

Hitchcock Center for the Environment

COVID-19 Program Participant Guidelines

(Current as of 1/5/2023 - This policy will be reassessed in April 2023 based on current conditions)

Our programs are designed to be fun and engaging and above all safe. The COVID-19 program guidelines below are designed to help protect everyone as we meet the strict health and safety requirements of the CDC and our state. Please take the time to read the information below thoroughly. If you feel that you or your child(ren) cannot follow these guidelines, we ask that you wait until these restrictions have been lifted to join one of our programs or events. We may change our guidelines to reflect new guidance from CDC and Massachusetts.

The Hitchcock Center highly encourages all program participants to have the COVID-19 vaccine in order to ensure that our program can be as safe as possible for all participants.

We require all vaccinations required by the Town of Amherst's Board of Health for Public Schools. The Amherst Board of Health requires COVID-19 vaccination for students 16 years of age and older (except for medical or religious exemptions) to attend Amherst public schools. Should FDA approval occur for children ages 5-12, we anticipate the town will also require vaccination for that age group.

We strongly encourage regular testing at home for COVID-19, especially before joining us for a new program.

We will be following these [Mass Gov Guidelines](#) regarding quarantine. If participant has had:

- Close contact - Do not attend programs until receiving a negative test result on day 5 after exposure.
- A positive test - Do not attend programs until symptoms have been resolved and then strictly mask inside and outside for an additional 5 days after symptoms have resolved.

- If a participant (including vaccinated participants), has had a fever above 100 degrees or exhibits one or more symptoms indicating the possibility of COVID-19 infection they cannot attend our programs, and we request a negative COVID test before returning to our program.
- If a non-vaccinated participant or a non-vaccinated member of the participant's household has traveled out of state to a location that has a high infection rate within 14 days of a program date, they cannot attend our programs unless the participant provides a negative covid test from at least 5 days after their return. A high infection rate is a county with a high risk rating according to the [CDC COVID Tracker](#) website..
- If a participant or a member of the participant's household has been tested positive for COVID-19 within 10 days of attending a Hitchcock program, please contact Billy Spitzer, Executive Director (billy@hitchcockcenter.org) or Colleen Kelley, Education Director (colleen@hitchcockcenter.org), or for summer camp Jeffrey Mazur, Camp Director.
- If the risk level for COVID according to the [CDC COVID Tracker](#) is low or medium, we will ask for families to complete the health-care screening checklist at home - you can use this [link](#). If the risk is high, participants must complete a health-screening checklist at drop off, either verbally or written each day they attend a program. This includes questions about any household contacts with COVID-19 positive individuals or symptoms (e.g., fever, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath, loss of smell or taste, or diarrhea) they might be experiencing.

- If a child becomes sick while attending a program, the parent or caregiver will be notified immediately and asked to arrange for the child's pick up as soon as possible. If the participant is an adult, they will be asked to go home and seek medical advice.
- Hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use of hand sanitizer is required when beginning a program, prior to and after eating, after using the bathroom, as well as other times when advised. Participants will be asked to use hand sanitizer during times when hand-washing is not available and handwashing is advised. A Hitchcock Center staff member will provide hand sanitizer if the participant has not brought their own. Parents and caregivers of child participants are asked to give their child permission to use hand sanitizer when asked by a Hitchcock Center staff member.
- All program participants are expected to bring their own snacks, food, water, sunblock, bug spray and proper attire including hats and footwear. The Hitchcock Center will not be providing any of these items to share. Our indoor water bottle refill station will be available to be used by camp.

Mask Usage:

- Participants will be required to bring their own masks. If the participant does not have a mask, and it is a hardship to get one, please contact the Hitchcock Center so that we can make arrangements to provide one. If a mask becomes dirty or wet it should be replaced with a clean one as soon as possible.
- Indoors - Program participants will need to be masked at all times, we will eat outside unless there are extreme conditions, in which case a minimum of 6ft of social distance will be required if any eating needs to take place indoors.
- Outdoors - Masks will not be required.
- If we use public transportation everyone will be required to use masks.
- For field trips, we will have masks on and windows open for van rides. To the extent possible, we will have spaces between campers.

Cohorts and High County Risk Covid Policies:

If the risk of Covid-19 in Hampshire County is high according to the [CDC COVID Tracker](#) website then we will implement Cohorts during camp. Cohorts are groups of people that will stay together to minimize exposure to other groups. During our programs we will use the following physical distancing of groups to reduce risk of exposure and limit the number of close contacts when someone is infected with COVID-19.

- Each Cohort will be assigned a different indoor classroom space to use to warm up/cool down or if there is extreme weather
- At least 6 feet between all participants outside of their cohort when stationary outdoors.
- At least 6 feet while eating and drinking, or singing without masks, including among people within the same cohort.

Thank you for taking these guidelines seriously.

We look forward to happier, healthier, and more carefree times!!