

Howard County Youth Program
Return to Play Plan

Updated June 17, 2020

The plan has been created in three sections: **Practice Guidelines**, **Facilities Guidelines**, and **Game Guidelines**. The Facilities Guidelines pertain specifically to the management and utilization of Kiwanis Wallas Park for baseball and softball practices and games. The plan was constructed utilizing the Field Rental Guidelines provide by Howard County Recreation and Parks as well as plans collected from across the country who have safely returned to play.

Practice Guidelines

In order to ensure the health and safety of EVERYONE, we need the cooperation of all players, families, coaches, and volunteers. We can put all of the guidelines and rules in place to keep everyone safe, but it is the responsibility of everyone to follow these guidelines.

General Protocol

- Prior to June 6th, coaches are required to have communicated to families and players ALL rules and guidelines that must be agreed and adhered to.
- Prior to arriving at practice, all individuals are required to be symptom [cdc.gov] and fever free. It is the responsibility of the family to ensure that the player is symptom free prior to arriving at practice.
- DO NOT arrive at the park/fields more than 15 minutes prior to the start of practice time. In addition, all players and family members must remain in their car until 10 minutes prior to the scheduled practice start time. No player may leave their car until a coach is present on the field to ensure proper social distancing.
- It is recommended that families remain in their cars. However, if parents want to be spectators, they may not enter the field area and must maintain an appropriate social distance of 6ft or more from other spectators.
- Families, players, and coaches must wear facial covering when walking to and from their field.
- Families should limit the number of people at a practice as well as limit their time in the park and avoid any area where their child is not directly playing or involved.
- Players, parents and siblings are not permitted on open fields, open batting cages, open spaces or on the county playground. Spectators and siblings must remain within their practice field and younger siblings are prohibited from roaming along sidelines or other spaces.
- Players must have ALL of their own equipment and may not share ANY equipment (including bats).
- Players should arrive at practice with their own hand sanitizer or sanitizing wipes in their equipment bag.
- Sunflower seeds, gum and spitting are not permitted.

- Practice times will be scheduled with 30 minutes between the end of one practice and the start of the next practice. It is the responsibility of the manager to end each practice at the scheduled end time.
- Practice start times on fields will be staggered to limit the number of people in the park at any time.
- Parents should park as close to the practice field as possible to minimize coming in contact with other families.
- It is recommended that players and family members over the age of 2 wear facial covering in the restroom or any other public areas.
- Coaches may not touch any player or help them with equipment. If a player is in need of assistance, a player's parent must provide the assistance. If a parent is not available or if an emergency arises, all necessary actions should be taken by coaches to assist the player and get them the medical attention they need.

Practice Protocol

Pre-Practice:

- No more than 3 coaches/parent volunteers should arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of a practice to prepare the field and organize equipment for the practice plan.
- All coaches must come to the field with a specific practice plan that incorporates requirements in the social distancing and new practice guidelines of this plan.
- All facilities specific guidelines will be followed for all practices. See Facilities Guidelines section of this plan for specifics.

Practice:

- Teams should have the ability to space out and not encroach on the sideline of an adjacent field.
- The wearing of facial coverings is optional during practice for both players and coaches.
- No food is allowed at the field or on the sideline. All food that players have MUST be kept with their families or in their cars. Any food consumption must be consumed in the family's vehicle. Water bottles or sports drinks are permitted as long as it is 1) appropriately marked with the player's name and 2) is kept in the player's bag when not in use. Hand sanitizer is recommended before and after any food and water breaks.
- Players and coaches should sanitize their hands with anti-bacterial wipes or hand sanitizer frequently throughout each practice including when moving from station to station.
- Plans for each practice must incorporate the county guidelines of having a maximum of 10 persons per half baseball field (outfield and infield). For example, 8 players and 2 coaches or 9 players and 1 coach per half field.
- Balls and equipment shall be wiped down by coaches or a parent volunteer before and after each practice.
- Use of batting cages is limited to scheduled practice time and must follow Facility Guidelines.

Post-Practice:

- Final team huddle discussions should ensure the kids are properly socially distanced at a minimum of 6ft apart.
- Once practice is completed, no more than 3 volunteers should police the field space to clean up any items left behind.
- All players, families, and coaches must depart the field/park within 10 minutes of the scheduled end of practice.

Kiwanis Wallas Park Facilities Guidelines

In order to ensure the health and safety of EVERYONE, we need the cooperation of all players, families, coaches, and volunteers. We can put all of the guidelines and rules in place to keep everyone safe, but must have specific individual requirements and cooperation from all parties involved.

General Protocol

- All dugouts are closed for the traditional use of sitting or congregating during a game or practice and will only be used where necessary as pass through to promote adequate social distancing.
- Proper social distancing will always be stressed and reviewed by coaches for themselves and their players.
- Numbers from 1-12 (younger age groups) or 1-15 (older age groups) will be placed on fencing/ground down the 1st and 3rd baselines of all fields at 6ft intervals.
- Each player will be assigned a number prior to the practice and they shall hang their bag below that number.
- Most fields have 2 ways in/out and teams shall use both entrances when entering/leaving the field. Coaches shall determine which players use each entrance (infielders one, outfielders one) so there is no huddling of players attempting to get on or off the field.
- Any parent/family member remaining at a practice field during practice must follow social distancing guidelines of 6ft from other non-family members and bring their own chair or blanket as bleachers will be closed.

Batting Cages

- The pavilion and Field 4 batting cages will have numbers on the fences adjacent to each batting cage or markings on the ground as to the flow and loading of each batting cage.
- The Field 8 batting cage will have numbers on the fence as to the flow and loading of each batting cage.

Restrooms

- Both sets of restrooms will be maintained by HCYP for cleaning purposes.

- All restrooms will be cleaned every 90 minutes using Virex 256 or an equivalent, available product.
- Restrooms will be open 30 minutes prior to the first activity and will close 30 minutes after the last activity.
- Soap dispensers will be stocked in each restroom and checked/refilled throughout each day.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be stocked in each restroom and checked/refilled throughout each day.

Pavilion

- The pavilion will be closed and roped off so no access will be permitted.
- Picnic tables will be moved or altered so as to make their use impossible.

Bleachers

- All bleachers will be closed and roped off so they may not be used.

Meeting Room

- The meeting room will be closed for use and an additional lock will be placed on the door to prevent access.

Concession Stand

- The concession stand will remain closed and not utilized.

Parking

- It will be suggested to all HCYP families visiting the park to leave one open parking space between them and other cars when parking.
- It will be suggested to all HCYP families to utilize the parking lots and spaces closest to the fields where their team is practicing.

Games Guidelines

In order to ensure the health and safety of all HCYP and visiting teams and families, we need the cooperation of all players, families, coaches, and volunteers.

General Protocol

- Each individual player, coach, and spectator has a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that protects themselves and others from illness. This includes ensuring that all participants are symptom and fever free per CDC guidelines PRIOR to arriving at the field. Anyone who does not meet CDC guidelines, is not permitted to attend a game in any capacity.
- Managers of all participating teams have a responsibility to ensure that all players, coaches, and spectators follow all rules and best practices, in addition to all other rules surrounding sportsmanship and conduct.

- It is the responsibility of each team to provide needed supplies for the periodic sanitization of baseballs referenced in these rules.
- All managers of participating teams in tournaments must attend the pre-tournament conference call to review policies surrounding rules and best practices.
- For all other games and scrimmages, the manager of the hosting team is responsible for sending the visiting team these rules and guidelines, and then following up with a conference call with the visiting manager to review the rules and make sure they are understood. Visiting managers are required to email the hosting HCYP manager or tournament director that rules have been reviewed and accepted.
- Violations of rules may result in immediate ejection of the individual and/or team manager from the facility, forfeit, and/or disqualification from the remainder of the tournament where applicable.

Guiding Principles

- Our goal is to limit the amount of time at a field for each team. For scrimmages, warmup time will be limited and teams should leave the park within 15 minutes of the end of a game. For tournaments, in pool play, teams will be scheduled in pods of 4 with the intent to arrive at the park, play 2 games within your pod, and then vacate the park.
- Adequate space will be provided for team warmups, maintaining both within team social distancing and separation from other teams and spectators.
- Designated parking per field will be provided for scrimmages and tournaments. If needed, overflow parking will be designated.
- Staggered start times will be set to limit the number of people walking through the parking lot or park at any time.
- Simultaneous usage of fields where spectating areas are adjacent or where parking is not adequate will be avoided.
- With the exception of restroom usage, players, coaches, and spectators are asked to limit their movement to be on their assigned field and to not wander around the park or from field to field.

Social Distancing and Other Safety Guidelines

- Players and families must maintain adequate social distancing at all times, both off and on the field of play, with the exception of game action that will naturally draw players within a closer proximity.
- When leaving the immediate field area including going to restrooms and to and from the parking lot, or when adequate social distancing is not possible, face masks covering both mouth and nose shall be worn.
- Family members should remain in their cars until 15 minutes prior to game start and should vacate the field within 15 minutes of completion of their final scheduled game.
- Spectators, players, and coaches must remain at their field unless utilizing the restrooms. All open fields and open areas are considered closed.

- The number of spectators per family is limited to the players parents/guardians and siblings. Extended family and other spectators are not permitted. Spectators for each family should be able to fit within an 8' by 8' area.
- On some fields, areas behind the backstop and extending down the baselines as far as needed to maintain a distance of 6 ft. between all players and coaches will be reserved and closed to spectators. On some fields, numbering will be provided that designates places for player equipment.
 - Player equipment shall be placed immediately below the designated numbered areas where available or at a distance of at least 6 ft. apart.
- Players may only warm up within the playing field on their side, and should not congregate on the sideline while awaiting a previous game to end. Common areas including batting cages are closed.
- When on defense, players not on the field will stand at one of the designated numbers when available and maintain distancing of at least 6 ft. between other players and coaches.
- No seeds, gum, or spitting!

Game Specific Rules

- Home plate umpires shall stand 6 feet behind the pitcher's mound and NOT behind home plate.
- Base coaches must maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from the base and may not lean in to speak to players on their base.
- All enclosed dugout areas are closed and can only be used as a pass through for entering or exiting the field.
- Teams are limited to 4 coaches (or 3 coaches + 1 scorekeeper) within the playing field area.
- No equipment may be shared, including bats!
- Coaches may not huddle up their team at any point, touch any player, or help them with equipment.
- Each team will provide their own baseballs. The defensive team will use their baseballs when on defense. When each team is on offense, balls used while on defense shall be sanitized.
- Prior to each game, umpires will visually inspect the balls provided by each team to ensure they meet requirements for that age group.
- For tournaments, all games other than championship games will have a hard stop at 1:45 after start time with no new innings after 1:30. This is done to allow for needed separation between games. Championship games will have no time limits.