

Preliminary 2021 Merri-Mac Health Guidelines

Pre-Camp Testing

Each family should assess their camper's and household's risk in light of the [CDC's list of vulnerable populations](#). We will also require campers to be tested for COVID-19 and to complete an eight day health monitoring form before arrival.

- Families will be required to demonstrate a negative molecular PCR test prior to coming to camp. This is your golden ticket and without it your camper will not be able to attend.
 - We recommend Vault Health's PCR Test. This is a saliva test and costs \$150 and is also covered by most insurance companies. [Click here](#) and follow the instructions to order your test.
 - You will need to order the test at least 14 days prior to your start date.
 - Campers will quarantine for 72 hours before taking their test, and then continue to do so until they arrive at camp.
- We will also ask that campers complete an [Eight Day Health Monitoring Form](#) starting eight days before their arrival. This form will include:
 - Daily temperature
 - Information on COVID exposure
 - Information on symptoms in the last two weeks

Campers MUST bring their health monitoring form and negative test results with them on opening day.

What Do We Mean By Quarantine?

- Campers should not be with friends or in public settings such as restaurants, sporting events, gas stations, etc.
- Family members should also avoid these settings and be thoughtful of their physical closeness to their campers. We understand that you may not be able to avoid work or grocery shopping, but we would ask for your extra care with masking, washing, etc., during these times.

What About Flights?

Campers may fly to and from camp, but they must remain distant and masked throughout the process.

Arrival Day Testing

We will perform a rapid test upon arrival. The process will take approximately thirty minutes and we will call you if the test raises concerns. In this event we will quarantine your camper in the Wishing Well and ask you to return to camp immediately.



Who Should Not Come?

- Campers from vulnerable groups, or those living with people from vulnerable groups.
- Those who cannot meet the quarantine guidelines noted above.
- Families who cannot be available to pick up their campers within 12 hours of receiving a call from camp.
- Families who are not comfortable with an increased risk of contracting COVID-19.

Opening Day

- We will have scheduled drop off times by “Neighborhood.” Families with multiple children may come at either drop off time.
- Parents will not exit vehicles so you will want to give your hugs before you arrive at camp.
- We suggest not having anyone 65 or older in your vehicle on either opening or closing days.
- Temps of 99.5 will be turned away. Parents may return when the temp returns to normal for 24 - 48 hours.
- 98.7 - 99.4 kept at camp in isolation until it goes down. If not down in 12 hours the camper will be sent home.
- Incomplete forms, turned away - kindly, and with invitation to return with forms.

How It Will Work

- Cars will pull through our second entrance (Macky’s Green) and be directed to “The Bear.”
- We will remove your camper’s luggage for you, and take it to their cabins.
- We’ll then walk your camper to our infirmary check in. Don’t worry, we’re really good at making everyone feel comfortable and welcome.
- We will ask you to remain in the Black Mountain area for thirty minutes while we perform your daughter’s health screening. We’ll give you a call if there are any concerns. If you do not hear from us in that time period, then you’re good to head home.
- THINGS CAMPERS SHOULD HAVE IN THEIR HANDS WHEN THEY GET OUT OF THEIR CARS.
 - Eight Day Health Monitoring Form
 - Negative PCR test results

Join us.



Medications

- If your camper takes any daily medications then you will receive a call from Sunshine Pharmacy two weeks prior to camp. After speaking with you, they will fill these per your instructions and deliver them to camp before your arrival. This allows you to reconcile all medications with the pharmacist before arrival.

We know how much you want to meet your daughter's counselors and cabinmates, or perhaps just get a camp tour, and we are so sorry that we will not be able to do these things this summer. But rest assured, she will come to love each of these, and you can count on us to give you a call if there are any concerns.

Program and Groups

Camp will look different this summer, but our target will be the heart of our mission: friends and adventure.

- Cabin Families: A cabin family is a single cabin, usually with 3 staff and 12-15 campers. These will operate pretty much the same as they always have. Cabins will be our campers' primary family with unstructured interaction and relaxed social distancing. During meal times, shower times and bedtime, campers and staff will interact with their cabin family only.
- Neighborhoods: A Neighborhood is a group of cabins with about fifty people. Neighborhoods will interact with each other throughout the day, attending activities together, etc. There will be more thoughtful distancing in these groups, with face coverings being worn when we do not feel distancing is realistic.
 - This is distinct from our regular activity schedule. Rather than each camper having a custom schedule, they will choose between several options available to their cohort that day. We will also work to help campers with special interests spend more time in those activities.
- If Neighborhood groups mix we will adopt mitigation methods such as social distancing or face coverings.
- Outside programming will be without face coverings provided social distancing is possible.
- Inside activities are more likely to require face coverings.
- We will eat and attend chapel in two separate shifts. Cabins will eat together with appropriate distancing between other cabins' tables.
- We will still have White Feather and activity awards, but we will recognize these in smaller settings.

Join us.



Staff

We see staff as an especially important group to manage. They are an exceptional group of young adults, but they are also very socially engaged.

- Staff will be tested prior to and upon arrival to camp and test results will be received before campers are on property.
 - If a staff member tests positive then they will be removed from property, or not permitted to arrive on property, until they have been quarantined 10 days since their test date and have a letter from a physician stating that they are no longer able to spread COVID.
- With few exceptions, staff will remain on property during their time off. This may change as we move into the later summer but otherwise we want to limit their exposure to the Black Mountain community. Exceptions include:
 - Time at the director's home
 - Carry-out food
 - Time on trails and rivers where exposure to the public and indoor settings can be minimized
 - Supervised shopping trips
- Staff will remain socially distant from other staff outside their cabins and where this is not possible (while driving, etc.) they will wear face coverings.

A Closed Community - The Imperfect Bubble

No one thing we do will protect our campers completely, but each adds a layer of security. We also understand that none of these layers can be done perfectly, which is why having multiple layers is important. A relatively closed community will be an especially important layer, and it is something that will make camp better too. We will avoid camper trips into the public, but we will take trips to wilderness destinations where we are not likely to have public interaction.

We will allow no visitors on camp, including families. The only people allowed on property will be food deliveries and other essential service workers, and these will be monitored by our staff.

Daily Health Checks

We will conduct daily health screenings for both campers and staff. These will be similar to those you will conduct at home before campers arrive. This will include temperature checks and questions; any campers noting the following will be taken to the infirmary.

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chills

Join us.



- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature equal to or greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit

Response Management of Case or Probable Case

A camper or staff member identified as having a potential case of COVID-19 will remain in an isolation room as part of Camp's communicable disease plan.

The Wishing Well will have three distinct rooms for camper rest and treatment:

1. A standard room for campers that are clearly non-viral. This will include individuals exhibiting symptoms that are consistent with existing medical history (e.g. cough if recent history of a chest cold).
 2. A room for campers exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 that are not consistent with existing medical history but could have alternative diagnosis (e.g. strep throat).
 3. An isolation room for campers with convincing symptoms of COVID-19 and who are therefore scheduled to leave camp.
- If a camper has convincing symptoms:
 - We will call their parents and ask that they pick them up within twelve hours.
 - We will then begin evaluating the others in her cabin three times a day and ask our medical staff to recommend when/if it is safe for them to return to their larger Neighborhood.
 - We may also choose to 1) test the campers in that cabin, or 2) send those campers home. If a camper leaves due to suspected COVID-19 we will offer a refund for the unused portion of their tuition.
 - If a staff member has convincing symptoms:
 - We will have them isolate or leave property.
 - They will not be permitted to return to work until all three of the following criteria are met:
 - At least 24 hours have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications)
 - Improvement in symptoms



- We may also require a negative COVID test
- If the staff member has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to work before completing the above isolation period, they must obtain a medical professional's note clearing them for return based on a negative PCR COVID-19 test and an alternative diagnosis.

Face Covering Protocol

We will issue each camper two camp [buffs](#) that will be our typical face coverings. We feel these will be easiest to keep up with and quickest to use when we find them necessary.

- We will wear buffs when indoors and interacting within six feet of anyone outside our cabin family.
- Within a cabin family, campers and counselors are not required to wear buffs.
- Multiple cabins or Neighborhoods can occupy the same indoor space without face coverings if the groups are separated by at least six feet (i.e. Dining Hall, Chapel).
- Campers and counselors will wear face coverings while in the Wishing Well unless instructed otherwise by the medical staff.
- Whenever singing or cheering.
- While walking into or out of group settings like the dining hall or chapel.

Additionally, staff will wear face coverings when interacting within the personal space of a camper outside of their Family (i.e. the camper could easily reach out and touch them) for more than two minutes.

- For example, while placing a harness on a camper, a staff member from a different cabin will wear a mask. Once the staff member is no longer in the camper's personal space, the mask may be removed.
- Face coverings will not be required for campers or staff when participating in water activities.
- Face coverings will not be as prevalent during outdoor activities but may still be used when social distancing is difficult to maintain.

Parent Communication

Pre-Camp:

- Our policies may change as we learn more about the virus and as we hear from other camps that are opening prior to Merri-Mac.
- We are also committed to not open a session if we see concerning trends. In this event we will offer full refunds.

Join us.



During Camp:

- We will keep you up to date on COVID-19 as it relates to our camp. We will report confirmed cases as well as the camp's response.
- We will not receive camper mail. We ask that campers receive email instead. Campers may still mail letters home.
- If we make the decision to dismiss a camper or end camp early due to COVID-19 related concerns, we will communicate these plans with families and make appropriate prorated refunds.

Cleaning and Disinfection

We will have enhanced cleaning and disinfection throughout our program to reduce risk to campers and camp staff.

- Communal Spaces: Our staff members and maintenance team will clean and disinfect communal spaces on a regular basis.
- Shared Items: Cleaning and disinfecting of shared items between Neighborhood uses.
- Frequently Touched Surfaces: Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces and common spaces twice daily. Examples of frequently touched surfaces include tables, door handles, hand railings, light switches, countertops, cabinet handles, desks, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- Cleaning of outdoor structures made of plastic or metal will be carried out according to typical camp cleaning practices. More frequent cleaning of high touch outdoor surfaces, such as railings, will take place. Outdoor wooden surfaces, such as benches will be cleaned according to standard camp practices and more frequently if needed to remove obvious soiling.

Personal Hygiene

At the beginning of each session, staff members will train campers on behaviors and precautions they 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 (dining hall, activity spaces, cabins, etc.).
- Face covering policy.
- Which symptoms to look out for and when to report them and to whom.
- Coughing etiquette.

Join us.



Hand Hygiene

- We have added additional hand-washing facilities throughout camp.
- We will have hand sanitizer stations near the entrance of each building and activity area. We will ask campers to use these upon entering and exiting.

Bathrooms and Showers

- Campers will avoid sharing common bathroom supplies (towels, soap, toothpaste, etc.). Campers need to bring their own bathroom supplies and a container for toiletries to be stored in for the duration of camp (for example, a bathroom tote or a 1-quart clear plastic bag labeled with their name).
- Campers should keep personal items in their bag or tote and store their bag or tote in a designated area in their cabin.

Cabins/Bunk Arrangements

- We are positioning sleepers head-to-toe or toe-to-toe to maximize distance between heads/faces.
- We will keep each camper's bedding separate.

Chapel

- Cabins sit together with 7 feet between each.
- Skipping rows and staggered groups on benches work.
- Remind musicians to stay apart and 7 feet from the first row.
- Speaker does not need a buff (if at least 7 feet away from the first row).

Distancing Protocols

- Campers and staff within a Cabin family will limit interactions with members of other Cabin families.
- To the extent that they must interact, members of different Cabin families will do so with at least 6 feet of separation when possible.
- If members of different Cabin families must interact in close proximity (such as a staff member instructing campers outside of their cabin family), the following must be true:
 - They will follow the face covering protocol.
 - They will consciously minimize the duration of this interaction.

Join us.



Dining Hall

- Our Kitchen Manager will screen food service employees and assess their symptoms prior to starting work each day.
- We will eat in two shifts, keeping six feet between cabin table groups.
- Campers will not touch serving utensils.
- We will not have self service bars. Items like salads and yogurt will be served in single servings from the window, or served by a food service worker.
- We will encourage diners to maintain physical distancing between themselves and others while in line for their meals, especially if those diners are from different Neighborhoods.
- We will have stations available for diners to wash their hands with soap and water prior to eating. In addition to proper hand washing prior to every meal, we will have hand sanitizer on each table.
- We are discontinuing the use of most communal condiment dispensers.

Circulation - Research is showing that air conditioning is problematic. Therefore:

- Vehicles
 - Windows should be open
 - Everyone in the vehicle will be masked and spread out as able
 - Attention will be paid to separating by cabin families as able
- Infirmary
 - Doors should be left open when campers or staff are present
 - Ordinary sick calls and medication distribution will be outside
 - Fans employed inside
- Tucker Inn
 - Ventilation fan turned on
- MM Big House
 - Doors left open as able

Closing Day

- We will not have a closing ceremony or closing day picnic.
- We will escort campers to their parent's/guardian's vehicle and assist in loading luggage. Those helping with luggage will wear masks.
 - Please be prepared to unlock your trunk from inside the vehicle or hand the staff member your keys; this will allow you to remain in your vehicle.

Join us.



- There will be a pickup schedule in which groups of campers are to be picked up from camp during staggered timeframes by Neighborhood. Families with campers in multiple Neighborhoods will likely be scheduled at the time of the earliest pick up.
- We strongly suggest not having anyone 65 or older in your vehicle on Opening or Closing Day.
- We will send communications to parents/guardians that assign each camper their pick up time window. Other differences include:
 - Parents not exiting their vehicles during pick up.
 - Minimizing the time you take greeting your camper to allow for the continual flow of traffic.