



Fort Hunt Little League

POST COVID-19 Return-to-Play Guidelines, Procedures and Best Practices 8/24/2020

OVERVIEW:

The following return-to-play guidelines, procedures and best practices are designed to help facilitate Fort Hunt Little League activities in a manner that mitigates risks related to COVID-19. They do not replace or supersede any protocols or restrictions outlined by federal, state or local authorities, and Fort Hunt Little League shall continue to follow all federal, state and local guidelines. This guidance provides information to help managers, coaches, players, and parents return to play in a safe manner.

Fort Hunt Little League will return to play only once the State of Virginia and Fairfax County officials approve return to play for youth sports and fields are open. As Northern Virginia begins to open and play resumes, we anticipate the need to adapt to new state or local requirements and considerations that may not be addressed in this document, as well as to conform to additional guidance that maybe issued by Little League District 9. If the need to revise this guidance is identified, Fort Hunt Little League will publish and communicate those updates to the league.

Prior to a return to play, all participants, including parents, in Fort Hunt Little League activities must be familiar with and agree to abide by the information and requirements included in the following links:

CDC GUIDELINES: CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUTH SPORTS

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>

VIRGINIA PHASE 2 GUIDELINES

<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/Virginia-Forward-Phase-Two-Guidelines.pdf>

VIRGINIA PHASE 3 GUIDELINES

<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/Virginia-Forward-Phase-Three-Guidelines.pdf>

Fairfax County:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/athletics>

Prior to a return to play, parents will execute all required paperwork, including a general release and waiver of claims.

GENERAL RETURN-TO-PLAY GUIDELINES:

The manager, coaches, players, parents, and spectators shall follow all federal, state and local and Little League requirements and guidelines regarding COVID-19 protocols at fields and for all team activities.

The manager, coaches, players, parents, and spectators shall practice social distancing (defined as individuals not part of the same family unit maintaining a distance of 10 feet or more apart from all other individuals) on and off the field during all team activities.

The manager, coaches, players, parents, and spectators must adhere to all requirements and guidelines from federal, state and local authorities regarding potential state travel restrictions and stay-at-home orders.

The manager, coaches, players, parents, and spectators must follow these CDC guidelines:

- Stay at home if you are sick or do not feel well.
- Use social distancing and maintain at least 10 feet between individuals.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Any manager, coach, player, parent, or spectator who is experiencing symptoms of sickness will be prohibited from participating in and attending team activities. CDC symptoms include:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Any team member with positive signs or symptoms of COVID-19 will not be allowed to participate in any team activity. If these signs or symptoms are exhibited during a team activity, the manager will send home the affected individual immediately.

Any manager, coaches, or players who have exhibited these symptoms shall be allowed to resume participation in team activities if they:

- Show no signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
- Have had no close sustained contact with anyone who is sick within 14 days of beginning team activities.

If a manager, coach or player has had a case of documented COVID-19 infection, they will need a note from their doctor indicating they are cleared to participate in team activities.

All managers, coaches, parents, players and spectators should self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19. If any signs of symptoms of infection are present, the individual exhibiting signs or symptoms is expected to take the following action:

- do not attend team activities
- notify the team manager
- contact their healthcare provider. (See Self-Monitoring Instruction sheet)

If a player or family member has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or is diagnosed with COVID-19, parents must notify the manager as soon as practical. The manager is required to notify the division commissioner, who will notify the Fort Hunt Little League Board of Directors. The Fort Hunt Little League Board of Directors will consider the appropriate course of action, to include notification to other Fort Hunt Little League participants.

Fort Hunt Little League will provide supplies for teams (the manager, coaches and players), such as hand sanitizer, facial tissues, facial coverings, latex gloves, thermometers, and trash bags.

Each Fort Hunt Little League team will assign a COVID Coach/Parent. The COVID Coach/Parent is responsible for assisting with any COVID-related needs or issues, such as:

- Risk Mitigation Measures (Social distancing / Hand sanitizer / Equipment Sanitization / Seeds / Gum / Spitting / Wipes)
- Collection of screening documents
- Marking off all social distancing in dugouts and viewing areas for spectators
- Collection and disposal of used sanitizing materials and waste in a safe location

GENERAL RETURN-TO-PLAY PROCEDURES:

Parents must remain in their cars for drop off and pick up of players after practice. Parents of ball players in AAA and below may bring their ball players to the field from their cars and remain at the field during practices; however, parents must maintain social distancing requirements of at least 10 feet (defined as individuals not part of the same family unit maintaining a distance of 10 feet or more apart from all other individuals).

Players will not share team equipment during team activities, except for baseballs, which will be sanitized before, during and after each team activity.

Players will not share personally-owned equipment. Players shall only use their own personal equipment while participating in all team activities. This includes but is not limited to fielding gloves, bats, batting helmets, batting gloves, hats, sunglasses and catcher equipment. If a ball player does not have their own glove, bat, or batting helmet, then Fort Hunt Little League will supply the ball player with equipment for use during the season.

Coaches and players must sanitize hands with hand sanitizer between drills during practices and innings during games. Coaches are required to disinfect equipment with antibacterial wipes.

Each player must have their own water container to consume during team activities. Water bottles will not be shared between managers, coaches and players. There will be no team water coolers in dugouts.

Spitting is not permitted. Spitting may result in removal from the field and team activities.

Gum, seeds, food or snacks are not permitted in the dugout or on the field of play.

Team or player handshakes, team or player huddles, team or player high fives and team gatherings on the field are not permitted.

GENERAL RETURN-TO-PLAY BEST PRACTICES:

Carpooling is discouraged. Players are encouraged to travel to the venue with a member of their immediate family.

Parents are encouraged to supply their player with their own hand sanitizing products and antibacterial wipes.

Players are allowed to wear Personal Protective Equipment items during team activities, if they so choose, so long as the items do not compromise the safety of the other players on the field, the game or practice.

PHASE 1 – GENERAL RETURN-TO-PLAY PROCEDURES FOR TEAM ACTIVITIES:

Upon arrival at team activities, the manager, coaches and players will be screened for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Screening may include a temperature check. Responses to screening questions for the manager, coaches and players will be recorded and stored for purposes of contact tracing in case a team member develops COVID-19. Managers will maintain copies of the screening questions for the entirety of the season and turn them in to the League President at the end of the season.

Any team member with positive signs or symptoms of COVID-19, will not be allowed to participate in any team activity, will be sent home and should contact their healthcare provider.

Prior to practice, dugout benches and first row of spectator benches shall be wiped down and sanitized.

No gathering of more than 10 team members at a time will be permitted. This includes managers, coaches and players.

There must be a minimum distance of 10 feet between all team members at all times.

Players' equipment will be lined up against the fence inside the field of play, not inside the dugout, at least 10 feet apart.

Practices and workouts should be conducted in small groups or “pods” with the same 5-10 players and coaches working out together. This limits exposure if a team member develops an infection.

Team equipment will not be used during team activities, except the baseballs, which will be sanitized after each drill.

PHASE 2 – GENERAL RETURN-TO-PLAY PROCEDURES FOR TEAM ACTIVITIES:

Upon arrival at team activities, the manager, coaches and players will be screened for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Screening will include a temperature check. Responses to screening questions for the manager, coaches and players will be recorded and stored for contact tracing in case a team member develops COVID-19.

Any team member with positive signs or symptoms of COVID-19, will not be allowed to participate in any team activity, will be sent home and should contact their healthcare provider.

The entire team (up to 50 individuals) may gather for team workouts.

There must be a minimum distance of 10 feet between all team members at all times. Appropriate social distancing must be maintained in the dugout and bench areas during practices and games.

Players’ equipment will be lined up against the fence inside the field of play, not inside the dugout, at least 10 feet apart.

Workouts will be conducted in small groups or “pods” with the same 5-10 players and coaches working out together. This limits exposure if a team member develops an infection.

Prior to any team activity, hard surfaces, such as the dugouts, should be wiped down and sanitized.

Sharing of team equipment during team activities will not be permitted, except the baseballs, which will be sanitized frequently during practice in accordance with CDC and Little League guidance.

PHASE 3 – GENERAL RETURN-TO-PLAY PROCEDURES FOR TEAM ACTIVITIES:

Upon arrival at team activities, the manager, coaches and players will be screened for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Screening will include a temperature check. Responses to screening questions for the manager, coaches and players will be recorded and stored for purposes of contract tracing in case a team member develops COVID-19.

Any team member who has had a fever or cold symptoms in the previous 24 hours will not be allowed to take part in team activities and should contact their healthcare provider. A record will be kept of all team members present at each team activity for purposes of contact tracing.

The entire team (up to 50 individuals) may gather for team workouts.

Players' equipment will be lined up against the fence inside the field of play, not inside the dugout, at least 10 feet apart.

Prior to any team activity, hard surfaces, such as the dugouts, should be wiped down and sanitized.

Sharing of team equipment during team activities is not permitted, except the baseballs, which will be sanitized frequently during practice in accordance with CDC and Little League guidance.

GAME DAY RETURN-TO-PLAY PROCEDURES:

Spectators will be limited to household members or guardians only.

Spectators for upcoming games must remain in their cars during warmups and will be permitted to approach the fields once the team they are there to watch enters the field of play. Parents of ball players in AAA and below may bring their ball players to the field from their cars and remain at the field during practices; however, parents must maintain social distancing requirements of at least 10 feet.

All spectators will practice social distancing (defined as individuals not part of the same family unit maintaining a distance of 10 feet or more apart from all other individuals).

If spectators refuse to social distance, then the game will stop.

The use of a tent at the field should be restricted to household members only.

Spectators shall use their own chairs. All bleacher seating and open areas behind home plate at the fields are closed to spectators.

No spectators shall enter the field of play.

Spectators are encouraged to wear a mask or other face covering until federal, state or local authorities declare that masks are no longer recommended.

If a parent needs to speak with their player, the parent should notify one of the coaches who will alert the player.

There will be no usage of the scoreboards in order to reduce person-to-person contact with the equipment.

There will be no organized team snacks or meals.

There must be a minimum distance of 10 feet between all team members at all times, including in the designated dugout areas.

Designated dugout areas will be increased to utilize the adjacent area and first row of the bleachers next to the dugout opening. Players will be able to stand outside the dugout to allow for social distancing, only if player safety will not be compromised. Expansion of the team dugouts will not be onto the field of play or in foul territory. For those FHLL ball fields that do not have dugouts (benches only) and no bleachers (FHE, Stratford Landing, Waynewood Elementary, Waynewood Recreation Center, and Fort Hunt Park), the benches will be reserved for the team manager, coaches, on deck batter, and the batter in the hole. The remainder of the players will sit with their immediate family, which will need to bring their own chairs, socially distanced from other families.

Prior to the game, hard surfaces, such as the dugouts, should be wiped down and sanitized.

Dugouts are reserved for the manager, coaches and players only. There shall be no parents, siblings or spectators in the dugouts or in the extended bench areas.

Players' equipment must be lined up against the fence outside the field of play, not inside the dugout, at least 10 feet apart. For teams playing at FHE, Stratford Landing, Waynewood Elementary, Waynewood Recreation Center, and Fort Hunt Park, the ball players' equipment will be staged in the location his/her immediate family is sitting.

Pre-game activities, including stretching, batting practice and throwing will be conducted in a socially distanced manner. These warmups should be conducted in small groups or "pods" with the same 5-10 players and coaches working out together. This limits exposure if a team member develops an infection.

Game balls will be sanitized every half-inning. New balls will remain in their original packaging until they need to be introduced into a game. Each team will use their own balls for the half-inning they are in the field, sanitized and kept in their dugout.

After an out is recorded in the field, the ball will immediately be thrown back to the pitcher. Throwing the ball around to other players on the field before it is returned to the pitcher is not permitted.

The on-deck batter will not retrieve the bat. The bench coach will wear protective gloves and retrieve the bat to the dugout.

Batters should wipe down their bat with antibacterial wipes after each at bat or when the batter returns to the dugout.

After the game, the manager, coaches and players will tip their caps to the other team from across the field, instead of post-game handshakes.

When games are complete, spectators will immediately return to their vehicles and wait for their player. Parents of ball players in AAA and below may remain in the vicinity of the ball field

until the team manager/coach releases the ball players; however, parents must maintain social distancing requirements of at least 10 feet.

Teams are responsible to clean their dugout of all trash and other items after each game and to sanitize the hard surface areas, such as the benches and bat racks, before departing the dugout.

If bat or equipment testing is available at an event, no player will use the bats/equipment or participate in equipment testing.

BEST PRACTICES FOR RETURN-TO-PLAY TEAM ACTIVITIES

The manager, coaches and players are encouraged to wear masks if social distancing is not possible or when they are not on the field of play.

Social distancing will be practiced between the two playing teams. Neither team will conduct pre-game activities on the field or in the cages at the same time.

The managers meeting at home plate will include only the manager from each team plus the umpires and will maintain 10 feet social distancing during the meeting. Lineups will be exchanged electronically. There will be no players at the plate meeting.

The manager, coaches and players should keep proper social distance from umpires, coaches and players on the field of play.

ADDITIONAL RETURN TO PLAY GUIDELINES FOR AA AND BELOW

AA:

- Will use the catcher position for the Fall 2020 Season.
- Each identified catcher will be issued his/her own catcher's equipment from FHLL if they do not already have their own catcher's equipment.
- During games and in addition to the COVID Coach, each team is permitted to have a dedicated bench coach in addition to the manager and coach. The bench coach will focus on ensuring the ball players maintain the minimum 10 ft of social distance.
- For practices, parents are permitted to physically drop their ball players at the designated practice field. Parents may also remain at the field as long as they maintain the minimum social distance, 10 ft, from other ball players' parents. The COVID Coach is responsible to ensure parents maintain social distance.
- For practices, managers may elect to have at most two additional parents assist with practice.
- Managers, coaches, and volunteers must wear masks during practices and games while on the field or in the dugout with the ball players.

A:

- Will not use the catcher position for the Fall 2020 Season.
- Teams will be limited to no more than 10 ball players per team.
- Managers/Coaches will conduct small group drills for practice.

- There will be only one practice and one game per week.
- During games, ball players will sit with their social distanced families/guardians when their team is up to bat.
- For practices, parents may ~~also~~ remain at the field as long as they maintain the minimum social distance, 10 ft, from other ball players' parents. The COVID Coach is responsible to ensure parents maintain social distance.
- For practices, managers may elect to have at most three additional parents assist with practice.
- Managers, coaches, and volunteers must wear masks during practices and games while on the field or in the dugout with the ball players.

T-Ball:

- Teams will be limited to no more than 10 ball players per team.
- Managers/Coaches will conduct small group drills for practice.
- There will be only one practice and one game per week.
- During games, ball players will sit with their social distanced families/guardians when their team is up to bat.
- For practices, parents may also remain at the field as long as they maintain the minimum social distance, 10 ft, from other ball players' parents. The COVID Coach is responsible to ensure parents maintain social distance.
- For practices, managers may elect to have at most four additional parents assist with practice.
- Managers, coaches, and volunteers must wear masks during practices and games while on the field or in the dugout with the ball players.