



Health Protocols and COVID-19 Response Plan Youth Programming Updated March 2022

We have been working hard this year to ensure that our program is meeting the best possible health and safety practices in response to COVID-19. Our Response Plan is created and modified according to licensing regulations set by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, the Door County Health Department, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and the Centers for Disease Control. Due to the changing nature of this virus and our knowledge about it, these policies are subject to change.

Goals for the 2021-2022 School Year

- Keep all students and staff physically safe
- Care for the social-emotional needs of students and staff
- Modify our morning routines to adjust our program in response to COVID-19
- Modify our spaces and protocols as needed.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has recommended that all K-12 schools in Wisconsin create plans based on the following assumptions:

The virus remains in circulation as schools are serving a mixed population of both fully vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.

- Children under 5 years old are not eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.
- The CDC and DHS continue to stress the importance of layered mitigation strategies in schools.
- Short-term closures of schools will remain a possibility until a vaccine is available to children under 5 and widely distributed to children under 12.
- With a mixture of vaccinated children and children who are not yet eligible to receive the vaccine, vaccinated children in Ridges youth programs should continue to follow the same protocol as unvaccinated children and staff.
- Children and staff with significant health conditions will continue to be especially vulnerable during this time
- Reinforcing prevention behaviors will be essential strategies in slowing the spread of this and other infectious diseases
- Frequent cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces and materials are needed
- Children and staff showing symptoms of contagious respiratory illness should stay home

Facemasks

Facemasks are currently required for all teachers, staff, volunteers, parents, and caregivers. **Children over the age of 2 will be required to wear a mask.** Children are expected to come to school with 2 personal facemasks.

Modifications to our Program

>Nature is our Primary Classroom

We are implementing an **all-outdoor model** for youth programs and will only go indoors if the wind chill temperature (according to the National Weather Service [NOAA]) unexpectedly goes below zero, or when there is lightning in the area. If thunderstorms or extreme cold (wind chill below zero) is predicted, class will be cancelled by 7 AM via email notification. Our indoor classroom will be reserved for bathroom visits and as a place to shelter from unexpected severe weather.

>Morning Routine and Bathroom – (Masks are required for everyone regardless of vaccination status when indoors)

Parents and caregivers should take their child to the bathroom right before leaving home.

- Children will come to class fully dressed in outdoor clothing and will begin the morning in the outdoor play area and will have Circle Time on the Overlook.
- A mid-morning bathroom break will provide a warming opportunity as well as the all-important practice of removing and putting back on snow gear.
- After bathrooming, we will head off on a hike and unstructured play in our nature area and will return in time for parent pick-up.

>**Snack** will be prepared in individual baggies and placed in children's hiking packs to be eaten while socially distanced from each other or will otherwise be prepared and handed out to children by teachers wearing PPE including a facemask and medical grade gloves.

>**Materials cannot** be shared. Therefore, we will provide each child with a backpack stocked with nature tools and art supplies.

>**Class Size** will be limited to 16 children and 2 teachers.

Drop-off and Pick-Up

A car line procedure will be implemented for drop-off and pick-up. Parents/ guardians are required to wear masks for car line. When picking up or dropping off a child in our **car line**, please wait inside the car and a teacher/staff person will assist you. Our car line will enter the SOUTH entrance to the Nature Center parking lot on Hwy 57. **A teacher or staff person will help your child exit the car and grab materials while you sign our drop-off form.** You will be asked about COVID-19 symptoms in your household each day. We ask that you **wear a mask** while signing in and talking with us. We will be wearing one as well. **Be sure to apply bug spray and sunscreen at home.** After dropping off your child, you will continue through the parking lot and exit at the NORTH end. Pick up will follow the same procedure.

Guidelines for Keeping Children Home

You should keep your child at home if:

Showing Symptoms of Illness and/or COVID-19:

- Your child has a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea. Fever reducing medication may not be used when determining a child's health. Your child should be fever-free, vomit free, and diarrhea free for 72 hours before returning to school and should receive a negative PCR COVID-19 test.
- Your child is experiencing recognizable symptoms of COVID-19, including:
 - Any ONE of the following symptoms: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath, diarrhea or vomiting, loss of taste or smell
 - OR any two of the following: atypical headache, muscle pain or body aches, sore throat, unusual fatigue, nausea, or congestion/ runny nose. This does not apply to individuals with a doctor's note stating that the child does not have COVID-19

Close Contact:

- Your child has been exposed to someone who has had COVID-19 (by testing or medical diagnosis) within the past 5 days or; Anyone in your family is under a 5-day quarantine for COVID-19 *unless that person has tested negative using a PCR test (since testing positive or being medically diagnosed)*:
 - Your child must remain home for 5 days, then take a PCR COVID-19 test. If the test result is negative, your child may return to the program, but must continue to mask for 5 additional days.
- Your child has had sustained close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more) with a person showing symptoms of COVID-19 within the previous 5 days:
 - Your child must remain home for 5 days, then take a PCR COVID-19 test. If the test result is negative, your child may return to the program, but must continue to mask for 5 additional days.
 - If at any point the person showing symptoms receives a negative PCR COVID-19 test, your child may return to programming.

Additionally:

- Your child should remain home if you are awaiting results of a PCR COVID-19 test
- We also request that you keep your child at home if they are experiencing any symptoms of a contagious illness. Our goal is to avoid spreading illness of any kind to the children and adults in our program, which means keeping sick children and adults at home. This includes but is not limited to symptoms of a cold, stomach illness, or flu-like illnesses.
- Your child or anyone in the immediate family has traveled out of Door County in the last 5 days:
 - If your child is vaccinated, they must remain home for 5 days after travel.
 - If your child is unvaccinated, they must remain home for 5 days after travelling and receive a negative PCR COVID-19 test before returning to programming.
 - After your child returns to programming, they must wear a mask for an additional 5 days.
 - We are closely monitoring travel guidelines from the CDC.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html>

Our staff will follow these same guidelines in the case of illness and/or exposure. If a staff member becomes ill and has not exposed children in the last 5 days, programming will continue with a substitute. If the staff member has exposed children in the program, class will be canceled until all participants follow the above protocol for exposure and can safely return to programming.

Actions Taken if a Child Develop Symptoms of COVID-19 at The Ridges

We will follow our regular protocols but will take the additional step of informing the Door County Health Department.

- Remove the child from their group and relocate them to an isolated area with a member of staff; child and staff will wear facemasks
- Call the parent/guardian to pick up the child
- Report the event to the Executive Director
- Notify all families in that class of the event, without identifying the individual by name.

In Case Someone in the Program Tests Positive

- If anyone in our program tests positive for COVID-19, we will notify all the families in the program. We will not identify the individual by name.
- We will follow the guidance of the Door County Health Department, which currently requires that anyone directly exposed to someone who has tested positive remain home for 5 days and receive a negative PCR COVID-19 test before returning to programming. After returning, all exposed students and staff must wear masks for 5 additional days.
- Close contacts must follow the quarantine protocols outlined previously in this document under “Guidelines for Keeping Your Child Home” before returning to school even with a negative PCR test result.
 - A close contact is anyone who has been within 6 feet of someone who tested positive for COVID-19 for a cumulative time of fifteen minutes or more with or without a mask.
- Follow Door County Health Department recommendations for quarantining an entire class
- If a person in our program tests positive, but shows no symptoms, they may return once they have completed the 5 day at home quarantine and have received a negative PCR COVID-19 test result. The person must continue to wear a mask for 5 additional days.
- If a person in our program tests positive and *is symptomatic*, the person must remain home until they are symptom free for 5 days or they have received a negative PCR test.

We understand that no one gets sick on purpose. We ask for patience and understanding should anyone in our program test positive to COVID-19, just as we would any illness.