



Dear Parents,

First and foremost, we hope that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy. We have received questions from the community about if and how COVID-19 will change this year's athletic season. We know this outbreak has been stressful to many and recognize that exercising and participating in activities like sports can be a healthy way to cope with stress and connect with our community. After careful thought and planning, we are excited to let you know that we plan to resume youth sports while following CDC and PA state government considerations to protect players, families, and our community.

The health and safety of our athletes, staff, and volunteers remain our highest priority. Below, you will find a summary of actions we are taking to help ensure we are lowering COVID-19 risk as much as possible while also allowing our athletes to play. We are:

- Intensifying cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation within our facilities and premises
- Reducing physical closeness or contact between players when possible
- Promoting healthy hygiene practices and screening players' temperatures before each activity
- Requesting that coaches, youth sports staff and officials wear a cloth face covering at all times. Players will be required to wear a cloth face covering on the sidelines and on the benches, but not while on the field of play. Parents and spectators will be required to wear a face covering at all times, unless they are seated and can socially distance at a minimum of 6 feet from other people. As a reminder, cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children younger than 2 years of age, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance.
- Limiting the sharing of equipment

Anyone who is sick or has been in contact with someone who has COVID-19— including players, family members, coaches, staff and spectators — should not attend practices or games. Be on the lookout for symptoms of COVID-19, which include fever, cough, or shortness of breath. Call your doctor if you think you or a family member is sick. If your player has been in contact with anybody with a confirmed case of COVID-19, we would ask that you contact your home organization immediately.

If someone does get sick during practice or at a game, they will not be allowed to participate in any team activities until cleared to return. If you have a specific question about this plan or COVID-19, please contact your home organization COVID rep for more information. You can also find more information about COVID-19 at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

Attached is our detailed return to play plan for the league that you and your player will be expected to comply with. The Board is aware there is some skepticism in the community about the need for health-related precautions and behavioral changes, but we can't take any chances with the health of our players and families. If you plan to contest LVCAL return to play policies, please instead just don't sign up this season. As the COVID19 situation and government requirements change, the return to play plan will be modified as deemed necessary by the LVCAL board.

We look forward to seeing you. Now, let's play ball!

Thank you and stay healthy,  
Lehigh Valley Cal Ripken Board

## **LVCAL Return to Play Plan**

### **1. Education, Awareness and Communication**

- a. Each organization will nominate a COVID 19 organization rep as primary point of contact for all questions related to COVID-19 concerns, incidents, and noncompliance with return to play requirements. All parents, athletes, officials, and coaches must be provided the person's contact information and it will also be posted on the Lehigh Valley Cal Ripken Website.
- b. The five organization COVID19 reps will form a committee that will oversee and do their best to enforce the LVCAL return to play rules. Any concerns or confirmed cases of COVID19 will be reported back to the LVCAL board through this committee. This committee will be the point of contact for all questions related to COVID19.
- c. LVCAL will develop a written plan of action in the event any athlete, coach, or official falls ill with COVID19. The plan will be made publicly available and posted on the LVCAL website.
- d. COVID19 education. All athletes, staff and parents must familiarize themselves with the symptoms of COVID19. More information can be found at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

### **Watch for symptoms**

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness.

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

- e. All teams must have a designated volunteer or coach at all games whose only responsibility is to the best of their ability ensure the rules of this return to play plan are followed (COVID19 team rep). If anybody becomes confrontational in regards to a request from the COVID19 team rep, the concern will be escalated through the Head Coach back to the organization COVID19 rep / board for further action if deemed necessary. COVID19 team reps must have all necessary background checks required by the league with the exception of the coaching certification.
- f. Before each practice or game, the team will be responsible for screening all athletes and coaches on their respective team for a fever. This must be done using a no touch thermometer. Any person whose temperature is 100.4F or greater will be sent home and the incident reported to the organization COVID coordinator. When players arrive at the facility they should keep their mask on and the parent must not leave until this temperature screen is completed. The player or coach will not be able to return to any team activities until cleared by the league COVID coordinator. At any games, the home team will be responsible for conducting a temperature check on the umpire when he arrives.
- g. Sick individuals must not attend the youth sports activity. Players must not be participating in any events and must be kept home if they exhibit a fever or any COVID19 symptoms. **It is the caregiver / parent's responsibility to ensure a sick player or spectator in their family does not attend any events!**
- h. If a player is to have a fever in excess of 100.4, regardless of the cause they must not attend any team events for a minimum of 48 hours after the fever has broken without the use of fever reducing drugs.
- i. Parents / Caregivers and volunteers should notify their organization COVID19 point of contact if they or their child become sick with COVID-19 symptoms, test positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case. Necessary risk mitigation actions will be put in place per the COVID19 Response Plan.
- j. Coaches should create a back-up staffing plan which should include cross-training staff and coaches and training all coaches and officials on safety protocols and requirements.
- k. Caregivers should assess levels of risk based on individual athletes on the team who may be at a higher risk for severe illness.
- l. Each organization must certify that the rules for return to play have been distributed to all volunteers.
- m. All participants (coaches, parents, and volunteers) must sign an LVCAL and home organization release of liability waiver. Each organization must submit copies of all signed waivers to LVCAL and it is recommended copies are kept on file with the organization. All umpires will also be required to sign a waiver that must be returned to LVCAL before umpiring any games.

## 2. Hygiene and Cleaning

- a. Coaching staff and other adult volunteers must wear face coverings (masks or face shields) at all times, unless doing so jeopardizes their health. Players will also be required to wear face coverings except when on the active field of play (required on benches and outside of field of play)
- b. Adult spectators should wear face coverings (masks or face shields) at all times while moving around the facility unless doing so jeopardizes their health. Face coverings are not mandatory once a spectator is seated, as long as they can socially distance by a minimum of six feet from people outside their household.

- c. All athletes, coaches, and officials must bring their own water and drinks to team activities. Team water coolers for sharing through disposable cups are not allowed. Fixed water fountains should not be used. All bottles must be labeled with player's name to prevent possible mix up. COVID team rep will have a marker available and ensure all bottles are labeled.
- d. Activities that increase the risk of exposure to saliva must not be allowed including chewing gum, spitting, licking fingers, and eating sunflower seeds.
- e. After each game bases, stands, and benches must be sanitized with an appropriate disinfectant or 10% bleach solution - Home team is responsible for sanitizing after each game with supplies the organization must provide.
- f. Hand Sanitizer must be available near the benches. Each team is responsible for supplying their own hand sanitizer and players should be encouraged to regularly sanitize their hands during games and practices. Players should also be encouraged to bring their own sanitizer supply with their equipment.

### **3. Social Distancing**

- a. Where possible, designated spots should be set up for players at all fields so that during the game when not on the field, they can maintain 6-foot minimum distance between players. If players are in the dugout, they must wear masks at all times.
- b. Pregame conference will be limited to one (1) Coach per team and one (1) Umpire. Social distancing of 6' is required.
- c. Prior to the game players will line up for the pledge of allegiance on the field. They will be spaced out by a 6' distance and wear masks along the baselines.
- d. During post or pre-game meetings with the team players must be physically separated by a minimum of 6 feet distance in an open area and wearing masks.
- e. Batting lineup changes should be limited to communicating from a distance that maintains the 6' social distancing guidelines at all times.
- f. Avoid shaking hands, fist bumps, or high fives before, during or after games and practices. In lieu of the customary post game handshake line, a tip of the hat will be the normal post game gesture.
- g. At the conclusion of each game players and spectators must leave the field in a timely fashion to prevent possible overlap with the next game.
- h. Spectators must maintain at least 6 feet of social distancing in all cases for anyone not in the same household. They must wear face coverings (masks or face shields) at all times, unless they are outdoors and can consistently maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet, or fall under an exception listed in Section 3 of the Secretary of Health's Order on Universal Face Coverings.

### **4. Facilities**

- a. For facilities with multiple fields, game and practice start times should be staggered when possible to minimize congestion in the parking lot with people coming and going at the same time. Sports complexes with multiple fields may operate simultaneous games or practices on fields within a complex only if social distancing can be maintained.
- b. If multiple games are to be held at the same field, adequate time shall be scheduled between contests to allow for the field to be cleaned and disinfected, and to minimize interaction between athletes. Minimum 90 minutes between games.
- c. Any indoor team activity must comply with state and local guidelines.

## **5. Equipment**

- a. Personal items and equipment should not be shared. This includes helmets, bats, gloves, hats, batting gloves and any other equipment. The only exception to this rule will be catcher's gear. This means players at all levels will need to have their own equipment including a helmet and bat.
- b. It is recommended that catcher's gear is not shared if possible. If catcher's gear must be shared, the catcher's helmet and glove must be disinfected between players using either a 10% bleach solution or disinfectant spray. It is recommended that each team bag have two catchers' helmets to facilitate cleaning.
- c. All player's equipment should be properly labeled to minimize the chance of player accidentally using another player's equipment.

## **6. Playing Rules**

- a. Caregivers or spectators should not enter the field of play or bench areas unless in the case of a medical emergency
- b. Teams will be limited to a maximum of 15 players
- c. Team volunteers will be limited to a maximum of 5 (1 Head Coach, 2 Assistant Coaches, 1 Scorekeeper and 1 COVID team rep per game). Minimum number of volunteers required will be 3 at all games with the COVID rep position being mandatory.
- d. Teams will have their own game balls that will only be used by their team when playing defense in the field. Balls should be labeled with an identifying mark or organizations name. 3 game ball minimum per team.
- e. Umpires will call balls and strikes from behind the plate but must wear masks.
- f. Tball and Rookie will not utilize catchers to promote social distancing and to eliminate having to disinfect catcher's gear.

All LVCAL member organizations (Nazareth Area Youth Baseball Association, Pen Argyl Junior Green Knights, Bushkill Township Athletic Association, Slater Baseball Association, and Freemansburg Bethlehem Township Athletic Association) have agreed to adopt the return to play plan outlined in this document.

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# STAY SAFE ON AND OFF THE FIELD



**Stay home** if you are sick.



**Bring your own** equipment and gear (if possible)



**Cover your coughs and sneezes** with a tissue or your elbow.



**Wash your hands** or use sanitizer before and after events and sharing equipment.



**Tell a coach** or staff member if you don't feel well.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)