

Parish and School Summer Programming
Involving Minors Under 18
June 11, 2021

COVID-19 Protocols

Introduction

With the introduction of COVID-19 vaccines, many COVID-19 preventive measures have been relaxed or even eliminated. For our parishes and schools that will provide summer programming involving children need to remain vigilant in protecting the younger members of our parishes. Children under 12 remain ineligible to be vaccinated. Children between the ages of 12 to 16 have only recently become eligible for vaccination and the percentage of those vaccinated remains low.

As the leadership reviews the prescribed COVID-19 protocols for summer programming, the Archdiocese is looking to establish minimum standards. Parishes and schools are strongly encouraged to adopt protocols that not only meet, but exceed the minimum standards of the outlined guidance. Ultimately, application of and adherence to the protocols is a parish and school decision as to the commitment and vigilance undertaken by each location.

Parishes and schools should carefully measure the benefit of offering adequate precautions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all participants, employees and volunteers involved in the delivery of such program. The greater care demonstrated and carried out will also greatly increase each location's ability to carry out the programming with no interruptions or need to suspend programming due to an outbreak of COVID-19.

Protocols

State and Local Orders

As each location operates the various programs throughout the summer, it is extremely important the leadership at each location remain current on State and local orders that could impact the operation of the program offering. At the time of writing this document, the only specific order that remains in place in the jurisdictions where Archdiocesan locations operate is the continued requirement for face masking in Baltimore City. As you will note throughout this document, efforts have been made to establish a minimum benchmark for safety and wellness protocols. Beyond this minimum standard, the Archdiocese is seeking to provide flexibility in order that locations can make accommodations and standards that meet the specific needs of each location. However, this effort to provide flexibility does not in any way relieve any location from the obligations to remain current and compliant with all State and local orders.

Risk Statement/Acknowledgement-Agreement/Permission-Release

Parents are provided the **COVID-19 Assumption of Risk Statement**. This is simply an informational notice and does not require a signature and is not required to be returned.

Parents are provided the **COVID-19 Acknowledgement and Agreement**. This document is to be reviewed, signed and returned by the parent. If the parent is signing for more than one child, a list of each child can be simply listed on a separate sheet of paper and attached to the form when returned.

Parents are provided the **Permission and Release Agreement for Minor Participant**. This document is to be reviewed, signed and returned by parent. A separate document must be completed for each child attending the program.

It should be noted these forms have been updated as of 6/10/2021. If a location is utilizing the forms prepared in early May there is no need to reissue the new documents. The May documents are more restrictive as to requirements and protocols. Program administrators should simply communicate to any parents, volunteers or employees the changes. These include but are not limited to relaxed social distancing and location specific masking protocols.

Wellness Screenings

Each location is to have a wellness screening process. The wellness screening must be implement and ensure that participants and their parents are reminded to evaluate on a daily basis the following consideration before sending their child to participant in the programming:

1. Does the participant have any COVID-19 like symptoms?
2. Has the participant been exposed to another person with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
3. Is the participant currently awaiting COVID-19 testing results?
4. Is the participant currently under directive from a health agency to be either isolating or quarantining?

If the participant answers yes to any of these questions, then the participant should not attend the program until such time as the consideration is resolved. These same four questions should also be posed to all volunteers and employees that will be assisting with the programming.

The design of the wellness screening process must at a minimum include regular reminders to parents of participants, employees and volunteers. This can include e-mails, newsletters, notifications being sent home to parents and posting at the entry for each program these four questions. Locations are encouraged to develop and implement screening programs beyond the minimum guidance. Processes can include hard copy wellness screening checklists that attendees turn in daily or an electronic version offered through Google documents or similar applications.

Ultimately the objective is to ensure that each participant, employee and volunteer are reminder to carry out a self-assessment to evaluate whether or not they are experiencing any conditions or circumstances that should preclude them from participating.

Hand Sanitization

Each location is to continue to offer supplies and materials to allow participants, employees and volunteers to regularly sanitize one's hand. Materials and scheduling shall also address times throughout each day to allow for regular washing of one's hands. Locations should also have posted on the premises reminders about hand sanitization and hand washing.

Social Distancing

Locations are to make every reasonable effort to ensure spacing is adequate to provide for a minimum of three feet (3 ft.) of social distancing between participants, volunteers and employees.

Shared Materials

Participants, volunteers and employees are allowed to share materials such as art supplies, sports equipment and other similar supplies. However, each participant, volunteer and employee is to be encouraged and reminded to sanitize their hands prior to and immediately following the activity.

Singing

Outdoor singing with no masking is permitted. Indoor singing is also permitted. A determination as to masking for indoor singing is to be made by the program leadership based upon factors such as the size of the room, the number involved in the activity, the effectiveness of ventilation in the room and other factors that increase or decrease the possibility of introduction and spread of COVID-19.

Food and Drinks

Food and drink can be offered as part of the programming. With respect to providing of food it is encouraged that all food be individually wrapped and provided as a single serving to each participant, volunteer and employee. In the alternative food can be provided either already plated or individuals can work through a line where an identified individual plates the food for each person coming through line. Under no circumstances shall food be offered as either a self-serve buffet or family style. Efforts to minimize the sharing of utensils and other such food related supplies is to be limited.

Isolation Area

Each location must have identified and have available an area for isolation in the event a participant, employee or volunteer becomes symptomatic and needs to be separated from the rest of the group.

Cohorting

Programs are encouraged but not required to practice cohorting or groups. This practice helps to minimize the impact of the number of others affected if someone should become positive or presumptive positive.

Contact Tracing

An individual or individuals need to be identified that are responsible for handling a response to either a positive or presumptive positive case. In addition to ensuring proper isolation, responsibilities include contact tracing, notification to affected program members and the Office of Risk Management.

Close Contact

While the guidelines are allowing social distancing to be reduced to three feet (3 ft.), it is critical to note that for incidents involving positive or presumptive positive cases, the identification of close contacts remains defined as those individuals who had contact with the confirmed or presumed positive individual for an aggregate of 15 minutes and within six feet (6 ft.).

Masking

Masking has proven to be one of the most effective, but also diverse, protocols to protect against the introduction and spread of COVID-19. With respect to masking programs are to adopt a masking policy appropriate for the location based upon the age of the participants, the number of participants, the percentage of indoor activities, the size of the venue to allow for spacing, ventilation and other related considerations. Ultimately the decision to require masking is up to the location. With that noted, locations are reminded should no masking be required to remind parents, participants, volunteers and employees that a culture of tolerance and acceptance of masking, as well as non-masking if permitted, is accepted among at attending the program. With respect to masking outdoors, unless there is a particular need for such masking, no masking outdoors is necessary.

In addition to addressing masking among the participants, consideration must be given to masking of volunteers and employees. Again the final decision on masking is to be made at the location level based upon the various considerations noted above. It is encourage for example if groups under the age of 12 will be required to be masked while indoors, strong consideration should be given to requiring the volunteers and employees working those students to then mask as well. Adherence to masking rules will be greatly impacted by the example, or lack of example, set by leadership.

Ultimately the masking guidance established by each program must be consistent, consistently applied and consistently enforced.

Water Play

With respect to the introduction of water activities such as water slides, water guns and other such activities, there is no evidence that water is typically impacted by COVID-19. Rather, the real consideration is the object holding the water, such as an inflatable pool. The key is to simply ensure the cleanliness of such items, just as would be conduct pre-pandemic. So there are no specific restrictions or limitations on such activities. Needless to say all safety protocols with respects to other risk such as falls, striking of a person in the eyes with squirt/water guns or water pools but be addressed and mitigated as best as possible.

Cleaning

Cleaning of supplies, materials and facilities should be consistent at a minimum with pre-pandemic measures. Program operators are encourage to clean with standard soap and water at the end of each day supplies such as sports equipment, chairs, desks or other items that are frequently touched and handled throughout the day. As for sanitization, the circumstances under which this level of cleaning is required is if a person is either verified as testing positive or if a person is identified as a presumptive

positive case. In those circumstances all areas occupied and used by the individual must be thoroughly sanitized.

Transportation

If program activities require transportation from the location to a third party venue, the COVID-19 summation document has details on the protocols for such transportation. Please go to https://www.archbalt.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/COVID-19-Comprehensive-Summation-Document-as-of-5.28.2021_TA.pdf.

Conclusion

As each location undertakes the summer programming, if there are concerns, considerations or additional guidance needed, please send your inquires to riskmanagement@archbalt.org. Every effort will be made to have a response back within 2 business days. Also, if during the running of your program, should an incident arise involving either a confirmed COVID-19 case or a presumptive case, if you need assistance with contact tracing and evaluating the extent of exposure, please contact Tom Alban, Director of Risk Management at 410-591-5717.