coaches from the program if there is intentional or repeated disregard for this guidance. We ask that ultimately parents will need to be responsible for themselves and their own children. As a league, NB&S is unable to police what parents and children do, but we need everyone's help to put safety and our kids first this season.**

Arrival/Departure Procedures

- Players are strongly recommended to travel to the field alone and/or only with members of their own household.
- Congregation before and after practices and games is highly discouraged, particularly if another team will be arriving at the field soon after the event. If a field is being used upon arrival, participants are encouraged to wait in their cars until the previous teams have cleared the area.

Facilities/Equipment

- All personal equipment (water bottles, bats, helmets, hats, gloves, catchers gear, softball metal face guards) shall not be shared between players. Each team will be supplied with at least one set of catcher's equipment that can be utilized ideally by one player each practice/game and disinfected properly (see contact time required for product) between use by another player. Equipment should be clearly labeled.
- No personal equipment shall be kept in the dugouts. Players should space their personal equipment at least 6 feet apart from other players' personal equipment. If dugouts or benches are used they should be sanitized at the end of the activity.
- Gates should be kept open at all times to reduce touch points. Beware of risk of balls leaving the field of play as a result.

Safety/Hygiene

- An assistant coach or another designated parent volunteer should monitor adherence to these policies during each event. Interested parents are encouraged to reach out to their child's coach.
- Managers of each team will be provided with hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol) to be made available to players, coaches and umpires during the season. All players and coaches are required to sanitize hands upon arrival at the field and prior to departure. Participants are encouraged to sanitize hands after coming off the field, such as between each inning.

- To participate or attend a practice or game, players, coaches and spectators must have shown no signs or symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days (current list of symptoms <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>).
- Moreover, players shall not participate in a practice or game if the player or another member of their household is then exhibiting signs or symptoms of COVID-19.
- If any individual develops symptoms during the activity, they should promptly inform their team manager and be removed from the activity and instructed to return home.
- If a player or coach or another member of their household tests positive for COVID-19, the League Director shall immediately be notified.
- A player or coach shall not participate in a practice or game if they or a member of their household has been diagnosed with COVID-19 until (i) the later of (x) 14 days after diagnosis, and (y) 3 days after the diagnosed person's symptoms have cleared, and (ii) a letter or email from the respective player's or coach's primary care physician indicating that the player or coach has been cleared to resume baseball/softball activities.
- All players, coaches and spectators traveling outside of Massachusetts (except to Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, New York and New Jersey) are instructed to self-quarantine for 14 days upon returning to Massachusetts, in accordance with State guidelines. This policy will be adjusted if and when the State guidelines on the subject are modified.

Food and Drink

- Spitting, seeds, gum and other food is prohibited during practices/games, on the field or in the dugout or extended dugout area. Only labeled water bottles permitted.
- There shall be no team water coolers or sharing of water bottles.
- NO TRASH SHOULD BE LEFT AT THE FIELD FOR OTHERS TO CLEAN UP

Players

- NB&S will provide neck gaiters (a/k/a "buffs"). They should be worn around the neck as part of practice attire by all players. Players should wear this or an alternative face covering over their nose and mouth at all times they are not actively participating in the field (e.g., bench, dugout, pre/post game/practice). In addition, batters and runners shall also wear the face covering. For clarity, the 9 defensive players in the field do not need to wear their face covering over their nose and mouth. Players may wear a face covering even at times it is not required of them.
- Players should endeavor to adhere to a 6' physical distance between one another except when engaged in baseball/softball activities on the field. For example, additional spacing between players while playing catch, changing drills, etc., during practice is expected, so that players remain spaced out where possible. There shall be no congregating of players while waiting to bat.
- No touch rule – other than during baseball/softball activities, any physical contact between players and players/coaches/umpires/fans is not allowed. Clapping and tipping the cap shall replace high fives, fist bumps and handshake lines.
- Defensive players or their coaches shall retrieve all balls leaving the field of play.

Parents/Spectators

- Spectators shall refrain from retrieving balls leaving the field of play.
- Spectators are encouraged to wear facial coverings and shall maintain a distance of at least 6' between groups of different household members.
- Spectators should remain at least 6' back from the backstop and fences surrounding the fields.
- Spectators should remain at least 10' back from the players' personal equipment space (other than younger ages- see below).
- Bleachers may only be utilized where social distancing, including the distancing from players' personal equipment, can be maintained.
- Parents may not enter the play area at any time – though they are encouraged to help guide children to find an appropriate space to locate their equipment and sit. At younger ages, children may elect to sit with their parents while on the sidelines during practice.
- Parents are requested to keep children from playing on or near benches and equipment boxes.
- No more than 100 people, including participants, players, coaches, volunteers and spectators, in the aggregate, shall be situated in, on or surrounding any baseball/softball activities.

Coaches

- NB&S will provide neck gaiters. They should be worn around the neck as part of practice/game attire by all coaches. Coaches will be expected to wear the gaiter or alternative face covering and maintain 6' physical distance from players, coaches, umpires and spectators at all times.
- Team meetings should be conducted virtually if possible.
- Coaches are required to sanitize their hands upon arrival at the field and prior to departure. They are encouraged to additionally do so during the activity.
- Coaches should be aware that the zero tolerance policy on arguing with an umpire will be strictly enforced this year. Coaches will be suspended or permanently removed by NB&S for violating this policy. Let's make sure we all have the right priorities this year and let the kids play the game. Just be happy you are playing baseball/softball period!

Gameplay

- Umpires will be instructed to wear face coverings at all times and maintain 6' distance from all players and coaches.
- The umpire calling balls and strikes for baseball will be situated behind the pitcher in the field of play (rather than behind the catcher). The umpire calling balls and strikes for softball may be situated behind the pitcher in the field of play.
- Umpires shall not retrieve or handle baseballs/softballs.
- The defensive team's baseballs/softballs shall be used each inning. There shall be frequent introduction of new or sanitized baseballs/softballs.
- Lineups are encouraged to be shared electronically and paper score books should be utilized by one person to minimize shared items. Use of electronic scoring apps like Game Changer are encouraged.
- Dugouts and benches may be used, but shall be sanitized before and after use, and 6' of distancing is to be maintained. Only the on-deck and in-the-hole batters should be permitted to sit in the dugout/on the bench during their team's at-bat. When a team is in the field, only the

substitute players who are sitting out that inning may sit in the dugout/on the bench (provided 6' of distancing can be maintained). Players who are otherwise awaiting their turn at bat or sitting out a defensive inning should sit with their personal equipment at least 6' from other players. Home team players shall sit outside the fences (if applicable), or field of play, along the 1st baseline; away team players shall sit outside the fences (if applicable), or field of play, along the 3rd baseline.

Miscellaneous

- We will attempt to reschedule practices/games when there is risk of inclement weather that has the potential to restrict physical distancing of the players (e.g., players congregating in a dugout, etc.).
- Disinfectant spray will be provided to Managers for use on applicable equipment/communal areas.
- Games and practices should be scheduled to leave sufficient time so that teams will not overlap with each other at a field.

League Specific Rules to be provided by each League Director, as applicable.