

ICYP Return to Play Safety Guidelines - Spring 2021

Effective 2/18/21

Overview:

ICYP is committed to providing area youth with a venue for returning to the field of play in spring 2021 that is both safe and carefully aligned with federal, state, and local regulations. All social activities during the pandemic carry an inherent risk, but as a community we can collectively manage that risk by following a basic set of guidelines adapted from best practices and recommendations by public health officials.

The purpose of these guidelines is not to impose an unreasonable burden, but simply to create the safest possible environment for our players, coaches, volunteers, and their families during an exceptional time. *The spring 2021 season can only succeed with total buy-in from all stakeholders.* We appreciate your patience, understanding, flexibility, and goodwill in helping to make the season possible.

Confirmation upon Registration:

- All prospective registrants will be made aware of these guidelines prior to registration, with the understanding that consent to follow the guidelines in their entirety is a condition of participation on any team.

Updates to These Guidelines:

- In the event that these guidelines need to be modified during the season, the latest version will always be posted in the Field House and also downloadable on the Website.

Applicability:

- The guidelines detailed here will be in effect at all times and apply to both games and practices, even those held offsite.

General Hygienic Best Practices:

- All players, coaches, volunteers, umpires, and spectators should continue to adhere to best practices for personal hygiene as established and well-publicized by federal, state, and local public health authorities. These include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Wear a securely-fitted face covering/mask to protect others and yourself.
 - Maintain a distance of at least six feet from others whenever possible. For situations when players are engaging in competition, see the *Players* section for additional guidelines.

- Wash hands often and use personal hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available, especially in dugouts and around the field of play.
- Cover all coughs and sneezes as fully as possible with the crook of your elbow, not with your hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you believe you may have been exposed to illness, stay home.
- Stay home if you do not feel well or if you present symptoms such as fever or cough. For persistent symptoms, consult a health professional.
- Those with health conditions and/or immune-deficiencies should use their best judgement concerning whether to visit the ICYP field complex.

Safety Committee:

- The league shall appoint a Safety Committee who will help educate all coaches, volunteers, umpires, and parents about these guidelines and about the conditional nature of the season, so that they can pass along that messaging to the players.
- The Safety Committee will maintain routine communication with coaches and volunteers and serve as the liaisons for disclosures about potential COVID exposure.
- The Safety Committee will help league officials issue timely announcements about necessary cancelations and/or schedule changes.

Players:

- **Players must wear face coverings/masks at all times inside the ICYP field complex, including while entering from and exiting to the street.**
- Players should maintain social distance on the field of play and inside the dugout as much as space allows.
- Each player must bring his or her own personal equipment—including a glove/mitt, bat, and batting helmet—to all practices and games. Sharing of equipment is prohibited, except by players who reside within the same household.
- Each player must bring his or her own personal water bottle, clearly labeled, as well as any personal snacks or food. Sharing of water bottles and/or snacks is prohibited. Individuals are also responsible for removing all empty bottles and wrappers from the dugout and field area following each game.
- Players should include their own personal hand sanitizer, clearly labeled, among their standard equipment and bring it with them to all events.
- No more than a total of 5 individuals (coaches plus players) may be inside a team dugout at any time. Additional players should await their turns at bat along the fence outside the dugout, sufficiently spaced.
- Personal bat and/or equipment bags are not allowed in team dugouts, but should be spaced outside the dugout to limit contact between players.
- Spitting and the chewing of sunflower seeds and gum are prohibited both in team dugouts and on the field of play.
- Handshakes and other forms of personal contact celebrations (high fives, fist/elbow bumps, group huddles, etc.) are prohibited. Instead of a traditional postgame

handshake, players should line up outside of their team dugouts and tip their caps to the opposing team as a sign of good sportsmanship.

- Players and their families should vacate the field complex as soon as is reasonably possible after the conclusion of their game to minimize unnecessary contact with players, coaches, and spectators from the next game.

Coaches / Volunteers:

- Coaches and volunteers are responsible for modeling careful adherence to safety guidelines to children and therefore will be held to higher standards of compliance.
- **Coaches and volunteers must wear face coverings/masks at all times inside the ICYP field complex, including while entering from and exiting to the street.**
- Each team is permitted one head coach and a maximum of one dugout assistant at any time. Base coaches must remain outside of the team dugout and may only enter the field of play when their team is at bat, returning to the distanced spectator area when their team is in the field.
- Coaches will work together with umpires to ensure that games proceed in accordance with these guidelines. Child/participant safety should always take priority over contest outcomes or completion.
- Coaches will serve as information liaisons between team parents and the league and are responsible for immediately communicating potential exposures to the league Safety Committee. In such scenarios, coaches should also err on the side of caution by canceling team practices until a notice can be sent out by the league.

Umpires

- **Umpires must wear face coverings/masks at all times inside the ICYP field complex, including while entering from and exiting to the street.**
- Umpires will work together with the coaches from both teams to ensure that games proceed in accordance with these guidelines. Child/participant safety should always take priority over contest outcomes or completion.
- In the event of player, coach, or spectator non-compliance with these guidelines, umpires may, at their discretion, rule for the discontinuation of a game or for forfeit by the team judged to be out of compliance.

Parents / Spectators:

- Parents are responsible for monitoring their children's health and making smart, COVID-safe decisions about whether to attend games and practices. Parents should keep at home children who do not feel well. In cases of potential exposure, parents should notify both their child's coach and the league Safety Committee immediately.
- Per NYS regulations, no more than two spectators (including family members and caretakers) may accompany any individual player to games or practices.
- **Spectators must wear face coverings/masks at all times inside the ICYP field complex, including while entering from and exiting to the street.**

- Spectators should minimize time at the field before and after scheduled games. Arrival more than 30 minutes beforehand is discouraged.
- All spectators should follow best social distancing practices, remaining at least six feet away from individuals outside their households. Portable chairs and other forms of personal seating are strongly encouraged to help space out the spectator area.
- Spectators are prohibited from entering team dugouts at any time. Those who wish to assist as base coaches may enter the field when their team is at bat, but then must return to the distanced spectator area when their team is in the field.
- Spectators can help coaches and league volunteers by modeling careful adherence to safety guidelines to children.

Game Equipment:

- The league shall furnish for each contest two game balls, which should be marked by the umpire as “home” and “away.” Each fielding team should use their designated ball during each half inning to minimize contact with the ball. Warm-up balls should be carefully tracked and limited in number.
- Whenever possible, players who routinely play the catcher position are encouraged to provide their own masks. In cases when masks need to be furnished by the league, they will be designated for specific teams for use throughout the season and should not be shared. Teams should not rotate catchers within games unless the players have separate masks; positional timeshares may be implemented from game to game, provided the masks have been sanitized beforehand. Coaches are responsible for sanitizing team masks.

Violations:

- Players and coaches who violate these guidelines, including by neglecting to wear masks, will receive one initial warning from game officials; a second violation will result in a ruled out against the team; a third violation will result in ejection.
- Parents / spectators who violate these guidelines will be asked to leave the ICYP field complex.
- Individuals whose behavior immediately results in any social distancing fines imposed by the city or state will be held responsible for paying said fines.

Reporting Violations:

- The entire league community shares the responsibility of keeping games and practices safe. Friendly, judgement-free reminders about these safety protocols are encouraged when individuals forget to comply. For habitual or flagrant offenses, community members may reach out to the Safety Committee or to league officials to voice their concerns privately.

Emergency Protocols:

- In the event that a member of the league tests positive at any point, the league will promptly issue an announcement, including which groups, if any, may have been exposed through contact.
- League-wide announcements of this nature will be aimed exclusively at community safety and will protect the confidentiality of individuals.
- The league will determine appropriate next steps for teams and divisions affected, including, but not limited to, closure of the ICYP field complex, canceled practices, canceled/rescheduled games, or the termination of the season.

Schedule:

- Team schedules are subject to change at any time. The league will make its best effort to reschedule compromised dates, so long as safety concerns allow. Circumstances may ultimately necessitate an uneven number of games played per team, or scrimmages instead of official games.

Thank you for helping to keep ICYP safe!