



## **Cornell Cooperative Extension New York State 4-H Youth Development**

### **Covid-19 Safety Protocols and Best Practices for 4-H Programming Spring – Summer 2022**

The following recommendations are considered best practices based on the currently available information from the CDC and NYSDOH. CCE Associations are responsible for making local decisions, complying with local Health Dept. and NYS policy guidance, and ensuring that local staff and volunteers are fully aware of Association expectations for in-person programming as we resume 4-H program activity at a level that more closely reflects pre-pandemic circumstances. It is also important, during this transition period, to create local expectations and approaches that respect individual choice regarding mask-wearing.

### **Symptom Check**

Youth, staff, and adults should be advised not to participate in any in-person 4-H activities if they are sick or have COVID-19 symptoms, or if you or someone you have been in contact with has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Symptoms may include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

[\*\*https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html\*\*](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html)

### **When are Masks Still Needed?**

Start with the most updated guidance from your local Health Department and New York State. Although the mask mandate has been lifted for New York State schools, local conditions will likely continue to vary, and local Associations should pursue strategies that align closely with local conditions. The following are recommended best practices, not mandates.

## Indoor Spaces

Continue to look for larger indoor spaces that allow for social distancing and ventilation when possible. When youth and adults are present in the same indoor space, masks continue to be recommended, regardless of vaccination status. When only adults are present, masks are recommended for those who are not fully vaccinated.

## Outdoor Spaces

Masks are not necessary in truly outdoor spaces. Barns and other animal areas may very well fit the category of outdoor spaces, particularly if efforts are made to maintain open air and proper ventilation. Smaller, enclosed areas within another structure should be considered indoor spaces.

**There will be youth and families who are not comfortable removing their masks for meetings and gatherings. It is critical that these decisions are respected and that there is no pressure applied, or opportunities withheld, due to a decision to wear a mask while participating in programming.**

## Best Practices for Meals and Food Service

The best approach would be to provide pre-plated or served meals. Buffet-style and family-style setups are not recommended unless servers plate food for individuals.

## Best Practices for Overnight 4-H Events and Activities

Events and programs held at Cornell University will follow Cornell University policy and protocols. The protocols and expectations for these events will be fully outlined as part of the registration process.

NYS 4-H Camping programming and other summer programming will be following updated New York State and local Health Department rules for this summer. These policies are still being developed and will be updated as soon as possible. Please reach out to NYS 4-H Camping Specialist Shawn Tiede ([srt28@cornell.edu](mailto:srt28@cornell.edu)) for updates on Camp Guidance.

We are working with the New York State Fair, and Cornell University, to develop the protocols related to the Great New York State Fair. We will provide updates as soon as possible.

National 4-H programs will likely have additional protocols that will need to be followed. These guidelines will also be outlined with registration materials.

## COVID Testing and Proof of Vaccination

We are not expecting or recommending that CCE Associations implement COVID testing or Proof of Vaccination at the local level. Testing and Proof of Vaccination policies create significant challenges and privacy concerns. Events held at Cornell, such as 4-H Career Explorations and National 4-H events may have protocols that will need to be followed. These protocols will be shared along with registration materials.

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The recommendations outlined here are based on the best available guidance at this time and are subject to change as new information becomes available.

Additional Guidance can be obtained from the NYSDOH, the local health department and the CDC.

If you have specific questions or concerns about this document, please reach out to Andy Turner, NYS 4-H Program Leader ([ast4@cornell.edu](mailto:ast4@cornell.edu))

### **Additional Resources**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/gatherings.html>

<https://forward.ny.gov/>

