

Covid Operating Procedures for Camp St. Charles

Updated May 10, 2021

**All operating procedures noted here are subject to change based on guidance from the CDC, State of Maryland, and local health departments, etc. The guidelines for overnight camps are not the same as the school guidelines.

Safety is always our top priority for Camp St. Charles. Annually, the screening, training and selection of our camp counselors and staff members continues to be the key to planning for summer camp. We have been researching how to safely operate summer camps during COVID-19 since February 2020, when news was just beginning to break. In addition to COVID-19 concerns, we are considering and planning for all the other aspects of our campers' physical, emotional and spiritual health. All of our operating decisions have been carefully considered based on the [American Camp Association Covid field guide](#), [CDC guidance for summer camps](#), State regulations, and with our camp traditions and norms in mind so that we can add a layered approach to COVID mitigation and preserve the CSC spirit.

During summer and fall of 2020, Camp St. Charles operated a family camp program. We are building on the success and lessons learned of our healthy, COVID-free 2020 operations and the data from camp, school, and other program operations to operate safely in 2021.

Here are the pillars of our covid mitigation strategy at Camp St. Charles:

Reduced capacity (50% camp operations)
Negative COVID Test Required for Check in
Use of Small Cohort groups (Cabin groups)
Mostly Outdoor Activities
Frequent Hand Hygiene
Daily Screening of all campers and staff members

Throughout this document, "cabin group" will refer to the cohort group of campers who are sharing a cabin. Each cabin will house around 13 campers and a few camp counselors. (Our typical cabin capacity is 23-25 campers)

Before Arrival at Camp:

- A big part of a healthy camp program is bringing your healthy campers to check in day.
- Prior to arrival, families are encouraged to take the [CDC recommended steps to reduce risk of covid exposure for 14 days prior to arrival at camp](#).
- **Campers must bring a negative, recent COVID-19 test to check in at camp. (must be a lab test conducted 1-3 days before arrival at camp)**
 - This extra step of COVID testing will permit us to form household groups at camp, who do not need to wear masks when together.

- Utilize the Prep4Camp program to help reduce feelings of homesickness and anxiety regarding time at camp. (see the camp forms page, secret handshake password is WICOMICO)
- Camp staff will be screened for COVID before arriving at camp and regularly throughout the season
- Parents are encouraged to discuss the risks of COVID-19 with their camper's pediatrician before attending camp.
- Campers/Guests/Staff Members who have had a recent exposure to COVID-19 or have tested positive for COVID-19 should not come to camp.
- If vaccines are made available to youth, we anticipate that camps may be permitted to accept vaccine records in place of testing for vaccinated campers, but that is not confirmed.
- Precamp COVID testing of campers will allow our cabin groups to be considered households during the camp session. Within the cabin group, campers will be permitted to spend time together without masks. Since campers are sharing living space and would not be sleeping in masks, we were pleased to see that the CDC updated summer camp guidance to allow forming of households at camp

Arrival at Camp:

- Check in will be a drive through process. Parents will remain in the car and check in will be completed at various stops around camp
- Check in will be Sunday 1-3pm
- Camp staff will assist campers in moving into their cabin and bunks.
- Campers will be provided with a mask lanyard to assist them in keeping their masks handy. We anticipate taking masks on and off throughout the camp day. Counselors will let campers know when to put on masks.
- **Mail: Parents may drop off a package at check in to be delivered on Wednesday.** (Because our local post office has closed, we have requested that parents plan to leave a package at camp during drop off and use the bunk1 to send bunk notes. Mail will not be collected daily from the post office and is typically very slow. Additionally, we are trying to limit trips in and out of camp so please refrain from sending mail in 2021)
- Parents will receive a folder of information, including information to assist with accessing Bunk1 photos and how to send and receive Bunk notes. Parents are advised NOT to send packages by mail this season.

Activities/General Camp Events:

- Campers will need to bring several face coverings/masks to camp. Campers should choose well fitting masks that they are used to wearing. Label all masks with camper's names, just as we recommend labeling clothing. Mabel's Labels are ideal.

- Campers will wear masks when indoors, near people from other cohort groups, or when being lead by staff members from outside their cohort group.
- Campers and staff will be encouraged to take mask breaks as needed. When outdoors, campers are encouraged to step back from the group for frequent water/mask breaks as needed.
- Campers will stay with cabin groups with minimal interaction with campers from other groups.
- Campers will have daily health checks, which will include temperature checks and COVID screening questions
- Campers will wash their hands frequently while at camp and will use hand sanitizer at activity areas without access to a handwashing station.
- Whole camp activities will be modified to provide spacing between cohort groups with limited, masked interactions between cabin groups.
- When possible, campers will be lead by the counselors from their cabin. When campers are being lead by their cabin counselors, they will be permitted to remove their mask.
- Since we offer a wide range of specialized activities, it will not always be possible to have campers assigned with their cabin counselors.
- Most camp activities are outdoors and will continue to be outdoors for this summer.
- Some of our camp wide events will be modified so that we can continue some camper favorites with physical distancing between cabin groups.
- Sharing of equipment will be limited and high touch areas will be sanitized regularly.

Meals at Camp:

- Meals will be served in shifts in the well ventilated mess hall building
- The mess hall typically houses 200 people for each meal and will be half or fewer for the 2021 season.
- Campers will wear masks as they walk to their tables and will sit with their cabin groups with 6+ feet of space between cabin groups.
- Camper groups will eat at assigned tables and the space will be sanitized between uses.
- Snacks (Canteen) will be served by cabin group and enjoyed at picnic tables in the cabin area. Again, cohort groups will be seated together at each cabin.

Free Time at Camp:

- Cabin groups will be assigned to camp areas during freetime (dock, sports, pool, nature... on a rotation so that all campers will have opportunities at all areas)
- It may be possible to allow more choice during free time with masks on and physical distancing between groups.

- Pool time will be assigned to one cabin group at a time since masks will not be worn in the pool

Extreme Heat:

- In the event of extreme heat, our schedule will be modified to ensure that campers can remove their masks and avoid interaction with other cabin groups.
- Campers will not be required to wear masks in extreme heat as that would present a health hazard

Siblings at Camp:

- Siblings who are not the same gender and age group will not be assigned to the same cabin group for 2021.
- Since we must keep cabin groups together as a cohort, our cabins and teams are the same group. Many activities are adjusted for campers age, abilities, and physical size. We have opted to organize cabins by age group for the 2021 season.
- Siblings who do not share a cabin may wish to connect during their time at camp. Counselors will assist campers in these visits. Counselors will not necessarily know that campers have siblings in other groups and campers can ask counselors to help them arrange for a check in with a sibling.

Illness at Camp:

- Check in Screenings and Daily health screenings will be completed at camp.
- If a child or staff member has a fever or any COVID-19 symptoms, they will be referred to the camp nurse/physician for further evaluation.
- The camp nurse/physician will identify any camper or staff member who is suspected of having COVID. That person will be separated from the group and monitored until they can be collected by a parent or other authorized adult.
- In the event of an illness after camp, please notify Camp St. Charles for contact tracing purposes.
- In the event of a COVID case at camp, all members of the camp community will be notified.

For the 2021 Season, some of our traditional activities will not be possible due to COVID related challenges. Returning camp families are encouraged to discuss these changes so that campers are not surprised by the changes.

Activities that are typically part of the CSC program but will not be included in the 2021 season:

- Trips off site (4th of July, King's Dominion for Majors, mentor service trip) Bus transportation is extremely challenging per summer camp regulations

- Low ropes course (most elements require very close interaction between participants)
- Swimming lessons (due to the shorter session time, we will not be providing swim lessons. We will have pool time by cabin, just no lessons)
- Campout on Skull Island may be possible for minors, weather permitting

Activities that we ARE providing for 2021:

- Tubing
- Horseback Riding
- Archery
- Riflery
- BBs
- Escape Room
- Pool
- Dock
- Stand Up Paddle Boarding
- Canoeing
- Sports
- Night activities (modified)

The additional great things about the 2021 program:

- AIR CONDITIONED CABINS!!! We actually completed the air conditioning installation in March 2020 and we finally get to enjoy that with our campers!
- Every camp day will have some of our camper's favorite activities
- S'mores Night
- Super short shower lines
- Late wakeup & breakfast for Majors
- Smaller groups give us greater flexibility with planning free time activities for cohort groups