Young Naturalist Modifications for Covid-19

We acknowledge that we can, and will, do everything in our power to reduce the risk of the transmission of covid-19 within our community. However, we cannot completely eliminate that risk. Therefore, there are two aspects of covid mitigation: precautions, and response. The precautions are for the unknown, the general environment - we take action/make policies based on the knowledge that we have about the virus. That includes (but is not limited to) keeping up to date about how it spreads, and its status in our communities. These precautions are to minimize positive cases within our Young Naturalist community. In the event of a positive case, we switch from precautions to a response - the positive case is known, and there is another, specific set of actions/policies to enact. Both precautions and response are outlined below.

We will put forth our best effort to address any and all aspects of this ever-evolving landscape. Throughout the year, you will receive a weekly update about the impact of covid on our program. This may include information that we are keeping an eye on, and will include any changes to our policies and procedures based on the data/information that emerges over time and any changes from guiding bodies (the CDC, New York state, the Orange County Department of Health, and/or the NYS Office of Children and Family Services). You may contact Kerrilee Hunter, Young Naturalist Preschool Director, with any questions or concerns that you may have either before school begins or once we are underway: 845-243-6669, or khunter@hhnm.org.

- **Before School Begins**
  - Be sure your child is potty trained
  - Talk with your child about school. Allow them to get excited! Maybe it’s different than it was a couple of years ago, but they don’t know that, and if they do... they don’t care. It will still be exciting and fun!
  - Ensure your child has everything they need in terms of clothing; much of our covid mitigation, as well as our educational philosophy, relies on utilizing the outdoors in all kinds of weather
Before You Arrive Each Day

○ Assess your child’s health. Are they coughing, sneezing, feverish, etc? When in doubt, stay home! This is one of the biggest things you can do to keep everyone safe and healthy.

○ Please ensure your child comes already dressed for the weather
  ■ Rain boots and waterproof clothing on rainy/damp days
  ■ Jackets, hats, mittens on cold days; snowsuits if applicable
    ○ Use parking in the lower lot, if you would like to park and dress children in snowsuits and winter gear just prior to drop-off
  ■ Apply any sunscreen, bug spray, etc. before arrival
  ■ Have their mask on at drop-off so that we know they have it

○ Check that your child’s backpack has:
  ■ Snack + filled water bottle
    ○ Containers/packages that children can open independently as much as possible
    ○ Please limit snack to one or two items - they need space in their backpacks for all of their things!
  ■ Spare set of clothing, including socks, underwear, and a mask
  ■ Please! We much prefer backpacks over bags - something your child can maneuver themselves. Something like a large tote bag is difficult for the children to carry on their own as we go places outdoors. It also needs to be large enough to fit their clothing, water bottle, and snack.

Safeguarding Young Naturalists During School

1. Contact Reduction

   ● Staggered drop-off and pick-up times and/or areas for each group
     ○ Owl & Deer classes in the lower parking lot
       ■ Staff cars will be parked along the left; pull in towards the right
       ■ Pull up as far as you can
       ■ Loop around to the left to exit back onto the driveway
     ○ Turtle, Bluebird, Fox, Frog & Dragonfly classes in the upper parking lot (loop)
○ Grown-ups may leave their vehicles to assist children in getting in and out of car seats, but are not allowed to be in class areas or enter buildings
  ■ Exception! Parents who are acting as substitute teachers when staff members are unavailable to sub (will be subject to all staff health check and PPE procedures), or who are helping with Fireside Fridays
  ■ This is to keep grown-ups from being considered primary contacts (and therefore required to quarantine) if there is a positive case among staff or students
● Use of outdoor space will be maximized as much as possible
  ○ Air purifiers in each classroom
  ○ Touch-free soap and paper towel dispensers in bathrooms
  ○ Snack (and lunch, for children enrolled in Lunch Club) eaten outdoors when weather/schedule permits

2. **Social Distancing**
● Groups will commingle minimally, and not indoors
● Seating will be arranged to maintain as much distance as possible - circle time, snack, etc.

4. **Handwashing/Hand sanitizing**
● Mandatory hand sanitizing on arrival and departure
● Mandatory hand washing or sanitizing before and after snack
● Hand sanitizing stations throughout classrooms and grounds. Teachers carry spray hand sanitizer for use when handwashing is not available

5. **Face Coverings/Masks/PPE**
● Teachers are required to wear masks indoors, regardless of vaccination status *(the YN staff is 100% vaccinated)*
● Adult(s) doing drop-off are required to wear masks
● Children will also wear masks:
  ■ at drop-off, so we know they have one that day
  ■ when indoors
  ■ will be encouraged to wear them when outdoors
● Teachers will have a change of clothes in case of any physical interaction with a child where mucus, saliva, etc. may get on clothing

6. **Cleaning/Sanitization**
● Trained sanitation team that is dedicated and trained in Covid-19 procedures
• Shared surfaces are cleaned and sanitized multiple times a day
• Toys sprayed with sanitizer after each class use

7. **Zoom Orientations for Parents/Outdoor Meet & Greets**
   • Orientation will be virtual, prior to school starting
   • Time to meet the staff and other YN families/students will be class by class, in the outdoor setting of Grasshopper Grove

• **Responding to a Positive Case**

If we are informed of a positive case of either a YN staff member or student, we will immediately call the Orange County Department of Health for our next steps. They will most likely resemble the CDC’s guidelines for schools, which are referenced by New York State in its Health and Safety Guide for the 2021-22 School Year.

• If a child or YN staff member tests positive for covid-19, for everyone’s safety we will close the program in order to quarantine for the recommended amount of time (10 days, as of August 2021) as per the Orange County Department of Health
  ○ We will be taking the precaution of minimizing contact between groups as much as possible. However, because our staff and a significant percentage of our students are in more than one group, and/or have siblings in other classes, we cannot create stable groups (cohorts) with no overlap. This means that in terms of response, we cannot confine “close contacts” to the class in which the positive case occurred, even though the actual risk of transmission may be very low if your child was in a different class.
  ○ We will communicate with you as efficiently as possible regarding how to proceed, once the positive case is identified.
    ■ Your child may be required to quarantine for 10 days
    ■ You may be contacted by a contact tracer during that time
  ○ We will provide virtual content during any covid-related closure (please note, that is for covid-related closures ONLY; not for closures due to inclement weather)

There are currently unknowable factors - including how many positive cases may be identified in our YN community, and the impact of vaccines potentially becoming available for children under 12 - that may affect any requirement to close. In the event of covid-related closure, there is the possibility of extending the school year by up to one week (5 school days) in June 2022.
However, this is not a guarantee and will be determined by need and by our ability to staff the classes.