

## 1.0 GUIDANCE ON COMMUNICATION

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Camp administration should be in regular contact with campers, parents/legal guardians, staff, and vendors. Many of these communications may be time sensitive and may contain confidential health information. In addition, the administration should seek guidance from and work with local health organizations (e.g., municipal and state health departments) to engage on health and safety plans and response programs to COVID-19, along with communications. The following provides suggested communication guidelines camp administrations can follow prior to, during, and after camp openings.

### PREPARATION

- Designate at least one qualified person from the medical or administrative staff who can act as the primary contact for campers, parents/legal guardians, and staff. The designee(s) should be prepared to effectively address any questions and concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the resources available for additional information. The designee(s) should be familiar with:
  - Medical matters relating to the novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2.
  - Administrative, engineering, and personal protective equipment (PPE) controls the camp has implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic designed to reduce risk.
  - Current events as they relate to the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - Policies and procedures the camp has implemented related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - **Best practice:** Designate a team consisting of both medical and administrative staff responsible for answering questions and concerns from campers, parents/legal guardians, and staff.
- Inform relevant local public health authorities of planned camp operations schedule.
- Prepare and distribute policy guidelines allowing staff to familiarize themselves with the material.
- Prepare and distribute documentation to staff and parents/legal guardians of campers to explain rules and guidelines for campers to follow during their time at camp.
- Consider including [videos](#) about behaviors that prevent spread of COVID-19 such as on camp websites, in emails, and through camp [social media accounts](#). These social media tool kits provide free materials for camps to utilize.
- Prepare relevant posters and signage from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)), World Health Organization (WHO), and/or other accredited health agencies and post in appropriate places where intended audiences can be reached. Examples include:
  - [COVID-19 information](#)
  - [Handwashing](#)
  - [Cough etiquette](#)

- [Symptoms associated with COVID-19](#)
- [Stop the spread of germs](#)
- [Physical distancing](#)
- **Best practice:** Prepare communication platforms, such as [websites, automated text messaging, and telephone hotlines](#), to communicate information to campers, parents/legal guardians, staff, etc.
- Additional print and digital resources are available for free on [CDC's communications resources](#) main page.

## CAMPER COMMUNICATION

### Prior to Camp

Note: Communication with campers prior to camp may not be applicable to overnight camps where most pre-camp communication is coordinated through parents and legal guardians.

- Prepare and distribute documentation containing rules and guidelines for campers to follow during their time at camp.
- Be familiar with answers to [frequently asked questions](#) and common misconceptions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Identify which staff and campers are at [higher risk](#) for complications related to COVID-19, and encourage and support them in taking additional precautionary measures including consultation with their healthcare provider. The healthcare provider should provide written documentation for requested accommodations for the individual.
- **Best practice:** Provide information on any communication platforms, such as [websites, automated text messaging, and telephone hotlines](#), to distribute information to staff, parents/guardians, and campers.

### During Camp

- At the beginning of camp, hold small group trainings and demonstrations on behaviors and precautions campers should abide by to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including:
  - How and when to effectively wash and sanitize hands
  - How to practice physical distancing in various settings (cafeteria, classrooms, cabins, etc.)
  - Which symptoms to look out for and when to report them and to whom
  - When to stay home
  - Coughing etiquette
  - Other camp-specific policies or guidelines
- If possible, limit the amount of available media focused on the COVID-19 pandemic if it may be contributing to anxiety.
- Broadcast regular messages on reducing the spread of COVID-19 on the camp PA system. Example [announcements](#) are available from CDC.

## Conversation

- Encourage campers to talk about how they are feeling. Tell campers they can ask you any questions and make yourself available to talk and listen.
- Be calm and reassuring; be careful not only about what you say but how you say it.
- Be a source of comfort.
- Listen for underlying fears or concerns. Ask questions to find out what a concerned camper knows about COVID-19.
- Let campers know that fear is a normal and acceptable reaction.
- Provide only honest and accurate information. Correct any false information they may have heard. Note: Make sure to be considerate with campers when correcting any information.
- If you do not know the answer to a question, say so. Do not speculate. Find answers by visiting the [CDC website](#).
- Make sure campers know how the virus can spread and how to prevent it from spreading.
- Talk about what the camp is doing to protect campers from getting sick.
- Tell campers that even though the COVID-19 pandemic is serious, hospitalizations and death are rare, especially in young healthy individuals.
- Let campers know that teens and children seem to get a milder illness when compared to adults.
- Speak in age-appropriate language:<sup>4</sup>
  - *Early elementary school aged children:* Provide brief, simple information that balances COVID-19 facts with appropriate reassurances that adults are there to help keep them healthy and to take care of them if they do get sick. Give simple examples of the steps they make every day to stop germs and stay healthy, such as washing hands. Use language such as “Adults are working hard to keep you safe.”
  - *Upper elementary and early middle school aged children:* This age group often is more vocal in asking questions about whether they indeed are safe and what will happen if COVID-19 spreads in their area. They may need assistance separating reality from rumor and fantasy. Discuss the efforts national, state, and community leaders are making to prevent germs from spreading and keep people healthy.
  - *Upper middle and high school aged children:* With this age group, issues can be discussed in more depth. Refer them to appropriate sources of COVID-19 facts. Provide honest, accurate, and factual information about the current status of COVID- 19.
- [Reduce stigma](#), especially against individuals of Asian descent and those who have traveled recently.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19>

- Direct campers with questions you cannot answer and/or fears you cannot assuage to administration or the designated staff member(s) responsible.
- Have follow-up conversations with campers who have asked questions or expressed concerns.
- Staff and campers who are experiencing stress and anxiety should be referred to the Health Center for consultation by a medical professional.

### Posters/Signage

- Post relevant posters and signage from the [CDC](#), [WHO](#), and/or other health agencies in appropriate areas to encourage behaviors that mitigate the spread of disease:
  - [COVID-19 information](#)
  - [Handwashing](#)
  - [Cough etiquette](#)
  - [Symptoms associated with COVID-19](#)
  - [Stop the spread of germs](#)
  - [Physical distancing](#)
- Post [signs](#) in highly visible locations (e.g., camp entrances, dining areas, restrooms) that [promote everyday protective measures](#) and describe how to [stop the spread](#) of germs such as by [properly washing hands](#) and [properly wearing a mask](#) or face covering.

### In Case of a Confirmed or Suspected Case

- Refer to the camp’s Communicable Disease Plan (CDP) or applicable childcare standards<sup>5</sup> for full guidance.
- Before any conversation with campers, make sure to consider their age and address fears and concerns appropriately.
- Interview the confirmed or suspected case and begin contact tracing in coordination with appropriate local and state health resources, as warranted.
- Advise those who have had [close contact](#) with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to separate themselves, [self-monitor for symptoms](#), and follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop.
- Maintain confidentiality; do not provide the name or any potentially identifying information of the confirmed or suspected case in communications in camp or outside of camp with the exception of the campers’ parent/guardian and health authorities.

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<sup>5</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. 2019. *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs*, Fourth Edition. Itasca, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics. <http://nrckids.org/files/CF0.C4 pdf- FINAL.pdf>.

## PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS COMMUNICATION

### Prior to Camp

- Inform parents/legal guardians about the precautions and procedures the camp has implemented/will implement to minimize the risk of COVID-19 exposure.
- **Best practice:** Provide information on any communication platforms, such as [websites](#), [automated text messaging](#), and [telephone hotlines](#), to distribute information to parents/legal guardians.
- Identify which campers are at [higher risk](#) for complications related to COVID-19, and encourage and support them to take additional precautionary measures.
- **Best practice:** Recommend parents/legal guardians of higher-risk campers to consult their child's medical provider to assess their risk and determine if attendance is acceptable.
- Communicate the importance of keeping campers home if they show any symptoms associated with COVID-19. Share the CDC Symptom Screening List: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- Inform and seek consent from parents/legal guardians for any health monitoring (e.g., daily temperature readings) that will occur.

### During Camp

- Keep parents/legal guardians up to date on COVID-19 as it relates to the camp. Send parents/legal guardians regular newsletters or communications regarding the prevention efforts. If necessary, report the number of suspected and confirmed cases (if any), as well as the camp's responses.
- If the decision to dismiss or end camp early is made, communicate these plans.

### In the Event of a Potential Exposure

- Immediately inform parents/legal guardians about any potential contact their children may have had with suspected or confirmed cases.
- Immediately inform parents/legal guardians if their child(ren) are experiencing any symptoms.
- Refer to the camp's Communicable Disease Plan (CDP) or applicable childcare standards for full guidance.
- See the "Sample Communication" document for the following scenarios:
  - Your child has tested positive for symptoms/COVID-19.
  - Your child was identified as having contact with a suspected or confirmed case.
  - There are X number of cases at camp; there is no reason to believe your child has been in contact with these individuals.

## STAFF COMMUNICATION

### Prior to Camp

- Provide training and educational material, including this guide, to staff. Include information on:
  - The camp administration’s responsibilities as they relate to COVID-19
  - Workplace controls, including the use of PPE
  - Their individual roles and responsibilities as they relate to COVID-19
- Ascertain which staff members are at [higher risk](#) for complications related to COVID-19. Work with camp administration and camp health staff to determine if these staff members should not work as counselors or have prolonged direct contact with campers. Identify alternative job duties for these staff members, if warranted.
- Communicate the importance of vigilantly monitoring their health for symptoms associated with COVID-19 and staying home if they are showing any.
- Maintain flexible leave policies:
  - Do not require healthcare provider’s note for leave from work.
  - Permit employees to take leave to care for a sick family member.
- Communicate strategies for administrative staff to telework from home if possible.

### During Camp

- Continue to provide educational material, including this guide, to staff and enforce training requirements. Include information on workplace controls, including the use of PPE.
- Be aware of workers’ concerns about pay, leave, safety, health, and other issues related to COVID-19.
- Make administration available to hear concerns and answer questions related to these issues.

### Posters/Signage

- Post relevant posters and signage from the [CDC](#), [WHO](#), and/or other health agencies in appropriate areas to encourage behaviors that mitigate the spread of disease. Examples:
  - [COVID-19 information](#)
  - [Handwashing](#)
  - [Cough etiquette](#)
  - [Symptoms associated with COVID-19](#)
  - [Don’t Spread Germs at Work](#)
  - [Social Distancing](#)
  - [Stay Home If You’re Sick](#)

## VENDOR COMMUNICATION

- Inform vendors that access to the camp's facilities will be restricted.
- Request that vendors reduce the frequency of deliveries while simultaneously meeting the demand of ordered goods.
- Request that vendors use the same delivery driver for all deliveries for the duration of camp.
- Notify vendors to suspend deliveries and/or adjust maintenance schedules for services in the event camp is suspended.
- Inform vendors that, during deliveries, they are required to take precautions:
  - Maintain physical distancing between themselves and campers and staff
  - Wear appropriate PPE (a mask or face covering and gloves)
  - Do not make deliveries if they have symptoms associated with COVID-19

## LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS COMMUNICATION

- Coordinate with local health officials; they should provide strategic assistance in the decision-making response to the COVID-19 pandemic with each camp.
- Work with your local health officials to develop a set of strategies appropriate for the camp.
- Inform local health officials on the camp operations scheduled.
- Alert local health officials on unusually high camper absenteeism rates.
  - **Best practice:** Regularly share camper absenteeism data with local health officials if requested.
- Notify local health officials of suspected and confirmed cases immediately.
- Seek guidance to determine whether to dismiss or end camp early if necessary.

## REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

American Red Cross. *Coronavirus: How to Talk to Kids and Keep Them Healthy.*

<https://www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/2020/coronavirus-how-to-talk-to-your-kids.html>

KidsHealth. *Coronavirus: How to Talk to Your Child.*

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/coronavirus-how-talk-child.html>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Interim guidance for homeless service providers to plan and respond to coronavirus disease 2019.*

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID19\\_Homeless-H.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID19_Homeless-H.pdf)

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Coronavirus Disease 2019 Supplemental Guidance for Childcare.* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>

National Association of School Psychologists. *Helping Children Cope With Changes Resulting From COVID-19*. <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Guidance for Administrators of Institutions of Higher Education: Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-ihe-response.html>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs: Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html>

U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration. *Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19*. <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Coronavirus Disease 2019 Talking to Children*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *CDC Activities and Initiatives Supporting the COVID-19 Response and the President's Plan for Opening America Up Again*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/php/CDC-Activities-Initiatives-for-COVID-19-Response.pdf>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Suggestions for Youth and Summer Camps*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/summer-camps.html>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Suggestions for Youth Programs and Camps: Readiness and Planning Tool*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/camp-planning-tool.pdf>