



Safety of our Players, Coaches, Officials, Volunteers and Families will be Top Priority

Return to Play Guidelines

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INTRODUCTION

Oakville Little League is committed to providing baseball to our players again in 2021. OLL's primary focus is keeping our players, coaches, officials, volunteers, and families safe while still providing an option for physical activity for the youth within our boundaries.

COVID-19 has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization and is extremely contagious. OLL has put in place preventative measures to reduce its spread; however, we cannot guarantee that participants will not become infected with COVID-19.

All participants/parents should be aware that participation is voluntary and at their own risk.

OLL will monitor the situation in Oakville and Ontario and follow the guidelines provided by public health authorities. All items in this document are subject to change. This document will be updated throughout the season as necessary. Participants will be notified of changes and the most current version of these Guidelines will be available on our website.

Participants continue to have injury insurance coverage through Oakville Little League and District 1. This insurance does not include any COVID-19 coverage.

2021 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

We are planning on several different possibilities for our 2021 season. The format will be dependent on the status of the pandemic and the guidelines provided by the Province of Ontario, Region of Halton, Town of Oakville and Little League Canada.

The guidelines below apply to all individuals participating in OLL programs in 2021. Additional guidelines may be added as we progress into the season and in accordance with any new public health guidelines.

OVERVIEW - OLL MANDATORY GUIDELINES

OLL has instituted mandatory guidelines to be followed for approved activities to proceed. These guidelines may change at any time following the guidance of local health authorities. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in suspension, removal from the team and league, cancellation of an event, or any other disciplinary action approved by the Board of Directors. **This applies to all participants, parents/guardians and any spectators.**

Parents/Guardians/Participants must review the General Player Guidelines as well as any guidelines pertaining to the specific type of event their player is participating in.

Before starting the season, each team will appoint a rostered coach to act as COVID Manager. This person will be responsible for ensuring team compliance to these guidelines (e.g., will ensure health screening is completed, attendance tracking is accurate, appropriate physical distancing occurs and help spectators comply with protocols).

Head Coach to send the name and email of your COVID Manager to:
safety@oakvillelittleleague.com

PERSONAL HYGIENE AND SUPPLIES

Oakville Little League will provide the following items for Coaches and Players:

- Hand Sanitizer for each player and each team
- Spray Sanitizer to sanitize bats, balls and other equipment after use
- Disposable gloves (for coach use, optional)
- First Aid Kits for player injuries will be provided to each team.
- Ice Packs for player injuries will be available in the Brown Bins

GENERAL PLAYER GUIDELINES

- Any player who has **any** COVID-19 symptoms (or with family with such) or any player (or with family with such) that has been tested for COVID-19 and has not received a negative result, must stay home and self-monitor, following Public Health guidelines.
- COVID-19 self-assessment is required before all games or practices. OLL will be using the TeamSnap Health Check for this purpose. The Health

Check must be completed through the TeamSnap app prior to all practices and games.

- Players are to practice physical distancing as much as possible
- Players are required to wear a cloth face covering (non-medical mask as recommended by Halton Public Health) at all times when not actively participating in the event (i.e., It is to be worn while waiting to bat, sitting in the dugout, etc.) It is optional to wear while on the field of play. Should any participant be exempt, as outlined by Halton Public Health, please inform league Safety Officer via email safety@oakvillelittleleague.com.
- Dugouts will be used during game play as in a normal season. All personal items and equipment should be stored in the player's bag when not in use. Masks are mandatory in the dugout by all coaches and players, unless an exemption has been provided to OLL. Temporary dugouts will remain for practices.
- Players are not to lick their fingers, blow on their hands, or otherwise put their hands near their mouths
- Players must use their own glove, batting gloves and helmet. A player may use their own catcher's equipment. There is **NO** sharing of ANY personal equipment or items.
- Sunflower seeds, gum or food of any kind are **NOT** allowed on or near the playing field or temporary dugouts. Players should bring their own, labeled drinks, to all team activities. There is to be **NO** sharing of beverages
- Players and coaches are to **refrain from spitting** anywhere in the facility, including the temporary dugout areas and on the playing field.
- Players should have their own hand sanitizer and sanitize hands frequently during each event. It is recommended hands are sanitized every half inning.
- Player equipment (e.g., bags, helmets, bats, gloves, etc.) should be cleaned and disinfected after each practice/game by a parent/guardian/caretaker
- All uniforms or clothing should be washed after each event

GENERAL COACH GUIDELINES

- Coaches must attend a mandatory COVID-19 coach meeting. Only OLL designated coaches are allowed on the field. No other on-field helpers are allowed (parents, siblings, caregivers). The only exception is the Challenger Division, where each participant is allowed 1 on-field helper, wearing an appropriate face covering
- Coaches must attend a mandatory COVID-19 coach meeting.
 - Coaches will be provided with information and best practices for the

following:

- Practice structure while adhering to physical distancing guidelines
- PPE requirements
 - Face covering to be worn at all times by coaches, unless exemption is provided to safety@oakvillelittleleague.com
 - Players are to wear face covering when not actively participating in an event (i.e., It must be worn it while waiting to bat, sitting at their designated spot, etc.) It is optional to wear on the field.
 - Players are to sanitize hands frequently; recommend every time they return to their designated spot, they sanitize their hands
 - Use of protective gloves by coaches is optional. Coaches are recommended to sanitize hands regularly and frequently, especially after touching any piece of equipment
- Guidance on providing support and information to players and parents
- Field preparation guidelines
- Sanitization guidelines for shared equipment and common areas before, during and after a practice or games.
- Any Coach who has **any** COVID-19 symptoms (or with family with such) or any Coach (or with family with such) that has been tested for COVID-19 and has not received a negative result, must stay home and self-monitor, following Public Health guidelines.
- Coaches will complete Health Check via TeamSnap App prior to attending any event
- All shared equipment must be cleaned, disinfected with the provided sanitizing agent and allowed to dry before used by a new player
- Coaches must wear a cloth face covering (non-medical mask as recommended by Halton Public Health) to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 at all times during practices and games, unless exemption is provided to safety@oakvillelittleleague.com. Neck gaiters are not recommended as they aren't well secured to the head or ears, and are likely to move or slip out of place.
- Teams must track the attendance of all players and coaches at every team event. The TeamSnap Health Check can be used for this purpose or an electronic tracking sheet. Attendance lists must be stored such that a future request for tracing of participants at all League events is available. The COVID Manager will be responsible for this task.
- Practice drills must be designed to maintain physical distancing where possible

- Coaches must ensure proper physical distancing is maintained during drills
- Coaches should encourage the frequent use of hand sanitizer during events, especially when water breaks are provided at practice.
- Sunflower seeds, gum and food of any kind are **NOT** allowed on or near the playing field or temporary dugouts
- No sharing of beverages. Participants should bring their own labeled water bottle, and keep it in their equipment bag.
- Players and coaches are to **refrain from spitting** anywhere in the facility, including the temporary dugout areas and on the playing field.
- **Brown and Green Bins at all fields are to be locked once equipment is taken out.** They are not to remain open and accessible during any practice or game. The Brown Bins will contain the sanitizing agent that we do not want in the hands of children.

GENERAL PARENT/GUARDIAN GUIDELINES

- Spectator capacity is limited to 25% of normal capacity. Spectators are asked to ensure they respect all physical distancing and mask wearing requirements. It is recommended spectators bring their own chair as they may not be able to sit in the bleachers. Spectator attendance and limits remain subject to change based on provincial and local health guidelines.
- Ride sharing is strongly discouraged

ARRIVING AND LEAVING THE DIAMONDS

- Participants should arrive no sooner than 15 minutes before the scheduled start time.
- If there is another event prior, please stay in your vehicle until those participants have entered their vehicle. Follow signage and maintain physical distancing.
- Spectator capacity is limited. Town and Provincial health guidelines for physical distancing and face coverings are to be followed at all times. Failure to do so may result in cancellation of the event.
- Players are to check-in with their COVID Manager, ensuring Health Check has been completed. This is mandatory, as it will help OLL communicate faster if we have a COVID-19 case reported. Reminder, Coaches are required to complete a TeamSnap Health Check as well.
- Players, coaches and officials will wear a cloth face covering outside the diamond.

- **Players will leave the field in such a way as to avoid crowding anywhere near the dugout.** Participants are asked to leave the facility immediately. This is to minimize contact with players, coaches, and spectators

PRACTICE SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

- Participants may be grouped in appropriate-sized groups to facilitate training based on health guidelines. The number of participants will not exceed local/provincial guidelines. Joint practices will be allowed when necessary. Throughout the summer, there may be a time when attendance dictates a joint practice. This will be a decision made by the head coaches of the teams involved.
- Practices will be 60-90 minutes in duration, based on guidelines. Teams are requested to leave the field of play immediately after their time has expired. There will be a 30-minute break between practices to allow players to leave and sanitization before the next team arrives.
- All drills should ensure physical distancing requirements are followed.
- All participants are encouraged to sanitize hands prior to the start of practice. Hands should be sanitized frequently during practice, especially at water breaks.
- Coaches should wear cloth face covering at all times, unless exempt. Players are required to wear cloth face covering when not actively involved in practice, especially when physical distancing is not possible. The wearing of face coverings on the field is optional.
- Use of temporary dugout during practice sessions will continue. Players are to place their personal equipment along the inside fence of the designated dugout area keeping (2m or 6ft) apart from other players. Team COVID Manager will set up cones at the appropriate distance.
- No sharing of personal equipment such as helmets, gloves, batting gloves
- No sharing of catcher's masks or gloves without fully sanitizing first. Only Coaches are to use sanitizing agent. Players are not to use.
- All shared equipment must be cleaned and disinfected with the provided sanitizing agent to allow sufficient time to dry before used by a new player. Only Coaches are to use sanitizing agent. Players are not to use.
- **No team huddles before, during or after the practice for coaching or teaching purposes.** Use platforms such as Zoom or Teams to hold such events. Recommend Coaches provide practice plan prior to the practice for review.
- Players should bring their own personal drinks, labeled with their name, to all team activities. There is to be NO sharing of beverages.

- Players and coaches are to **refrain from spitting** including in temporary dugout areas and on the playing field.
- Emphasis will be on mandatory cleaning and sanitization of the dugout and temporary bench area following the completion of the game. It is the responsibility of each coach to ensure the area is cleaned and sanitized prior to departing and all league equipment has been cleaned, sanitized and returned to the appropriate place.

GAME SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Player Guidelines - Refer to [General Player Guidelines](#)

Coach Guidelines - Refer to [General Coach Guidelines](#)

Parent/Guardian Guidelines - Refer to the [General Parent/Guardian Guidelines](#)

Game Specific Guidelines

- OLL may consider allowing players on other teams to be used for callup purposes. All callups **MUST** be arranged through proper channels (i.e. respective division convenor). Coaches are not to arrange their own call ups.
- Players must have their own individual helmet, glove, and batting gloves, if required, to reduce contact exposure. It is recommended players with their own catcher's equipment use it, rather than use the league provided equipment. Bats may be shared only after sanitized using League sanitizing agent. Only Coaches are to use sanitizing agent. Players are not to use.
- Each brown bin contains 2 sets of catcher's equipment for each team. Each team will therefore have a minimum of 2 catchers for each game. A player with their own catcher's equipment is allowed to catch over and above the 2 designated catchers. Each catcher will have their own gear for that game. There is to be NO sharing of this equipment. In the event a catcher is injured during the game or equipment malfunctions, the gear must be thoroughly sanitized prior to use by another player. As a reminder, while warming pitchers up in the bullpen or on the field, a catcher's mask **MUST** be worn. This applies to players and coaches.
- **Dugouts will be used by players to store equipment and sit in. All personal items and equipment are to be stored in the player's bag when not in use. Masks are mandatory in the dugout for all coaches and players, unless exempt.**

- Shared equipment must be cleaned before use and disinfected with the provided sanitizer after use to allow sufficient time to dry before use by a new player. League equipment must be sanitized before and after the game prior to being returned. Only Coaches are to use sanitizing agent. Players are not to use.
- No sharing of towels, clothing, or other items that may be used to wipe face or hands
- Players are encouraged to sanitize their hands when returning to the dugout from the field, whether on defense or offense
- Coaches and umpires are to wear a face covering whenever possible, especially when physical distance cannot be maintained, unless exemption has been provided.
- There are to be no high-fives, handshakes or any other celebrations involving close contact of participants.
- All games Major T-Ball to Senior will be 5 innings in length. There will be a drop-dead time of 2 hours from scheduled start time.
- A mercy run limit of 3 runs max per inning for innings 1-4. The 5th inning will be open.
- Pitchers will be limited to 2 innings per game or 3 innings per week. The week is considered Monday to Sunday
- Weekday games will start at 6:00pm and 8:30pm, allowing for 30-minute sanitization period. Weekend games will follow a similar format, however start times will vary throughout the day.

Baseballs

- Balls used for pre-game warm up, in between innings and warming up pitchers are to be sanitized by the coaches and/or convenor at the end of the game. Coaches are encouraged to sanitize any balls used in warmups when they are returned to the dugout.
- Umpires will take game balls from the Brown Bin before the start of each game. Between each half inning, the umpire will bring ALL game balls to the HOME team coach for sanitization before being given to the next pitcher. At the end of the game ALL game balls will be returned to the HOME team coach for sanitization before being returned to the brown bin.
- Any game or practice ball that leaves the field of play should be sanitized before being returned. It is recommended that a coach retrieve any such ball, where possible

Pre-Game Warm-up

- Infields are allowed with proper physical distancing observed.

Safety & Game Attendance

- Player and coach attendance tracking is mandatory and must be maintained such that a future request for tracing of attendees at all events is available. OLL will be using TeamSnap Health Check for this purpose. COVID Manager will be responsible for maintaining attendance for each practice and game.
- If there is an injury on the field, one of the coaches should follow First Aid guidelines found [here](#) using the provided First Aid Kit, ensuring the use of disposable gloves prior to touching any item or the injured participant. Coach must ensure face covering is properly in place while providing aid. All incidents are to be reported to the League at the soonest possible time using the [Injury Reporting Tool](#)

Pre-Game Plate Meeting

- Pre-game plate meetings are optional. If they occur:
 - They should only consist of one coach from each team and game umpires. No players allowed at the pre-game meeting.
 - All participants of the plate meeting must wear a cloth face covering and follow physical distancing guidelines by remaining 2 metres apart

Umpires

- **Umpires are permitted to officiate multiple teams and in multiple divisions.**
- Umpires are to complete the [OLL Umpire Screening Tool](#) no sooner than 8 hours prior to attending an event. Horizon Web Ref will be used for contact tracing purposes. Umpires must check-in with Convenor upon arrival at each assignment.
- Umpires must wear a cloth face covering while umpiring, unless exempt, and encouraged to sanitize their hands at the end of every half inning.
- Umpires are permitted to be placed behind the pitcher's mound/circle to call balls and strikes in the Minor, Major, Junior & Senior Divisions. From this position, league supplied umpire gear will not be necessary and will not be provided.
- **A base umpire will be not be used in the Minor NL Division**

Scorekeeping

- Line up cards must be prepared but not physically shared. Photos may be taken by scorekeepers. If requested, the lineup card must be made available to the umpire.
- As per house league traditions, scorekeeping is the responsibility of each team.

Dugouts/Benches

- Dugouts will now be used by players to store equipment and sit in. All personal items and equipment are to be stored in the player's bag when not in use. Masks are mandatory in the dugout for all coaches and players, unless exempt.

Game Play

T-Ball

- Run downs are permitted when happening in the normal circumstances of the game
- Tagging is allowed in any manner. Ball in glove is recommended, however ball in bare hand allowed. Players are encouraged to make the tag and move away from the offensive player promptly.
- Pitcher must remain behind new line to be drawn 50 feet from home plate. Pitcher is required to wear their own batting helmet.
- T-Ball Major:
 - T-Ball Major will have a player designated as the catcher, positioned behind home plate against the backstop, wearing their batting helmet and regular player's glove
- For Minor T-Ball the group in the outfield will enter the infield after the teams have vacated the dugout areas and completed sanitization.

Minor/Major

- Base stealing is allowed. Runners may disengage from the base after the ball passes the batter. There will be no back picks by the catcher if the runner strays off the base too far.
- No advancing from third to home on wild pitch/passed ball. This will reduce the chance of contact at home plate.
- Run downs are permitted when happening in the normal circumstances of the game
- Tagging is allowed in any manner. Ball in glove is recommended. Players are encouraged to make the tag and move away from the offensive player promptly.
- Mound visits are only allowed by the coach and only to change the pitcher. No mound visits allowed from catcher or other infielders. Coach should not encroach onto the mound (dirt cut out), maintaining 2 metres distance from the pitcher.
- In Minor with Pitching Machine:
 - Any passed balls will stay at the fence, or if the Catcher catches the ball or keeps in front, they can throw back to the backstop. The Catcher will not chase the ball. At Convenor's discretion, either a

bucket or net will be placed behind the catcher to shorten the backstop and collect baseballs

- o When a batter has completed his/her turn at bat, and the play is completed, the catcher will place loose balls in either the net or the bucket.
- o At the end of the half inning, or as necessary, the defensive coach will empty the bucket from the backstop into the bucket at the pitching machine. Coach will sanitize balls at the end of each half inning with sanitizing agent
- In All Minor Division Leagues (Pitching Machine and Live Pitching)
 - o In the event there is a bat near home plate that poses a danger, a defensive coach will kick it out of the way for safety purposes (umpire is not in position to do this). Coaches need to be aware, knowing it may be difficult on plays where there is a runner on 3rd base.

Junior/Senior

- Base stealing is allowed, at the runner's peril, but leadoffs are not. There will be no "holding" of runners at any base. The base runner cannot disengage from the base until the ball has been fully released from the pitcher's hand towards home plate. There will be no back picking or pick off moves made by the catcher if the runner is not advancing to the next base.
- Run downs are permitted when happening in the normal circumstances of the game
- Tagging is allowed in any manner. Ball in glove is recommended, however ball in bare hand allowed. Players are encouraged to make the tag and move away from the offensive player promptly.
- No advancing from third to home on wild pitch/passed ball. This will reduce the chance of contact at home plate.
- Mound visits are only allowed by the coach and only to change the pitcher. No mound visits allowed from catcher or other infielders. Coach should not encroach onto the mound (dirt cut out), maintaining 2 metres distance from the pitcher.
- Balls leave playing field should be sanitized prior to being returned to the field of play.

Post-Game

- No post-game handshakes. A tip of the hat or similar sportsmanship gesture is encouraged.
- No post-game discussions with players and coaching staff. Use virtual means if necessary.

- Emphasis will be on mandatory cleaning and sanitization of the dugout and temporary bench area. Each coach is responsible to ensure the area is cleaned and sanitized prior to departing and all league equipment has been cleaned, sanitized and returned appropriately.
- No Post-Game team snacks

CORNWALL CONCESSION

- The concession stand will open for game play only and sell only beverages. Line-ups must maintain physical distancing like grocery stores. Payments are strongly encouraged to be made by debit/credit card.
- The Concession Manager will be responsible for the regular sanitization of the facility and ensure volunteers wear appropriate PPE at all times.
- The number of volunteers allowed in Concession area will be based on physical distancing guidelines. Currently, no more than 1 volunteer will be allowed at a time.

GAME ANNOUNCING AND MUSIC

- Announcing of games will be dependent on local health restrictions and potential protocols. If it is determined that it's safe to announce games, proper social distancing must be followed. One announcer per game only.
- All equipment, tables, electrical cords and chairs will be sanitized before, during and after each game

CORNWALL PARK BUILDING USAGE

- The use of the Clubhouse is limited to Board and Executive Committee members only. Face coverings and physical distancing must be observed while inside the clubhouse.
- Authorized members will sign in with date and time of visit for contact tracing purposes. There will be a sign-in sheet posted on the wall. At no time will the capacity exceed the authorized number based on local health guidelines.
- The public washrooms at will remain operational as per the Town of Oakville.