

To: 2021 Resident Camp Families
Covid 19 Safety Notice **Updated** – June 14, 2021

Maine’s guidelines for the safe operation of summer camps are revised.

Some guidance has changed since our last Covid message in April. This message outlines the guidelines for our 2021 camp season, based on new CDC recommendations for summer camps.

Our updated policies take into consideration that **the majority of our campers are under age 12 and not yet eligible for a vaccine**. At the same time, science has provided some additional guidance about transmission that has helped us in our safety protocols. Camps like ours, with many campers who are not fully vaccinated, will continue to use layered multiple prevention strategies to help protect them, and slow the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

We know everyone is anxious to get outside, play, try new skills and enjoy camp friendships. Together we can make that happen!

*Guidelines may yet change over the summer; we will keep families posted on any changes.

Pre-arrival:

Testing: All unvaccinated campers are required to have a negative Covid test*, either a PCR test or a rapid antigen test, taken ideally 72 hours before camp. Proof must be shown upon camp arrival. Any camper without a negative test should stay home.

Alternately, a camper can show proof of full Covid 19 vaccination—the last vaccine was given 14 days or more before camp arrival. (You can also upload the test results or vaccine card into your child’s CampInTouch account before camp arrival)

We will be following the CDC’s Guidance for Camps Where not Everyone is Fully Vaccinated

Before camp arrival:

As parents, you play an integral role by making thoughtful and smart decisions in the weeks prior to camp. Following these guidelines and keeping your daughter healthy ensures a healthy start for our entire community. Families will be asked to complete the CampInTouch **Pre-Arrival Screening form**, and agreeing to keep activities and interactions outside the family low risk, and to skip gatherings like weddings, parties and sleepovers 7 days before camp.

During pre-camp, we ask that your daughter chooses only low-risk or “COVID-safe” behaviors to limit all exposures.

COVID vaccines are impressive, proving well over 90% effective. But they are not 100% effective. For children 12-15 years old, it is not yet clear when peak protection is achieved. For these reasons, even if your child is vaccinated, we ask you to continue to follow our guidelines, being intentional about what you do prior to arrival at camp.

Lower risk activities examples: Outdoor activities with members of your family or vaccinated people; small outdoor gatherings with fully vaccinated family and friends.

High risk activities to avoid- examples: Attending crowded indoor events like weddings, shopping centers or museums, indoor gatherings, movie theaters, indoor dining at restaurants.

Drop Off:

Campers will provide their Covid test results (or immunization card) and have temperatures taken upon arrival. All other check ins with the nurse and others will be done as drive throughs. Only campers will leave the car. This is what worked best at camps that opened last summer.

Families will sign up for a timed appointment for their camper's arrival. Sign-ups will go out to families by email prior their camp session.

Pick Up:

Again families will not exit the car; pick up will be contactless.

Cohorts: Living at resident camp

Cohorting is an essential tool to control the spread of illness in public health. Cohort grouping is a way to place people into groups of a limited size, thus limiting possible exposure.

- Upon arrival at camp, campers will be assigned to cohorts ("units") that will remain together for the entire camp session without mixing with other campers and staff in close contact, to the largest extent possible.
- A "cohort" means campers and staff who are living together in a unit. In cohorts, masks will be worn when deemed necessary based on the ability to distance safely, and when campers are together without other cohorts nearby.
- Additional support and program staff who interact with the unit will be masked and using social distancing.
- When different cohorts are using shared indoor or outdoor spaces together during the day or night, we will monitor and enforce mask use, physical distancing, and healthy hygiene behaviors for everyone.
- Outdoors, if physical distancing and safety can be maintained, masking requirements may be adjusted.

Lodging

Girls will sleep head to toe in cabins and tents. Heads will be more than 6 feet apart. Extra attention to ventilation will be taken. Ask any girl who has slept in a tent before – ventilation is not a problem!

Handwashing/sanitizing:

Personal hygiene will definitely be a priority this summer, including assessing camper skill and instructing campers on proper handwashing and use of sanitizer.

Meals:

Meals will be served with girls physically distanced indoors, and outdoors under shelters. Food will only be served by staff wearing masks and gloves. Masks will be worn inside dining halls when not eating or drinking.

Masking:

Even though the State of Maine no longer requires wearing a mask *in public settings*, we will mask in our congregate community when deemed necessary for the continued good health of everyone at camp.

Masks have been shown to be the number one method of preventing transmission of the virus. Our masking policy will be constantly evaluated and updated. There will be as many mask breaks daily as possible when girls are in their cohorts, outdoors, and can be safely spaced.

Washable cloth face masks have been added to the camp packing list. Neck gaiters and buffs are not acceptable.

General masking rules:

When masks are required, we will require both vaccinated and unvaccinated campers and staff to wear them as a prevention strategy, which is the recommendation for mixed groups of vaccinated and unvaccinated people.

- **Indoors.** Mask use indoors will be enforced for all campers and staff regardless of vaccination status.
- **Outdoors.** In general, since most of our campers will not be vaccinated, we will continue outdoor masking, dependent on safety, distancing and activities.
- Masks will never be worn on or near the water, during heavy physical exertion, when sleeping, or during meal times.
- We will be supportive of any camper or staff person who chooses to wear a mask, even at times it is not required (but never during waterfront activities, eating, drinking and sleeping).

Activities:

Our popular activities and programs will be offered, with additional sanitizing or hand washing upon entering the activity and upon exiting. Plan to enjoy boating, swimming, archery, outdoor skills, challenge courses and rock climbing, arts and crafts, drama, cooking, hatchet throwing and all the things you love about camp!

Most activities are already outside, where transmission is much lower. As many activities as possible will be moved outside.

- CDC: Activities that have the potential to produce respiratory droplets including singing, chanting, shouting, will be done outdoors: Campers and staff, will wear masks and maintain at least 6 feet physical distance during these activities.

Sanitation

Even though it is proven that COVID does not transmit easily or at all on surfaces, any kind of viral transmission causes undue stress in a congregate community. Our goal is to be as healthy as we can be, considering not only COVID but also all other transmissible viruses and diseases. With that in mind, we will continue enhanced cleaning and sanitizing, especially of high touch areas.

Bathroom & Shower houses:

Partitions have been installed between the rows of sinks to limit splashing during washing up and tooth brushing. Showers will be scheduled by cohorts to prevent crowding in the shower houses.

Transportation

This applies to the Pondicherry Horseback Riding program and several Natarzwi trips. When campers are transported in camp vans, masks must be worn, windows opened slightly for ventilation and spacing considered.

Immunization

We are encouraging all of our staff to get vaccinated prior to camp arrive, which will further limit transmission opportunities.

What happens if there is a case of COVID?

If a COVID case is suspected or confirmed: parents will be asked to pick up their child within 12 hours. The camps do not have the capacity to isolate sick campers. The camper's unit will be further monitored and all camp parents in the current session will be notified – for girls without symptoms and in other cohorts; the families can decide to either pick up their child or keep them at camp for the remainder of their stay.

Will all of these precautions guarantee that my child will not be exposed to COVID-19?

The simple answer is no, we cannot guarantee your child will avoid exposure to COVID-19 this summer. Although we can tell you that our intentional, structured and controlled setting with testing, cohorting, appropriate physical distancing, and masking is likely to be a safer environment for your daughter than other summer options.

We will do everything we can to try to keep our whole community virus free.

We have a WONDERFUL summer in store! We feel very well prepared with the layers of protocols and safety strategies outlined above, and we know your girls can't wait for the opportunity to safely live, play and grow this summer with their friends!
We're almost there!

Treasa Wheeler (Camp Natarzwi) twheeler@gsmaine.org, 207-299-0089

Nicole Nelson (Camp Pondicherry) nnelson@gsmaine.org, 207-699-7447

Together, we can do this!