

FALMOUTH LITTLE LEAGUE

BASEBALL SOFTBALL



T-BALL



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Falmouth Little League Covid-19 Safety Plan

Community youth sports activities require thoughtful, reasonable precautions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

After reviewing the COVID-19 Prevention Checklist for Community Sports provided by the State of Maine, after considering our experience running Majors and AAA division games in July and August of 2020, and after reflecting upon all of our children's experience with the hybrid learning model adopted by Falmouth schools in the 2020-2021 school year, the Board of Directors for Falmouth Little League has resolved to play baseball, softball and tee ball games at all age levels for the 2021 season with games beginning Monday, May 3rd, and ending Saturday, June 19th.

The goal of this plan is to create as safe an environment as possible for players, coaches, families, volunteers and umpires while they are participating in or experiencing a Falmouth Little League event. The following rules and recommendations are made using resources from Little League International, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO). These plans will be reviewed regularly to ensure that at all times, Falmouth Little League will follow Maine and local guidelines and regulations regarding group gatherings and youth sports activities.

We acknowledge our right and responsibility to exercise our judgment and cancel play at any time if players and/or coaches show symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, if our safety guidelines are not being met, and if the rate of infections in Cumberland County rises dramatically and unexpectedly.

General Guidelines

- Families will be asked to complete a health screening of all players before leaving home for practices or games.
- Any participant with a temperature above 100° Fahrenheit should stay home and team coaches should be notified.
- Any participant, fan or volunteer with symptoms of COVID-19 will be asked to stay home with symptoms including but not limited to: fever, cough, shortness of breath, loss of smell/taste.
- Any player who has been required by school officials to quarantine at home for any period of time because of exposure to someone who has contracted COVID-19, of course, must not participate in any FLL activities during that time.
- Individuals at risk of severe illness or with underlying medical and respiratory diseases should attend FLL activities only with specific permission from a medical professional.
- Any participant or fan who has been at an FLL event and then becomes sick within two weeks should immediately notify the league.
- Physical distancing (6 foot distance between people) will be expected whenever possible.
- Hands should be washed frequently for at least 20 seconds or hand sanitizer used as often as is practical and always after touching common surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, gate handles or latches.
- Hand sanitizer will be available at all fields during all events in sufficient amounts to supply all players, coaches, volunteers and families. Players will also be encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer for personal use.
- No spitting, eating sunflower seeds or chewing gum will be allowed.
- Personal water bottles must be clearly labelled to avoid accidental sharing.
- Falmouth Little League will provide bats, batting helmets, and catcher's gear for teammates to share, but whenever possible, players are encouraged to use their own equipment exclusively.

Use of Facilities

Effective March 26, Maine has increased the limit on outdoor gatherings to 75 percent, and effective May 24, the limit for outdoor gatherings will increase to 100 percent. Falmouth Little League will adopt the following measures to prevent unnecessary crowding and risk of contamination at the four ball fields in the Little Legion Fields complex.

- No Opening Day Ceremony.
- Only one game will be scheduled on each field on any weekday evening to prevent the overlap of players and spectators on and around the field and in the parking lot that would occur when two teams wait their turn to play while two other teams are still on the field finishing a game.
- Extra time will be scheduled between games occurring on the same field on Saturdays to prevent team overlap.
- The public restrooms in the snack shack building will be locked for the duration of the FLL season because Falmouth Little League cannot possibly trust volunteers to keep them clean and sanitary. Four port-a-potties will be rented instead. We trust players and family members to take normal, sensible precautions when using those temporary facilities at their own risk.
- The snack shack concession stand will be opened on a limited basis serving only prepackaged items.
- When opened, one volunteer at a time will work in the snack shack unless joined by a family member.
- Snack shack volunteers will wear facemasks at all times.
- On Grubb field and Little Legion field, spectators of Majors and AAA baseball and softball games should watch from the outfield parking lot and leave the area behind home plate and along the sidelines to the players and coaches.
- The announcers booths behind home plate at each field will be closed and off limits to players and spectators for the entire season.

On-Field Guidelines

- Players are encouraged to arrive no more than 15 minutes before scheduled game warmup/practice time.
- Teams will not enter a playing field until previous teams have completely vacated and commonly touched surfaces have been cleaned by previous event coaches.
- No pre-game meeting at home plate with coaches and umpires.
- Balls will be provided by each defensive team to minimize any sharing of game balls.
- Foul balls should be retrieved by players only, not spectators or coaches. If touched by non-player, a coach will set aside and disinfect the ball before returning it into play.
- Measures must be taken to prevent all but the essential contact necessary to play the game. This means refraining from handshakes, high fives, fist or elbow bumps and group celebrations.
- No handshake line at the end of games. Instead players will line up outside dugout and tip hats toward the other team.
- Field must be vacated no later than 20 minutes after the end of each game.

Equipment

- Equipment is not to be shared between players except as absolutely necessary; if any equipment is shared then players must use sanitizer between uses.
- If any player does not have individual equipment, team equipment will be used and then disinfected after each use.
- Player bags will be placed outside the dugout in designated "ready zones" separate from each other.
- Players will bring their own beverages and these drinks will not be shared.

Dugout

- When not on the field, players will be assigned ready zones, or spots, outside the dugout along the first and third base line fences, each separated by at least 6 feet where possible. These areas will be marked out, numbered, and enforced by the coach or volunteer designated to this area.
- Players will never sit together as a team on the bench inside the dugout.
- The on-deck hitter will be the only player allowed in the dugout area at any given time.
- Players will place their bats in the dugout on-deck area before the game begins in an orderly fashion following coaches' direction.
- Players waiting in their ready zones should wear batting helmets for protection while their team is at bat.

Players

- Players will be encouraged by coaches at all times to maintain social distance from each other.
- Face coverings will be worn by all players at all times unless they have a medical condition preventing them from doing so and have received a written waiver from the FLL president.
- Players will be allowed to touch only their own equipment.
- If players need to use shared equipment, like catcher's gear, it must be disinfected by a coach first.
- Players should bring, identify and touch only their own beverages, and should not bring any food, gum or sunflower seeds to games or practices.

Coaches

- Minimize numbers of coaches and assistants for games practices. A maximum of three is preferred.
- Maintain communication of expectations, plans and progress with parents.
- Wear facemasks at all times.
- Disinfect baseballs regularly during games and practices as well as other shared equipment.
- Arrive early to prep fields well before game time and be ready to manage your players before they begin to arrive at the field.

Umpires

- Umpires must wear facemasks.
- Home plate umpire will call balls and strikes from behind pitchers mound.
- Field umpires will keep at least 6 feet distance from each other and players.
- Umpires will not touch baseballs and will not retrieve passed balls or foul balls.

Family Members and Spectators

- Screen players prior to arrival at any FLL event.
- Report any signs of illness in participants
- Wear facemasks and practice proper social distancing at the games at all times.
- Maintain 6 feet distance between families and groups
- Arrive no more than 15 minutes before scheduled start time and depart within 20 minutes of the conclusion of a game or practice.
- Help your players clean their equipment and bags after each game.

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