



Aptos Little League Return to Play COVID Safety Protocols

Goals

- To get our kids out playing baseball.
- To do so safely– keeping in mind that this is a COMMUNITY activity.

Organization Responsibilities:

- Distribute and post Return to Play protocols.
- Be sensitive and accommodating to parents that may be uncomfortable with returning to play.
- Train and educate all staff on Return to Play protocols.
- Provide adequate field space for social distancing.
- Provide support and equipment necessary to implement safety protocols.

Manager & Coach Responsibilities:

- Follow all Return to Play protocols.
- Screen athletes and if they are not feeling well, send them home.
- Sanitize each player's hands with 60% alcohol hand sanitizer after screening them, before they enter the field, and when they leave the field at the end of the event.
- Ensure all athletes have their individual equipment (ball, water, helmet, bat, etc.)
- The coach is the only person to place/pickup/touch cones, bases, or training equipment.
- Ensure drills/exercises which allow for adequate social distancing.
- Ensure that equipment is disinfected properly after each use.

Parent Responsibilities:

- If you are not comfortable with returning to play, DON'T. You are the only one who can make the right decision of when your child returns to play.
 - Adhere to all Return to Play protocols.
 - Check your child's temperature and complete the "Aptos Little League at Home Screening Questionnaire" before coming to any training session or game.
 - Ensure child's clothing is washed after every training session.
- Ensure all equipment (cleats, baseballs, bats, helmets, etc.) is sanitized before and after every event.
 - Supply your child with individual hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol or the coach will have some at the field.
 - Ensure your child has their own full water bottle.
- Parents will drop off and pick up at practices. No observers at practice at this time.
 - Adhere to 6 ft social distancing and masking when attending any little league events.
- All spectators of games must bring their own chairs and sit 6ft apart from non-family members and the players around the outfield.

Player Responsibilities:

- If you are not comfortable with returning to play, DON'T.
- Adhere to all Return to Play protocols
- Wash hands thoroughly before and after training at home and use hand sanitizer before and after every little league event.
- Wash and sanitize training equipment (shoes, shin guards, clothing) after every event.
- Do not share water, food, or equipment with any other players.
- No sunflower seeds or gum during events. No spitting.
- Respect and practice social distancing at all times during a little league event. Place your equipment, bags, etc. in your assigned space, which will be at least 6 feet apart from other players and their equipment.



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- Adhere to social distancing and masking requirements for all LL events. Your coaches will remind you and direct you when needed.
- No high 5's, handshakes, knuckles, or group celebrations.
- Sanitize your hands before and after every little league event.

Person to Person Health Practices:

- All players and coaches should practice good general health habits and if feeling sick or exposed don't come!
- No Handshakes/Personal Contact Celebrations.

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. 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 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.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- All managers/coaches, players, volunteers, umpires, etc., will wear masks at all times during practice and games.
- Spectators must wear masks and maintain social distancing from other non-family spectators.
- All teams should have a supply of disinfectant wipes or sprays, hand sanitizer and extra masks for team players and coaches.

Player's Equipment:

- Measures should be enacted to avoid, or minimize, equipment sharing when feasible.
- Players should have their own individual batter's helmet, glove, and bat.
- Player's equipment should stay in their assigned spaces in the dugout or bleachers.
- The catcher's equipment may not be able to be obtained by every individual. Each team will have 3 catchers helmets to prevent possible exposure. Catcher's masks are not to be shared on the same day by different participants. Each catcher should have their own mask for any given day. When it is necessary to share critical or limited equipment, all surfaces of each piece of shared equipment must be disinfected with an EPA approved disinfectant against COVID-19 and allowed sufficient time to dry 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).

Baseballs:

- Baseballs should be rotated through on a regular basis, at least every two innings, to limit individual contact.
- Umpires should limit their contact with the ball, and catchers should retrieve foul balls and passed balls where possible.

On-Field Guidance Drinks and Snacks:

- There should be no use of shared or team beverages. Everyone will bring their own water bottle.
- Teams should not share any snacks or food. Players should bring individual, pre-packaged food, if needed.
- All players and coaches are to refrain from spitting at all times, including in dugout areas and on the playing field.
- Sunflower seeds and gum should not be allowed in dugouts or on the playing field.



Pre-game Plate Meetings:

- Social distancing of six feet between individuals should be implemented during all pre-game plate meetings between teams and umpires.
- Plate meetings should only consist of one manager or coach from each team, and game umpires.
- No players should ever be a part of plate meetings.

Field Preparation and Maintenance:

- It is recommended that any shared field preparation equipment be sprayed or wiped with cleaner and disinfectant before and after each use.

COVID Modification for Practices:

- Each scheduled practice is for a single team cohort only.
- No multi-team practices or scrimmages at this time.
- Parents cannot observe during practices at this time. Parents can drop off and pick up as designated by each team.

COVID-19 at home screening:

- At home, prior to every practice or game, players and coaches must screen for any of these symptoms:
 1. Do you have...
 - a. Fever (100.4F or higher) or chills (CHECK TEMP)
 - b. Sore throat
 - c. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - d. Body aches or fatigue
 - e. New cough, runny nose or congestion that is different from pre-existing allergies or asthma?
 - f. New loss of taste or smell
 - g. Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
 - h. New onset of severe headache
 2. Have you had close contact with a person who has Covid-19 in the last 14 days?
 3. Are you wearing a mask properly over your nose and mouth?
- Every player and coach will have an "Aptos Little League at Home Screening Questionnaire" to review prior to all events.
- [Stay home](#) and contact your coach if you are showing any of these COVID-19 symptoms, if you have tested positive for COVID-19, or if you have had [close contact](#) with a person who has tested positive COVID-19.
- At the field, Coaches will perform screenings of players on arrival to team practices and games. The screening will consist of a temperature check, the above symptom check, sanitizing their hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and confirming the player is wearing the mask over the nose and mouth properly.
- If the player fails the screening, the coach will call their parent or guardian immediately to take the child home.
- Each coach will have a laminated sheet that has the above list of symptoms for screening and their list of players. Beside the names of each player will be the parent contact info and a check box. With a dry erase marker, they can check each player off as they are screened. Or call their parent/guardian to come back to get them if they fail the screening.
- Each team will have a box containing an infrared thermometer, extra masks, a bottle of 60 % alcohol hand sanitizer and a container of disinfecting wipes for cleaning shared equipment.

What to do if there is a COVID-19 exposure in little league:



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There are varying degrees of severity in COVID cases with youth, and the return to sport pathway also differs based on the severity. Cases may vary individually.

Situation 1. A Coach or Player is COVID positive.

What happens to the coach or player?

1. The COVID positive participant should notify their Manager/Coach immediately of positive COVID status.
2. The participant is required to ISOLATE per CDC guidelines. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html>
3. Participants may return to play with either WRITTEN notice of clearance by a health care provider to specify "Participant may return to BASEBALL", or after 14 days of quarantine and they have no remaining symptoms of infection.

What happens to the team?

4. Manager/coach will notify the Safety Officer immediately of a positive COVID case on the team.
5. The team will be notified of a possible COVID-19 exposure, not mentioning the participant's name being mindful of the participant's privacy rights.
6. Exposure to the COVID positive participant during baseball should be little to none, assuming the team has been playing outdoors and has followed all the safety protocols of mask wearing, social distancing and proper hand hygiene.
7. Each individual situation will be assessed by the Aptos Little League safety officer and the team manager/coach to decide if the team needs to isolate.
8. The team may be requested to quarantine, and not have practice or games, for 14 days from the last exposure to the affected individual.

Situation 2. Coach or Player is exposed to a COVID positive person

What happens to the coach or player?

1. Participant's situation should be assessed by a Health Care Provider and may be quarantined for 14 days after the last COVID exposure to the affected individual.

What Happens to the team?

2. Team will be cleared to return as appropriate once the situation is assessed, or when the exposed participant is cleared by the Health Care Provider.
3. Exposure to the exposed participant during baseball should be little to none, assuming the team has been playing outdoors and has followed all the safety protocols of mask wearing, social distancing and proper hand hygiene.

Situation 3- Coach or Player has COVID symptoms:

What happens to coach or player?

1. Ideally, participant has not exposed the team due to being stopped with screening questions
2. Participants may return to play with written clearance by Health Care Provider, with note specifying, "May return to Baseball".

What happens to team?

3. Because the team was not exposed due to screening before every event, the team will continue the practice/game as usual.

Returning to play after an COVID infection:

- Participants with symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend practices or games. They should consult their physician and notify their manager/coach of their symptoms.
- The child cannot participate in team activities for 14 days after the onset of the symptoms. After the 14 days, if the child no longer has symptoms, they can return to team activities.
- If you are not sure if your child is ready to return to play sports, please consult your primary physician.



Dugouts:

- Managers/coaches and players will be given assigned spots so that they are socially distanced 6ft from other players while in the dugout or on the bleachers.
- Players are to stay at their assigned spots when on the bench or while waiting their turn to bat.

Note: Coaches will designate seating with paint and or tape for players in the dugout and bleachers.

Figure 1. Aptos Junior High field with highlighted player seating





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Figure 2. Aptos Polo Grounds Park fields with highlighted player seating





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Figure 3. Rio Del Mar fields with highlighted player seating





At the field coach screening questionnaire:

Ask each player prior to entering the field:

1. **Do you have...**
 - a. Fever (100.4F or higher) or chills (CHECK TEMP)
 - b. Sore throat
 - c. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - d. Body aches or fatigue
 - e. New cough, runny nose or congestion that is different from pre-existing allergies or asthma?
 - f. New loss of taste or smell
 - g. Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
 - h. New onset of severe headache
2. **Have you had close contact with a person who has Covid-19 in the last 14 days?**
3. **Are you wearing a mask properly over your nose and mouth?**

Template Example

Name	Pass Screener?	Parent Contact Info
Player name 1	Yes/No	Parent Name (831)- 000-0000
Player name 2	Yes/No	Parent Name 2 (831)- 000-0000
Player name 3	Yes/No	Parent Name 3 (831)- 000-0000
Repeat for each player each day		

Documentation Reference & Updates:

1. Protocols and policies are derived from guidelines from CDC, CDC Considerations for Youth Sports California Department of Public Health, American Academy of Pediatrics, CIF Guidelines which governs high school sports.
2. Policies and protocols outlined here are derived from most recent guidelines effective on February 14, 2021. If guidelines change during the season, the most recent guidelines will supersede all others.
3. If circumstances and/or guidance from the State of CA Public Health Department, or the Santa Cruz Public Health Department alter and/or change, or if for any other reason(s), the board of directors reserves the right to amend and update the protocol, as they see fit to, to reflect current conditions.
4. For situations involving a COVID exposure or positive test, return to practice protocol will be followed as recommended by the CDC and the Return to play guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics. These protocols will define an exposure, isolation requirements and most importantly the protocol to return.