



# Arkansas Department of Health

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## **Guidance for Summer Residential Camps Regarding COVID-19**

Community spread of COVID-19 remains active within the State. Therefore, the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) makes the following recommendations for how to best prevent transmission of COVID-19 at residential camps.

This guidance from ADH addresses the operation of overnight camps throughout the state during the summer of 2021. This guidance is intended to cover organized, residential camp group activities for children that may be outdoors or indoors. It is not intended to cover summer day camps, which are covered under the [Guidance for Summer Day Camps](#).

Summer residential camps should follow the measures below to protect the health of attendees and staff. Due to the higher exposure risk from close contact while sleeping, dining, and participating in other activities of residential camps, extra precautions are necessary. Taking these proactive measures will help limit the spread of COVID-19 and safeguard children and their families.

### **Before Camp**

- The more people at a camp who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, the less likely it will be for a large outbreak to occur. ADH strongly recommends camps encourage all eligible campers and staff to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 before arrival to camp. Currently, vaccination is available to all those aged 12 years and older. So, most camp staff, counselors and adolescent campers should be able to receive COVID-19 vaccination.
- All staff and campers are strongly encouraged to self-quarantine at home for 14 days prior to arriving at camp unless they are fully vaccinated.

### **Testing**

- We strongly encourage camps to have all staff and campers undergo COVID-19 testing (PCR or antigen) within 3 days prior to arrival at camp. Camps could also consider on-site testing of all staff and campers at the start of each camp session.
  - If the test is positive, camper or staff should not be permitted to enter the camp until completing their isolation period.
  - This recommendation does not apply to community-based staff, including maintenance, kitchen and any others who do not stay overnight at the camp and who will not have direct contact with the campers or staff. However, if a camp has

on-site testing, it is recommended to test them weekly along with other attendees; these individuals should also undergo screening for COVID-19 symptoms daily (see the “Screening” section of this document).

- Fully vaccinated campers or staff who have no symptoms do NOT need COVID-19 testing prior to camp.

## **Masking**

- Generally, staff and campers 2 years of age and older should wear face coverings to diminish potential spread from individuals who might be asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic for COVID-19. Face coverings have also been shown to provide protection to the person wearing one. For safety reasons, under no circumstances should a mask be placed on a child under 2 years of age. Face coverings should not be worn while exercising, eating, sleeping, bathing, swimming, or during activities that could get the mask wet. See the [Face Coverings Guidance](#) for more details.
- Camp programs should encourage people who are not fully vaccinated and [those who might need extra precautions](#) to wear a mask consistently and correctly:
  - **Indoors.** Mask use indoors is strongly encouraged for people who are not fully vaccinated including children.
  - **Outdoors.** In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors. However, people who are not fully vaccinated are encouraged to wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated.
- Although people who are fully vaccinated do not need to wear masks, camp programs should be supportive of campers or staff who choose to wear a mask.
- Camps may also choose to continue to require masks for vaccinated and not fully vaccinated campers and staff in order to adhere to prevention strategies when it is difficult to tell who has been vaccinated or to set an example for not fully vaccinated campers.

## **Visitors**

- Summer overnight camps should limit the number of persons entering the facility except for:
  - Camp or facility staff;
  - Children enrolled at the camp;
  - Parents or legal guardians who have children enrolled and present at the facility with a legitimate need; and
  - Professionals providing services to children.
- Camps should limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible. If such persons are present, camps should ensure they adhere to all COVID-19 prevention rules that are in place for staff and should be treated as staff.
- Parents or professionals should sign in and follow camp safety practices on entry.
- Providers of essential camp services, including, but not limited to, food suppliers and delivery drivers, should be screened for symptoms prior to entry. To ensure that their contact with campers and staff is limited, they should use designated entry points to any camp facility and be physically segregated from campers and staff to the extent possible. They should follow camp safety practices at all times while on the premises.
- The camp should consider scheduling arrival/departure times to limit the number of campers and parents present at one time. Campers should preferably be dropped off outside the facility. If necessary, parents can drop off campers within the facility but are encouraged to remain in their vehicles and should wear a face covering while at camp. If parents are allowed out of vehicles at arrival/departure, they should adhere to physical distancing and masking

measures.

### **Screening**

- All staff and campers should receive a pre-screening questionnaire that is reviewed upon entry to camp. This could include an agreement signed by the parent or staff member affirming they have followed the 14-day self-quarantine. Advise campers and families in advance about COVID-19 symptoms and exclusions, and place signage at all entrances. These signs should inform campers and staff that those who have any of the following characteristics should NOT enter:
  - Have had a fever of 100.4°F or greater in the last 2 days;
  - Have a cough, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle aches (myalgias), sore throat, headache, recent loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea;
  - Had contact with a person known to be infected with COVID-19 in the previous 14 days and have not themselves been fully vaccinated.
  - Had a positive COVID-19 test in last 10 days;
  - Awaiting results of a test for COVID-19.
- Advise campers, staff, and volunteers that some individuals may wish to refrain from entering. Place signage at all entrances alerting campers and staff that it may not be safe for the following people to enter:
  - Individuals who are 65 years of age or older.
  - Individuals of any age with underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, severe obesity, asthma or weakened immunity.

### **Camps where *Everyone* is Fully Vaccinated**

Although it is unlikely many camps will be able to meet this standard, CDC has offered the following recommendations for camps where everyone present, both staff and campers, is fully vaccinated:

- Staff and campers who are fully vaccinated do not need to wear masks at camp. Although fully vaccinated persons do not need to wear masks, camps can be supportive of staff or campers who choose to continue to wear a mask.
- Physical distancing is not necessary for campers and staff who are fully vaccinated.

### **Daily Activities**

- Cohorting: Ensure student and staff groupings change as little as possible by cohorting the same group of children stay with the same staff (all day for young children and as much as possible for older children). Limit mixing between groups.
- When possible, separate campers into groups of 10 persons or fewer.
- If campers remain in cohorts throughout their time at camp, camps may opt to allow cohorts the option to not wear masks or practice physical distancing while they remain in their cohort. However, when different cohorts are using shared indoor or outdoor spaces together (people from different cohorts are present at the same time), mask use and physical distancing should be maintained. If physical distancing can be maintained while outdoors, masks can be removed.
- Promote gatherings, events, or extracurricular activities which allow for proper social distancing and support proper hand hygiene. Limit group size to the extent possible.
- Avoid field trips and events with outside groups or other camps as much as possible.

### **Hygiene**

- Hand sanitizers should be available in as many places as possible, including every bunk

house, room, and dining facility.

- Hand washing is required before and after every meal.
- Areas that are frequently touched—such as shared objects, door handles, drinking fountains, and sink handles—should be cleaned and disinfected multiple times daily.

### **Sleeping and Showering Arrangements**

- Arrange cabins so that physical distancing can be achieved to the extent possible, with 6 feet between camper's heads while in bunk. Bunk beds could be arranged head to toe to aid in achieving this.
- Reduce the number of campers in each bunk house to allow for spacing of beds.
- Shower times should be staggered.

### **Ventilation**

- Attempts should be made to increase ventilation in buildings as much as possible, especially in cabins, dormitories, or places campers are sleeping. This may include, without limitation, opening doors and windows as weather permits, turning on exhaust fans, improving central air filtration without significantly diminishing design airflow, or, if equipped, run the HVAC system at maximum outside airflow for 2 hours before and after occupied times.
- Consider holding as many activities and meetings outside as possible.

### **Ongoing monitoring**

- Monitor staff for fever, cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat or loss of taste or smell daily and exclude from work all who are ill.
- Temperature checks and symptom screening of all campers should be done daily.

### **Medical Plan**

- Identify a medical evaluation team.
- Identify a testing facility the camp would use in the event of an ill staff or camper.
- Do not care for sick children within the facility for extended periods of time.
  - Any person who becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms while at the camp should be immediately isolated.
  - Make arrangements for the individual to be returned home.

### **Meal Service**

All meals should be provided in accordance with the [Guidance on Restaurant Dine-In Operations](#).

Meals should be plated by staff and access to single-service items such as plastic silverware, condiment packets, and napkins should be provided individually.

- Consider increasing meal shifts to promote spacing during mealtimes
- Consider serving meals outdoors whenever possible.

ADH will continue to closely monitor the evolving novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

### **For a sign warning who should not enter:**

[https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/COVID-19\\_No\\_Entry.pdf](https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/COVID-19_No_Entry.pdf)

**CDC Guidance for Youth and Summer Camps**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/summer-camps.html>

**ACA Field Guide for Camps**

<https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/coronavirus/camp-business/field-guide-camps>