

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE FOR DAY CAMPS

– STEP 3

Last revised: July 16, 2021

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) is currently in Step 3 of the province's [Roadmap to Reopen](#). This document provides additional guidance to reduce the risk of introducing and spreading COVID-19 in day camps at Step 3 by following [Ontario Regulation 364/20: Rules for Areas at Step 3](#) (O. Reg 364/20) under the [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Approach to COVID-19\) Act, 2020](#). This guidance document should be used in conjunction with complete guidance provided in the Ministry of Health's [COVID-19 Safety Guidelines for: Day Camps](#) (revised July 15, 2021) along with existing day camp procedures, guidance, resources, and systems. This guidance does not apply to licensed child care centres or agencies licensed under the [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014](#).

DECIDING TO OFFER DAY CAMP PROGRAMS

Day camps provide short-term programs that provide care and learning opportunities for children of all ages. It is critical that we keep children in day camp programs safe and healthy. Plans and procedures must be in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to campers and staff. Each day camp setting is unique. As such, careful consideration must be given to your ability to develop or modify the day camp to meet the required [infection prevention and control measures](#).

As per the [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 \(CCEYA\)](#), camps are permitted to operate if the camp:

- is not operated for more than 13 weeks in a calendar year (subject to certain exceptions set out in regulations);
- is not operated on days on which instruction is typically provided for pupils enrolled in schools;
- is not operated at a person's home; and
- is only operated for children who are four years old or older or, if the camp is operated on or after September first, who will attain the age of four in that year.

PUBLIC HEALTH REQUIREMENTS FOR OPERATION

The province's [COVID-19 Safety Guidelines for Day Camps](#) (revised July 15, 2021) provides direction for day camp providers to reduce the risk of introducing and spreading COVID-19. All day camps that are permitted to operate must implement the public health measures as outlined in the [Guidelines](#).

A [Daily Operations checklist](#) is also available to support the safe operation of day camps.

Public health guidelines for day camps include, but are not limited to:

- Day camps have permitted cohort sizes based on age, as is outlined in the province's day camp [Safety Guidelines](#).
- All day camps permitted to operate must implement all public health measures as outlined in [COVID-19 Safety Guidelines for Day Camps](#).

MANAGEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WHO DEVELOP SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

- All staff, essential visitors and children must be [actively screened](#) before attending the day camp and follow the directions provided by the screening tool. Please see the letter of [instruction](#) from SMDHU's medical officer of health for direction on screening staff.
- Campers and staff who start to show COVID-19 [symptoms](#) while at camp must be promptly moved to a designated area away from others while awaiting pick-up and must be excluded from the camp. Camps must have protocols in place for immediate pick-up. Furthermore:
 - Where possible, anyone who is providing care to the ill camper should maintain a distance of 2 metres (6 feet) and if 2 metres cannot be maintained wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) (i.e., medical mask and eye protection).
 - If appropriate PPE is not worn and the ill child tests positive for COVID-19, staff who provided direct care for the ill camper may need to be off work for 14 days.
 - After the ill camper or staff member has gone home, the isolation space must be cleaned and disinfected with an appropriate disinfectant, followed by hand hygiene.

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- Ill individuals need to be assessed by a health care provider.
 - If the health care provider makes an alternative diagnosis and determines that the condition is not COVID-19, the individual can return to the camp; however, the individual should remain isolated away from others until their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours.
- Contact SMDHU Infectious Diseases Program at 1-877-721-7520 or 705-721-7520 ext. 5830 if a camper, essential visitor or staff member reports that they have tested positive for COVID-19. The health unit will provide specific advice on required control measures to prevent the potential spread and how to monitor for other possibly infected staff members and children.

DRINKING WATER

- Day camps with private water supplies must ensure water samples are taken before the opening of the day camp operation with tests from a licensed laboratory demonstrating results to the satisfaction of the medical officer of health. Furthermore, water sampling should occur over the period of operation.
- Schools and childcare centres must follow all Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks requirements and procedures regarding water flushing in schools and child care centres.
- Encourage staff and campers to bring their own labelled water bottle. Water bottles will be required to be filled rather than campers and staff drinking directly from the mouthpiece of water fountains.
- Water filling stations should be cleaned and sanitized at least twice daily. Refer to PHO's [Environmental Cleaning Fact Sheet](#) and [SMDHU signage for water filling stations](#).

PSYCHOSOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHILDREN

- Reassure children about their personal safety and health and the many things they can do to stay healthy (e.g., hand washing, cough/sneeze etiquette, staying home when sick, keeping clean).
- Let children know they can ask questions and make sure that the information provided is suitable for their age level.

For more guidance, see the Ministry of Health's [COVID-19: Mental Health Resources for Camp Operators](#).

SUPPORTING EACH OTHER AND OUR COMMUNITY

We understand that this is a challenging time, but public health measures like this are needed to limit the spread of COVID-19. We thank you for the service that you provide to the community.

Please contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit's Health Connection line if you have any questions at 1-877-721-7520, Monday to Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

While the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit aims to provide relevant and timely information, no guarantee can be given as to the accuracy or completeness of any information provided. This guidance is not intended to, nor does it provide legal advice and should not be relied upon or treated as legal advice. Users seeking legal advice should consult with a qualified legal professional. No one should act, or refrain from acting, based solely upon the materials provided in this guidance, any hypertext links or other general information without first seeking appropriate legal or other professional advice. Please visit the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit website regularly for updates and additional guidance.

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REFERENCES

Ontario Ministry of Health. (2020). *COVID-19 Fact Sheet: Talking to Children About the Pandemic*. Retrieved from: http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_talking_children_guidance.pdf