

Costa Mesa Pony Baseball COVID-19 Return to Play Plan Updated March 2021

Mission Statement and League Philosophy:

Costa Mesa Pony Baseball is a non-profit organization benefiting the local youth within NMUSD and our surrounding communities. Our program is made up of volunteers who put in many hours of personal time and strive to create a positive youth baseball experience. Values of teamwork, good sportsmanship and fair play are important character traits we want our kids to learn. We also encourage our kids to be productive members of their communities. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an unexpected shift in how we live our everyday lives in all aspects, including youth sports. The health and safety of every participant has always been the highest priority for Costa Mesa Pony and will continue to be.

We hereby submit the following plan and guidelines to City of Costa Mesa Parks and Community Services Department for review and approval. This plan is also meant to comply with NMUSD and specific sections are modified accordingly.

Youth Sports Reopening Guidelines:

On February 19, 2021, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued interim guidance for sports in California. This guidance provides direction on outdoor and indoor youth and recreational adult sports activities to support a safe environment for these sports. The guidance applies to all organized youth sports and recreation – including school and community-sponsored programs, and privately-organized clubs and leagues – and adult recreational sports (hereafter youth and adult sports). The CDPH issued interim guidance can be found at this link

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/outdoor-indoor-recreational-sports.aspx?fbclid=IwAR0->

Return to Play Risk Assessment:

Costa Mesa Pony Baseball falls under Outdoor Moderate Contact Sport per current State of California and Orange County guidelines. We will adhere to and monitor all activities according to our approved Return to Play Plan. We also understand that ultimately it is the individual choice of every family to decide to participate. Each parent or guardian will be asked to sign a hold harmless waiver, similar to what is required at registration but updated with COVID-19 related language and include a list of known COVID-19 symptoms (See Attached Sample).

Adherence to Guidelines / Acknowledge Permitted and Prohibited Activities:

Training Only Protocols – The following guidelines are modeled after “COVID-19” Return to Play Requirements” document issued by City of Costa Mesa Parks and Community Services Department as well as NMUSD Staff and last updated on 2/11/2021.

- **Permitted activities include:** Physical conditioning, practice, skill-building, and training that can be conducted outdoors, with 6 feet of physical distancing, and within stable cohorts (14:2) are authorized regardless of case rate or sport
- **Prohibited activities include:** Contact drills, competition and tournaments
- Parents/guardians of minor participants, league administrators, coaches, trainers and parent volunteers will receive a copy of the approved league *Return to Play Plan* and sign a form agreeing to follow all terms and conditions herein (See Attached Sample)

- Strict adherence to this plan will be required and any individual(s) not following these guidelines will be dismissed from participation
- Should there be additional waves, all activities can be easily canceled, modified with less participants, extend time between starts or permitted facilities can be locked
- Prior to the start of each activity, verbal reminders will be given to all participants regarding behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19 (i.e. maintain 6ft distances, minimize touching surfaces, etc...)

Competition Permitted Activities

- Inter-team competitions, meets, races, or similar events are permitted to occur only if:
 - (a) both teams are located in the same county and the sport is authorized in the Table in Section V; or (b) teams are located in immediately bordering counties and the sport is authorized in both counties in the Table in Section V.
 - A maximum of one competition, per team, per day.

Competition Prohibited Activities

- No tournaments or events that involve more than two teams to occur.

Plan for Healthy Environment / Avoid Equipment Sharing:

A copy of This approved Return to Play Plan will also be emailed to every parent or guardian and will include Health Agency Resources Link shown at the end of this document.

- **Physical Distancing** – Maintain at least 6 feet of distance between sport participants and others to the maximum extent possible, including when on the sidelines or in dugout. Dugout may need to be extended outside the designed structure
 - Maintain at least 6 feet of distance between coaches and participants and facilitate physical distancing between participants to the maximum extent possible (e.g. staggered starts instead of mass starts for races).
- **Face Coverings** – Must be worn when not participating in the activity (e.g., on the sidelines).
 - Must be worn by coaches, support staff and observers at all times, and in compliance with the CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings.
 - Strongly encouraged to be worn during activity, even during heavy exertion as tolerated. See the American Academy of Pediatrics Interim Guidance on Return to the Sports for specific exceptions where the face covering may become a hazard.
- **Equipment** – Avoid equipment sharing, and if unavoidable, clean and disinfect shared equipment between use by different people and **perform hand hygiene (wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer)**, to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread.
 - When equipment is shared during an activity, participants will perform hand hygiene (wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) before play, during breaks, at half time, and after the conclusion of the activity. If balls or other objects or equipment are touched by multiple players and used during practice and play, the above hand hygiene practices will be followed

- Drink bottles will not be shared, and other personal items and equipment will not be shared
 - Hand sanitizer will be provided at each facility for all participants at each permitted field
 - Disinfectant spray will be available at each facility to wipe down any surface observed to be touched and any equipment should it be deemed necessary
- **Limitation on Observers** – Limit observation of youth sports (age 18 years and under) to immediate household members, and for the strict purpose of age appropriate supervision.
- This includes observation of practice and competition. Limit number of observers to ensure physical distance can be maintained, reduce potential crowding, and maintain indoor and outdoor capacity limits.
 - Observers maintain at least 6 feet from non-household members
- **Teams/Cohorts** - For NMUSD facilities Teams are considered “Cohorts” without a specific limit on number of participants and one Cohort per facility
- For City facilities Teams are considered “Cohorts” without a specific limit on number of participants and a maximum of three Cohorts are allowed on each permitted facility (One in the infield and two in the outfield)
 - Cohorts will not intermingle and participants will not intermingle. Cohorts will remain in their Zone until activity is complete and rotate Zones
 - **City permitted fields** – May have up to THREE Training Zones (Two Outfield and One Infield) and each cohort assigned to a zone must remain together in their zone. Cohorts may switch zones to vary the drills or training but must do so in an organized manner keeping no less than 6ft separation from each other
 - **NMUSD Fields** – Divide participants into cohorts; NMUSD defines cohort as a team or organization not a specific limit on number of participants. No more than one cohort per NMUSD field. These cohorts must be pre-established and must remain constant. At no time will cohorts intermingle or move between groups
- **Training Only Procedures** – All stations will be set up ahead of time with cones identifying where each participant will stand and remain no less than 6ft from other participants
- Cohorts will enter from opposite dugouts when possible or subsequent Cohorts will wait until Cohort ahead have taken their place in their “Zone”
 - There will be no less than 15min between starts to allow time for necessary disinfecting, cleaning and/or set up for next activity
 - Volunteer training will be ongoing and league will provide any updated resources, guidelines, etc...as state and local agencies update and/or issue them

Onsite Screening Protocol:

Costa Mesa Pony Baseball will require our program volunteers, coaches, trainers and participants to follow state and local guidance of physical distancing and safety protocols for small and stable team or cohorts. The following protocols will be implemented to protect players, families and the community, and slow the spread of COVID-19. A league representative, Coach, Trainer or Volunteer will be assigned a facility and will be responsible to ensure all participants have been approved to enter the permitted facility and monitor activities:

- Verify participants have signed required waivers or sign prior to entering permitted facility
- Ensure no physical touching and 6ft separation at all times by all participants
- If subsequent cohorts are scheduled, they cannot gather outside of a field and must wait in parking lot or area designated by their coach until they are permitted to approach the field and be checked in by onsite league representative

Arrival, Departure and Procedures:

Participants will be screened daily upon arrival (health survey and temperature). Organizations are required to maintain a record of daily screenings. After a temperature check, youth participants/coaches are to wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer.

- Only participants, coaches, trainers or volunteers are allowed on a permitted facility and all parents/guardians must remain inside their vehicles while dropping off and picking participants. Early drop-off will not be permitted.

Safety Protocols:

- League will ensure that all coaches, trainers and volunteers are educated on appropriate cleaning and disinfection, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette per CDC guidelines. A link to the Centers for Disease Control can be found below
- League will require all parents/guardians and youth participants to sign a document agreeing to abide by the organization's "return to play" plan and physical distancing requirements and a waiver acknowledging that understand the symptoms of COVID-19 and the risks of participation, PRIOR to participation.
- Youth participants should provide and use their own personal hand sanitizer before and after each session and during water breaks.
- Youth participants will handle and care for their own equipment.
- Players and coaches should bring their own seating and avoid using benches. If benches are to be used, coaches will clean before and after usage.
- Mixing with other households before and/or after any practice or competition must strictly adhere to current gathering guidance

HEALTH AGENCY RESOURCES

- Centers for Disease Control <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>
- California Department of Public Health <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/outdoor-indoor-recreationalports.aspx>
- Orange County Healthcare Agency <https://occovid19.ochealthinfo.com/press-release-state-releases-youth-sports-guidance>

OTHER RESOURCES

- National Council of Youth Sports, PLAY Sports Coalition – Return to Play Considerations <https://playsportscoalition.org/returntoplay/>
- The Aspen Institute Project Play – Coronavirus & Youth Sports <https://www.aspenprojectplay.org/coronavirus-and-youth-sports>
- Sports Events & Tourism Association – Back to Play Resources <https://www.sportseta.org/resources/back-to-play>
- Little League – Season Resumption Guide <https://www.littleleague.org/player-safety/coronavirus-update/season-resumption-guide/>

Communication Plan:

League will provide league administration cell phone numbers and email addresses to all coaches, trainers and volunteers in order to ensure real time updates are received from each permitted facility.

- Should a COVID-19 related concern arise, the protocol will be a group SMS (Text Message) sent to league administrators by the individual assigned to monitor the permitted facility. A league administrator will document the issue and report to appropriate City staff via email.
- League President Jack Morales will be the responsible for the *Return to Play Plan* and will coordinate with City staff any modifications and/or enhancements that may be needed.
- Record keeping of each participant, coach, trainer and volunteer will include signed documents by parents/guardians, coaches, and youth participants agreeing to have read and to abide by the “return to play” plan and physical distancing requirements.
- Any participant, coach, trainer or volunteer found to be out of compliance with Costa Mesa Pony Baseball’s *Return To Play Plan* will be given a verbal warning. A second violation will be written up and a third violation will result in removal from the program for the remainder of the season.

Closing Statements:

Costa Mesa Pony Baseball is committed to abiding by all state and local guidelines and especially the **“COVID-19” Return to Play Requirements**” document issued by City of Costa Mesa Parks and Community Services Department. We are pleased to submit this league Return To Play Plan and look forward to its approval in order to continue serving the youth of our community.

Sincerely,

The Costa Mesa Pony Board

RELEASE OF LIABILITY FOR MINOR PARTICIPANTS

READ BEFORE SIGNING

IN CONSIDERATION OF my child/ward being allowed to participate in any way in **Costa Mesa Pony Baseball** related events, camps, clinics, practices, games and other activities, the undersigned acknowledges, appreciates, and agrees that:

The risks of injury and illness (ex: communicable diseases such as MRSA, influenza, and **COVID-19**) to myself from the activities involved in these programs are significant, including the potential for permanent disability and death, and while particular rules, equipment, and personal discipline may reduce these risks, the risks of serious injury and illness do exist; I understand **COVID-19** symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus and may include (But not limited to) fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea (Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>); and,

- FOR MYSELF, SPOUSE, AND CHILD, I KNOWINGLY AND FREELY ASSUME ALL SUCH RISKS, both known and unknown, EVEN IF ARISING FROM THE CARELESSNESS OF THE RELEASEES or others, and assume full responsibility for my child's participation; and,
- I willingly agree to comply with the program's stated and customary terms and conditions for participation. If I observe any unusual significant concern in my child's readiness for participation and/or in the program itself, I will remove my child from the participation and bring such attention of the nearest official immediately; and,
- I myself, my spouse, my child, and on behalf of my/our heirs, assigns, personal representatives and next of kin, HEREBY RELEASE AND HOLD HARMLESS Costa Mesa Pony Baseball and its Partners, Pony Baseball, Inc. the City of Costa Mesa and its Officials, Newport-Mesa Unified School District; its directors, officers, officials, agents, employees, volunteers, other participants, sponsoring agencies, sponsors, advertisers, and if applicable, owners and lessors of premises used to conduct the event ("Releasees"), WITH RESPECT TO ANY AND ALL INJURY, ILLNESS, DISABILITY, DEATH, or loss or damage to person or property incident to my child's involvement or participation in these programs, WHETHER ARISING FROM THE CARELESSNESS OF THE RELEASEES OR OTHERWISE, to the fullest extent permitted by law.
- I, for myself, my spouse, my child, and on behalf of my/our heirs, assigns, personal representatives and next of kin, HEREBY INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS all the above Releasees from any and all liabilities incident to my involvement or participation in these programs, EVEN IF ARISING FROM THEIR CARELESSNESS, to the fullest extent permitted by law.
- I, the parent/guardian, assert that I have explained to my child/ward: the risks of the activity, his/her responsibilities for adhering to the rules and regulations, and that my child/ward understands this agreement. We have also received a copy of Costa Mesa Pony Baseball's "Return to Play Plan" and hereby agree to strictly adhere to and follow the guidelines and instructions as set forth therein.

I, FOR MYSELF, MY SPOUSE, AND CHILD/WARD, HAVE READ THIS RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK AGREEMENT, FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS TERMS, UNDERSTAND THAT WE HAVE GIVEN UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS BY SIGNING IT, AND SIGN IT FREELY AND VOLUNTARILY WITHOUT ANY INDUCEMENT. WE HAVE READ AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY "RETURN TO PLAY PLAN" AND PHYSICAL DISTANCE REQUIREMENTS

Name of Child/Ward: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date Signed: _____

RELEASE OF LIABILITY FOR COACH, INSTRUCTOR, TRAINER OR VOLUNTEER

READ BEFORE SIGNING

IN CONSIDERATION OF my participation in any way in **Costa Mesa Pony Baseball** related events, camps, clinics, practices, games and other activities, the undersigned acknowledges, appreciates, and agrees that:

The risks of injury and illness (ex: communicable diseases such as MRSA, influenza, and **COVID-19**) to myself from the activities involved in these programs are significant, including the potential for permanent disability and death, and while particular rules, equipment, and personal discipline may reduce these risks, the risks of serious injury and illness do exist; I understand **COVID-19** symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus and may include (But not limited to) fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea (Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>); and,

1. FOR MYSELF, I KNOWINGLY AND FREELY ASSUME ALL SUCH RISKS, both known and unknown, EVEN IF ARISING FROM THE CARELESSNESS OF THE RELEASEES or others, and assume full responsibility for my participation; and,
2. I willingly agree to comply with the program's stated and customary terms and conditions for participation. If I observe any unusual significant concern in my readiness for participation and/or in the program itself, I will remove myself from the participation and bring such attention of the nearest official immediately; and,
3. I myself, and my family, and on behalf of my/our heirs, assigns, personal representatives and next of kin, HEREBY RELEASE AND HOLD HARMLESS Costa Mesa Pony Baseball and its Partners, Pony Baseball, Inc. the City of Costa Mesa and its Officials, Newport-Mesa Unified School District; its directors, officers, officials, agents, employees, volunteers, other participants, sponsoring agencies, sponsors, advertisers, and if applicable, owners and lessors of premises used to conduct the event ("Releasees"), WITH RESPECT TO ANY AND ALL INJURY, ILLNESS, DISABILITY, DEATH, or loss or damage to person or property incident to my involvement or participation in these programs, WHETHER ARISING FROM THE CARELESSNESS OF THE RELEASEES OR OTHERWISE, to the fullest extent permitted by law.
4. I, for myself, my family, and on behalf of my/our heirs, assigns, personal representatives and next of kin, HEREBY INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS all the above Releasees from any and all liabilities incident to my involvement or participation in these programs, EVEN IF ARISING FROM THEIR CARELESSNESS, to the fullest extent permitted by law.
5. I hereby acknowledge and understand the risks of the activity and have a responsibility for adhering to the rules and regulations of this agreement. I have also received a copy of Costa Mesa Pony Baseball's "Return to Play Plan" and hereby agree to strictly adhere to and follow the guidelines and instructions as set forth therein.

I, FOR MYSELF, MY FAMILY, HAVE READ THIS RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK AGREEMENT, FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS TERMS, UNDERSTAND THAT WE HAVE GIVEN UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS BY SIGNING IT, AND SIGN IT FREELY AND VOLUNTARILY WITHOUT ANY INDUCEMENT. WE HAVE READ AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY "RETURN TO PLAY PLAN" AND PHYSICAL DISTANCE REQUIREMENTS

Name of Coach, Instructor, Trainer or Volunteer: _____

Signature: _____ Date Signed: _____