



New Jersey 2021 COVID-19 Youth Summer Camp Standards Guidelines

New Jersey youth day and resident summer camps are permitted to open, pursuant to Executive Order No. 237. The Youth Camp Safety Standards and COVID-19 Standards were not designed to support year-round (Ex: learning centers) accommodation for students/children displaced due to hybrid school models implemented by the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE). Youth camps, during the ongoing public health emergency, are only allowed to operate during out-of-school vacations and holidays (e.g., summer break, spring break, etc.) where the activity includes at least one high risk activity as defined in N.J.A.C. 8:25-1.4.

During the COVID-19 public health emergency, all owners/operators of youth camp programs should stay up to date with any changes to state and federal requirements related to summer day camp entities and incorporate those changes into their operations. This guidance is not intended to replace any existing applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and standards, and is designed to supplement the youth camp program.

The multilayered use of nonpharmaceutical interventions (NPI) such as face masks, cohorting, social distancing of 6 feet, hand hygiene and cleaning and disinfecting has shown to be successful when mitigating the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 within the youth camp setting. The Department of Health has developed these guidelines to govern the operations of youth summer camps, as required by Executive Order No. 237 .

If eligible, staff, volunteers, campers, and family members are encouraged to get fully vaccinated for COVID-19 at least two weeks prior to traveling to camp. Per updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), camps should encourage all unvaccinated staff and campers to engage in a 2-week prearrival quarantine. Camp staff and campers who are not fully vaccinated are encouraged to get tested with a viral test 3–5 days after traveling home from camp AND stay home and self-quarantine for 7 days after their return home.

General requirements for youth summer camps

1. “Youth summer camps” are defined in the Order to include youth camps required to be licensed pursuant to N.J.S.A. 26:12-1 et seq., facilities operating programs as described in N.J.S.A. 30:5B-3(b)(4), and other entities that provide daily multi-hour programming for youths, without regard to whether the program is subject to the certification requirements pursuant to N.J.S.A. 26:12-1 et seq., including youth programs operated by municipal agencies.
2. Youth camps that are subject to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 26:12-1 et seq., must complete a Youth Camp Certificate application form.
3. Youth camps do not include child care services designed to accommodate children displaced due to a school district virtual learning curriculum.



4. Licensed youth camps must meet the definition and offer at least one high risk activity, accommodate 5 or more children under 18 years of age, operate 3 hours or more over the course of 2 or more days within the same week.
5. Municipal public camps meeting the above definition of youth camps must comply with EO No. 237 and this guidance. The application fee for municipal camps will be waived with the following requirements: A request to waive the application fee must be submitted on the municipality's letterhead and a Youth Camp Certification application form must be completed.
6. Youth camps, as defined in Executive Order No. 237, must develop and implement a COVID-19 Operational Plan that, at minimum, includes written policies and procedures addressing the following areas:

a. Training

- i. Youth camp operator must access and review the CDC's [Youth Camp Programs and Camps Readiness and Planning Tool](#)
- ii. Camps must conduct staff training and update staff on the basic principles of emergency first aid, infection control, hand washing practices, personal protective equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 signs and symptoms.
- iii. The health director must (1) be designated as the camp's COVID-19 point of contact, (2) be knowledgeable about COVID-19 signs and symptoms, and (3) be familiar with the following training resources:
 1. Training resources:
 - a. New Jersey Department of Health Communicable Disease Service (CDS) [COVID-19 Youth Camp Guidance](#)
 - b. [Contact Tracing Awareness Training](#)
 - c. [Infection Control Resources Document](#)
 - d. Centers for Disease Control(CDC) [Suggestions for Youth and Summer Camps](#)
 2. Monitor the [COVID-19 Activity Report](#) at least weekly
- iv. Camps must document in writing how age-appropriate instruction is provided to campers and their families on safe practices while attending camp, including face coverings, hand hygiene and staying home when ill.

b. Promote Healthy Hygiene Practices

- i. Teach and reinforce among all campers and staff the importance of washing hands and covering one's mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.



- ii. Teach and reinforce use of face coverings among all staff. Staff should be reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently.
- iii. Staff and campers should be educated on proper use, removal, and disposal of face coverings.
- iv. Have adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older campers who can safely use hand sanitizer), tissues, and no-touch trashcans.
- v. Post signs on how to stop the spread of COVID-19, properly wash hands, promote everyday protective measures, and properly wear a face covering.
- vi. Provide educational materials in advance to families for sharing with campers prior to camp and reinforce awareness at staff and camper orientation and periodically thereafter for all throughout the camp experience.
- vii. Encourage, promote and prioritize outdoor activities.

c. Screening and Admittance

- i. Educate staff, campers and their families about when they should [stay home](#) and when they can return to camp.
- ii. Create a communication system for staff and camper families for self-reporting of symptoms and notification of exposures and closures. In the resident camp setting, a communication system for camper self-reporting of symptoms and notification of exposures and closures should be implemented. Camps should provide clear and accessible directions to their camp community for reporting symptoms and reasons for absences.
- iii. Require staff and campers who are sick or have recently had a close contact with a person with COVID-19 to stay home.
- iv. Develop a policy for safe and respectful daily screening of staff/camper/visitor. The CDC has issued guidance on the activity available [here](#). Such screenings should be conducted in accordance with any applicable privacy laws or regulations. Confidentiality must be maintained.
 - 1. Parents/caregivers are strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs of illness every day, as they are the “front line” for assessing illness in their children.
 - 2. Have a plan to screen students if not screened by parents prior to arrival.
 - 3. At resident camps, staff assigned for the oversight of a camper under care are encouraged to monitor children for signs of illness everyday, as they are the “front line” for assessing illness in the child.



- v. Monitor staff absenteeism and consider maintaining a roster of trained back-up staff.

d. Face Coverings and Social Distancing

- i. In indoor settings, staff must wear face masks at all times except when not practicable, such as when eating or drinking, sleeping, or swimming. Staff must also wear face coverings in outdoor settings when within 6 feet of distance from fellow staff members or campers, except when not practicable or when in extreme heat.
 - 1. In indoor settings, it is particularly important to maintain 6 feet of physical distancing when masks cannot be worn, such as when eating or drinking.
 - 2. Camps must supply their staff and campers with face coverings.
- ii. It is understood that face coverings may be challenging for campers, particularly younger campers, in an all-day setting.
 - 1. In outdoor settings, when social distancing of 6 ft. between assigned groups cannot be maintained, campers should mask.
 - 2. Indoors, campers should wear face coverings at all times, but particularly when physical distancing is difficult.
 - 3. Campers should wear face masks indoors and outdoors, as described above, unless (1) doing so is impracticable, such as when a camper is eating or drinking or (2) while the individual is in the water.
 - 4. Face masks should not be put on any child under the age of two.

e. Infection Control and Monitoring

- i. Youth camp programs shall implement the following prevention and mitigation strategies to slow and limit COVID-19 exposure and spread:
 - 1. Stagger arrival and drop-off times or locations by cohort (group) and limit contact between cohorts as much as possible.
 - 2. Communicate and educate staff, parents, and campers in COVID-19 safety measures including:
 - a. Staying home when ill;
 - b. Proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette;
 - c. Wearing, removing and discarding face coverings;
 - d. Reporting illnesses and symptoms to the camp Health Director or other healthcare personnel at the camp immediately.



3. Handwash and/or hand sanitizers stations shall be provided in numerous areas around the camp.
 4. Document [cleaning and disinfection](#) procedures and frequencies for frequently touched surfaces, and high traffic areas such as restrooms, dining areas, and indoor areas prone to congregation using EPA approved disinfectants.
 5. Discourage sharing of items, especially those that are difficult to clean or disinfect. If items are shared, limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of campers at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
 6. Consider limiting non-essential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible.
 - a. Visitors are required to wear face coverings unless medically contraindicated. If a visitor refuses to wear a cloth face covering for non-medical reasons and if such covering cannot be provided to the individual by the business at the point of entry, the youth camp must decline entry.
 - b. Avoid large group events, gatherings, or meetings where social distancing of at least 6 ft. between assigned groups and/or individuals from other groups cannot be maintained.
- f. Plan for When a Staff, Camper or Visitor Becomes Sick

Camp administrators must implement a policy in the event someone tests positive with COVID-19 or gets sick while on site with COVID-19 symptoms. The camp's COVID-19 response policy must include, at a minimum, the following procedures:

1. The camp must immediately separate the impacted staff or camper(s) from the other staff and campers.
2. If the camp becomes aware of an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19, the camp must **immediately** notify the local health authority where the camp is located. While maintaining confidentiality, the camp must also immediately notify all staff and families of campers that a confirmed case has been identified at the camp.
 - a. Notification to the [NJDOH-Youth Camp Safety Project](#) is required within 24 hours at youthcamps@doh.nj.gov.
3. The camp must establish a COVID-19 isolation area.
4. Document procedures detailing the safe transportation of implicated staff/camper.



5. Document procedures for contact tracing, which include maintaining records of groups/cohorts, assigned staff and daily attendance logs.
 - a. Camp administration should assist the local health department with identifying close contacts of positive COVID-19 cases.
 6. Document policies that detail camper/staff readmittance which follow NJCDS [COVID-19 Youth Camp Guidance](#)
 7. Document policies and procedures for closure due to outbreak as determined by the LHD.
 - a. Local health officials, in consultation with CDS epidemiologists, will provide direction to the camp if a closure is warranted.
 - i. The duration of a temporary closure may be dependent on several factors which will be communicated by the local health official.
 - ii. Notification of a recommended closure to the [NJDOH-Youth Camp Safety Project](#) is required within 24 hours at youthcamps@doh.nj.gov.
 - b. Staff/campers are discouraged from attending another facility if the camp is closed due to an outbreak.
 - c. Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting them (for outdoor areas, this includes surfaces or shared objects in the area, if applicable). Follow CDS guidance on [reopening after a closure](#).
- g. Intensify Cleaning, Disinfection, Facilities and Ventilation
- i. Outdoor camp activities are strongly encouraged
 1. Canopy/tenting/cover accessibility is required for camps that maintain a primarily outdoor camp environment.
 2. Camps must have procedures in place in the event of inclement weather. Outdoor camps may move their activities indoors, as opposed to cancelling session, but should ensure properly ventilated indoor space to allow for social distancing.
 - ii. Refer to the [CDC cleaning guidance](#) for general information.
 - iii. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces within the camp and on buses at least daily (e.g., playground equipment, door handles, railings) and shared objects between uses (e.g., toys, games, art supplies).
 1. Document the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of bathrooms.



- iv. Create processes for bathroom use that encourage 6 ft. of social distancing while also protecting camper safety.
- v. Ventilation
 1. Inspect and evaluate the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) unit to ensure that the system is operating within its design specifications and according to existing building code standards.
 2. Conduct routine maintenance as recommended by the manufacturer or HVAC professional within the design specifications of the HVAC unit.
 3. Set HVAC systems to bring in as much outdoor air as the system will safely allow. Reduce or eliminate HVAC air recirculation, when practical and with expert HVAC consultation.
 4. Make sure the ventilation systems are serviced. If the camp does not own the building where the camp is operated, it should contact the owner and discuss and document any actions taken over the pandemic to ensure indoor air quality.
 5. Run the HVAC unit for at least two hours before and two hours after the facility is occupied.
 6. Filter(s) for A/C units must be maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations.
 7. The camp should open windows if air conditioning (A/C) is not provided.
 8. Consider installing portable air cleaners equipped with a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter to increase the amount of clean air within the facility.
 9. Consider using carbon dioxide devices as a means of monitoring CO2 levels and ventilation/air flow within a room/space.
- vi. [Take steps](#) to ensure that all water systems and features (e.g., drinking fountains, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of [Legionnaires' disease](#) and other water-borne diseases.
- vii. Shared Buildings
 1. If multiple entities/camps operate programs using a shared facility (Ex: school building), those entities must arrange to stagger their activities in order to minimize intermingling among groups of campers.

h. Attendance and Cohorting (Groupings)

- i. Camper: Staff Cohorts



1. Staff to camper ratios of 1 adult:1 counselor: 20 campers (ages 5-17 yrs.).
 2. Staff to camper ratios of 1 adult: 1 counselor: 14 campers (ages 2.5 through 4 yrs.)
- ii. Restrict mixing between cohorts.
 1. Ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that cohorts include the same children and staff each day. Camp operators should minimize staff/camper movement between groups.
 2. If mixing of staff/campers cannot be avoided, masking of all floating staff and campers should be implemented.
 - iii. Social distancing of 6 ft. of distance should be maintained between cohorts.
- i. Transportation Services
- i. During bussing/transportation, social distancing must be maintained by maximizing space between riders and maintaining space between the driver and the passengers.
 1. Consider seating campers who are part of a cohort or family members together to maximize limited space.
 - ii. When feasible, a staff person should accompany the driver on all transportation routes to ensure safety and social distancing.
 - iii. Face coverings must be worn by all onboard transport vehicles except for those with medical necessities which prohibit the use and children aged 2 and under.
 - iv. Open windows, if safe to do so and except during inclement weather, to encourage air flow.
 - v. Vehicles must be cleaned and disinfected between uses and the activity documented.
- j. Food Service
- i. Camps should stagger mealtimes and ensure cohorts remain intact.
 1. If feasible, have campers bring their own meals.
 2. Camps must make appropriate accommodations for food storage.
 3. Consider serving meals in separate rooms if possible and avoid congregation.
 4. Consider serving meals in outdoor environments.
 - ii. Clean and sanitize surfaces between each meal service.
 - iii. Eliminate self-service food such as buffets and salad bars. Self-service food is permitted where all food is packaged (e.g. is in individual wrapping or plastic



containers). Facilities may operate buffet stations if food is kept behind plexiglass or a similar barrier and an attendant serves the campers and staff. Limit self-service drink stations to those that can be routinely and effectively cleaned and disinfected.

- iv. Encourage proper hand washing before and after meals.
- v. Use disposable food service items wherever feasible.
 - 1. If disposable items are not feasible, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are properly cleaned and sanitized.

k. Sports and Recreational Activities

- i. Where possible, perform activities that have the potential to produce respiratory droplets including singing, chanting, shouting, or playing an instrument outside. Campers and staff should wear masks, unless not practicable (i.e. when an individual is playing an instrument that requires use of their mouth), and maintain at least 6 feet physical distance during these activities.
- ii. All sports and recreational activities shall be conducted in accordance with the [Organized Sports Guidance and applicable Executive Orders](#).
- iii. Camps should increase breaks and encourage hydration of masked staff/campers throughout the day.
- iv. All swimming facilities shall operate in accordance with [Executive Directive 20-031 Health and Safety Standards for Pools and Aquatic Facilities](#).
- v. Sprinkler and spray park play areas which do not use recirculated water are approved for use and are not regulated via the [N.J.A.C. 8:26 Public Recreational Bathing](#) rule
 - 1. Ensure social distancing procedures are in place for unmasked water play participants.
- vi. Educate campers and staff on sports etiquette regarding social distancing and hygiene (e.g., no spitting, handshakes, etc.).
- vii. Clean and disinfect shared equipment between use. Avoid use of items that are not easily cleaned or disinfected.
- viii. Stagger outside play and events for individual camps (campers?) and coordinate outside play between camps sharing the same building.
- ix. Off-site activities and field trips are discouraged, but not prohibited.
 - 1. When participating in off-site activities and field trips, proper mask use is required consistent with Section D above, unless:
 - a. impractical for an individual to wear a face mask, such as when the individual is eating, drinking or swimming, or
 - b. when not around the general public (Ex. Hiking in wooded area away from the public).



2. Offsite activities should minimize prolonged contact with others outside the camp.
3. Consider day trips with small groups to nearby recreational areas where interaction with the external community may be limited.
4. Day/resident camps who elect to participate in field trips and off-site activities must keep in mind that venue capacities remain impacted by Executive Orders limiting their on-site capacity and gatherings limits.

I. Additional Requirements for Resident and Sleepaway Camp Activities

i. COVID-19 Testing Requirements for Unvaccinated Individuals

1. Before arrival: All staff/campers will be required to have a documented negative test within 72 hours of arriving on-site.
 - a. Camps must have a procedure for documenting any exceptions.
 2. After arrival: All staff/campers will be required to receive a documented test within 3-6 days of arrival at any youth camp.
 3. Resident camps must document policies and procedures for testing.
 4. Lab analyzed tests whereby results are reported in congruence with New Jersey Communicable Disease Service guidelines are required.
- ii. Camp operators should, prior to the arrival of staff and campers at the facility, communicate to staff, campers and parents the continued accessibility of free COVID-19 testing in areas across the country.
- iii. Operators should strongly encourage staff/campers to quarantine prior to arrival at camp.
- iv. Camps should document policies and procedures that minimize the risk of transmission for staff concerning their permissible off-duty activities. The rules should detail expectations, training, testing, quarantine and isolation policies and procedures.
 1. At minimum, screen staff upon return
 2. Consider retesting staff upon return to the camp.
- v. Long-term camps lasting more than 14 days who have implemented a bubble environment whereby all staff and campers remain on-site at all times, and routine on-site testing, quarantine and monitoring is conducted to establish “stable cohorts”, may help facilitate safer larger group activities after the 15th day.



- vi. For all resident camps, health directors and other on-site health personnel must identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-19 like [symptoms](#). Also, see Section F above.
- vii. Resident camps must document policies and procedures for the isolation and quarantine of impacted staff/campers. Also, see Section F above.
 1. These policies and procedures must be provided to staff and to parents and guardians of all campers prior to attending camp.
 2. Parents/guardians may choose to allow campers to stay at the camp or to take their child home. Parents/guardians who choose to pick up a sick child should be provided with educational material regarding isolation, quarantine and the [care of someone sick with COVID-19](#).
- viii. Bunking/ Sleeping
 1. Try to align mats or beds so that campers and staff sleep head-to-toe and at least 6 ft. apart.
 2. Ensure adequate ventilation within sleeping quarters.
 - a. Consider portable air filters in the sleeping quarters.
 - b. When possible, promote cross ventilation by opening two or more windows.
 - c. Consider the use of child-safe fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows. Safely secure fans in a window to blow potentially contaminated air out and pull new air in through other open windows and doors.
 - d. Set HVAC systems to bring in as much outdoor air as the system will safely allow. Reduce or eliminate HVAC air recirculation, when practical and with expert HVAC consultation.
- ix. Campers, as part of defined cohort based on sleeping arrangements, are not required to mask while in their assigned sleeping quarters and among bunkmates/cohort.
 1. Campers must mask when 6 ft. distancing is not feasible or cannot be maintained when in the presence of those outside of their bunk/cohort.
- x. Document the frequency of [cleaning and disinfecting](#) of bathrooms (e.g., in the morning and evening, after times of heavy use) and use [EPA-registered disinfectants](#)
 1. Encourage staff and campers to avoid placing toothbrushes or toiletries directly on counter surfaces.
- xi. Staff and campers with symptoms of COVID-19 at resident camps should immediately be separated from other campers and staff. Individuals who



are sick should be cared for in accordance with [CDC Guidance for caring for oneself and others who are sick](#).

1. Staff/campers with symptoms are encouraged, but not required, to stay at the camp.
- xii. Staff and campers who have had close contact with a person who has symptoms should be separated, monitored and follow [CDS Youth Camp Guidance](#). If symptoms develop, individuals who are sick should be cared for following [CDC guidance for caring for yourself or others who are sick](#).
 1. Staff/campers with symptoms are encouraged, but not required, to stay at camp.
- xiii. If a person becomes sick and needs to be transported, camps must establish procedures for safely transporting him or her. If circumstances require medical transport of someone displaying symptoms of COVID-19, the camp should advise the dispatcher or receiving health care facility that the person may have COVID-19.

m. High Risk and Special Needs Populations

- i. Parents of campers are encouraged to work with their primary care provider and the camp director to determine if camp is a reasonably safe option for them.
- ii. Camps should consider adjusting cohort ratios as necessary to promote child safety and to ensure that social distancing can be maintained.
- iii. For children who rely on lip reading, people in close contact can use face coverings with transparent windows. Face shields alone are not a substitute for a face covering.

7. Violations and Enforcement

- a. Compliance with the conditions set forth in this Executive Directive shall be investigated and enforced by the Department of Health.
- b. A youth camp's noncompliance with the conditions set forth in this Executive Directive that is reasonably believed to endanger public health will be subject to a closure order by the Department of Health.