



HLL 2021 COVID SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Hillsborough Little League is excited to welcome players back for the 2021 season. Baseball is a sport well-suited to the safety demands of COVID-19. Played outdoors, with naturally spaced positions and minimal contact, the baseball experience can be [delivered safely](#), provided we all work together.

To this end, the HLL Board has established a set of safety protocols informed by guidance from Little League International, [State of California guidelines](#), Hillsborough Recreation rules and CDC guidelines. The CDC has provided the following illustrations on aspects of youth sports that are advantageous in these times which indicate baseball to be a lower risk sport.

In December 2020, the State announced specific guidance for youth sports, which gives us more clarity with respect to our season. Baseball is classified as a 'outdoor moderate-contact sport', so we would need to get to the Red tier before any games could be played - but we can start practices with stable cohorts in February. Safety will be our primary focus with our COVID protocols. In practical terms, we are planning to have as close to a "normal" season as possible with tryouts/drafts/games for most (possibly all) of our upper divisions and standard team selection for our lower divisions. We also have some contingencies in place if we cannot run our "normal" season based on covid restrictions.

Our goals for this season are simple:

1. Create the safest and best possible experience for the HLL Community
2. Establish new HLL protocols for a COVID-19 world for this year and beyond
3. Focus on getting back to normal player development and sportsmanship
4. Create a balanced yet accelerated schedule between games and practices

What safety measures are in place?

HLL will be implementing the following expectations and procedures to encourage a safe and fun season, and here are a few highlights:

- We will follow the state rules regarding youth sports, the [CDC guide to youth sports](#), Hillsborough Recreation provisions, and ideas from LL International's [restart plans](#).
- We will have specific protocols for before, during, and after field activities for parents, players, coaches, and umpires to follow (see DAY OF PRACTICE/GAMES below).
- Parents will be asked to sign a waiver prior to the season during the registration process. Further, all parents must complete a symptom checker online, demonstrating symptom free status, before players will be permitted to attend HLL activities.
- **Parents are required to complete a health screening form through Ambry every practice or game day.** Students in HSD are already using this for in person classes. Players from other schools will need to sign up.
- **Masks are mandatory for all field and cage activities until further notice.** Wearing cloth face coverings is an effective way to reduce the spread of COVID-19 through respiratory droplets. This can be extra important at sporting events, where it's common for coaches, players, officials and spectators to raise their voices shouting, singing or chanting. Athletes,



coaches, officials and volunteers should wear a cloth face covering especially in the dugout
Spectators should wear cloth face coverings and follow local rules for physical distancing.

- Teams should practice significant social distancing when arriving, switching, and departing. Spectators from different households should also be spaced apart.
- Players should clean their hands before and after practices, games, and sharing equipment. Players should have their own hand sanitizer.
- High fives, fist bumps, and other physicals contact celebratory gestures will be discouraged. A verbal 'great hit' can be just as powerful.
- No sunflower seeds, shared food, or sharing of liquids in the dugout or at the field
- We ask that you equip your child with any wipes or hand sanitizers as you see fit.
- Facilities and bathrooms will be cleaned per Hillsborough Recreation and School District standards.
- HLL reserves the right to remove players, coaches, spectators from practices/games should these precautions be ignored.

Who is our primary contact for COVID concerns?

Although we all share responsibility in reducing our personal and community risks from COVID, our Safety Officer Paul Leung will be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns on behalf of the HLL Community. He has the full support of the HLL Board and can be reached via email at safety@hllbaseball.org. All coaches, staff, officials, and families should also feel free to file a [safety report](#) on the HLL website.

What about participation in other youth sports activities?

We recognize and appreciate that the HLL Community is enrolling their children in local activities and youth sports training that follow the similar COVID guidelines we are implementing. HLL wants our kids to be active for physical and emotional well-being during this trying time.

However, once you extend beyond our local community the approach in COVID protocols in other counties and states vary dramatically. If you plan on travelling outside the Bay Area for anything like youth travel sports tournaments, scrimmages, or practices - please exercise a quarantine period prior to returning to HLL activities. The HLL Board fully realizes that this may preclude certain kids who are hoping to play on travel teams, but execution of a safe experience is our highest priority.



DAY OF PRACTICE/GAMES

What happens before going to an HLL practice or game?

- Players must have cleared the health screening through Ambry. If not, they are not eligible to be at the field.
- If players have any COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell) they should NOT attend the session.
- Each player must bring their own gear, there will be no shared equipment besides baseballs.
 - Baseball glove, bat, batting helmet, cleats, and catchers gear (if desired)
 - Personal hand sanitizer
 - Water bottle
 - Face mask, and one that attaches to the player
- All players need to wear a face mask once out of their car and it should stay on throughout the practice or game. Face mask/covering must be on the athlete at all times. The only exception is during water breaks, when the face mask must be in the athlete's pocket or around their neck.
- At the start of each practice an HLL appointed official, manager, or coach will take player temperatures with a touchless thermometer near the Majors scoring shed and ask the player if he/she has any symptoms. Once they are cleared, the parent can depart.
- Parents/Guardians are asked to comply with the same rules regarding masks and social distancing at practices.
- Maintain social distancing throughout the check in process as well as the whole practice.
- A team manager, acting manager, or league official, has discretion to remove from activity, separate, and request parental pick up for any player showing any of the symptoms listed above or who, despite reminders, is not following these health and safety guidelines.

What happens before practice?

- On field participation will be limited to the coaches & players of the group. Coaches will set up and break down all equipment before and after practice
- Dugouts will not be used to prevent unnecessary contact & crowding. Gear will be placed down the foul lines, 6 feet apart.
- Players and coaches must wear their face mask/covering when meeting with the team and maintain 6 ft social distances while in that designated common area.
- No contact by any players throughout the practice – minimum 6ft apart at all times. Zero tolerance for players who can't abide by the social distancing rules!

What rules will we follow during practice?

- Each coaching staff will be provided with a contactless thermometer, first aid kit, and ice packs. If you have an injury which requires further attention, the sink on the side of the snack shack will be available to clean up any wounds. When attending to any injury, coaches and players should wear a mask.
- To the greatest extent possible, we will take a group of 8-12 kids and make it smaller through stations. Teams should target no more than 16 players and coaches on the field at any time.



- Teams will maintain 6 feet social distancing at all times. No team huddles, no high fives, fist bumping or horseplay allowed.
- Players will separate into smaller teams & participate in station-based training.
- No shared equipment will be allowed (bats, helmets, etc), with the exception of baseballs & tees. Every player has to pick up their own equipment.
- Players are encouraged to use the restroom at home before arrival. However, if players must use the restroom, they must do so one at a time and maintain social distancing. Face mask/covering must be worn when using the restroom.

What happens after practice?

- Perform normal field maintenance - water, drag the field if needed.
- We will be sanitizing common equipment baseballs, batting cage balls, tees, and common areas after each practice.
- Players must maintain physical distancing when gathering their bags and equipment.
- Players are to meet their families in the parking lot. Players should maintain 6 feet physical distancing when walking to the parking lot.
- Families are encouraged to wipe down all personal equipment at home, wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and wash face mask/covering when needed.



COVID CASE (OR SUSPECTED CASE) PROTOCOLS

For clarity purposes, HLL will carefully follow the CDC, CDPH, and San Mateo County guidance. HLL also reserves the right to use the most conservative view of this collective guidance for the safety of the league.

What happens in the case of illness or suspected COVID-19 symptoms at an HLL practice or game?

Any player, coach, or staff exhibiting symptoms will immediately be required to wear a face covering and wait in an isolated area until they can be transported home or to a healthcare facility, as soon as practicable. For serious illness, 9-1-1 will be called without delay.

What happens in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 Case(s)?

Given the virulent spread of COVID, we have specific protocols in the event of a player, coach, or family member contracting COVID.

- In the case of a positive test, that individual should not return until they have met [CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation or quarantine.](#)
- We ask that any COVID related issue be communicated to any affected HLL Community members expediently to prevent further spread.
- HLL will notify the manager and all families on the team of a possible exposure to a positive COVID-19 case while maintaining confidentiality as required by state and federal laws. HLL will also adjust relevant game schedules, when feasible, to ensure that any affected team does not put others at risk.
- HLL Safety Board Member Paul Leung will work with the family of the affected player or adult and notify the County of San Mateo County Public Health Department immediately of any positive COVID-19 case.
- HLL will provide information regarding close contacts to the County of San Mateo Public Health Department as requested. By attending and participating in HLL activities, players and families consent to this process, as specified in the signature of the HLL COVID Waiver during registration.
- Per contact tracing protocols, San Mateo County may advise close contacts to get COVID-19 tests and remain quarantined at home for 14 days or as required by the county health officials
- Hillsborough Recreation will also be notified to ensure proper cleaning and disinfection of the common areas, this includes surfaces or shared objects in the area, if applicable.

What happens in the event of close contacts to confirmed COVID-19 Case(s)?

For individuals who have had close contact (less than 6 feet for at least an aggregate of 15 minutes) with a person who is COVID-19 positive, CDPH recommends the exposed person be quarantined and stay home for a period of 14 days from the day of exposure.

- Close contacts (household or non-household) of confirmed COVID-19 cases will be sent home immediately, instructed to seek medical advice, and to follow the guidance of the county contract tracing program or medical professional.
- "Close Contact" is defined by the CDC as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic persons, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.



- Close Contacts are strongly advised to get COVID-19 testing immediately and on day 5 after last day of exposure to the case.
- Close Contacts should, even if they test negative, remain in quarantine for a full 14 days after (1) date of last exposure to COVID-19 positive non-household contact or (2) date that COVID-19 positive household member completes their isolation.
- Household members of COVID-19 positive persons should also be quarantined for this period, as well as anyone who has had unprotected contact with an infected person's body fluids and/or secretions, such as being coughed or sneezed on, sharing utensils or saliva, or providing care without wearing appropriate protective equipment, such as a facemask and gloves.
- No actions are required to be taken for persons who have not had direct close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case, but who have had close contact with persons who were themselves a Close Contact.

What is the self-isolation and quarantine required to return to HLL activities?

Players with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 need to take this seriously for themselves and the HLL Community, and the burden of proof will be on the HLL family. The American Academy of Pediatrics, supported by the [CDC guidelines](#), has [specific recommendations](#) for youth sports.

By default, the quarantine period is 14 days from last known exposure. However the CDC guidelines above outline the process of shortening a quarantine period in the event of a false positive or a classroom exposure. HLL will require a negative test after day 5 from the most recent exposure (i.e. test must occur on day 5 or later).

What is the protocol for returning to play in HLL activities after a positive test?

In addition to compliance with all the required medical, isolation and quarantine guidance above, parents or guardians of players must provide a medical note from a physician with a date for clearing the player for return to play. This note should be provided ONLY to the HLL Safety Director (safety@hllbaseball.org), not to the manager/coach or other team volunteer.