



Sea Education Association COVID-19 Response and Mitigation Planning Document

Overview:

This document reflects inputs from peer institutions and guidelines from health agencies compiled for the benefit of Sea Education Association students participating in SEA programs on shore and at sea. The practices listed herein do not eliminate the risk of a participant contracting COVID-19. This is a living document subject to regular revision as information and best practices relating to COVID-19 evolve.

This plan includes guidance for students and SEA employees who may interact with students during a SEA program and is designed to be in compliance with federal, state, and local COVID-19 protocols. It includes risk mitigation practices that we believe are reasonable, prudent, and practical. This guidance will be informed by the current and ever-changing guidelines available during the program and is subject to immediate modification based on emerging public health data or guidance from health authorities.

The overarching concepts which allow us to offer programs during the ongoing pandemic rely on the careful construction of an isolated “pod” or “bubble” of students & faculty who are known to be free of coronavirus and who can, ultimately, with a degree of confidence, become a functional community that is not required to maintain physical distancing and/or wear face coverings in proximity with one another.

We will use the time on shore at our Woods Hole campus to establish good hygiene protocols, to test regularly for infection and to isolate the members of the group from contact outside the program for 14 days before allowing the participants to form a class pod. Current understanding of the pathology of this disease indicates that it can be reasonable to allow students to begin to live communally without restrictions or special protocols, much as a family might, after 14 infection-free days have elapsed.

This student group will be restricted to campus-based activities and allowed only limited, non-contact off-campus outings (beaches, bike rides, outdoor activities). Maintaining the integrity of the SEA pod will be fundamental to promoting health and allowing the program to continue. All members of the community share a joint and serious responsibility to adhere to the group-isolation rules that will govern this program during the fall 2020 semester.

References

SEA COVID-19 Risk Management Plan is directly informed using the following sources:

1. Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/summer-camps.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/index.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/maritime/recommendations-for-ships.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notice.html>

2. World Health Organization - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

3. Boston University Return to Campus Planning -

<https://www.bu.edu/provost/students/undergraduate/covid-19-resources-for-undergraduate-students/>

4. NOLS Accepted Field Practices COVID-19 Risk Management Plan

<https://www.nols.edu/en/covid19-practices/>

Overarching guidelines for COVID-19 Risk Management:

- Adhere to federal, state, & local guidelines and best practices of peer organizations
- Continuous risk assessment
- Informed consent & COVID-19-specific code of conduct
- Maintain physical distancing of six feet or greater indoors and outside
- Face coverings at all times indoors and when physical distancing is not possible outside (except when alone in bedroom or actively eating)
- Limit group size to 16 students and four instructors
- Increase attention to hygiene, with a focus on hands, covering coughs & sneezes
- Share specific protocols prior to program start
- Daily wellness checks with documentation

Enrollment Practices:

1. **Informed consent:** Students, staff, and partner guides will be required to sign an informed consent agreement which will detail the risk of contracting COVID-19 as a direct result of participation in SEA programs.
2. Students will read and sign an SEA COVID-19 Code of Conduct prior to arrival on campus.
3. Violations of the Covid-19 Code of Conduct may result in dismissal from the program with no financial recourse or refund.
4. Students will be required to submit a self-reporting health form which will include questions on the complicating factors for COVID-19.
5. Students who self-identify complicating factors for COVID-19 will be advised to assess their risk with their personal healthcare provider.

Travel and Arrival Practices:

At this time, the state of Massachusetts requires all persons arriving from outside of the New England states and New York and New Jersey to self-quarantine upon arrival in Massachusetts. This self-quarantine is to be completed before arriving at the SEA campus. If you will be unable to meet this requirement, please contact us to see if an alternative arrangement can be made. At this time we cannot guarantee that this requirement will be waived.

- a. All students and faculty must be tested for COVID-19 infection within 96 hours prior to arrival on campus and program start. Testing will continue at intervals throughout the program.
- b. Students who can drive or be driven to campus are encouraged to do so rather than use public transportation. Students should plan to minimize use of public restrooms en-route.
- c. Students travelling by air, bus or other public transportation should wear a face covering for the duration of their travel and pay close attention to personal hygiene during travel (wash hands, avoid touching face, etc.)
- d. COVID-19 practices and briefing upon arrival will include reinforcement of physical distancing, immediate hand-washing, and use of face coverings when indoors or outside when physical distancing of at least six feet is not possible.

On Campus:

1. Accommodations

- a. Students will be lodged in single bedrooms in four-bedroom cottages for the first 14 days of the program. Face coverings may only be removed when students are alone in their own bedroom and briefly while eating.

b. Bathrooms will be shared, but only one user will be allowed in the bathroom area at a time (one student may not shower while another is using the sink). Students must close the wooden door when using the bathroom.

c. Windows should be left open as much as possible and window fans should be used to increase air circulation whenever practicable.

d. After 14 days with no symptoms and a second round of negative test results, students may be assigned to shared rooms.

2. Meals

a. Meals will be prepared and served communally. Students will wear masks while preparing food.

Students will work together to prepare menus and grocery lists. Groceries will be delivered weekly so that students do not need to enter stores.

b. Students are encouraged to eat outside on picnic tables whenever the weather allows. When eating indoors, maintain six feet of distance and replace face covering as soon as you're finished.

The same team of students should plan to cook and to clean up after a meal. All students will rotate through these responsibilities regularly during the program.

3. Hygiene

a. Frequent handwashing will be encouraged. Washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds several times per day will be expected. Bathrooms will be stocked with soap and disposable towels.

b. Handwashing expectations will be clearly defined to students and include (but may not be limited to)

i. Morning/evening group handwashing

ii. Washing before and after meals

iii. After toileting

4. Face coverings

a. Handmade or commercially manufactured cloth masks or doubled buffs will be considered adequate face covering.

b. Students should have a minimum of two face coverings available and should regularly wash face coverings after use. Having multiple face covering for each participant allows

face coverings to be washed regularly with soap and water, and to follow a wash/dry/use rotation

- c. Face coverings will be worn at all times when inside, except when alone in your bedroom.
- d. Face covering must be worn outside when it is impossible to keep a distance of six feet from all other people.
- e. Face coverings AND six feet of distance provide optimal protection for students.

5. Daily wellness checks for students and instructors (with associated documentation) will be accomplished with particular attention to the following symptoms:

- a. Cough
- b. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- c. Fever, chills, or repeated shaking with chills
- d. Muscle pain unrelated to physical activity
- e. Sore throat
- f. New loss of taste or smell

5. Teaching spaces

- a. Instructors will work to use outdoor space as much as possible. However, this program will require activities that take place in a traditional classroom setting.
- b. Windows will remain open whenever possible
- c. Desks will be positioned to maintain at least six feet between all students and instructors
- d. Traffic through the classroom will be one-way and will be appropriately signed.
- e. Entrance and exit through the student spaces of the classroom building will be one-way and will be signed appropriately
- f. Faculty will adhere to six feet of physical distance before the pod is formed and will likewise wear face coverings

Response to Suspected COVID-19 Infection

1. Prepare: A separate sleeping room and bathroom will be made available for the exclusive use of any student experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. One SEA-owned vehicle will be designated as a COVID-19 transportation vehicle with preplaced protective equipment for the driver.

All students will be asked to have a “fast pack” ready in the event that they become symptomatic and must be quickly isolated without time to pack their belongings. This kit should have necessary hygiene items, medications and a set of clothing and must be ready to be quickly retrieved from their cottage.

2. Isolate: An individual(s) with COVID-19 [symptoms](#) (such as fever, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath) will be immediately separated from other participants and moved to the COVID-19 isolation area. Individuals who are sick should be cared for following [CDC guidance for caring for yourself or others who are sick](#).

3. Transport: Those who are sick and require medical care will be transported differently depending on the severity of symptoms. The 911 system will be used in more severe cases and those with less severe symptomatology will be transported via the COVID-19 contingency vehicle to the most appropriate location for assessment, isolation and/or treatment.

4. Continuance of program activities will be determined in consultation with SEA medical advisors, the patient’s healthcare provider and with local health officials in accordance with established guidelines.

SEA’s response to COVID-19 is designed to be flexible and adaptive. This document will be modified as changing local and global health conditions warrant.