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## **GUIDE FOR SAFE OPERATIONS- SMIRKUS CAMP 2020**

**What follows are guidelines and protocols for the safest possible operation of Smirkus Camp in a COVID-19 environment. We will use the guidance given by the Vermont Department of Health as our primary source of information and requirements, particularly as it is applied through the specific guidance for overnight camps that we worked closely with the State to develop. We also draw deeply from the *Field Guide for Camps*, prepared for the American Camp Association and YMCA of the USA by Environmental Health and Engineering. We have also reviewed all readily available CDC guidelines. Everything in this Guide is subject to enhancement and revision based on current guidance from the Vermont Department of Health throughout the camp season.**

**These protocols will continue to be reviewed throughout the summer and may be changed to meet current public health guidelines at any time.**

### Why Would We Still Hold Smirkus Camp?

The quarantine resulting from the current worldwide pandemic has been difficult for everyone, and children and teenagers have been hit hard by the social and emotional effects of isolation. Over the last few months they have experienced:

- School cancellation
- Extracurricular activities closed (circus training, gymnastics)
- Lack of social time with friends and time with extended family
- Increased screen time with distance learning

Circus Smirkus helps campers develop artistic, athletic, and life skills through the power of performance. We challenge them to perform and live to the very best of their own abilities. We can provide a powerful antidote to the fear and stress and dislocation of the pandemic by giving these kids an opportunity to reclaim some of those social and emotional losses, to do what they love, and even have some fun!

The most important issue here is safety, of course, and that's what we have emphasized throughout this very comprehensive plan. We have worked closely with the State of Vermont to construct this plan and get approval to operate.



### Initial Cleaning and Check of Ventilation Systems

All of the buildings at Smirkus Camp have been shut down for the winter. The CDC recommends that all facilities be re-opened and maintained in ways that maximize air flow and therefore reduce the possibility of airborne infection.

Before Camp opens, we will:

- Verify the function and operation of all supply fans, exhaust fans, ceiling fans, and other air circulation or ventilation equipment in all Camp facilities;
- Make sure all windows and doors are in good working order, with intact screens where necessary;
- Two days before opening Camp (approximately, depending on weather), open all windows and run all fans to promote air circulation in all Camp facilities.



## Ordering of Supplies

Before Camp opens, we will:

- Ensure that we have enough cleaning and disinfecting supplies for:
  - All dorm bathrooms;
  - All four program tents (Mamma Mia, Natalie, Ruby, and Lottie);
  - The nurse's tent (Flo);
  - The Pie Car and the dining hall;
  - All bathrooms in the Longren House;
  - Additional hand hygiene stations between the tents and at the entrance to the Brown.
- These supplies will include:
  - Liquid soap for washing hands;
  - Hand sanitizer;
  - Spray bottles of sanitizer to disinfect equipment;
  - Disposable gloves;
  - Face masks for all staff.



## Camper Pre-Arrival Communication and Protocols

All camper families will receive written communication and an invitation to participate in a virtual town hall before start. It's crucial that we communicate very clearly with families about the changes to Smirkus Camp this year, our expectations, and what we need from them in order to keep everyone as safe as possible. Parents are encouraged to review the health and safety protocols with their campers, and to work with them on self-care items like hand hygiene and social distancing.

Health screening will be required of all campers for the 14 days before arriving at camp. A symptom log will be provided to parents/guardians that must be completed, signed, and turned in a check-in before the camper is allowed to move in. This symptom log will include:

- Temperature checks every day for 14 days (campers who run a fever at any point during the 72 hours immediately preceding Camp will be asked to stay home);
- Screening for the presence of symptoms recognized by the CDC for pediatric COVID patients;
  - Fever of 100.4 or higher;
  - Cough;
  - Shortness of breath;
  - Diarrhea;
  - Fatigue;
  - Headache;
  - Muscle aches;
  - Nausea;
  - Loss of taste or smell;
  - Sore throat;
  - Vomiting.
- Should campers experience any of these symptoms, parents will be required to report them immediately to our Camp Nurse, who will work with the Vermont Department of Health to determine whether the camper can be cleared to come to Smirkus Camp.
- Families will also be required to disclose their camper's exposure to anyone known to have COVID-19, whether that exposure is discovered before camp starts or after the camper's arrival.
- Families will be told that Smirkus Camp intends to work very closely with them to answer their questions about health and safety. However, we retain the absolute right to deny admittance to Camp to anyone we deem to pose a health risk to themselves or other campers because of possible COVID symptoms or exposure.



In addition to the health pre-screens, families will receive information on:

- Quarantine and testing requirements (covered in subsequent sections);
- Waivers indicating they understand the precautions and risks involved in sending their child to camp;
- Comprehensive explanations of the changes to camp activities and routines this year in response to COVID.



## Quarantine and Testing Requirements

Quarantining and testing are two of the most essential elements in keeping everyone at Smirkus Camp safe this summer. Campers will be required to quarantine at home for a certain period before coming to Camp, and in some cases to present negative COVID test results before arrival. In addition, everyone at Smirkus Camp will spend their first 7 days at Camp quarantining in 25 person camper/staffer pods before another COVID test on Day 7, after which the pods will be relaxed as long as everyone receives a negative test result.

In all cases, parents/guardians will be asked to sign a waiver affirming that their camper has spent the requisite time in quarantine prior to arrival at Smirkus Camp.

**Quarantine Definition:** Smirkus Camp follows the guidelines for quarantine given by the Vermont Department of Health:

[https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/COVID-19-chart-observation-isolation-quarantine\\_final.pdf](https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/COVID-19-chart-observation-isolation-quarantine_final.pdf)

**Out-of-State Campers:** In alignment with the current protocols for out-of-staters entering Vermont, out-of-state campers MUST follow one of these two protocols before arriving at Smirkus Camp:

- **14 DAYS AT HOME:** Campers must quarantine at home for the 14 days before arriving at Camp, and must travel directly to Camp, without making any stops along the way that could potentially expose them to the virus;
- **7 DAYS AT HOME + NEGATIVE TEST RESULT:** Campers self-quarantine for 7 days at home. Prior to departing for camp, if they are symptom-free they can take a test for COVID-19 and remain quarantined while they await the result. The timing of the test must be arranged so that they depart for camp within 24 hours of receiving a negative test result, and they must come directly to camp without making any stops along the way that could potentially expose them to the virus. Negative test results must be received by Smirkus Camp upon or before arrival, or the camper will not be allowed to stay at Camp.

### **Vermont Campers:**

- **7 DAYS AT HOME:** Since COVID-19 is currently less prevalent in Vermont than in other states, Vermont campers will be asked to quarantine at home for 7 days before arriving at Camp, and must travel directly to Camp, without making any stops along the way that could potentially expose them to the virus.



**Air Travel:** Campers who arrive via air travel would not be eligible for home quarantine. They would need to quarantine for 14 days in Vermont before coming to Camp. If they are symptom-free after 7 days, they can be tested and released from quarantine once a negative result is returned.

**Quarantine and Testing at Smirkus Camp:** As noted above, everyone at Smirkus Camp will be quarantined upon arrival in 25 person camper/staffer pods, described more thoroughly in the next section. Testing at Smirkus Camp will be carried out as follows:

- On Day 7, everyone at Smirkus Camp (campers and staff) will be tested on-site for COVID. These tests will be performed by a Greensboro-based strike force under the auspices of the Vermont Department of Health;
- Parents will be required to sign a permission form for this testing as part of the Camp onboarding paperwork;
- Upon receiving negative results for everyone at Smirkus Camp, the pods will be relaxed and the entire Camp will become one large unit, as we normally are;
- Should anyone test positive, the pods will remain, and the Vermont Department of Health strike team will arrive to guide us in isolating any positive cases and coordinating any necessary treatment.

**Testing Guidelines:** Any tests used at camp or at home must be validated and approved by the Vermont Department of Health and/or receive EUA (Emergency Use Authorization) from the FDA. We highly recommend that any campers getting a test at home before arriving at Smirkus Camp do so through the department of health in their home state.



## Illness Management

In the event a camper tests positive, the Vermont Department of Health will form a strike team to work directly with the Smirkus Camp and camper's family to handle the situation safely and in ways that will avoid further exposure.

- Anyone who tests positive for COVID during Smirkus Camp will be isolated in one of the end rooms in Marceau set aside for that purpose;
- No one else will be housed next to the isolation room;
- Anyone under isolation will use the back door to the outside and not move within the building;
- Parents will be immediately notified of any positive tests for anyone at Smirkus Camp, along with next steps determined by the Vermont Department of Health;
- Smirkus Camp will follow all guidance from the Vermont Department of Health strike team on seeking medical treatment for the individual who tests positive; taking them safely off-site, and disinfecting all necessary areas of the camp;
- Smirkus Camp will follow Department of Health direction on contact tracing protocols;
- We will inform families of the need to notify the camp if they learn of a camper's prior exposure to a COVID case after they come to camp, and that camper must be completely isolated from the other campers until they can be tested with a negative result;
- Counselors will be trained to monitor campers for symptoms and make necessary reports to medical staff of anything abnormal or likely to be COVID-related;
- Smirkus will work closely with the Vermont Department of Health to identify and monitor anyone else- trouper or staff member who may have been exposed. We will also work with the Department of Health to provide appropriate care and arrangements for any exposed staff who care for a trouper under these circumstances;
- Smirkus Camp has the right to refuse to admit any camper or staff who tests positive prior to arrival.



## Pods

Campers and staffers will spend the first week of each Smirkus Camp session within pods as outlined in the “Quarantine” section above. After testing with negative results on Day 7, pods will be able to mix within camp for the rest of the session. Pods will be organized as follows:

- The size of the pods need to reflect the current orders of the Governor, which at the time of writing is 25 people;
- Bathrooms will be assigned by pod to limit the possibility of contamination, and cleaned before being assigned to another pod;
- Common areas used for activities will be cleaned and disinfected before another pod enters them;
- Meals will be eaten within pods, with at least six feet of distancing between pods to limit the possibility of contamination.
- Meals will be served cafeteria style or in other ways that do not allow cross-contamination of food or utensils between pods;
- There will be no shared condiments;
- All staff who move between pods (e.g. directors, health care staff) will wear masks and observe social distancing practices to the extent possible.



### Pre-Existing Conditions

While Smirkus Camp will not discriminate against any camper or staff member on the basis of a pre-existing health condition, the fact remains that some conditions place an individual at higher risk for contracting COVID-19 or experiencing complications if it is contracted.

Therefore, we will require any camper or staff member with any of the following conditions to provide documentation that they have discussed participation at Smirkus Camp with their healthcare provider before arrival:

- Adults 65 years of age and older
- People who have serious underlying medical conditions like:
  - o Heart disease
  - o Diabetes
  - o Lung disease
  - o Underlying immune disorders/people with compromised immune systems/people taking immune suppressant medications (examples of these disorders include Rheumatoid Arthritis, Crohn's Disease, recent cancer treatment)
- Pregnant women
- People with HIV



## Staff Training, Guidelines, Communication, and Support

**Communication:** Communication with staff will start as soon as Smirkus Camp is cleared to open, and will include:

- Comprehensive guidance on all the changes at Camp this year;
- Guidelines and requirements for the same pre-arrival health monitoring (including temperature checks) as required of campers;
- An outline of the particular requirements for staff this year, particularly quarantine and visitors policies, to ensure that everyone understands and accepts these standards;
- Staff will be invited to participate in a town hall before arrival in which questions and concerns can be addressed by Circus Smirkus and Smirkus Camp leadership.

**Quarantine and Testing:** All Smirkus Camp staff members will be required to quarantine within driving distance or in Vermont for 7 days before arriving at Camp for training. Prior to departing for Smirkus Camp, if they are symptom-free they can take a test for COVID-19 and remain quarantined while they await the result. The timing of the test must be arranged so that they depart for Camp within 24 hours of receiving a negative test result, and they must come directly to Camp without making any stops along the way that could potentially expose them to the virus. Negative test results must be received by Smirkus upon or before arrival, or the staff member will not be allowed to stay at Smirkus Camp.

**Quarantine at Camp:** In order to limit the potential for exposure to the virus, staff will be asked to remain onsite at all times. Staff time off will be limited to a few socially distanced locations.

**Training:** In addition to the usual training provided by Smirkus Camp for all its coaches and counselors, staff members will be trained on:

- Symptom monitoring for themselves and campers;
- Appropriate social distancing and when and how to maintain it, both between each other and with campers;
- Self-reporting any symptoms or illness, and isolation protocols;
- Hand hygiene, sanitation, and disinfection protocols for themselves, campers, and equipment;
- Pod maintenance;
- Maintaining the Smirkus culture, magic, and FUN! in extraordinary times.



## Visitor Policy

One of the most important things we can do to reduce the chance of exposure to the virus is to strictly limit the number of people allowed onsite at Smirkus Camp this summer. This is in direct contrast to our normal policies of welcome and hospitality, and it's not something we do lightly. However, it's necessary. Therefore:

- **Absolutely no unnecessary visitors will be allowed at Smirkus Camp this summer.**
- "Unnecessary visitors" includes:
  - Camper families, unless a camper is sick or injured;
  - Camper friends;
  - Staff families, unless a staff member is sick or injured;
  - Staff friends;
  - Former staff members or those not currently employed at Camp;
  - Camp or Tour alumni;
  - Members of the public, unless they are pre-approved and expected delivery people.
- Exceptions to this policy should not be requested; it is one of the most important ways we can protect our campers from unnecessary exposure.



## Camper Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Drop-off and pick-up protocols have been re-designed to limit the exposure of our campers and our facilities to as many outside people as possible. We are very sorry this year to have include camper families in our definition of “outside people,” but the virus does not discriminate and we need to reduce the possibility of exposure at every opportunity.

**Drop-Off:** Protocols are as follows:

- Drop-off protocols will be communicated to families at least three weeks before arrival and strictly enforced;
- Campers will be given timeframes for arrival based on the first letter of their last names, with arrivals to be staggered with no more than 10-15 cars arriving at once;
- Families will be asked to bring no more than one vehicle and no one but campers and parents/guardians to drop-off;
- A staff member will do a health check with campers and families upon arrival and collect pre-arrival health screening forms and, when applicable, COVID test results;
  - Has the camper had a fever at any point over the last seven days?
  - Has the camper had a fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other respiratory symptoms in the past week?
  - Has the camper spent time with or been exposed to anyone who has been sick with COVID-19 or any other infectious illness?
  - Other symptoms may be specifically checked based on current CDC guidelines.
  - If the answer to any question is yes, the camper and family will meet with the Camp Nurse for further evaluation.
- Families will be asked to remain at their cars to say their good-byes. They will not be allowed in the dorms, the tents, or anywhere else at Camp except Loo-Ease, which will be washed and disinfected throughout the day;
- Staff members will help each camper unload their things and transport them to the dorm;
- At the entrance to the Brown and the dorm area, campers will stop at a handwashing/disinfecting station. They will:
  - Wash their hands, faces, arms, and other exposed skin and learn the protocol for doing so;
  - Wipe down their luggage and other gear with disinfecting wipes
  - Receive a brightly colored garbage bag to hold their laundry while at Camp and keep it away from other campers;



- Proceed immediately to their assigned rooms, change their clothes, and stash their arrival outfits safely in their designated garbage bag.

**Pick-Up:** Pick-up protocols will be largely the same as those for drop-off, in reverse:

- Closing shows will take place before the end of the Camp session and will be livestreamed. Family members and other audiences will not be allowed in the tent;
- Families will be given timeframes for pick-up in the same manner as drop-off, with staggered times to allow for distancing;
- Staff members will help campers pack up and prepare their belongings, and will bring them to the Balance Barn just before their family's assigned pick-up time;
- Campers will again wash their hands, faces, arms, and other exposed skin, and wipe down their bags and belongings, before getting into cars with their families;
- Families will not be allowed in the dorms, the tents, or anywhere else at Camp except Loo-Ease, which will be washed and disinfected throughout the day.



## Food Preparation and Service

Food preparation and service will need to be a bit different this year, but there are already a good many cleaning and safety protocols in place that will continue from prior years.

### **Distancing:**

- Only two individuals will be allowed in the Pie Car at any one time, to allow for appropriate distancing between them;
- Only two individuals will be allowed in the Lonegren House kitchen at any one time, to allow for appropriate distancing. This may require some coordination with Camp staff who use that kitchen for coffee and food prep;
- Only one individual will be allowed in the dish room at any one time, as that room is too small to allow for distancing with more than one person;
- Camp staff are encouraged to walk outside to go from the living room/staff lounge to the dining hall, to allow for appropriate distancing in the kitchen.

### **PPE and Hand Hygiene:**

- Kitchen staff will be provided with masks to wear at all times when preparing or serving food or doing dishes.
- As always, disposable gloves are to be worn at all times when preparing or serving food.
- Staff will follow posted food service handwashing protocols at all times.

### **Meal Service:**

- Staff members who serve or replenish food will wear masks and disposable gloves at all times;
- Beverages will be served by staff, rather than beverage machines shared by the entire camp;
- Pods will eat together, with a minimum of 6 feet between pods to allow for distancing;
- As is always the case at Smirkus Camp, meals will be outdoors whenever the weather allows;
- When dining indoors, campers will be seated at intervals, with as few campers at each table as we can accommodate.



## Dorms

- Dorm rooms will be assigned by pods, with campers and staff members staying in the same area;
- Staff and campers will remain in the same room for the duration of the session or contract;
- Housing plans for campers and staff will utilize all possible rooms to ensure maximum distance between sleeping individuals;
- Only the individual assigned to a room may enter that room, with the exception of a staff member entering a camper room for safety or logistical purposes;
- Pre-bedtime socializing will take place in the wing a camper lives in, or out on the Brown. Campers will not be permitted to visit other wings/dorms;
- Everyone will sanitize their hands any time they must enter the dorms;
- Camper belongings will remain separated and within drawers, under beds, in suitcases, or in dirty clothes bags to allow for easy cleaning access;
- Dorm room occupancy will be kept as low as possible given the number of campers at any session;
  
- Where possible, six feet of space will be maintained between beds. They will be arranged upon arrival in a pattern that allows that spacing, with specific sleeping patterns that will be assigned to the campers. It is imperative that campers follow these sleeping guidelines;
- Beds will be arranged toe-to-toe or head-to-toe wherever possible, to maintain as much space as possible between heads/faces;
- Out of use beds will be clearly taped off;
- Campers will stay in sections of dorms designated by pod, and use entrances and bathrooms closest to their pod's space;
- Common rooms will be designated by pod;
- Campers and staff will use only the dorm bathroom designated for their wing;
- Toiletries may not be stored in the bathroom, but rather will be kept with other personal belongings;
- Shower times will be staggered to allow for maximum distancing;
- Weather permitting, dorm room windows will be kept open as much as possible to promote air circulation;
- Campers will be encouraged to bring portable fans with them for the same purpose.



### Health and Safety Orientation- Campers

Campers will participate in a thorough health and safety orientation when they arrive at Smirkus Camp. Topics will include:

- Hand hygiene and washing protocols;
- Pod maintenance and guidance;
- Sneezing and coughing into the fold of the arm;
- Hand sanitizing locations and requirements;
- Avoiding touching the face;
- Limiting non-training physical contact and sharing gear and personal items with other campers;
- Physical distancing.

Camp staff will make every effort to address these topics in a positive and upbeat manner. The goal is to help campers understand their responsibility for their own and others' safety, in the same way as they would when forming a human pyramid or performing another group acro or aerial routine.



## PPE

Staff will need different forms of PPE depending on their responsibilities and their proximity to campers and other staff. A full set of PPE will be available for any staff member who needs to care for an infected camper or another infected staff member.

### **Gloves:**

- Disposable gloves will be worn by staff members who unload campers at drop-off, and changed between campers;
- Hands must be washed prior to putting on and after taking off gloves;
- Gloves will be worn at all times by anyone preparing or serving food;
- Gloves will be worn by anyone cleaning a bathroom or other common areas;
- Gloves will be worn by anyone disinfecting equipment of seating areas in the tents.

### **Masks:**

- Counselors and coaches will wear masks when they need to be closer to campers than 6 feet;
- Kitchen staff will wear masks when preparing or serving food;
- Masks with valves will be discouraged, as these do not allow for source control;
- Campers cannot safely wear masks when training acro or aerials, and can maintain six feet of distance when training clowning or juggling. Non-circus activities will be planned to facilitate physical distancing whenever possible.



## Ongoing Symptom Checks

Smirkus Camp will be vigilant in maintaining the health of campers and staff members, and working to identify possible symptoms on a daily basis.

### **Temperature Checks:**

- Campers' temperature will be checked twice daily- before breakfast and before bed;
- Daily camper temperature logs will be kept by the Camp Nurse;
- Staff members will be asked to check their temperatures daily, during coach and counselor meetings;
- Staff will note their own temperatures on the staff logs; if they have privacy concerns about noting the actual number, they can note that their temperature is below the 100.4 degree fever threshold set by the CDC.

### **Symptom Checks:**

- Counselors will ask each camper daily if they are experiencing any of the common symptoms of COVID: fever (feeling unusually warm), cough, shortness of breath, impaired taste and smell, etc.
- Commuting staff will be asked to do temperature checks upon arrival and to immediately report any symptoms;
- Camper symptom checks will be noted on a daily log kept by each counselor;
- Counselors will be trained to look for other unusual symptoms in their campers and to report them immediately to the Camp Nurse;
- Staff will note on the staff logs when they have no symptoms to report each day;
- Staff will be responsible for reporting their own symptoms immediately, when necessary.



## Hand Hygiene

Everyone at Smirkus Camp will be responsible for practicing good hand hygiene and sanitation practices in every area of Camp.

- All campers and staff are required to wash or sanitize their hands at least:
  - At the start of each camp day;
  - Before and after every snack and meal;
  - Upon changing tents;
  - After exposure to their own or anyone else's sneezes or coughs;
  - After using the restroom;
  - Before bed
- Food service staff will follow accepted foodservice handwashing protocols;
- Handwashing and sanitizing stations will be placed around the tents and near the entrance to the dorm area.



## Tent and Curriculum Protocols

Tents will have both common protocols and procedures specific to each tent and its curriculum.

### **General Tent Area Overview:**

- All shared surfaces in the tents- mats, equipment, and bleachers- will be wiped down at the end of each rotation;
- Bleachers and seating areas will be roped off so to give campers enough room for distanced seating that can still easily be cleaned after each group;
- Equipment that cannot be sanitized and cleaned will not be used;
- Curriculum in each tent will be chosen to allow distancing whenever possible;
- Coaches in physical contact with campers for spotting or instructing purposes will sanitize their hands between campers;
- Tents will have one direction for foot traffic, with a separate entrance and exit to avoid cross over between pods;
- Cubbies will be more spread out and isolated by pods;
- Each pod will have a separate area to refill water bottles;
- Campers and staff members will use hand sanitizer between each rotation;
- Tent walls will be “open” as much as possible to allow for increased air flow;
- Coaches will wear masks and disposable gloves when close spotting;
- We will offer more “choice time” options to allow for smaller pods.



### Parent Communications During Sessions

In an atmosphere of heightened anxiety and tighter controls on visitation at Camp, it's imperative that we communicate with parents/guardians often and well.

- Family communications during Camp sessions will be addressed throughout the pre-Camp communication sessions so that families know what to expect;
- Camp pictures will be taken regularly and posted at regular and pre-determined intervals, so that parents know what to expect;
- While it will not be possible to include every camper in every batch of pictures, enough groups shots will be taken so that most families can find their camper in most batches;
- Camp families will receive regular messages from the Camp Director during each session, which can be written ahead of time and personalized to include specific events at Camp;
- Camp families will receive at least one message per session from the Executive Director for extra communication and reassurance.



## Vendors and Other Deliveries

All regular vendors and those making deliveries to Smirkus Camp will follow the same protocols:

- Deliveries should be scheduled whenever possible so staff know when they are expected;
- Delivery staff must wear masks and gloves on Smirkus Camp property;
- When possible, boxes will be unloaded on the Lonegren House lawn and moved into the house by Smirkus Camp staff;
- When that's not feasible (Sysco and other larger deliveries); delivery staff will wear masks and gloves, touch as few surfaces as possible, have contact with as few staff as possible, and have no contact with campers.