Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana
Summer Camp and COVID-19
Last updated 6/2/2021

Safety is a cornerstone of Girl Scouting, and we will continue to put the health and safety of our campers and staff first throughout the summer camp season. We are regularly monitoring COVID-19 updates from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), the American Camp Association (ACA), and state and local authorities. We will continue to adjust our guidelines and processes with the goal of providing a safe and fun outdoor experience. All of our 2021 summer camp programs, including day and resident camp, will be following the guidelines and processes below, regardless of the state in which they reside.

Though this summer will look different from past summers, our team is working hard to prepare an enjoyable summer camp experience full of camp traditions and new friendships while we implement strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The biggest strategies and processes are listed below to give you and your family a general idea of camp operations this summer and are subject to change. With your help, patience, and understanding we have no doubt that we can provide incredible camp adventures!

We will continue to monitor the information around COVID-19 and will provide updates to the information below in order to run summer camp programs with the most current public health information in mind. If you have any questions or cannot find the information that you are looking for please do not hesitate to reach out to us at customercare@girlscoutsgcnwi.org.

All information presented in this resource is subject to change. Guidelines are requirements may be changed and/or added at a later time pending changes in recommendations from the CDC, GSUSA, ACA, and state and local authorities.

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Before Registering for Camp

While we are preparing for the upcoming camp season with the health and safety of our campers and staff in mind, here is some valuable information for you to consider. No matter your decision about attending camp this summer, it’s the right one for you and your family.

1. There will be updated guidelines and processes at camp. These updates are detailed below and include mask wearing, social distancing, and specific changes to activities, meals, and sleeping accommodations. Make sure your camper is prepared to handle these changes and is ready to follow directions from camp staff as we will be taking these updates very seriously.

2. Your camper will be around other campers and staff from across the council and will be in close contact with the campers and staff in her program/unit. The summer camp experience fosters valuable opportunities to meet people from different geographic areas, including other towns and states.

3. We are preparing to use many strategies to prevent transmission of COVID-19, but we can’t guarantee that your child won’t come into contact with COVID-19 at camp. We are aware that some campers or family members may be at higher risk for COVID-19 complications, and we recommend that these families contact their medical provider to assess the risk of attending summer camp.

Before Attending Camp

A healthy camp begins at home and requires a commitment from everyone. For the safety of our camp community, we are asking you to partner with us before checking in at camp by:

- Wearing masks and practicing social distancing when you are outside of your household.
- Limiting your camper’s and family’s contact with people outside of your household for two weeks prior to your camper’s session.
- Taking your camper’s temperature daily for the week prior to your camper’s session.
- Being honest with us if your camper or someone in your household develops any COVID-19 symptoms, has exposure to COVID-19, or tests positive with COVID-19 themselves.

Campers and staff are not permitted at camp if any of the following is true:

- They or anyone in their household has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
- They have had a temperature greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit in the past 14 days.
- They have shown any COVID-19 symptoms including any chills, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, or respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, etc.) in the past 14 days.
- They have had known contact with a person who has COVID-19.

For everyone’s health and safety, we cannot make exceptions, and we thank you in advance for you not asking our staff to do so. If any of these statements apply, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can work with your family to find the best solution possible.

All campers will be required to complete a health prescreening prior to camp. Details will be sent prior to your camper’s session on how to complete the prescreening via CampDoc. This will include taking and recording your camper’s temperature and answering health screening questions. Camp staff will follow up with camper families who report symptoms, fever, or exposure.

GSGCNWI summer camp programs will not require COVID-19 testing or proof of negative test results prior to attending camp.
General Safety Guidelines and Processes

**Mask Wearing**
Campers and staff will be expected to wear face masks over their nose and mouth throughout most of their summer camp program, especially when indoors or when unable to maintain adequate social distancing. Masks may be taken off for safety management during specific situations (i.e. eating, sleeping, aquatic activities, or planned mask breaks). Every effort will be made to utilize other strategies when masks cannot be worn. If a camper is unable to wear a mask due to medical reasons, we ask that a medical note from their physician be sent to the camp director or customercare@girlscoutsgcnwi.org.

Face masks should fit snugly over the nose, mouth and chin. See the CDC website for recommendations on fit and adding layers of material. For summer camp use, we do not recommend gaiters due to the covering of the neck and lack of neck ventilation; or bandanas due to lack of secure fastening to the face when worn.

We recognize that many campers who are 12 years and older may come to camp fully vaccinated this summer. While the CDC has updated guidance around masks in the summer camp setting, we recognize that our campers will be a mixed population of vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals, and that our camper population comes from regions that remain at substantial to high risk of transmission. With those points in mind, we have chosen to maintain our current mask guidelines at camp to ensure safe, consistent use of masks for all campers this summer as a key prevention strategy.

**Physical Distancing**
Campers and staff will be expected to physical distance (aka social distance) throughout the summer camp program. This includes practicing six feet of physical distancing during activities and throughout the day where possible. We will use props such as hula hoops, bases, or tape as part of strategies to encourage physical distancing, especially with younger campers. Campers will be reminded to practice physical distancing throughout the day and during unstructured times.

A program group will be made up of campers that are all registered for the same program during the same dates. A program group may be partnered with another program, depending on group size and site accommodations. Campers and staff that are part of a program group will do all activities together, eat together, and share a sleeping space. Program groups (or partnered program groups) may have decreased physical distancing in some situations and when combined with other prevention strategies. Program groups (or partnered program groups) will be treated like a pod or cohort and will enjoy the camp session together. Program groups will not be allowed to be inside of another groups’ sleeping space except in cases of inclement weather.

Traditional large group activities (e.g. flag ceremonies, mealtimes, and all camps) will be modified so that each program group can participate while physically distanced. This means that a program group will be seated near each other and will maintain more than six feet of physical distance between members of another program group. Large group activities will be held in outdoor spaces and will follow current guidelines for the number of people who can safely gather.

**Utilizing the Outdoors**
At camp, most activities typically take place outdoors! Activities will be kept outside in the open air whenever possible. If possible, activities that may have previously taken place indoors will be moved and modified to take place in outdoor activity spaces.
Cleaning & Sanitizing
Campers and staff will be trained on how to properly wash and sanitize hands, as the number one recommendation from the CDC for infection control. Additional hand washing stations will be placed throughout camp and hand sanitizer will be placed at activity areas and carried by all staff.

We will follow a Sanitize In/Sanitize Out model: campers and staff wash or sanitize hand before and after an activity in a new space. Staff will disinfect all commonly touched surfaces (e.g. door handles, picnic tables, and light switches) on a regular schedule throughout the day. Cleaning protocols are in place for cleaning activity spaces and equipment between program groups.

Camper’s traditional kapers will consist of their own sleeping spaces and sites/units including maintaining personal belongings, sweeping, and wiping down their own bed. Daily cleaning will take place by staff throughout camp with high traffic areas and shared bathrooms being cleaned multiple times daily. All activity areas and program group sites/units will be deep cleaned at the end of each week between camp sessions.

Additional Safety Guidelines and Processes
Check-In and Check-Out
All of our summer camp programs, including both day and resident camp, will have a drive-through check-in and check-out. Families and friends are expected to remain in the vehicle throughout both processes and will not be permitted around camp.

Prior to arrival at camp, an electronic pre-screening form will be sent via CampDoc with instructions on how to complete. This must be filled out prior to camper’s arrival at camp on the first day of their camp session.

We ask that the number of people in the vehicle dropping off your camper is kept to a minimum and that all people in the vehicle above the age of two wear a face mask, regardless of vaccination status. Carpooling this year is discouraged.

Only campers will exit the vehicle with their belongings, please say good-bye to your camper before they get out of the car. Campers will receive a health check, including a temperature check, near their vehicle.

More information will be sent out prior to your camper’s session detailing the check-in and check-out process and how you should pack your camper to make sure the process is as smooth as possible.

Day Camp Considerations
We understand that a drive-thouugh check-in and check-out is very similar to how we have operated in the past. We do ask that all bug spray, sun screen, and goodbyes are taken care of before the camper exits the vehicle.

When a camper arrives at camp with personal transportation, or at their bus stop, there will be a health screening that will take place every day of the camp session. This screening will include a temperature check and return of a daily COVID-19 screening card that will be emailed to camper families one week prior to arrival at camp.

Busses used for bus transportation to camp are driven with windows down, and with one passenger per seat unless campers are part of the same family. Busses are cleaned in between groups transported to and from camp.
**Resident Camp Considerations**

We understand that a drive-through check-in and check-out is very different than what we have been able to do in the past. We encourage you to look at these changes as an express check-in and check-out.

Each camper will be assigned a check-in time for the first day of their session. You will receive this time the week prior to your camper’s session. By staggering check-in, we hope to keep any lines to a minimum. Upon arrival at check-in, camp staff will guide your vehicle to the designated area. If you arrive before your check-in time you will be asked to wait in the holding parking lot until the appropriate time.

As with previous summers we will have a full check-in process; throughout the drive-through experience there will be stations along the vehicles path to verify paperwork and check-in medications, cell phones, and mail as needed. We will have a detailed health screening process that includes temperature checks and head checks, in addition to COVID-19 screening. Camper’s belongings and luggage should be labeled clearly and placed in the trunk of the vehicle so that staff can easily assist in unloading.

Camp counselors will be at designated nearby areas to welcome your camper. They will assist campers in transporting luggage to units, setting up their beds, and helping your camper get oriented to camp.

For check-out, campers will have their luggage with them, and pickup will take place in the same drive-through line method with staff assisting in loading luggage into vehicles.

**Mealtimes**

Campers and staff will wash or sanitize hands before and after every meal. Meals will be eaten in program groups while maintaining physical distancing. In general, more meals will be eaten outdoors, either around camp or in a group’s preassigned site/unit. Outdoor meals may be structured as cookouts, picnic-style, or grab and go. All cooking equipment, tables, chairs, and picnic tables that are used will be cleaned and sanitized thoroughly.

**Resident Camp Considerations**

Overall, we have decreased the number of meals that will take place inside of the dining hall this summer. Dining hall meals will take place in two shifts, to limit the number of people in the dining hall at one time. When inside the dining hall, campers and staff will be assigned to specific tables by program group. Dining hall tables will be seated at half capacity for all indoor dining that takes place. Tables assigned to other program groups will be distanced by at least six feet and windows will remain open when possible.

Dining hall meals will be served buffet style by temperature checked staff wearing face masks and gloves. Each program will be called up one at a time and staff will serve all items before passing the plate to the camper or staff member. Additional distancing and barriers will be added to ensure there is no unnecessary contact with food or dishes. Campers and staff can remove their masks once their entire table is seated to eat.

Daily kitchen and dining hall cleaning protocols will include a combination of what we have done in previous summers and new COVID-19 specific processes. This will include but is not limited to sanitizing commonly touched surfaces at a minimum of every two hours, cleaning counters and equipment between each use, and use of an industrial dishwashing machine which uses multiple agents to dean and sanitize dishes at a high temperature. Program groups will help by sweeping and
tidying up their own tables. Staff will thoroughly clean and sanitize the dining hall, including tables and chairs, after each meal shift.

**Sleeping Accommodations**

In addition to general safety processes previously mentioned, sleeping areas will have the following modifications for this summer. Beds will be moved to ensure physical distancing parameters are met and ventilation will be fully utilized (i.e. windows open when possible including in tents and using fans where electricity is an option). Campers and staff will be required to sleep head to toe and alternated as needed to prevent close proximity of head spaces. Due to safety, campers and staff will sleep with masks off. They will be expected to wear masks in other locations throughout their assigned unit, including trips to the bathroom or entering/exiting the area.

Sleeping space capacities have been lowered to allow for at least six feet of social distancing between campers and staff while they sleep. These numbers vary by the size, structure, and bed arrangement in each space. In general: building and yurt capacities have been lowered by 20-50%, cookie cabin, tabin, and platform tent capacities will be set at three people per tent, and small pop-up tent capacities will be set at two people per tent.

**Camp Health Processes**

If during the camp session a camper or staff member exhibits symptoms of COVID-19, they will be taken to the health supervisor on duty for an on-site screening of their symptoms. If a camper or staff member exhibits significant symptoms of COVID-19, their family will be contacted immediately, and the camper must be picked up from camp as soon as possible. While the camper or staff member remains on site, they will be quarantined with staff supervision at or by the health center until they are picked up from the camp.

If a camper or staff member receives a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, communication by email will be sent to all families with campers present on the same dates as the camper or staff member. This email will include what happened, the potential connection of the family’s camper to the individual with a positive case, our action steps during the time the camper was on site, and next steps for the camp as well as the family.

**After Attending Camp**

We recommend that following a camp session, camper families continue to follow CDC, state, and local guidance regarding masking, social distancing, and camper and family contact with people outside of their household for two weeks to ensure they have not contracted COVID-19.

**Cancellations**

If you choose to cancel camp due to camper’s or family’s comfort level or if your camper is unable to attend camp due to exposure, symptoms, or a positive case of COVID-19, please contact us at customercare@girlscoutsgcnwi.org. We can refund your camp fees to the same card that was used to make the payment, minus the non-refundable deposit.