

MBSC COVID 19 Risk Management Guidelines *

(Note: references to staff means coaches, team specific staff, and general league staff members which may include directors/officers)

Manage

- **COVID Coordinator:** A COVID coordinator will be appointed to oversee the COVID risk management plan including development from appropriate resources, implementation, monitoring, updates/changes, communications, staff training, regulatory compliance, and answering player, parent, and staff questions about COVID concerns.
- **COVID Self-Reporting:** The COVID coordinator will be familiar with and comply with all regulatory requirements, privacy policies, and information sharing regulations as regards COVID-19 self reporting of symptoms or positive tests by players or staff as well as by related family members with whom they have had close contact.
- **Training:** All staff will be required to familiarize themselves with the CDC guidelines and recommendations in youth sports, New Jersey specific guidelines in youth sports, these MBSC risk management guidelines, and any applicable league guidelines regarding COVID-19 risk management.
- **Spreading Out Teams and Spectators:** Players, families and spectators are encouraged not to show up to fields more than 15 minutes before the start of practice or the start of warm-ups for games. On-field warm-ups for games should be limited and no more than 45 minutes. Participants in games or practices should leave the field as soon as practicable after the end of the relevant event.
- **Agreement to Abide by Guidelines:** By participating in MBSC events, all staff, players, parents and spectators agree to abide by these MBSC risk management guidelines.

Communications

- MBSC will disseminate information to all staff, players, parents, and spectators about the COVID risk and practices that should be undertaken to mitigate risks of COVID-19.
- A MBSC waiver specifically addressing the risks of COVID- 19 will be required to participate in practices. Parents with players with underlying conditions are required to disclose such conditions upon execution of the waiver. Parents with players with underlying conditions are encouraged to consider carefully all guidelines regarding the participation of player with an underlying condition.

Events: Games and Practices

- **Stay Home When Appropriate:** Players, staff, and spectators must stay home when they are showing symptoms of COVID-19, have a temperature over 100.4 Fahrenheit, have tested positive for COVID-19 and have yet to be cleared by doctor to resume activities, have had close contact with a person with COVID-19, or if any member of their household either has tested positive for COVID-19 or shows symptoms of COVID-19.
- **Temperature Check:** Players, staff, and coaches should take their own temperature before leaving the house and they should stay at home with a reading of 100.4 Fahrenheit or higher according to CDC definitions of reportable illnesses for contagious disease. The MBSC will not be responsible for checking temperatures prior to events.
- **No Congregation:** Players and team staff should not congregate prior to a practice and should stay in cars until right before warmups for the practice and should avoid other groups that are leaving the prior event. Players will be instructed not to enter the field for practice until one of the assigned coaches is present.
- **Team Check in Process:** Team staff and players should continue social distancing during the team check in process.
- **Dugouts:** Dugouts will not be used during practice and hard surfaces such as benches and equipment racks will be avoided unless deemed necessary. Dugouts may be used during games. Staff and players utilizing dugouts during games should maintain physical distancing and wear face coverings.
- **League Games:** Any MBSC team or staff participating in a league-sponsored game, such as USABL games, will abide by the COVID-19 risk management rules and guidelines of that league, in addition to the MBSC risk management guidelines where applicable. Where a league gives the option of placing umpires behind the pitcher or behind the plate, MBSC teams are encouraged to opt to have the umpire behind the mound, but can choose to have the umpire behind the plate if both teams and the umpire agree. Umpires calling the game from behind the plate must wear face masks when they cannot maintain 6' distance from the catcher.
- **Ad Hoc Games:** MBSC teams and staff participating in games that are not league-sponsored will abide by the MBSC risk management guidelines where applicable. Each team should use its own balls and equipment during play. Players are not required to wear face coverings on the field during game play, but are permitted to do so. MBSC teams are encouraged to opt to have the umpire behind the mound, but can choose to have the umpire behind the plate if both teams and the umpire agree. Umpires calling the game from behind the plate must wear face masks when they cannot maintain 6' distance from the catcher.
- **Exception for health risk of face-covering:** As per the NJDOH and Executive order 163, if a face-covering would legitimately pose a risk to the individual's safety you do not have to wear it while active during the game.
- **No spitting or chewing items:** There will be no spitting or chewing of sunflower seeds, gum, candy, or any other chewing item.

Social Distancing

- **6 Ft. Rule:** All players, staff, and spectators should practice social distancing of 6 ft. whenever possible, especially in common areas. Coaches are responsible for ensuring social distancing is maintained between players as much as possible. This means additional spacing between players while playing catch, changing drills so that players remain spaced out, and no congregating of players while waiting to bat or waiting for their turn at a drill.
- **Pre and Post Event Social Distancing:** Social distancing should be practiced by players and staff before and after all events.
- **Drills:** Coaches will be encouraged to structure practices to concentrate on conditioning, drills, skill building and will be asked to limit close contact during simulation drills.
- **No Handshakes/Celebrations:** Players and staff should refrain from handshakes, high fives, fist/elbow bumps, chest bumps, group celebrations, or any celebrations requiring physical contact, etc.
- **Waiting in Cars:** Players and team staff should wait in their cars with parents/guardians until just before the beginning of a practice or game instead of assembling in groups. Players should not arrive early to practice and should not be permitted on the field until the start of practice. Players will be instructed not to enter the field for practice until one of the assigned coaches is present.
- **Car Pools:** The use of car pools to transport participants who do not live in the same household is discouraged.
- **Spectator Social Distancing:** Spectators should follow social distancing of 6 ft. whenever possible and should avoid being in groups. If possible, parents will be encouraged to stay in cars or used marked areas to help maintain a distance of at least 6 ft. Where social distancing is not feasible, spectators should wear face coverings and wash hands or use hand sanitizer (60% alcohol) frequently.

Post-Event

- **Cleaning:** The staff and players will dispose of their own trash from seating or sideline areas when departing practice.
- **No Congregation:** Players and team staff should quickly exit the practice or playing location after the event and go directly to their cars without congregating with other players or spectators in common areas.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Personal Disinfectants

- When appropriate social distancing is not possible, players and staff should wear cloth face coverings. Wearing face coverings is most critical when physical distancing is difficult.

- **Face Coverings for Coaches and Staff:** All staff should wear face coverings at times when 6-feet of distancing is not possible, and wear gloves whenever applicable. (Note: CDC Considerations for Youth Sports does not suggest the use of gloves except for when removing garbage bags or disposing of trash.)
- **Player Face Coverings:** Players should wear face coverings when not engaging in vigorous physical activity, in close contact situations where 6-feet distancing is not possible (such as while catching or playing first base), or whenever the player or a parent/guardian/caretaker deem it advisable for the player's safety. All players must have a face covering on their person at any game, practice or event.
- **Parent / Spectator Face Coverings:** Parents and spectators should wear face coverings whenever they are at the facility and in close contact with a non-family member.
- All persons wearing face coverings should not touch their face covering and should wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer (60% alcohol) frequently.
- **Player Provided Hand Sanitizer and Wipes:** Parents should provide players with hand sanitizer for use between play periods as well as antibacterial wipes for disinfecting player provided equipment. The use of sanitizers before and after each at-bat and when going out to and in from the field is recommended.
- **Staff Provided Hand Sanitizer and Wipes:** Staff members should provide their own hand sanitizer for frequent use and antibacterial wipes for disinfecting hard surfaces and shared equipment.

Playing Equipment

- **Spacing of Player Equipment:** Player equipment should be spaced accordingly to prevent close contact. Dugouts will not be used during practice. Players' items should be lined up against a fence equal to or greater than six feet apart.
- **Player Provided Equipment:** Players should be encouraged to bring their own equipment and to not share it with others. Player provided equipment should be kept separate and in individual bags or containers.
- **Limit Team Shared Equipment:** The use of team shared equipment (e.g. protective gear, balls, bats, etc.) should be limited whenever possible and should be sanitized after each use if possible. Otherwise, limit use of team shared supplies and equipment to one group of players at a time and sanitize between use.
- **Water Bottles:** Water and sports drink jugs will not be provided by the coaches or MBSC. Players and staff should bring their own water bottles to all practices to help to reduce transmission risk. Individuals should take their own water bottles home each night for cleaning and sanitation.

When Someone Gets COVID-19 Or Has Close Contact/Out of State Travel

- **No attendance:** Staff and family members understand that a player should not attend any activities and that they should notify the COVID coordinator if they or any other staff member or player becomes sick with COVID-19 symptoms, tests positive, has had close contact with someone who

has COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive, or if any member of their household either has tested positive for COVID-19 or shows symptoms of COVID-19. In addition, players who have traveled to a state for which the State of New Jersey recommends quarantine must quarantine for 14 days or provide a negative test result before attending activities.

- **If COVID symptoms exhibited during practice:** If a player or staff member exhibits symptoms during an event, they should immediately be separated and sent home or to a healthcare facility depending on the severity of the symptoms. They should not be allowed to return to activity until they have met the CDC criteria to discontinue home isolation.
- **Player or Staff Has Close Contact:** Anyone with close contact with a person exhibiting symptoms should also be separated and sent home and should follow CDC guidelines for self-monitoring and procedures for community related exposures.
- **Cleaning / Disinfecting Surfaces:** Any areas or surfaces, or shared objects used by a sick person should be closed off and not used until after cleaning and disinfecting.
- **Notification:** Notify local health officials, staff, and family members immediately of any confirmed case of COVID-19 while complying with local state and privacy and confidentiality laws as well as with the Americans With Disabilities Act.

*These guidelines are based on recommendations from the following organizations:^[1]_[SEP]

USABL (United States Amateur Baseball League; established 1986) and Baseball Coalition;
<https://www.usabl.com/njbaseballcoalition>

Sadler Sports and Recreation Insurance; <https://www.sadlersports.com/coronavirus-risk-management-in-sports/>

United States Specialty Sports Association; POST COVID-19 Return-to-Play Guidelines, Procedures and Recommendations; Updated 5/14/20

Little League Best Practices on Organizing, Playing, and Watching Little League Baseball and Softball During the Coronavirus Pandemic