

# **WARWICK TOWNSHIP BASEBALL**

**Protocols and Guidelines for Safe Return to Play**

These guidelines will provide direction for acclimating and reintegrating players, coaches and families back into Little League Baseball at Warwick Township Baseball.

The conditions during this pandemic have continually evolved. We understand that additional information and new guidelines are forthcoming. These guidelines will be updated as necessary.

This document does not replace the advice or direction of medical professionals. The risk of infection still exists. Until a vaccine or cure is developed for COVID-19, we must proceed cautiously and continue to monitor and comply with the Governor's office, PA Department of Health, CDC and any other federal or local recommendations.

We recognize that many families and individuals will have reservations about reopening and reintegrating. If any family or person is not comfortable returning, they should not. This will not affect any future relationship with Warwick Township Baseball.

### **General Hygiene and Safety Guidelines**

- To be followed until further direction is received
- Wash your hands often with warm soapy water
- Players are always encouraged to have hand sanitizer available
- No sharing of water bottles, snacks, or equipment
- No shaking hands, high fives, fist bump, hugs etc.
- Social distancing of 6 feet apart should be maintained if possible
- No player or coach can attend if they are experiencing COVID-19 signs or symptoms or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19
- Sick players and coaches need to provide a doctor's note clearing them to return
- Only one coach may attend to an injured player
- Minimize contact with other teams before, during and after each session.

## On-Field Guidance

- All players and coaches are encouraged 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.
- 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, ideally within 20 minutes.
- **Drinks and Snacks:**
  - Athletes, managers/coaches, and umpires should 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 should be no use of shared or team beverages.
  - Teams should not share any snacks or food. Players should bring individual, pre-packaged food, if needed.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
  - All managers/coaches, volunteers, umpires, etc., should encourage hand washing before and after the games.
  - Players will be permitted 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/caretaker.
  - Players should not wear a medical type glove while playing. Only baseball glove and batting gloves should be brought to the fields.
- **Dugouts:**
  - Managers/coaches and players should 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.
  - Players are to stay at their assigned spots when on the bench or while waiting their turn to bat.

- **Player Equipment:**
  - 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.
  - Players should have their own individual batter's helmet, glove, bat, and catcher's equipment.
  - Measures should be enacted to avoid, or minimize, equipment sharing when feasible.
  - 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. bags, helmets, bats, gloves, etc.) should be cleaned and disinfected after each use by a parent/guardian/caretaker, where applicable.
- **Baseballs and Softballs:**
  - Baseballs and softballs 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.
  - 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.
- **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.

## Game Operations and Umpire Guidance

- **Pre-Game Plate Meetings:**
  - If possible, plate meetings should be eliminated.
  - 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.
- **Equipment Inspection:**
  - Players should place their individual equipment in a well-spaced out manner for inspection. Umpires should avoid direct contact with equipment where possible but, when required, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol after the inspection of each individual piece of equipment.
- **Limit League/Game Volunteers:**
  - For each game, there should only be the required team managers/coaches, umpires, and one (1) league administrator (i.e. Safety Officer, player agent, etc.) in attendance.
  - Practices should be limited to the managers/coaches and players.
- **Field Preparation and Maintenance:**
  - Fields should be mowed, raked, and lined prior to teams and spectators arriving at the complex and after they depart. It is encouraged that volunteers already participating in the game (managers/coaches, umpires, and league administrator) perform these tasks to limit individuals at the site.
  - It is recommended that any shared field preparation equipment be sprayed or wiped with cleaner and disinfectant before and after each use.
- **Umpire Placement:**
  - Umpires are permitted to be placed behind the pitcher's mound/circle to call balls and strikes. Umpires are encouraged to keep a safe distance from players as much as possible.

## Facility, Fan and Administrative Guidance

- **Clean and Disinfect Shared Equipment and Surfaces:**
  - Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily and in between all facility uses, including practices and games. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, facility equipment, dugouts, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
  - If surfaces are visibly soiled or dirty, they should be cleaned with a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- **Spread out scheduling of Practices and Games:**
  - League administrators should schedule sufficient time between practices and

games to facilitate the complete evacuation of individuals from a previous practice or game from the premises before the next group enters.

- Players/families/spectators are instructed not to show up to fields more than 40 minutes before game time.
- Arrivals to the complex can be scheduled to help ensure a large number of individuals are not arriving at the same time.
- 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.
- On-field warm-up should be limited as much as is reasonably possible and no more than 30 minutes.
- Ensure sure that practices and games follow all local and state directives regarding the number of people allowed to gather in one place.
- **Limiting Spectator Attendance:**
  - All spectators should follow best social distancing practices - stay six feet away from individuals outside their household; avoid direct hand or other contact with players/managers/coaches during play.
  - Spectators should bring their own seating or portable chairs when possible.
  - 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:
    - Active COVID-19 infection
    - Known direct contact with an individual testing positive for COVID-19
    - Fever
    - Cough
    - 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 hand washing.
  - **Such groups include:**
    - Those with a serious underlying medical condition, including heart disease, morbid obesity, diabetes, lung disease, immunocompromised, chronic kidney disease, and chronic lung disease.
    - Those currently residing in a nursing home or long-term care facility.
    - Those over 65