

COVID-19 Return to Day Camp Guidelines

Updated February 9, 2021

These guidelines are meant to support organizations in their delivery of day camps, including full day camps that run during the summer, during school holidays like Christmas and March Break, and on Professional Development days throughout the school year.

The details in this document are subject to change based on direction from the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. In the event of a localized outbreak or increased community transmission, providers and families should be aware that Public Health may need to stop or require modified delivery of these programs. Depending on the circumstance, this could happen with little notice.

All Nova Scotians must follow the [Public Health Order](#) issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health and direction arising from the Order given under the authority of the Health Protection Act. Day Camp providers should follow the guidance in this document and may wish to review [Nova Scotia's Back To School Plan Public Health Appendix](#) for information specific to programs located in the school setting. Providers should work closely with school administrators to coordinate accessing shared spaces or resources and to support coordination and clear communication to families.

Programs can find examples of risk mitigation strategies in the foundational documents used to create this guidance: [Risk mitigation tool for child and youth settings operating during the COVID-19 pandemic](#), [COVID-19 guidance for schools Kindergarten to Grade 12](#) and [Risk mitigation tool for outdoor recreation spaces and activities operating during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

Cohorting and Physical Distancing

- Day camp programs as defined in this document will operate with cohorts of up to 15 (including campers, staff, volunteers, or anyone else involved in the program).
- Best practices to limit interactions between campers and reduce transmission of COVID-19 may include:
 - Grouping campers from the same households in the same cohort where possible;
 - Separating cohorts by a minimum of 2 metres;

- Supporting campers to minimize direct physical contact (even within the cohort);
- Choosing activities that promote physical distancing between campers and staff;
- Programming the day to include more outdoor activities wherever possible (including use of nearby outdoor green spaces and trails);
- Assigning cohorts to specific spaces, and using large, well-ventilated spaces (i.e. a gymnasium) as much as possible;
- Maintaining physical distancing at pick-up and drop-off;
- Maintaining physical distancing between cohorts as they move through the facility and the outdoor space; and
- Using signage and visual cues (e.g. floor markings) to support physical distancing within the facility, in outdoor space, and at drop off and pick up location.

Daily Screening and Staying Home

Families are required to screen their campers and staff are required to self screen daily for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 at home before coming to the Day Camp program.

Campers and staff are expected to stay home if they are unwell, even if their symptoms are mild.

The most updated information can be found on the COVID-19 Daily Checklist. For more details visit: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/restrictions-and-guidance/#self-isolation-requirements>.

Designating Drop-off and Pick-up Areas

Day camps should designate drop-off and pick-up areas outside the building (facility, or offsite location) to facilitate physical distancing between staff and adult family members. Providers should coordinate with facilities, if leased, to determine designated drop-off and pick-up areas. No families should enter the facility unless scheduled and approved by the provider. Self-screening using the [COVID-19 Daily Checklist](#) is required.

Mask Wearing

Staff are required to wear a non-medical mask while inside when within 2 metres of campers and other adults. Consistent with school settings, campers in grade 4 and up are also required to wear a non-medical mask inside. Masks can be removed when campers are eating or drinking, engaged in physical activity, or where 2 metres of physical distancing can be maintained.

Staff and campers must follow mask protocols as outlined on the provincial coronavirus site <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/masks/>. A poster on how to wear masks safely can be found at: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Wearing-a-mask-poster-en.pdf>.

Hygiene Practices

Frequent hand washing is important. Hands should be washed with soap and water for 20 seconds or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with a minimum alcohol concentration of 60%) should be used if soap and water is not available. If alcohol-based hand sanitizer is used with younger campers, staff should dispense the sanitizer into the camper's hand and observe while the camper thoroughly rubs in the sanitizer. Practice hand hygiene (wash hands or use hand sanitizer) often; including but not limited to immediately upon entry to the facility, between activities, moving from indoor to outdoor space and vice versa, before and after eating, drinking and handling food, after cleaning, toileting, handling bodily fluid, sneezing, coughing, and blowing your nose. A poster on handwashing can be found here: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Hand-Washing-Poster.pdf>.

Cough etiquette should be practiced by coughing and sneezing into the sleeve, or a tissue and discard immediately. Staff and campers should avoid touching their mouth, nose or eyes.

Avoid sharing personal items (i.e. backpacks, hats, lip chap, hair pieces, water bottles etc.)

Signage should be posted to encourage campers in these hygiene practices.

Cleaning

Cleaning refers to the removal of visible dirt, grime and impurities. Cleaning does not kill germs but helps remove them from the surface. Disinfecting refers to using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. This is most effective after surfaces are cleaned. Both steps are important to reduce the spread of infection. For a list of approved disinfectants refer to: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>.

General cleaning and disinfecting should occur daily. High touch surfaces (e.g. doorknobs, railings, tables, light switches, shared items, toys, etc.) must be cleaned and disinfected frequently (at least twice daily). Shared items must also be cleaned and disinfected if mouthed or visibly soiled. Limit shared items to one cohort where possible. Outdoor toys and play equipment are to be cleaned and disinfected using your regular cleaning schedule.

Sensory experiences such as sand, water, slime, playdoh, if offered, must be provided in individual containers, which can then be cleaned and restocked after individual use.

In general, items that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected such as rugs, curtains, dress-up clothes, stuffed animals and sensory play (unless the sensory play can be cleaned and disinfected between use or each camper is designated their own sensory play) must be removed.

Waste must be disposed of regularly and hands must be washed after waste removal.

Food & Drink

Snacks are to be served individually to campers by staff; food must be prepared by approved adults (such as staff or food service staff). Campers are not to engage in preparing food or family style eating where they serve themselves. Eating outdoors is to be encouraged. Handwashing before and after snack is required for campers and staff.

Record Keeping & Absenteeism

Records must be maintained of campers, staff, and essential visitors who are present including name, contact information, time of arrival/departure, which cohort they were in, which staff were with which cohorts etc. to facilitate contact tracing in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case or outbreak.

Managing Symptoms of COVID-19

Campers or staff who develop symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 infection should not remain in the programs, even if the symptoms are mild. It is important that campers and staff are supported to report symptoms immediately and be protected from stigmatization.

A space should be designated for individuals who become symptomatic to isolate while awaiting pick-up, allowing for a 2-metre separation from other campers and staff.

If a camper or staff develops symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 infection, they should immediately wash their hands, don a mask if tolerated (medical mask if available but non-medical mask is acceptable), avoid contact with other staff and campers and go home to isolate. Staff supervising a camper with symptoms while awaiting pick-up should also wear a mask (medical if available) and may choose to wear a face shield for eye protection if they are unable to maintain 2m / 6ft physical distance. They should perform frequent hand hygiene. Families should be advised to complete the online assessment: <https://covid-self-assessment.novascotia.ca/> or if unable to access the online tool, call 811.

Additional environmental cleaning should occur if a camper or staff develops symptoms, with focus on high-touch areas and areas where the staff or camper spent time. If concerned, contact your [local Public Health office](#) to seek further advice.

Outbreak Management

If a case of COVID-19 is confirmed to be connected to a day camp, Public Health will provide additional guidance including ensuring that appropriate supports are in place to coordinate the response. Public Health is responsible for case management and contact follow-up of all COVID-19 cases, and for determining the need for individual or public notifications.

Public Health actions and directions may include, but are not limited to:

- Contact tracing, which involves identifying contacts of a positive case and contacting those individuals
- Requesting records that identify cohorts/groups of staff, campers and essential visitors in the day camp for a specified time frame
- Testing of staff and campers that may have been exposed to a positive case

- Enhancing environmental cleaning
- Assessing need for facility/program/school closure

Day Camp programs are expected to work with Public Health to ensure a prompt response to cases of COVID-19 that may have been exposed in or may have attended a Day Camp.

Communication with Families

Parents, guardians, campers and staff should be informed of the safety precautions that must be followed at camp. Where possible, limit face-to-face communication and provide information via phone or e-mail. Messaging should reinforce the requirements in this document (i.e. screening, hygiene, staying home when unwell, masking etc.) and provide any updated guidance.