

# Grantham Optimist Softball League



## Return To Play / Safe Play Policy 2021

The Grantham Optimist Club is continuously monitoring the very fluid COVID-19 situation. This document outlines the necessary safety precautions and risk management practices to administer and operate our softball program. Mass gathering recreational events, their settings and participants/attendees are generally unique and the following measures have been structured to abide with the Province of Ontario and Public Health regulations. The guidelines in this document are subject to updates relative to the ongoing COVID-19 safety protocols. It is our intent to provide a safe environment so that our players, coaches and their families and friends can have an enjoyable softball experience. By following the Return to Play guidelines we believe that we can all achieve that goal.

### GENERAL

- At no point will a baseball event exceed the number of attendees (*including players, coaches, umpires, association officials, volunteers, parents and other family members*) noted as the maximum number by the Province of Ontario, or any relevant municipality or public health authority.
- The number of non-participants attending (*siblings, parents, extended family, friends, etc.*) shall not exceed the maximum number of persons permitted to gather by the Province of Ontario and the relevant municipality and public health authority. Such spectators shall physically distance themselves from other spectators and participants at a minimum of 2 metres.
- Coaching staffs will keep an attendance tracker for all practices, games and in-person activities including all players, coaches, parents and others in attendance, including name and contact information (*e-mail or phone*) and will provide the attendance tracker to the Grantham Optimist or Public Health upon request.
- All visitors to the park should avoid congestion at points of entry to the park and to the diamonds.
- Scheduling of games will allow for 30 minutes between games at each designated diamond to reduce congestion and maintain safe distancing.
- A warning will be provided to anyone not complying with the protocols outlined in this document. Repeated violations may lead to the removal of that person from the park and repeated removals may lead to removal from the program at the discretion of the Grantham Optimist Club.

# Grantham Optimist Softball League



## Return To Play / Safe Play Policy 2021

### ENTRY

- All persons entering the park must agree to wear a mask and be screened, if not, admission will not be allowed.
- A declaration waiver, written or verbal as required, from all persons regarding COVID-19 exposure and or symptoms may be required upon entering the park at the discretion of the Grantham Optimist Club.
- During this process, individuals may also be asked if they are experiencing any other symptoms (*new or existing cough, fever, sore throat, respiratory illness, difficulty breathing, have they been in contact with anyone who had COVID-19 and have they travelled outside the country in the past 14 days*) to make a determination to help ensure the safety of all individuals involved.
- Emphasis will be placed on providing safe travel areas to reduce contact between individuals entering and exiting the park, diamond, or complex.
- The use of caution tape may be utilized to safely mark off areas that should not be accessed, as well as helping to provide marked areas for travel to and from diamonds, etc.

### GAME PLAY

- Each team will have hand sanitizer and/or disinfectant wipes readily available at all times.
- Each team will appoint a “COVID-19 Captain” (*adult, parent, coach or older youth*) to perform cleaning/sanitization functions.
- All players and coaches will maintain a minimum of 2 metres distancing during warm ups, pre-game and post-game activities, wherever possible.
- Use of dugouts are only for the coaches and the “COVID-19 Captain” and safe physical distancing will be maintained in this area wherever possible.
- Coaches, umpires and “COVID-19 Captains” must wear masks at all times.
- All participants will avoid congestion at points of entry to the diamond (*i.e. gates, dugout, etc.*) to allow maintenance of 2 metres distancing
- No bat sharing. Each player must have their own bat, helmet and glove which should be cleaned after each game. (*The Grantham Optimist Club is currently working on programs to supply bats and helmets to those participants who cannot supply their own.*)
- Players should be reminded to not share equipment and keep each individual’s equipment isolated – 6-foot distance and reduce coming into contact with the equipment of other players.

# Grantham Optimist Softball League



## Return To Play / Safe Play Policy 2021

- Only the offensive team will remove a bat from the field. No bat persons allowed. Picking up the hitter's bat will be the responsibility of the bench coach or "COVID-19 Captain". In the event there is a bat near home plate that poses a danger for the players, the umpire will kick it out of the way.
- The use of batting gloves is not recommended as a replacement for handwashing/sanitizing as the latter is more efficient. (*if using batting gloves, must use hand sanitizer on the gloves*).
- Each catcher must have their own designated equipment and this equipment should be disinfected after each game.
- Sharing of water bottles is not allowed. Label all water bottles and personal equipment so there is no confusion.
- It is recommended that players disinfect and sanitize their own personal equipment.
- There should be no sharing of helmets at any time.
- Defensive team will supply their own balls while in the field to reduce contact with individuals on the opposing team. No one on the offensive team is to retrieve or touch game balls.
- Consideration should be made for safe ball retrieval (homeruns, foul balls) by the defensive team only.
- Foul ball(s) must be retrieved by the defensive team only.
- The Catcher and Batter will need to maintain 6-foot distance, when possible.
- No physical contact with coaches at 1st and 3rd base.
- Coaches should attempt to reduce any unnecessary contact with other players. Coaches should also avoid using their hands to contact the ball at any time.
- Coaches must always stay within their coaches' box.
- If the coaches are on the playing field, they should remain a minimum of 6-feet away from the base they are coaching to prevent contact with the defensive player. Also, coaches should not engage an offensive player with high-fives or other physical contact.
- No handshakes, high fives, etc..
- Protest to be held at a safe distance. Any coach/umpire getting heated and yelling will be removed from the venue.
- General spitting will be banned for all participants, both on and off the field.
- Sunflower seeds and gum will be handled with a zero-tolerance policy, that will become enforceable through ejection from the game and/or removal from events.
- Team snacks and drinks are not allowed.
- Bleachers/ Spectator stands are for players use only. Players can sit in the designated bleacher at a safe distance from other players, on their own lawn chair or with their family unit when no playing

# Grantham Optimist Softball League



## Return To Play / Safe Play Policy 2021

- During the game, players entering and exiting the playing field should do so in an orderly fashion that allows a 6-foot distance to be maintained between players as much as possible.
- If medical personnel are on hand, injured players should be dealt with primarily by these individuals, unless further assistance is requested. The number of individuals attending to an injured player should be limited to the number necessary based on the severity of the injury. Sufficient first-aid kits are available at every diamond. Latex gloves and facemasks should be used by those attending an injured player to help increase the safety of their interaction with the injured player.
- Pitching Conferences/On-Field Conferences are not permitted
- No tagging is allowed. Force plays only. Home plate is not alive. The designated 'Run scored line' will be used as an alternative to home plate.
- "No new inning" and "Drop-dead time" rules will be implemented to help avoid congestion between games played.

## UMPIRES

- To ensure maintenance of safe distance, umpires will be required to utilize an exaggerated inside/outside slot position
- In situations where appropriate distance cannot be accommodated (*due to backstop size for example*), umpires will be required to assume a position behind the pitcher at a safe distance
- Player's equipment (*removal of bat*) will not be considered the responsibility of the umpire. Specifically, the removal of bats from the field will be the responsibility of the offensive team
- Base umpires must position themselves in a position at least 6-feet away from any defensive player.
- Umpire conferences may be allowed to take place, if they are conducted in a safe manner such that the umpires can be away from any players and coaches and can maintain a 6-foot distance between one another.
- Challenges/protests can be made by a coach in a safe and controlled manner. The umpire will have the authority to eject said coach if they feel their safe distance is being encroached upon and the coach has not respected any request to remain at distance.
- The Plate umpire will not hold any game balls.

# Grantham Optimist Softball League



## Return To Play / Safe Play Policy 2021

### Spectators

- Spectators must follow local authorities' guidelines strictly and ensure physical distance from participants and between spectators as required/recommended by the local public health authorities.
- Spectators are encouraged to bring their own chairs for personal use. Spectator stands or bleachers are not permitted for spectators. They have been designated for team use.
- Spectators are encouraged not to wander to other areas of the park in which the diamond is located.
- The allowance of spectators will be dependent on the guidelines set out by the Ontario government and local health officials. At no point will a softball event exceed the number of attendees (including players, coaches, umpires, association officials, volunteers, parents, and other family members) noted as the maximum number by the Province of Ontario, or any relevant municipality or public health authority.

### Concession areas/Washroom facilities

- Concessions may be available at the discretion of the Grantham Optimist Club. They will provide pre-packaged/take-out options, as well as the ability to provide consistent sanitization and abide by physical distancing guidelines. Concession line ups will require distancing at 6-foot intervals and customers must wear masks.
- Washrooms are available and will require sanitization prior to and after each event. No line-ups and designated waiting areas. Anyone entering the building must wear a mask.

### Schedules

Schedules for the 2021 season have not been set and will be subject to the ongoing Covid-19 gathering restrictions. As we move closer to the beginning of the 2021 season, tentatively set for the weekend of May 22nd, we will provide updates to all participants.

# Grantham Optimist Softball League



## Return To Play / Safe Play Policy 2021

### Screening Questionnaire for COVID-19

If you have 2 or more of the following symptoms, stay home, self-isolate:

- Fever or signs of a fever (such as chills)
- New cough or worsening of a chronic cough
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Runny nose
- New onset of fatigue
- New onset of muscle pain
- Diarrhea
- Loss of taste or smell

If you answer YES to any of the following, then you must stay home and self-isolate for 14 days.

- Have you had close contact within the last 14 days with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
- Have you been diagnosed with COVID-19?
- Have you returned from travel outside of Ontario within the last 14 days?
- Have you been told by public health that you may have been exposed to COVID-19?
- Follow public health advice if you are waiting for testing results for COVID-19

If you develop symptoms, please refer to the self-assessment link on the Government of Ontario webpage.