



## Williston Little League

# COVID-19 Return to Play Guide

Williston Little League is looking forward to our 2021 season and the health and safety of our players and families remains our top priority. Outlined below are the procedures and guidelines which should be followed when attending a game or practice at any of the Williston Little League fields.

\*\*The below guidelines, procedures, and recommendations do not replace or supersede any protocols or restrictions outlined by our state and local authorities for both Vermont and the town of Williston. It is imperative that state and local guidelines are followed at all times. \*\*

This document is available at: <https://tshq.bluesombrero.com/wllbaseball>

All parents/guardians should fully review this document. In addition, parents should review with their children as much as they are able to. During the first practice of the season, Managers should also review guidelines with their teams as appropriate depending on age. It will be important that coaches help kids during practices and games to remind them of the processes and procedures. We will also be instituting Safety Ambassadors on each team to make sure we are adhering to all mandatory guidelines.

Williston Little League (WLL) Safety guidelines as related to COVID-19:

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES:**

- We will be following the most current guidelines from the following: local, state and CDC. All local & state health official guidelines MUST be followed for any activity to take place.
- Participation in WLL is completely optional. There is no need to feel like your child has to play.
- Every family will need to sign a waiver for their child to play this year. No child will be able to attend practice or participate in a game until this waiver is signed and turned into their Coach. All Coaches must then forward a copy of these waivers to our League Safety Coordinator for record keeping.
- Foundational Personal COVID-19 responsibilities:
  - Consistent with CDC guidelines, anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19, or that has been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days, or that has been tested and are awaiting results cannot participate in any activity within our league until they have complied with current quarantine requirements.

- If you are an individual who is high risk due to underlying health conditions, or you are part of a household with members that are high risk due to underlying health conditions, we encourage you to NOT participate in Little League this season.
- If a player or spectator comes in contact with someone who is diagnosed with COVID19 and they have been to the Williston Little League fields, an e-mail should immediately be sent to [willistonlittleleague@gmail.com](mailto:willistonlittleleague@gmail.com) and the Safety Coordinator, Travis Whitmore at [wllsafetyoffice@gmail.com](mailto:wllsafetyoffice@gmail.com) so that teams who have come in contact with that person can be notified.
- Stay home if you feel sick and contact your health care provider.
- The League has purchased infrared thermometers and reserves the right to take contactless temperatures of Players, Coaches or Umpires.
  - Anyone who has a temperature of over 99.99 degrees can be sent home
- If a player, coach, umpire or spectator comes in contact with someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19 they will not be permitted to return for 14 days from the last contact with that person.
- If symptoms begin while participating in an activity, the individual must be sent home as soon as possible.

#### **GENERAL FIELD GUIDELINES:**

- Batting cages are not to be limited during practice and gameplay to those players or coaches that are involved in the active playing group(s).
- Hand Sanitizer will be made available at all of our fields as well as cleaning/sanitizing supplies.
- Bathrooms/porta-potty: If bathrooms are opened by the Town, we will need to follow the rules in place by the town for sanitizing.
- Teams are advised to clean out and wipe down dugout or other field areas that they were in prior to leaving the playing field.
- Field equipment to include rakes, lining machine, tarps and hoses should be cleaned after use.
- Signs with State of Vermont health guidance will be posted at parks/fields.
- Dugouts: will be limited to Coaches and on-deck hitters
- Instead of using the dugouts, players will have a designated personal area for their gear and themselves when not on the field. These areas will be outside the field of play, 6 feet apart, down the base lines.

#### **GENERAL SPECTATOR GUIDELINES:**

- Any spectator or attendee experiencing symptoms of sickness should not attend any event at WLL.
- Hand hygiene is of utmost importance and all participants should wash/sanitize their hands before entering and when leaving the fields.

- Ideally, the same parent or designated person should drop off and pick up their child from practices/games.
  - When possible, older people such as grandparents, should not pick up because of their increased risk for serious illness.
- We will be staggering practices and game times to allow for spectators, players and coaches to clear out before the next team arrives.
  - We will try to schedule practices on different days so there is no overlap.
- Parents who are not volunteers should stay outside designated areas for players and coaches, to include active playing areas, entrances to the active playing areas and behind the general home plate fence areas.
- As best as you can, please limit the number of attendees to the WLL fields. While we enjoy having extended family come watch the kids play ball, it is important that we limit crowd size as much as possible.
  - All event attendees should practice social distancing.
  - Spectators are permitted along the outside of the outfield fence, spaced 6 feet apart (unless from the same household.) Spectators may also watch from their vehicles, if applicable.
  - The bleachers will be closed for spectators during games and practices. All parents should provide their own chairs and sit outside of the outfield fence or down the base lines towards the outfield. No spectators will be allowed to sit behind the home plate fence. Social distancing should be practiced among those who do not reside in the same residence at both practice and games
- Protective masks for spectators are encouraged, but not required, as to align with the local and State of Vermont guidelines.
- Unless using the restroom, spectators should remain at the field in which their family member is playing. Some like to exercise (walk) during their child's practice. That is ok as long as it is on the outside of the active area of play and if social distancing guidelines are still followed.
- During games, parents should not approach the active playing area, including the dugout or wherever your child is located while not on the playing field. Please ensure your player has everything he/she needs prior to the game or practice.
- Parents are encouraged to supply their players with wipes or hand sanitizer to use between innings.
- We may need to be prepared to shut down and stop operations as the State of Vermont changes it's guidelines to include stoppage of play/the season. If so, the Williston Little League will communicate updates as they are made available.

#### **GENERAL PLAYER GUIDELINES:**

- Any player or attendee experiencing symptoms of sickness should not attend any event at WLL.
  - Coaches should monitor this and alert parents if they see any symptoms.
- A daily health check must be conducted prior to participants entering the field of play. Health checks can be performed by parents and may be reinforced by a coach or the team's Safety Ambassador. These health checks are to include a visual inspection of the participant for signs of infection (which could include flushed cheeks, fatigue, extreme discomfort, etc.) The following questions are to be asked of participants by parents/guardian prior to each session:
  - Have you been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19?
  - Do you feel unwell with any symptoms consistent with COVID-19? For example, have you had a cough, high temperature, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat or new loss of taste or smell?
  - Take your child's temperature prior to arrival. Your child may not attend any Little League activity if their temperature is above 100.00 F (if participant was not checked at home, we reserve the right to take their temperature with a touchless thermometer.)
- If the answer to the first two questions is "yes" and/or the temperature is above 99.99 F, the participant must be sent home immediately and not allowed to return until they have no fever for a minimum of 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.
  - For absolute clarity: if the participant takes fever-reducing medication for 72 hours after the initial reading and their temperature is below 100.00, then they stop taking the medication, they must not have: a) any symptoms and b) a temperature of over 99.99 degrees for the following 72 hours.
- No handshaking/celebrations: Players and Coaches should refrain from handshakes, high fives, fist/elbow bumps, chest bumps or any group celebration. At the end of the game, teams can give a "tip of the cap" to the other team. No post-game handshakes will take place. Coaches will need to continually monitor this and remind kids, especially the younger players.
- It is recommended that all players, coaches, officials and spectators have a cloth facial covering in their possession for times when physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Face coverings should be worn as much as possible. The CDC acknowledges that face coverings may be challenging for players (especially young players) to wear while playing sports. We strongly encourage players to wear face coverings when not engaged in active play (i.e. during warm-ups, while on the sideline or in the dug-out/sitting areas between innings.)
- No sunflower seeds or gum should be brought to a game/practice. Coaches, Umpires and Players should also refrain from spitting on the field or the sideline.
- No sharing of water bottles. Each player must have their own labelled water bottle.
- Players are not allowed to touch other player's equipment.
- Players are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer for use between innings and immediately following a practice or game.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with hands.
- All players must use their own equipment. This includes gloves, bats, helmets, etc.

- Baseballs and softballs should be cleaned whenever possible and an adequate supply should be on hand. Each team will be provided with their own sets of balls to be used for the season.
- WLL will provide players with necessary equipment to sign out and hold onto during the season. Please let your coach know if you have any such equipment needs.
- If a player contracts COVID-19 he/she will not be permitted to return without a doctor's note

#### **GENERAL COACH GUIDELINES:**

Every Coach's top priority is to ensure the health and safety of all WLL Athletes.

- At the end of a game coaches must ensure all trash is removed from the dugout
- Coaches need to track who attends each practice and game. The Team Safety Ambassador needs to keep a report of all the players, coaches and umpires who are in attendance at every single practice and game.
- VT District 1 Little League will allow up to 4 Coaches to help with social distancing and safety of the game. For games , only 2 Coaches are allowed on the field area (inside the area of play) and the other 2 are to be outside the play, they will be responsible to watch the players and maintain the integrity of the game.
  - Note: for practices social distancing guidelines apply and all volunteers are allowed upon the field of play given they are adhering to State and Local guidelines
- All Managers, Coaches and Safety Ambassadors need to sign a copy of these guidelines to show they have read and understood the guidelines set forth by Williston Little League.
- Managers & Coaches should help to educate players on the hygiene/handwashing/touching of the face suggested guidelines.
- Coaches must sanitize shared equipment (ex - catcher's gear) after each practice/game prior to their next practice/game.
- Coaches are encouraged to sanitize their hands as often as possible, minimally they will be required to disinfect their hands prior to and immediately after every group session and after any contact with a shared surface or piece of equipment.
- Coaches need to monitor equipment for sanitizing/cleaning and change out balls during practices/games.
  - It is advised that during competitive games (against other teams) that each team use their own set of baseballs/softballs while they are in the field (playing defense).
- New procedures should be reviewed with Team Managers and Coaches prior to practices and games.
- No post-game meetings should be held at the park after practice or games. Teams should leave the park immediately following their practice or game. Show up, practice, play and depart from the field. Team communications will be handled via email or the Game Changer app.

#### **PRACTICES:**

- **All spectators/players should remain in their cars until the previous game is finished and crowds have cleared out**
- Dugouts should not be used under any circumstance during practices
- Player bags should be spread out on in foul territory at least 6 feet apart to allow players to practice social distancing when they are taking out or putting away equipment
- Spectators should follow social distancing guidelines
- As much as possible, players and coaches should practice social distancing during practice
- Bases should be put away in the sheds after practice, placed on the field and put away by the same person. Bases should be sprayed with sanitizer after handling.
- Practices will vary by age group and a specific schedule will be sent out in the near future. Generally speaking, there will be gaps between practices to avoid larger crowds.
  - As an example, we may have the first practice of an evening go from 5:45-6:45. Teams will need to clear out immediately.
  - The next practice would be from 7-8. Teams will need to clear out immediately. ○ The final practice would be from 8:15-9:15.
  - Note: these times will be confirmed when schedules are complete. Younger age groups such as T-ball and Coach Pitch will have shorter practices and will not practice as late into the evening as the older kids

#### **GAMES:**

No team coolers will be allowed in the dugouts or the stands. Parents should provide their children with their own drinks and have all water bottles labelled with their child's name and also provide their child with backup supplies.

- Umpire/Coach pre-game meeting will be limited to the Umpires and one coach from each team. Social distancing during this meeting should be followed. No shaking of hands, fist bumps, etc. should occur.
- The "home plate" umpire will be positioned behind pitcher's mound with the 6 foot social distance in mind.
- End of game handshakes will be eliminated. Instead, teams can tip their caps from the other side of the field to the other team. We still want to encourage good sportsmanship.
- Bases should be put away in the sheds after practices/games. Make sure to sanitize anything being touched by different Coaches.
- Teams should not share in any team post game snacks or drinks.
- Player locations when not playing in the field will be as follows: Along the fence, spread a minimum of 6 feet apart. Coaches will show the players how to space out at the first practice and water breaks should be taken at these spots where their **OWN** equipment is located.
- Please note that a coach or Safety Ambassador will be required to help ensure kids remain where they should be.

Should you have any questions please contact [willistonlittleleague@gmail.com](mailto:willistonlittleleague@gmail.com) or League Safety Coordinator, Travis Whitmore at [wllsafetyoffice@gmail.com](mailto:wllsafetyoffice@gmail.com)

These guidelines and more information and links can be found at:

<https://tshq.bluesombrero.com/wilbaseball>