

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Summer is upon us and we would like to share some answers to frequently asked questions that we have been receiving with respect to summertime activities and hot weather. For more information on specific guidance for each setting, please refer to *Operational Guidance for Child Care During COVID-19* Outbreak and the *COVID-19 Safety Guidelines for Day Camps*.

Of note, as per the Ministry of Health COVID-19 Safety Guidelines for Day Camps: “Licensed childcare centres must follow the COVID-19 related health and safety requirements set out in *O. Reg. 137/15* under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (CCEYA). Additional operational guidance is provided in the Ministry of Education’s document entitled *Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak: Child Care Re-Opening*, as amended from time to time”(p. 2).

This summer, if a licensed childcare centre offers both daycare **and** day camp services, the most restrictive guideline should be followed.

Are children allowed to use water tables?

- Water tables are not permitted.
- Water play is permitted provided it is for single child use following current COVID-19 safety guidelines (for example, children may be assigned their own water buckets which would only be used by that child for the day then emptied, cleaned and disinfected at the end of use).

Are children allowed to play in sprinklers?

- Sprinkler play is permitted provided a distance of at least 2 metres is strictly maintained between children as masks can be removed for this activity.
- Mask use is not recommended when wet (masks lose their effectiveness when wet), therefore the focus should be on ensuring physical distancing.
- Ensure only one child is running through at a time and other children are maintaining their distance while waiting for their turn.
- Knowing that young children may have difficulty maintaining the 2 metres distance social distancing, markers are recommended.



Are children allowed to play in sand boxes?

- As per Public Health Sudbury & Districts recommendations, outdoor sandboxes are not considered sensory play and can continue to be used following current COVID-19 guidelines.
- Physical distancing of at least 2 m must be maintained between children and groups.
- Use designated toys and equipment for each child and/or group.
- Where toys and equipment are shared between groups, the items should be cleaned and disinfected prior to being shared.
- Hand washing before and after outdoor play is strongly recommended (hand washing using soap and water is recommended over alcohol-based hand rub when hands are visibly soiled).

Are field trips permitted?



- Field trips are discouraged due to the increased risk of potential exposure to COVID-19.
- Where there are challenges to securing outdoor play space, alternate outdoor arrangements can be made (for example, community walk).
- If an aquatic activity is planned (for example, walk to pool, lake, beach, splash pad, wading pool, etc.) the activity must adhere to regulatory requirements in each region at the time of activity.
- Masks or face coverings may be temporarily removed while engaging in an athletic or fitness activity (for example, swimming).
- Masks must be worn on the recreational water facility deck and in other areas of the facility.
- Physical distancing must be maintained from other community members or groups who may be attending the site (for example, splash pad).
- Group transportation for field trips and off-site activities is discouraged (walking to local sites is preferred). However, it can be permitted if transportation is on a charter bus and the transport is limited to a single existing cohort.

Are visitors permitted?

- Only essential visitors are permitted. The provision of special needs services may continue. Examples of essential visitors include ministry staff and other public officials (for example, fire marshal, public health inspectors).

Do children need to wear masks or face-coverings outdoors in hot weather?

- In daycare settings, while all children in grades 1 and above are required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering while indoors, use of masks when outdoors is not required if distancing of 2 metres can be adequately and consistently maintained. If 2 metre distancing cannot be maintained and masks or face-coverings are worn, they may need to be changed more frequently as they may become damp more quickly in hot, humid weather (each camp participant should have access to multiple masks to facilitate changing).
- In daycamp settings, masking and physically distancing **outdoors** is not required by individuals within a cohort. Physical distance must be maintained between individuals of other cohorts.
- Staff are encouraged to find creative ways to maintain distancing for COVID-safe outdoor play while *keeping children safe during hot weather* (ie, using marking on the ground to ensure distancing, finding shaded areas, limiting exposure during the hottest times of the day when the UV Index is 3 or higher usually between 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., ensuring children wear wide-brimmed hats, sunglasses and sunscreen, encouraging children to drink plenty of cool liquids, especially water, and monitoring for signs of dehydration, etc.).

Can mask exemptions be provided to children?

- Mask exemptions may apply to children for medical conditions.
- If a child has a mask exemption, the child may wear a face shield to limit the risk if this is a feasible/practical option for them.
- Children with a medical mask exemption need to be screened twice daily.



Can mask exemptions be provided to daycare staff?

- Mask exemptions may apply to staff members for medical conditions.
- Daycare and day camp operators are responsible for outlining reasonable mask exemption policies within their facilities.
- If a staff member possesses a reasonable mask exemption, the daycare can place the staff member in a role where they maintain 2 metres of physical distance away from others at all times.
- Staff with a mask exemption need to be screened twice during the shift.

For useful information related to COVID-19 Infection and control practices, please visit [Preventing COVID-19: Refresher Presentations for Schools and Childcare Settings | Public Health Ontario, Day and Overnight Camps | Public Health Ontario](#), visit phsd.ca or call Public Health Sudbury & Districts for more information at 705.522.9200, ext. 393 (toll-free at 1.866.522.9200).