

# BEAR Youth Mentoring Program – COVID-19 Guidelines

This guidance document outlines:

- **minimum requirements** that must be in place to begin to have participants attend programs
- a list of **recommendations** that we will incorporate into our business and service model to further protect the community, and
- some **ideas and strategies** to consider when preparing staff to engage in programming in the new age of social distancing.

These requirements and recommendations are taken from the Governor’s 4-22-20 directive and from other youth services organizations in the region. From the outset, it is important to know that “open for business” is not “business as usual”. We all have a social responsibility to do the best we can for our neighbors.

## MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Group Size

MUST – Youth groups are limited to 10 people if a physical six – foot distance cannot be maintained readily, including staff or anyone else participating in the group.

MUST – Youth groups are limited to 50 people if a physical six-foot distance can be maintained, including staff or anyone else participating in the group.

### 2. Sanitation and Cleaning

**BEAR has developed and implemented an enhanced cleaning and sanitizing plan, and all staff have been trained in COVID-19 specific cleaning practices.**

- Shared surfaces and supplies must be cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- Every morning before the youth arrive and every evening after the youth depart, staff will disinfect commonly used surfaces while wearing disposable gloves, including door knobs, counters, chairs, bathroom sink knobs, toilet flusher, toilet seat, car door handles, seat belts.
- Youth will be asked to not enter the office building other than to use the bathroom to reduce the amount of exposure to indoor spaces.
- The BEAR Den (garage) will also be sanitized daily, including the ping pong and foosball equipment, door knobs, hard surfaces, seating area, and other commonly used items.
- Any reusable towels, cloths, or face coverings (bandanas offered at camp) will be washed daily in laundry soap with color safe bleach in hot water.
- Sanitizing solutions will either be made by BEAR staff according to CDC guidelines (bleach/water) or an approved product will be purchased from the

store.

- Use disposable paper towels for drying hands or wiping any surfaces of sanitizing solution, though allowing sanitizing solutions to air dry is preferable.
- BEAR will ensure there are adequate supplies available to participants and staff to support healthy hygiene including soap, hand sanitizer, tissues, and no touch waste cans. Signs will be posted in various locations that share how to stop the spread of COVID.

**Sanitizing/cleaning products to be used:**

alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol)

disinfectant wipes with at least 70% alcohol (10 min contact time)

5-6% bleach in water solution (1 min contact time)

Lysol disinfectant spray (3 min contact time)

Laundry soap and warm water (wash on regular cycle)

Hand soap and warm water (wash for 20 seconds)

List from CDC of how to clean surfaces:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html>

**3. Transportation**

- All staff and participants **MUST** wear face coverings while in shared group transportation vehicles.
- While riding in shared vehicles, windows will remain open at all times, the vehicles will be disinfected pre and post use, all riders will wear face masks, and all riders will wash or use sanitizer on hands pre and post trip.
- The large van will allow a max capacity of 10 people at a time, max 2 people per bench seat, leaving the open seat in between riders.
- The minivan will allow a max capacity of 6 people at a time, max 2 people in the back row, leaving the open seat in between riders.
- BEAR staff will disinfect all shared program vehicles pre and post use following CDC guidelines
- Consider bringing extra jackets or sweaters on trips or activities, even when it's warm outside, in case riders get chilled with vehicle windows open.

**4. All staff, participants, and family members are responsible for disclosing any symptoms of illness they may be experiencing prior to or upon arrival at the office/programming.**

- BEAR staff will NOT conduct explicit pre-shift or pre-programming health assessments. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the individual to take action and disclose if they are experiencing any of the following symptoms:
  - fever over 100.4° Fahrenheit
  - cough
  - shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - sore throat
  - chills or repeated shaking with chills
  - unexplained muscle pain

- new loss of taste or smell
- diarrhea

- vomiting

- Staff, participants or family members experiencing any of the above symptoms **must be excluded from in-person work and attending programming** until they have been symptom-free for 14 days (staff are expected to telework from home if their symptoms do not prohibit them from working generally). We understand that this is more conservative than other guidelines, but is intended to provide the safest environment for everyone. In addition, any staff with symptoms should be tested for COVID-19.
- Identifying information for those who are excluded from work or programming due to reported symptoms or illness will be recorded in a confidential document and attached to participant registration information or employee files, including their name, phone number, symptoms, and the date the symptoms were reported in order to track who needs to refrain from attending work/programming and the date upon which they are able to return. The County Public Health Dept will be consulted if staff are in need of additional guidance on a case by case basis.

## **PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Make up of Youth Groups**

- BEAR will ensure that groups are as static as possible by keeping the same group of participants together with the same staff through each week of programming, as much as possible.

### **Communicating Program Expectations**

- BEAR will send parents/guardians a letter front loading families and youth about BEAR's physical distancing, hand washing, and other COVID mitigation expectations.

### **Face Masks**

- All participants and staff are encouraged to wear facemasks when physical distancing is not possible.
- Staff are encouraged, but not required, to wear a facemask while working, even if social distancing is maintained.
- BEAR will provide face coverings for staff and participants, and will wash all face coverings in between uses with laundry soap and color safe bleach.
- Youth will be allowed to keep their face covering at the end of camp
- BEAR staff will front load/educate youth at the beginning of each camp week about these guidelines, including the following reminders:
  - Frequent touching of face masks and removal could transmit pathogens

from the mask to their hands, and that hands should be washed or sanitized after touching, adjusting, or taking mask on or off.

- o Sneeze/cough into elbow, even when wearing a face covering.
- o Maintaining 6 feet social distance, even while outdoors or wearing a face mask, is the best way to reduce the chance of disease transmission and will be encouraged at all times.
- o Touching other participants (high fives, hugs, rough housing, etc) or staff is discouraged and alternative ways of showing connection and support will be highlighted and practiced.

## **Hand Washing**

- BEAR staff will front load participants with hand washing expectations and procedures prior to their participation in camp or visiting the office.
  - o Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and use paper towels to dry hands. Avoid shared multi-use towels near sinks.
  - o If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
  - o BEAR will provide soap and hand sanitizer for all staff and participants daily at the office, in company vehicles, and on all activities outside of the office.
- **Prompt staff and participants to avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands and avoid touching face in general.
- **Recommended hand washing times include:** at drop off, before pick up, upon entering and leaving the office, before and after meals/snack, at activity transitions, before and after restroom use, before and after transportation, or anytime one touches their face, mouth, or eyes, and sneezes, coughs, or blows their nose.

## **Program Location Facility**

- Programming activities will be facilitated outdoors as much as possible
- When activities are held indoors, they will be in a space where social distance can be maintained with the number of present participants and staff.
- If social distance cannot be maintained indoors, participants and staff will wear masks or the activity will be moved outdoors or cancelled.
- BEAR will reduce trips to other indoor facilities and limit visiting locations with high traffic and other groups as much as possible. Each trip location will be evaluated by staff on a case by case basis for potential risk and safety factors.

## **Snacks and Meals**

- BEAR strongly discourages staff and participants from sharing food during meal or snack times.

- All snacks provided by BEAR will be packaged individually so as to avoid contact by others.
- Participants and staff will maintain 6 feet social distance while eating.
- Consider setting up place markers to cue for social distancing, including hula hoops, cones, poly spots or felt flags.

## **Sports and Games**

- BEAR will modify sports and games to promote physical distancing and eliminate touching of shared objects with hands or head, whenever possible and practical. This includes eliminating tag and toss based activities and playing physical face to face defense during sport.
- Any gear that is used for sports and games will be sanitized pre and post use.
  - Staff is responsible for sanitization of shared gear/equipment pre use, and Youth can and should participate in sanitization of gear/equipment post use. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of staff to ensure all gear/equipment is sanitized and that it's documented.
  - Fabrics on gear that are not easily washed must be sprayed with an approved sanitizer or allowed to sit untouched for 3 days to allow any possible pathogens to die, such as backpacks, boots, tents, etc.
  - Fabrics that can be easily washed will be washed after each use using laundry soap and color safe bleach, if the item does not prohibit the use of bleach.
- Consider setting up place markers to cue for social distancing during activities, including hula hoops, cones, poly spots, felt flags or other gear appropriate to the activity.

## **Ropes Challenge Course**

- BEAR will open the ropes challenge course to groups of 10 or less, including ropes course facilitators
- Participants are encouraged, but not required to wear face coverings while participating in the ropes challenge course, as consistently maintaining 6 feet social distance is unlikely while on the elements.
- Facilitators will wear a face mask when in close proximity to participants for the purposes of:
  - checking the safety and security of harnesses, helmets, hardware, ropes, etc.
  - spotting participants on ground and low elements
  - belaying as a group with participants
  - attending to participants for first aid
  - whenever 6 feet social distance cannot be maintained consistently.

- All hard surfaces at the ropes course will be sanitized using approved spray cleaners and paper towel pre and post use, such as gates, hand holds, props, etc.
- All soft surfaces will be sanitized using approved sanitizers, such as non-life critical ropes, hand rugs, props, etc.
- All helmets, carabiners and belays will be sanitized according to manufacturer's instructions in order to maintain the integrity of the device and not void any warranty, or left untouched for 3 days to allow for the dying off of any potential pathogens.
- All ropes and harnesses will be left untouched for 3 days to allow for the dying off of any potential pathogens.

### **Participants that are at higher risk for COVID**

- If parents/guardians feel their youth are at higher risk for COVID exposure or complications through increased contact with other youth in the community and BEAR staff, they can choose to not participate in programming.
- BEAR will consult with each parent/guardian about any underlying health conditions their youth may have and how it may impact their ability to participate in group programming due to COVID. Good faith efforts will be made to accommodate special needs or requests.

### **Participant Behavior**

- Consider that kids have not been in a structured program or school for months and have not seen friends or peers and subsequent behaviors that might ensue due to these factors, such as hugging, rough housing, not following social distancing standards, etc.
- Staff will discourage hugs, rough housing, physical touching, etc. However, parents/guardians and participants need to be aware that physical contact is not just a possibility at BEAR programs, but likely. It is at the discretion and personal risk of families and participants to attend programming, knowing that these possibilities exist.