

NORTHWOOD LITTLE LEAGUE RETURN TO PLAY GUIDELINES – SPRING 2021 (rev. 31821)

Little League Name: Northwood Little League
California District 55

The following plan has been established to resume Little League Baseball activities while protecting and supporting our players' health, practice social distancing, limit large gatherings, and minimize risks of COVID-19. This guidance has been created to be compliant with the [Outdoor and Indoor Youth and Recreational Adult Sports Guidance](#) as set out by the state of California, as well as the Irvine Athletics Return to Play Protocols and [Little League Best Practices](#). This document has been approved by Northwood's Board of Directors and will be submitted to the City of Irvine for final approval. No activities will begin until the State of California and the County of Orange have given their approval to begin youth sports activities, and only in accordance with state and local guidance. These activities will take place on the following fields: Hicks Canyon Park, Woodbury Park, Heritage Park, Meadowood Park, Portola Springs Park, Cypress Park. An approved copy of this document can be found in Northwood's Safety Plan.

Northwood Little League players, coaches, volunteers, and spectators shall follow all current guidelines as established by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). Should any guidelines noted within this document contradict or otherwise not align with current CDPH guidelines, those guidelines established by the CDPH shall prevail.

I. TEAM ROSTERS & ADULT PARTICIPATION FOR GAMES

PLAYERS

Team rosters should not exceed 13 players per team at any given practice or game.

Competitive Teams – Juniors, Intermediate, Majors, AAA, AA Divisions

- 9-13 players maximum per team are permitted on one playing field at one time.

Non-Competitive Teams - Tee Ball, Rookie, A Ball Divisions

- 8-13 players maximum per team on any given game or practice day are permitted for Tee Ball, Rookie and A Ball divisions.

All Players for Both Competitive and Non-Competitive Teams

- During games, players MUST wear a face covering when not actively participating in the game (e.g., waiting for their turn to bat, sitting out while their team is playing defense).
- Face coverings shall be worn during play as tolerated.

MANAGERS/COACHES

All Teams

Three league-approved adult volunteers are permitted to be involved with each team at each practice or game.

- **1 Team Manager** per team
 - Required to wear face covering at all times, whether a practice or a game.
- **2 Assistant Coaches** per team
 - Required to wear face covering at all times, whether a practice or a game.
- **A Parent Volunteer** may be used to help the assistant coach to monitor the players between drills.
 - Enforces social distancing of players during drills.
 - Reminds players to wear face coverings.
 - Required to wear face covering if sharing the field with players.

Non-Competitive Teams

Due to the age, developmental level, and physical abilities of the players within the non-competitive divisions (Tee Ball, Rookie, A Ball), additional approved adult volunteers are permitted, but not required, during practice.

- There will be a maximum of 4 approved volunteers (1 Team Manager, 2 Assistant Coaches, 1 Parent Volunteer).
- Board of Director approval will be required to include additional volunteers during games and practices (as needed to play).
- All approved volunteers assisting with the non-competitive divisions must wear a face covering while they

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assist and interact with the players.

OTHER ADULT ROLES

- **Umpire** (Required for all competitive games)
 - Set up behind the catcher and batter or behind the pitching mound.
 - MUST wear a face covering at all times while on the field of play.
 - If more than 1 umpire will be used in a game, they must discuss each umpire’s responsibility in their pre-game meeting.
- **Scorekeeper** (Required for all competitive games)
 - One designated scorekeeper for each game – he/she will keep score as well as keep the pitch count and operate the scoreboard if it is used.
 - In order to promote 6 feet of social distancing, only the Scorekeeper and members of his/her immediate household should sit in the score booth.
 - MUST wear a face covering throughout the entire game.
 - Pencils and other scorekeeper supplies will be supplied by the league only when requested. If league supplies are used, they should be sanitized after each person’s use. Scorekeeper is encouraged to bring their own pencils, erasers, pens.
- **Safety Officer**
 - Each team must have a designated Safety Officer to serve as a point of contact for the league and team members for all questions related to Covid-19 and these protocols.
 - The Safety Officer is responsible for screening all players before each practice, using the Screening Questionnaire in Section VIII. If the Safety Officer is absent from practice, the Team Manager is responsible for screening the players.

II. EQUIPMENT PROTOCOL

PLAYER EQUIPMENT

- Players are not to use bat racks or helmet racks.
- Bats, helmets, and gloves are not to be shared between players (except siblings).
 - If a player is using a “team” bat, that bat will be assigned to only that player for the duration of the practice or game. That bat must be sanitized before the next practice.
 - If a player is using a “team” helmet, that helmet will be assigned to only that player for the duration of the practice. That helmet must be sanitized before the next practice.
- Catchers ideally should have their own equipment.
 - League can provide catcher’s gear for use in a game as needed. Noncompetitive divisions (Tee Ball, Rookie, Single A, Challengers) may forego having a catcher.
 - Borrowed league’s catcher’s gear must be wiped down with sanitizing wipes prior to reuse and players must sanitize their hands using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after using the borrowed catcher’s mitt.
- Players to keep their own equipment in their own bag. Personal bat, helmet and other game use equipment should be kept under their seat or alongside the field fence until the equipment needs to be used.

UMPIRE EQUIPMENT

- Umpires are encouraged to use their own umpire gear.
- League can provide umpire gear to include a protective face covering, chest protector, shin guards and umpire indicator—each set of gear is to be sanitized with a sanitizing wipe and allowed to dry prior to reuse of gear (at least 1 hour).

III. PREGAME & POSTGAME — PLAYERS & SPECTATORS

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PLAYER ARRIVAL TO FIELD & WARM-UPS

- Players should arrive to the field no earlier than 30 minutes before practice time for warm-ups.
- Players are not to congregate within a group prior to taking the field to warm up.
- Each team to follow social distancing guidelines during warm-ups
 - Stretching—separate in a space to allow 6 feet apart
 - Running—run as a team spaced 6 feet apart
 - Throwing—ensure throwing distance is at least 6 feet apart
 - Defense warm-up—when taking grounders, players awaiting their turn should be spaced from the other players at least 6 feet apart
 - Pitcher/catcher warm-ups in bullpen only; coach is to maintain a distance of 6 feet from players during instruction; coach to wear face covering at all times while in the bullpen

STARTING THE GAME

- For the Pledge of Allegiance and/or Little League Pledge
 - Players will line up along their dugout side baseline, spread out at least 6 feet apart, to recite both pledges.
 - Managers and coaches will line up behind their players, maintain 6 feet from each other and their players.
 - Umpire(s) to stand at home plate, maintaining 6 feet from each other, other adults and the players.
 - Face coverings are required for ALL participants during the pledge(s).
- For competitive games utilizing umpire(s), managers from both teams will meet the umpire at the plate. All parties MUST wear a face covering during the plate meeting.

DURING THE GAME

- Players are encouraged to use hand sanitizer as frequently as possible during the game or practice.
 - Players should have a personal bottle of sanitizer kept in their equipment bag.
- No group gatherings at home plate following a home run.
- No high fives or handshakes following a play or game.
- Players are to bring their own water/Gatorade for use during the practice - no team water jugs or ice chests are permitted; players are not to share their drinks, bottles or snacks with anyone.
- Sunflower seeds are not allowed at any time.

CONCLUSION OF THE GAME

- There will be no high-fives after practice or games (no “good game” high-five line).
- The Team Manager or Assistant Coach can address the players while maintaining social distancing immediately after the conclusion of practice.
- Congregation of teams/players is not allowed at the field—there is to be no after-practice team meeting involving parents at the field.
- An assistant coach should wipe down players’ bats after each game or practice.
- Players and families will be asked to leave the practice site within 20 minutes of the practice concluding.
- Teams are limited to ONE game per day (i.e. no double-headers).

SPECTATORS AT THE FIELD (Spectators are defined as parents, caregivers, siblings, family, fans)

- Spectators should try to limit their time at the field prior to practice or game time when possible, based on child’s age and needs.
- Spectators are not to congregate in a group outside of their stay-at-home family group.
- Spectators will not be allowed to stand behind the home plate area within 6 feet of the backstop. Caution tape will be used to mark off the restricted area.
- Bleachers will be closed to all spectators; bleachers will only be used as an extra area for players, managers, and coaches who are participating in a game. Caution tape will be used to close off this area to spectators

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and will be used to mark off a path from the bleachers to the dugout/field entrance.

- All spectators will sit outside the field fence at least 6 feet away from the dugout/field entrance. Chairs, blankets, etc., may be set up by spectators.
- There should be no more than 10 people sitting together in a “family group;” the “family group” is only to include their stay-at-home family.
- There should be at least 6 feet between each “family group” along the fence line.

IV. SNACK BARS—FOOD & BEVERAGE

FOOD & BEVERAGES AT LEAGUE SNACK BARS

- No food or concession sales will be allowed at facilities.
- Families are encouraged to bring their own snacks and/or drinks.
- Hand sanitizer will be available at the snack bar.

V. FIELD SETUP AND MAINTENANCE

FIELD SETUP AT NON-CITY STAFFED FIELDS

- Field setup and maintenance equipment at non-staffed fields such as Woodbury will only be handled by a maximum of two league members per team who will be designated as the “field crew”.
- Field equipment includes, but is not limited to, rakes, field drags, shovels, paint/chalk sprayers, and hoses.
- Field crew are to be the only person(s) to use the field equipment.
- Field crew to wear gloves during all field maintenance—including set up and tear down.
- Field maintenance equipment to be wiped down after each use.

VI. FIELD FACILITIES & SURROUNDINGS

FIELD FACILITIES

- All field restrooms are serviced by the city of Irvine and will be cleaned and stocked according to the city of Irvine’s athletic facility procedures.
- Where possible, restroom doors will be propped open, and entrance and exit doors designated.

FIELD SURROUNDINGS

- Informational signage will be posted throughout the field(s) regarding infection control, social distancing and the use of face coverings and gloves.
- No unrelated visitors, sales representatives or outside distributors will be allowed at the field.

VII. TEAM PRACTICE PROTOCOL

TEAM PRACTICE

- Team practice protocol shall align with all game day guidelines and protocol.
 - No sharing of equipment.
 - Proper social distance spacing during warm-up, practice drills and batting.
 - Hand sanitizer to be used by players before and after use of any equipment and transition of offense and defense drills.
- Dugouts should not be used during practice.
- Players shall put their equipment bag outside the dugout.
- Players MUST use face coverings at all times.
- Enforcing social distancing, use of face coverings and sanitizing equipment shall be the sole responsibility of each team manager, team coach(es) and/or other approved adult league volunteer that is organizing a

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team practice.

- Player's participation in team practice is at the sole discretion of the player's parent/caregiver; there will be no repercussion on game day for any player who does not attend a team practice.

BATTING CAGE PRACTICE

- Batting cages are limited to a maximum of 2 people at any one time.
- Players not actively hitting in a cage should be outside the cage, distanced 6 feet apart, and wear face coverings.
- Bats shall not be shared.
- Coaches are encouraged to pick up all balls to reduce sharing of equipment.
- Players should sanitize their hands after each cage session.

VIII. ONGOING MONITORING PROTOCOLS

PERSONAL PREVENTION ACTIONS

- All league members and visitors to the fields will be reminded of their responsibility to adhere to personal prevention actions including:
 - Stay home when sick or having symptoms of becoming sick (i.e., symptoms of respiratory illness, fever, or cough)
 - Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, dispose of the tissue and wash hands immediately after. If tissue is not available, cough or sneeze in elbow.
 - Do not touch eyes, mouth, or nose with unwashed hands.
 - Avoid contact with people who are sick or who are exhibiting symptoms of being sick.
 - Avoid sharing items.
 - Always maintain the recommended minimum of 6 feet separation from others
 - Wear a face covering when unable to practice 6 feet of social distancing.
 - Sanitize frequently touched objects and surfaces.

SCREENING

- Before each practice, the team Safety Officer must screen all players and volunteers with ALL of the following:
 - Visual wellness check
 - Asking if the player/volunteer is experiencing any of the following symptoms:
 - Fever or chills?
 - Mild or moderate difficulty breathing?
 - New or worsening cough?
 - Sustained loss of smell, taste, or appetite?
 - Sore throat?
 - Vomiting or diarrhea?
 - Aching throughout the body?
- If any of the above symptoms apply, then the player or volunteer should not join the practice or game and should see their health care provider immediately.
- If any player or volunteer is showing symptoms of COVID-19 or has reason to believe they have been exposed to COVID-19, or has tested positive for COVID-19, the team Safety Officer must document the incident, and notify the League Safety Officer immediately while maintaining confidentiality.
- In case of a positive COVID-19 case, the League Safety Officer will notify local health officials, the Northwood Board, and immediate team members and volunteers while maintaining confidentiality as required by state and federal laws.
- Sick players or volunteers shall not return to practice until they have met CDC criteria to discontinue [home isolation](#), including 3 days with no fever, symptoms have improved, and 10 days since symptoms first appeared.

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PROTECTING THE FIELD ENVIRONMENT

- All league members and visitors will be reminded of the importance of social distancing while at the fields as well as in all other environments.
- A minimum of 6 feet of social distancing should be maintained at all times.
- Face coverings should be worn to increase protection.
- Continued efforts to sanitize facilities, equipment, and areas and items of common touch points will be made.

ENSURING COOPERATION

- Board Members and league officials will maintain ongoing communication with all members of the league to include all players/managers/coaches/spectators at the field to limit any violation of the safety protocols.
 - All players/managers/coaches/spectators will be reminded that any violation of the social distancing and safety protocols will jeopardize the continued operation and opening of Little League games.
 - Any player/manager/coach/spectator who refuses to adhere to the protocols after one warning will be asked to leave the field site immediately.

IX. TRAINING VOLUNTEERS AND FAMILIES

SAFETY ACTIONS

- All league members and volunteers should be trained on the protocols and actions detailed in the previous sections, including but not limited to:
 - Enhanced sanitation practices (see section II)
 - Physical distancing guidelines and their importance (see section I)
 - [Proper use, removal and washing of cloth face coverings](#)
 - Screening practices (see section VIII)
 - COVID-19 specific [exclusion criteria](#)
- Training will be conducted virtually.

X. COMMUNICATION PLAN

RETURN TO PLAY GUIDELINES

- An approved copy of this document will be published on the Northwood Little League website available for download.
- An approved copy of this document will be included in the Northwood Little League Safety Manual.

ONGOING COMMUNICATION

- Team Safety Officers are responsible for communicating any COVID-19 related concerns to the League Safety Officer.
- The League Safety Officer is responsible for communicating COVID-19 related concerns to the appropriate City of Irvine representative, and for communicating to immediate team members, volunteers, and families in the case of a positive COVID-19 test.

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IX. LEAGUE GUIDELINES APPROVAL

These guidelines were established to allow our children the opportunity to participate in youth sports. These guidelines reflect the recommendations and views of the community and health care providers. Youth sports and local businesses are required to follow COVID-19 safety and preventive guidelines to remain open and active.

The following persons may be contacted regarding this protocol:

Name	Position	Email	Signature/Date Approved
Ted Hsieh	League President	nwllirvine@gmail.com	
Scott Fujimoto	League Safety Officer	sfujimot@gmail.com	
Michael Madden	League Player Agent	nwllplayeragent@gmail.com	
Tony Gray	District Administrator	da@district55.org	

X. PARENT/GUARDIAN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I understand and agree that these guidelines are necessary for my child(ren) to play Little League and that refusal to follow these guidelines may prevent Little League from remaining open for play and that I may be asked to leave the field if I do not abide by these guidelines.

Player Name: _____ Division: _____

Player Name: _____ Division: _____

Player Name: _____ Division: _____

Player Name: _____ Division: _____

Player Name: _____ Division: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Dated: _____