

Howard County Youth Program COVID Guidelines

Updated May 1, 2021

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 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. In addition to the HCYP specific guidelines, all Howard County Recreation and Parks and Health Department guidelines must also be followed. By definition, unvaccinated means anyone who has not been vaccinated for COVID-19, or who has not received their final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine at least two weeks prior to the date of any activity.

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 the first practice, coaches are required to have communicated to families and players ALL rules and guidelines.
- 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 and fever free prior to arriving at practice.
- Anyone with a fever of greater than 100.3F cannot participate in any activity for 14 days from the end of the fever, unless a doctor's note or note from the Howard County Health Department permitting a return is received.
- 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.
- 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.
- It is strongly recommended that unvaccinated families, players, coaches and officials wear masks when walking to and from their field.
- It is strongly recommended that any unvaccinated individual who is not on the playing field wear a mask at all times
- It is strongly recommended that coaches who are unvaccinated wear masks at all times.
- 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 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.
- No congregating before or after your permitted field/game time. Please maintain a 6-foot distance when walking to and from the field.
- Coaches should limit any direct contact with players and helping with equipment.

Practice Protocol

- All coaches should prepare a practice plan that incorporates requirements in the social distancing and new practice guidelines of this plan, and in conjunction with current governmental restrictions.
- Players and coaches are to maintain a 6-foot distance between each other, unless due to brief interactions that arise out of a drill or activity. In no case should there be a combined total of 15 minutes of less than 6 ft distancing between any individuals during a practice.
- Hand sanitizer is recommended before and after any food and water breaks.
- Players and coaches should use hand sanitizer before and after each practice, In addition, they should sanitize their hands frequently throughout each practice including when moving from station to station.
- Balls and equipment shall be wiped down by coaches or a parent volunteer before and after each practice.
- Final team huddle discussions should ensure the kids are properly socially distanced at a minimum of 6ft apart.

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

- To promote adequate social distancing, 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 a pass through.
- Proper social distancing (6 ft.) 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.
- It is strongly recommended that any coaches who are unvaccinated wear masks at all times.
- It is strongly recommended that any unvaccinated individual who is not on the playing field wear a mask at all times.
- Any parent/family member remaining at a field during a practice or game must follow social distancing guidelines of 6ft from other non-family members, and unvaccinated individuals are strongly encouraged to wear a mask at all times.
- Players, parents and siblings are not permitted on open fields, open batting cages, or other open spaces. Spectators and siblings must remain within their field and younger siblings are prohibited from roaming along sidelines or other spaces.

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.
- Use of batting cages is limited to up to 45 minutes before scheduled game time or practice time.

Restrooms

- Both sets of restrooms will be maintained by HCYP for cleaning purposes.
- All restrooms will be cleaned regularly and stocked with soap and hand sanitizer.
- Restrooms will be open no more than 30 minutes prior to the first activity and will close no later than 30 minutes after the last activity.
- Wearing of masks by all is required in the restrooms

Pavilion

- The pavilion will be closed and roped off, and no access will be permitted.
- Picnic tables will be overturned and unavailable for use.

Bleachers

- Bleachers may be used provided they do not exceed 50% capacity AND 6 ft. distancing is maintained.

Meeting Room

- The meeting room can be used subject to any state or county restrictions on maximum capacity, as applicable.

Concession Stand

When open, the concession stand shall operate with the following protocols:

- Patrons shall maintain 6 ft. of separation while in line and when exiting the concession area and unvaccinated individuals are strongly encouraged to wear masks at all times.

- A one way flow shall be established, with one window used for ordering and another window used for pickup
- Servers shall wear masks at all times.
- Food and drink can only be consumed away from a common area and where a minimum of 6 ft. of distancing can be maintained.

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.
- Anyone with a fever of greater than 100.3F cannot participate in any activity for 14 days from the end of the fever, unless a doctor's note or note from the Howard County Health Department permitting a return is received.
- 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 or review web based training 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 with confirming that the opposing manager has provided the rules to their participants.
- 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.

Social Distancing and Other Safety Guidelines

- For scrimmages and league games, warmup time may be limited and teams should not congregate before or after the scheduled game time. Please maintain a 6-foot distance when walking to and from the field.
- Players and families must maintain 6 ft. 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.

- It is strongly recommended that any coaches who are unvaccinated are wear masks at all times.
- It is strongly recommended that any unvaccinated individual who is not on the playing field wear a mask at all times.
- 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 or concessions. All open fields and open areas are considered closed.
- The number of spectators per family is limited to the players parents/guardians and siblings. Spectators for each family should be able to fit within an 8' by 8' area.
- On some fields, expanded areas 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.
- Batting cages will be open as allowed by guidelines for social distancing. If cages are roped off or otherwise marked as closed, they are not to be used.
- 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

- For rec baseball, home plate umpires shall stand 6 feet behind the pitcher's mound and NOT behind home plate.
- It is strongly recommended that unvaccinated umpires wear masks at all times.
- 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.
- No group celebrations, fist bumps, high fives etc. are allowed.
- 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!
- For tournaments, pool games may have a hard stop and no new inning rule if required to maintain adequate spacing between games. Elimination games other than the championship may have a no new inning rule if required to maintain adequate spacing between games.