

## **Groton-Dunstable Youth Softball League Response and Plan to Covid-19 for Spring 2021 Season**

Updated 4/21/2021

### **Notice:**

As Massachusetts continues to adjust the rules and regulations regarding COVID-19, please be aware that all Massachusetts state rules and regulations supersede any rule or regulations outlined here. Please view the [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov) covid site for up-to-date information here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-updates-and-information>

Additional information is found here:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/executive-office-of-energy-and-environmental-affairs-eea-covid-19-guidance-documents>

### **Foreword:**

The 2021 season has seen unprecedented impact caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. This pandemic requires GDYSL to institute policies on how we can make softball activities safe in order to best protect players, parents, coaches and others while still growing players abilities and enjoyment of the game.

The state of Massachusetts as well as our leagues affiliations have provided guidance around achieving this goal of keeping everyone safe while continuing to play softball.

This document outlines GDYSL's plan for the spring 2021 softball season as long as the State of Massachusetts and our affiliated USA Softball leagues require health and safety measures for COVID-19 to be met.

### **Guidance for Conducting Practices and Games:**

Massachusetts is currently in Phase IV, step one of the reopening plan.

### General Guidance:

1. All local & state health official guidelines must be followed for any activity to take place. This guidance is outlined in the following "Specific Guidance" section.
2. For outdoor facilities the number of spectators is not limited as long as proper social distancing can be maintained and spectators wear face coverings as outlined in guidance items #3 and 4 below. This determination is based on mass.gov information page located here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/safety-standards-for-youth-and-adult-amateur-sports-activities-phase-iv-step-1-effective-32221/download>
3. Spectators/chaperones must practice social distancing including wearing face coverings. If a player chooses to wear additional PPE, they may do so as long as it does not compromise their safety or the safety of other players.
4. Fans attending games or practices should follow 6' social distancing guidelines at all times. All spectators must supply their e-mail addresses & phone numbers only to be used if contact tracing of the COVID-19 virus is needed per Massachusetts EEA guidelines. GDYSL will use the contact information provided by the registration process.
5. In the event that transportation of non-family members becomes necessary, all parties in the vehicle must wear cloth face coverings or face masks and to the extent possible have external air circulating in the vehicle such as opening a window.
6. The use of candy, chewing gum, chewing tobacco and/or sunflower seeds is not permitted by players, coaches staff or umpires. The use of sunflower seed or chewing tobacco prohibited for spectators.
7. Players and all game participants will be responsible for bringing their own hand sanitizer. GDYSL will have a limited supply of sanitizer available at practices and games. If participants and coaches fail to have sanitizer, games will need to be rescheduled.
8. Players will supply their own marked water bottle or sports drink. No team, communal or dugout coolers are permitted.
9. Players cannot share playing equipment, bats, gloves, fielder's mask, catcher's gear, helmets, water bottles etc. Catcher's gear will be sanitized and redistributed as needed at the end of each week.
10. Players cannot share personal items such as bug spray, sunscreen, eyeblick.
11. Players and coaches will sanitize hands with hand sanitizer at the beginning and end of every practice. Before practice starts and before players leave the facility/fields.
12. Any player, or person not feeling well, will not attend games or practices.
13. GDYSL will provide proper signage throughout the park on guidelines provided by local and state health officials.

14. GDYSL Board Members and Division Directors will review new procedures with all Team Managers, coaches and staff prior to the first activity or game at the park
15. Managers & Coaches will help to educate players on the hygiene/hand washing/touching of the face suggested guidelines. Parents are required to reinforce guidelines with players.

Focus for People Travelling to and Returning to Massachusetts from other states—taken from Massachusetts Guidance:

Effective March 22, 2021, all visitors and returning residents entering Massachusetts are advised to follow the Commonwealth's new travel advisory as detailed below. The Commonwealth has made great progress to slow the spread of COVID-19 and gradually re-open the economy, and all visitors and returning residents have a responsibility to help us keep transmission levels as low as possible. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-travel-advisory>

Focus on return to Game Play:

1. Coaches must wear masks at all times including during the games or scrimmages, during pre-game practices, practices, warm-ups.
2. Players must wear masks at all times including in the field of play, in the dugout, extended dugout, or moving to and from amenities within the facility.
3. Each team needs to provide their own game balls and are responsible for switching out the game balls and sanitize them as best as possible each half inning. Team on defense will be responsible for supplying and sanitizing the game balls for that half inning as well as bringing them off the field when the team goes on offense. Should a game ball be hit foul, it will be returned to the defensive team's dugout who will sanitize the ball before it is allowed back into play.
4. Players must use hand sanitizer at each half inning. For divisions where coaches are pitching, they must sanitize their hands prior to pitching.
5. Each team will be responsible for sanitizing their dugout bench once the game has completed.
6. Spectators will be required to wear masks at all times and maintain distance from the dugout and playing area. Spectators will be required to stay past the third and first base location, meaning no spectators can occupy the area behind the backstop, behind the dugout to areas adjacent to the third base and first base lines.
7. Extended dugout areas will be designated adjacent to the first and third base lines to allow players to space themselves behind the fences in those areas.
8. Spectators are encouraged to bring their own chairs and maintain social distance. The use of the field bleachers will be limited as outlined in item #9 below.
9. The bleachers are reserved for spectators with physical impairment and accessibility issues who do not have their own chairs. Social distancing of 6 feet on bleachers must be maintained.

10. Players will be required to line backpacks and equipment bags along the dugout and third and first base line fences outside of the playing area.

Focus on return to Team Practices:

1. GDYSL will restrict the use of dugouts during practice and encourage players to store equipment along the fence line spaced out 6 feet apart to ensure social distancing.
2. There will be no cross use of equipment such as tees, softballs or other items that are handled between different cohorts/groups during practice. If you do need to share across groups that equipment must be wiped with sanitizer wipes between groups.
3. No handshaking/celebrations: Players and coaches must refrain from handshakes, high fives, fist/elbow bumps, group celebrations, etc.
4. High touch areas / equipment will be cleaned by coaches after practice (rakes, liner push carts if used, batter box frames, tees) using disinfecting wipes.
5. There will be limited trash and recycling receptacles to minimize high-touch areas. We encourage carry-in, carryout of trash.