



HEALTH & SAFETY: COMMUNICABLE DISEASES POLICIES & PROCEDURES

POLICY STATEMENT

Under the guidance of the local Public Health Department, the Child & Nature Alliance: Webinar: Reopening Forest & Nature Schools, the Ontario Ministry of Education's Guide to Reopening Schools, Ministry of Health: COVID-19 Guidance: Summer Day Camps, and other applicable legislation, the following health & safety measures have been developed to ensure we are doing our due diligence to take every reasonable precaution to prevent the risk of spreading communicable diseases, such as COVID-19, to increase the safety of interactions among participants, facilitators, families, and visitors to Dogwood Forest. *Please keep in mind that our policies may change or adapt to the evolving situation as information becomes available.*

PURPOSE

To ensure that all employees and families who attend our programs, are aware of and adhere to the following policies regarding the exclusion of sick children.

APPLIES TO

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers/placement students, children, and any other persons engaged in business with Dogwood Forest Ltd.

PROCEDURES

When children/participants are ill, employees will ensure the following:

- Ill children/participants are cared for and comforted by employees, while monitoring symptoms
- Ill children/participants will be separated from others when possible
- Symptoms of illness will be recorded in the attendance records
- The parent/guardian of the ill child/participant will be notified to take them home; or
- If it appears that the child/participant requires immediate medical attention, the child/participant will be taken to the hospital by ambulance and examined by a legally qualified medical practitioner or a nurse registered under the Health Disciplines Act. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 262, s. 34 (3).

When to Exclude

- Employees should exclude a sick child/participant when the child/participant has two signs and/or symptoms that are greater than normal, or if the child/participant is unable to participate in regular programming because of illness.

Exclusion Examples

- If a child/participant has diarrhea and a fever that is above normal for that child/participant, then exclusion should occur
- Child/participant has runny nose, fever, generally not feeling well and parents request the child/participant does not participate in specific activities. Exclusion should occur

How to Exclude

- When excluding a child/participant, they must be separated by at least 2 metres/6 feet from others and will stay in a designated place until the parents/guardians can pick up the child/participant

Surveillance

- Ensuring that all environmental conditions are constantly monitored is essential in prevention and reducing illness.
- Employees must monitor for an increase in above normal amount of illnesses among other employees and children by looking at the normal occurrence of illness at that location and during the specific time period.



Ensure surveillance includes the following:

- Observe children for illness upon arrival
- Record symptoms of illness for each child
- Record attendances and absences
- Record any outings, special events, etc.

Child returning from exclusion due to illness

- Individuals with COVID-19 who are vaccinated, as well as children under 12, will be required to isolate for five days following the onset of symptoms or if they test positive on a COVID-19 test, whichever is sooner. Their household contacts are also required to isolate with them. These individuals can end isolation after five days if their symptoms are improved for at least 24 hours and all public health and safety measures, such as masking and physical distancing, are followed. Non-household contacts are required to self-monitor for ten days.
- Individuals who are unvaccinated, partially vaccinated or immunocompromised will be required to isolate for 10 days.
- If symptoms are related to any other communicable disease, participants should remain home and isolate for 10 days from the start of symptoms, unless the participant has been cleared by Public Health and then they can return after a 24 hour period

MODIFYING BEHAVIOURS THAT REDUCE THE SPREAD

Health Screening

- Health screening in the form of a checklist will occur each day at the time of drop off/arrival and hand sanitizer or hand washing with soap & water will be available for use upon arrival
- Participants are to be accompanied by a parent/guardian and a parent/guardian must be available to respond to a health check in at the time of drop off/arrival
- If a participant or any person in the child's household is feeling sick or unwell and does not pass the health screening questions, they will be asked to go home/not attend programs
- If symptoms are COVID-19 related, Individuals with COVID-19 who are vaccinated, as well as children under 12, will be required to isolate for five days following the onset of symptoms. Their household contacts are also required to isolate with them. These individuals can end isolation after five days if their symptoms are improved for at least 24 hours and all public health and safety measures, such as masking and physical distancing, are followed. Non-household contacts are required to self-monitor for ten days.
- Individuals who are unvaccinated, partially vaccinated or immunocompromised will be required to isolate for 10 days.
- Please review the updated Health Screening Questions for further guidance

Staying Home when Appropriate

- If the participant or anyone in the participant's household is feeling sick or unwell
- If the participant has been in contact with someone who is sick with new respiratory or COVID-19 related symptoms or who recently travelled outside Canada
- If the participant has travelled outside of Canada in the 14 days prior to their program and is not fully vaccinated
 - Participant(s) will be required to quarantine for 14 days as mandated by the Government of Canada: Quarantine Act prior to returning to their program
- If the participant has been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days

Hand Hygiene & Respiratory Etiquette

- Hand sanitizer, hand washing stations (Fall/Spring/Summer), and tissue will be available to all participants, staff, and visitors; participants are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer and tissue
- Hand sanitizer or hand washing will be recommended before and after use of any shared tools or craft materials and practiced before meals and as required
- Appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette will be discussed with participants on the first day of programs and as required to promote awareness, education and understanding of these health practices



Face Coverings

- Our programs operate primarily outdoors and our shelters have open walls; one shelter is a tipi
- Once temperatures drop significantly, we add an insulated tarp to the “Den” shelter to enclose it
- Face coverings should include high quality 3-ply cloth masks as recommended by Public Health and may also include non-medical masks/cloth masks; scarves, neckwarmers, and bandanas are no longer sufficient as masks need to be tight fitting over nose, mouth and chin; students should pack 3 – 4 masks minimum to change throughout the day as needed
- **Outdoors:** Masks/face covering are not required for facilitators, children, or visitors to Dogwood Forest and are considered a personal choice
- **Indoors:** During this time mask/face coverings will be encouraged for all facilitators and children in Grade 1 and up; this includes use of the “Den” shelter, tipi, or washroom; physical distancing will be encouraged
- **Mask Exemptions**
 - We understand face coverings may not be appropriate for everyone for various reasons; please notify us in writing/via Amilia health form if you feel this will be an issue for your child
- **Inclusive Environment**
 - All participants, facilitators, & visitors have the choice to wear a mask or not and we will continue to maintain an inclusive environment that is respectful, welcoming and safe for all those who attend Dogwood regardless of their choice.
- Our intention is to reduce Indoor time as much as possible
- Indoor spaces will be used for taking shelter from inclement weather, warm up breaks and activities such as crafts, journaling, storytelling, etc.
- Eating snacks/lunches will usually take place outside and may occur indoors if weather or circumstances requires groups to do so
 - In the Winter, we strongly encourage children to bring finger gloves (the small cotton ones) so that hands will still be covered during mealtimes and they are able to pick up food
- Facilitators will be encouraged to wear a face covering in the enclosed shelter and when distancing cannot be maintained & wash hands/ use hand sanitizer as required

MAINTAINING HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

Participant Cohorts

- School Year Programs: cohorts will be made up of 10 - 16 participants who will have their own designated site; 2-3 facilitators per cohort depending on class size
- Summer Programs: cohorts will be made up of 10 – 12 participants who will have their own designated site; 2 counsellors per cohort
- Switches of facilitators from sites/cohorts may occur as needed, as approved by the director
- Cohort Considerations
 - Help to create consistency of interactions between participants and facilitators (i.e. contact tracing)
 - Allow for participants to develop relationships with peers and facilitators in a smaller group setting (i.e. building community)
 - Be a proactive method for mitigating possible outbreak (i.e. if one cohort has to shut down, there is possibility that the other will continue to run)
 - Cohorts/groups may mix during activities as cohorting is no longer required

Cohort Facilities

- 2 portable washrooms on site and hand sanitizer will be available at each washroom; washrooms will be cleaned daily with appropriate cleaning materials
- Hand washing station (Fall/Spring/Summer) and water refill station at each site
- Each cohort will have access to their own tools & craft materials as well as shared access to tools and materials



Cleaning Procedures

	Example	Cleaning Protocols	Disinfecting Protocols
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spray soapy water or standard regular cleaner on surfaces. 2. Wipe the surfaces. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-clean any visibly soiled areas. 2. Spray a disinfectant on surfaces making sure to wet thoroughly. 3. Allow the surfaces to remain wet for 5 minutes. 4. Wipe the surfaces or allow to air dry.
Low Touch Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picnic Tables • Sitting Stumps 	Cleaning of wooden surfaces not recommended as per Ministry of Education Guide to Reopening	
High Touch Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washroom Surfaces 	End of Day	Once per day or when visibly dirty
Shared Cohort Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tools, craft supplies, etc. 	Facilitator will wipe down tools and supplies as needed between users	After items are finished being used, they will be placed in a designated bin to be disinfected at the end of the day

MAINTAINING HEALTHY OPERATIONS

Case Management

- Daily attendance records of all participants and staff will be maintained
- Given the widespread transmission of the Omicron variant and changes to the provincial testing approach, families will not be notified of positive cases or if an individual is absent due to symptoms associated with COVID-19
- The local public health unit will be notified if student absenteeism rises to a defined level (approx. 30%) and Dogwood Forest will work with the local public health unit to review absenteeism data when the threshold has been met to assess whether there may be alternative causes for the increase
- Dogwood Forest will communicate in writing to families, students & staff about absenteeism, if recommended by the local public health unit

Procedures for a Suspected COVID-19 Case

- If a participant or anyone in their family is feeling sick and experiencing specific COVID-19 related symptoms, we ask that the participant remain home and the individual is encouraged to get tested
- If there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, the individual should follow public health guidance as outlined in the screening tool, found here: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>
- If a participant begins to experience symptoms of COVID-19 while on site, that individual will be separated from others in a designated area until he/she can be picked up; the individual will be provided with appropriate personal protection equipment and supplies (i.e. disposable gloves & mask, tissues, etc.); if the participant has siblings attending, they will also be required to be picked up
 - Any facilitator who is working with the individual must maintain physical distance and if not possible, wear appropriate PPE
- If a facilitator develops symptoms of COVID-19, they will be asked to return home and self-isolate immediately; a spare facilitator will join the cohort to ensure safe supervision
- The space and any items used by the individual will be cleaned and disinfected immediately



OUTBREAK AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Based on the guidance of the local Public Health Unit as information becomes available
 - Will include consideration of case numbers, cohort implementation, number of cohorts impacted, consideration of the needs of vulnerable participant populations, possible closure or cohort quarantine to allow for case and contact management, cleaning and disinfection, etc.
- Open and timely communication with families and the local public health unit

ADDITIONAL DISCLAIMERS

- Participants who test positive for COVID-19 may not return to programs until they are cleared according to public health guidance
- We reserve the right to send a participant home if we feel they are sick and/or putting themselves or others at risk
- Dogwood Forest will strive to follow all provincial and municipal guidance from regulators and health authorities and make adjustments as required