

Wallingford Return to Play Guidelines

Baseball & Softball

HEALTHY PRACTICES:

- All players and coaches are strongly recommended to practice good general health habits, including maintenance of adequate hydration, consumption of a varied, vitamin-rich diet with sufficient vegetables and fruits, and getting adequate sleep.

NO HANDSHAKES/PERSONAL CONTACT CELEBRATIONS:

- Players and coaches are required to take measures to prevent all but the essential contact necessary to play the game. This includes refraining from handshakes, high fives, fist/elbow bumps, chest bumps, group celebrations, etc.
- Little League International suggests lining up outside the dugout and tipping caps to the opposing team as a sign of good sportsmanship after a game.
- Players and families are to 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.

DRINKS AND SNACKS:

- Athletes, managers/coaches, and umpires are to bring their own personal drinks to all team activities. Drinks should be labeled with the person's name.
- Individuals should take their own drink containers home each night for cleaning and sanitation or use single-use bottles.
- There shall be no use of shared or team beverages.
- Teams are not to share any snacks or food. Players are to bring individual, pre-packaged food, if needed.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE):

- All managers/coaches, volunteers, umpires, etc., are to wear PPE whenever applicable and possible, such as cloth face coverings and protective medical gloves.
- Players are to wear cloth face coverings when in close contact areas and in places where social distancing is challenging or not feasible such as dugouts.
- Players should not wear protective medical gloves on the field during game play.
- Players, especially at younger divisions, are not required to wear a cloth face covering while on the field during game play.
- Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Teams must have hand sanitizer and EPA approved cleaning solution or disinfectant in dugouts during the game (SUPPLIED BY THE LEAGUE).

DUGOUTS:

- Managers/coaches and players will be assigned spots in the dugout or on the bleachers so that they are at least six feet apart and must be placed behind a fence. Wallingford Little League intends to “extend” the dugout to include the bullpen or bleachers and only players, coaches and officials will be allowed in any of the dugout areas.
- Players are to stay at their assigned spots when on the bench or while waiting their turn to bat.
- Players and managers/coaches are required to wear a cloth face covering while in the dugout when possible.
- Teams on offense will only have 1 coach and the current 3 players in the batting order in the dugout. All other players will line up along the side of the fence 6 feet apart in the batting order with their own equipment.

PLAYER EQUIPMENT:

- No personal player bat bags/equipment bags are allowed in the dugout. Player equipment is to be spaced accordingly outside the dugout to prevent direct contact.
- Whenever possible, players are to have their own individual batter’s helmet, glove, bat, and catcher’s equipment.
- Measures shall be enacted to avoid, or minimize, equipment sharing when feasible. For example, while most players currently supply their own helmet, some rely on Wallingford Little League to supply them. The league will take steps to loan helmets for the season to specific players to limit sharing.
- 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 cleaned first and then disinfected with an EPA- approved disinfectant against COVID-19 and allowed sufficient time to dry before 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).
- Player’s equipment (e.g. helmets, bats, gloves, etc.) must be cleaned and disinfected after each use by a parent/guardian/caretaker, where applicable.
- Individuals disinfecting equipment are encouraged to use gloves while using disinfectants and follow the manufacturer’s directions for use. All cleaning supplies and disinfectants should be stored properly, in a safe area, out of the reach of children.
- Player(s) equipment must be spread 6 feet apart to maintain social distancing.

BASEBALLS AND SOFTBALLS:

- Compliant game balls must be designated to each team for use while that team is playing defense in order to limit individual contact. Game balls should be rotated out every two innings to limit individual contact.
- Umpires are to limit their contact with the ball, and catchers will retrieve foul balls and passed balls where possible.
- Balls used in infield/outfield warm-up should be isolated from a shared ball container.
- Foul balls landing outside the field of play should be retrieved by participating players, coaches, and umpires. No spectators should retrieve the ball.

LINEUP EXCHANGE:

- Lineups should be by spoken word and recorded by officials/umpires or sent electronically to each coach via text without exchanging any physical documents with coaches or players.

UMPIRES:

- Umpires will avoid exchanging documents or equipment with players, coaches or spectators.
- Umpires will adhere to policy and not warm up pitchers
- Given that games will likely be played in warmer weather, umpires should make sure that they stay hydrated and safe, including taking extra time between innings or during the game to cool down.
- The home plate umpire is to call balls and strikes from a position between the pitcher and second base (wearing a mask) or six feet behind or off center of the catcher.
- Umpires are to wear face coverings where applicable or as recommended by the CDC.

SPITTING, SUNFLOWER SEEDS, GUM, ETC.:

- Sunflower seeds, gum, etc., are not be allowed in dugouts or on the playing field.
- All players and coaches are to refrain from spitting at all times, including in dugout areas and on the playing field.

SPECTATORS:

- Must adhere to 6-foot social distancing practices.
- Must conduct daily symptom assessments (self-evaluation). Anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home.
- Must not enter player areas (on the field of play or bench areas).
- As the League is looking to extend the dugout, no spectators will be allowed behind the backstops from the outfield end of the 1st base dugout to outfield end of the 3rd base dugout. All parents will spread out strictly adhering to social distancing from the outfield ends of the 1st and 3rd base dugouts and around the outfield.

- Bleacher use is not permitted. Spectators must remain down first and third base lines 6 feet apart beginning after the dugouts at each field. If the baselines do not provide suitable area to have social distancing, spectators must move to the outfield.

LEAVING THE VENUE:

- Individuals are not to congregate in common areas or parking lot following the event or practice
- Players and spectators are not to continue to play on the field after games
- Umpires should adhere to social distancing practices when interacting with players, coaches, and spectators off the field of play.
- Individuals should not exchange items.

GUIDELINES FOR ATHLETES:

- Must adhere to 6-foot social distancing practices off the field of play.
- Players are to wear cloth face coverings when in close contact areas and in places where recommended social distancing is challenging or not feasible, such as in dugouts.
- Must not share water or equipment. Belongings are to be used only by the individual owner or operator including, but not limited to water bottles, gloves, bats, hats, and other on- and off-field gear.
- No touch rule – players must refrain from high fives, handshake lines, and other physical contact with teammates, opposing players, coaches, umpires, and fans. A “tip the cap” can be used following the game in lieu of the handshake line.
- No spitting or eating seeds, gum, other similar products.
- Players do not have to wear face coverings in the field of play.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:

- Prior to all games and practices, parents must conduct a daily self-symptom assessment. This self-assessment will be provided to all parents and available on our website. This self-assessment should be for the player and parents and other spectators that will be going to the game with you.
- Children participating in youth sporting events or practice should minimize in-person contact with any person 65 years of age or older, especially those with pre-existing health conditions, for a period of 14 days. This includes maintaining social distancing of at least 6 feet of separation from those individuals, wearing a face covering or mask, and avoiding sharing utensils or other common objects with those individuals.
- No pop up tents will be allowed for spectators.
- To ensure adhering to the CDC social gathering limitations of no more than 50 people per event, 3 coaches and 1 parent/guardian per player will be permitted at the field. If a parent is also a coach, that will count as the one parent for the player.

GUIDELINES FOR COACHES:

- Coaches and managers with underlying health conditions should reach out to his/her doctor to determine if coaching during the 2020 season is appropriate.
- Prior to all games and practices, coaches should conduct a daily self-symptom assessment. If any coach is experiencing any of the symptoms per the CDC: fever, loss of taste and or smell, cough, chills, body aches, headache, shortness of breath, they are to remain home.
- Coaches must wear cloth face covering during games/practices.
- Coaches and players must maintain 6ft of social distancing during practices and drills.

RESPONSIBILITY OF LEAGUE PERSONNEL:

- These guidelines are to be enforced by league personnel/board member, team parent and/or coach.
- All games are to be scheduled with a 40 minute – 1 hour space in between to allow for proper cleaning and disinfecting of the dugout and the full departure of teams and spectators before the arrival of new teams and spectators.
- The leagues are responsible to provide all teams with the proper hand sanitizer, cleaner and disinfectant.
- All player benches and dugouts are to be wiped down with cleaner and disinfectant at the conclusion of each game by league personnel and or coaches.
- League is to provide hand sanitizer for routine use by teams throughout the game.

IN THE CASE A COACH, PLAYER OR UMPIRE TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID - 19

*The CT Reopen sector guidance defines baseball and softball as a MODERATE RISK: Sports that involve close, sustained contact, but with protective equipment in place that may reduce the likelihood of respiratory particle transmission between participants OR intermittent close contact OR group sports OR sports that use equipment that can't be cleaned between participants. Examples: volleyball, soccer, gymnastics, field hockey, tennis, swimming relays, pole vault, high jump, long jump, crew with two or more rowers in shell, synchronized swimming, **baseball, and softball**. The Wallingford Parks and Recreation Department in consultation with the Wallingford Health Department will monitor community COVID-19 cases and modify the guidance as necessary to ensure the health/safety of the coaching staff and players. If a player or a coaching staff member has a confirmed case of COVID-19, the team impacted would be required to cease baseball operations for a minimum of 14 days.*

FAILURE TO COMPLY TO RETURN TO PLAY GUIDELINES

Any league failing to comply with any of the above guidelines put forth in the return to play plan will risk forfeiting their entire season.

These guidelines are subject to change based on regulations put forth by the State of Connecticut Reopen, CDC, or the Town of Wallingford. As the state progresses in the Phase In Plan, guidelines may be adjusted accordingly. If the

state happens to regress in the Phase in Plan, league can and will have to cease operations based on the State of CT requirements, Executive Orders, etc.