CAMP WALTER SCOTT COVID-19 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR 2022

This is a general overview as of 9/26/2022 and is subject to change as we get closer to the camping season. Changes, if any, will be disclosed via email, social media, and other communication updates from the CCIW Region.

INTRODUCTION

The staff of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois & Wisconsin (CCIW) and Camp Walter Scott (CWS) have been closely following developments regarding COVID-19 since early 2020. We have implemented guidelines based on suggestions by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other local health organizations, attended webinars by the American Camping Association (ACA) and the Christian Camping and Conference Association (CCCA) and engaged in conversation with other Disciples-related campgrounds and outdoor ministries in order to share and develop best practices.

Here is a timeline and summary of our efforts and event:

2020 – All in-person family and youth camps were postponed. A camp box was available for purchase.

2021 – COVID policies were implemented; they included thorough cleaning protocols, proof of vaccination and/or negative covid test for campers, staff, and guests, social distancing, mandatory indoor masking, and isolation procedures for positive cases. Camps ran for a weekend instead of a full week. No cases of COVID were reported.

2022 – Our 2022 COVID policies changed following state, federal, and other guidelines. Cleaning procedures remained in place but vaccination and testing requirements were lessened. Camps returned to their typical full-week schedule. However, after several campers and staff attending our first full-week camp reported positive covid tests upon returning home, we made negative tests mandatory for subsequent camps. No other camps were affected by COVID and those affected during the first week recovered quickly and fully. One additional camp was rescheduled due to COVID, however, this was a case outside of camp.

As of September 26, 2022, we will continue requiring a negative COVID test from all guests attending CCIW-sponsored youth camps or events, our cleaning protocols remain in place, and we will practice social distancing and indoor masking as necessary. This document will outline the responsibilities of Camp Walter Scott staff and volunteers in order to make programs at Camp Walter Scott safe, healthy, and in compliance with the recommendations of the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Center for Disease Control. Many of our policies were drafted in conversation with information supplied by local and national health departments in conjunction with the Center for Disease Control's guidelines of safe summer camp.

Even with full vaccination and negative Covid tests, there might still be a chance of transmission and contagion. Therefore, our protocols will be required for all guests of Camp Walter Scott, including staff, volunteers, and campers. Anyone refusing to observe our guidelines will be asked to leave immediately in order to not compromise the well-being of our guests. While we strive to offer the highest level of health and safety possible, by visiting or attending programs at CWS, parents, campers, staff, volunteers, and all guests accept the risks associated with COVID-19.

Any questions regarding these policies and procedures may be sent to Eli Rolón Jeong, Associate Regional Minister (eli@cciwdisciples.org), or Clayton Summers, Camp Host (acsummers@cciwdisciples.org)

COVID PROTOCOLS

1. **Overview –** Even with full vaccination, we are asking our guests to adhere to these procedures:
    a. **Masks** – You may bring masks from home or a mask will be provided for you at Camp. Wearing masks may be required when inside and social distancing cannot occur.
    b. **Social Distancing** – We encourage social distancing while indoors when possible. This means that arrangements for family groups, bunks, closing circles, and other traditions may need to be altered as well.
    c. **Hand Washing** – Several handwashing breaks will be built into the schedule to be observed throughout the day.
    d. **Vaccination/Testing** – A negative Covid test performed within 72 hours prior to attending camp is mandatory for all attending. Upon taking their Covid test, individuals should limit their exposure to others leading up to their time at camp. At-home tests are acceptable. It is highly recommended that guests test on their own, however, CWS will have at-home tests available for those unable to test prior to arrival.
    e. **Monitoring** – We will have daily temperature checks around meal times as a part of ongoing monitoring of the health and safety of our campers, counselors, directors, staff, and volunteers.
2. **Scenarios**
    a. **Positive test for close contact at home** – If someone the camper/volunteer/staffer has been living with (i.e. a parent, spouse, or child) tests positive during the week of camp, there is still a risk of exposure (i.e. if John Doe comes to camp on Sunday and on Tuesday, John's parents test positive, even though they are home and John is at camp, there is still a chance that John could have been infected). We ask that if this is the case that the camp be notified so that the individual may go through isolation protocol and anyone in their cabin/ family group can receive notice as well and begin their isolation protocol.
    b. **Symptoms during daily monitoring** – Any individuals that show symptoms (fever, illness, loss of taste/smell, etc.) will be asked to immediately go into isolation protocol. If they test negative and their symptoms do not progress after a period of time, they may be allowed to return to the camp program. Any individual showing symptoms will also have their cabin/family group enter seclusion until they can be assessed.
    c. **Positive test after returning home** – Anyone who tests positive within 5 days of returning home from camp, should immediately contact Clayton Summers so that we can contact trace and inform the cabin mates and other campers from the previous week of their possible risk of exposure.
    d. **Positive test of counselor** – While it is our hope that by the time camps happen this summer that most of our counselors would be able to be vaccinated, we cannot guarantee that this will happen. To that end, we will be requiring every open cabin to have two counselors. This will increase our ability to continue the camping week with only one counselor in the event that one of the counselors does test positive and needs to enter isolation protocol. Should one counselor test positive, they will enter isolation protocol and the cabin in question will be secluded in their cabin until they can properly be assessed.

3. **Isolation Protocols**
    a. If an individual meets the requirements for isolation (symptoms of Covid during monitoring, etc.) they will be accompanied immediately by a nurse to the isolation area. We will designate Cabin 1 as the isolation area. If the individual has tested positive, the Health Department will be notified, their parents will be asked to pick them up, and the rest of the cabin/family group will enter into seclusion within their cabins until they can be tested as well. If the person is exhibiting symptoms, their guardian will be contacted so that approval can be given to take the person to the local hospital for additional testing and treatment. If the person has no symptoms, we will work with the Health Department to try and do additional testing to see if there was perhaps a false positive. Until the test comes back, the person will be asked to stay in isolation.
        i. Additionally, the camp will be notified of the positive test, and anyone who chooses can contact their parents/guardians to pick them up if they feel unsafe.
        ii. If this is the case, our staff will be monitored and tested regularly to ensure that they are not infected. All of the camp will be cleaned thoroughly several times and we will do our best to prepare for the coming weeks.
        iii. We will also contact the parents/guardians of those who are planning to attend in the coming weeks. Of course, if they do not feel comfortable sending their child to camp, we will offer a full refund for their registration.
    b. If the person is not exhibiting symptoms, the parents/guardians will be notified, as well as the Health Department but we will administer additional tests and monitoring while the individual is in isolation. We will continue to keep them in isolation until they are picked up by a guardian, transported to a hospital, or given an “all clear” by the Health Department.
    c. If a cabin group is isolating, they will also be tested and anyone testing positive will move over to the isolation side of camp.
    d. If there are multiple positive tests from across various cabin groups, the camp will be shut down, the Health Department and the Center for Disease Control will be notified, and they will conduct testing for the entire camp and will follow up by advising on next steps regarding how to care for and transport individuals who are infected and how to safely allow for uninfected individuals to return home.
4. **Volunteers and Staff**
    a. **Volunteers**— Volunteers who have refused a vaccine (that is, they have been given the chance and chosen not to be vaccinated) will be asked not to serve as a volunteer this summer.
        i. Volunteers will be trained in COVID protocols and are responsible for knowing and assisting with our new procedures.
        ii. As we need two counselors per cabin, and as we need as many counselors as possible to be vaccinated, we would like to ask those who may be available to strongly consider serving as a volunteer during a week at Camp this summer.
    b. **Nurses** – Anyone serving as a nurse is required to be vaccinated. We will ask each week to have two nurses to help facilitate an easier and more spread out schedule of distributing medications throughout the week.
    c. **Staff –** All staff will be strongly encouraged to be vaccinated. If they are unable to get a vaccine before camp, then a negative Covid test, as well as limited exposure to others will be mandatory**.**

5. **Facilities**
    a. Clayton Summers, our Camp Host, will be responsible for managing cleaning of camp. He will direct staff and volunteers to assist with this responsibility.
    b. Camp bathrooms and shared spaces (i.e. Dining Hall) will be cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily.
    c. There will be signs encouraging safe practices posted around camp (i.e. handwashing, not leaving toiletries on countertops, etc.)
    d. There will be adjustments to the facilities to allow for social distancing and open air spaces.
        i. Campers will be asked to sleep alternatively in upper and lower bunks so as to spread out.
        ii. At times, the Dining Hall will have all of the doors opened and fans circulating air throughout the building.
        iii. Markers will be visible in shared spaces so that when programs take place in these areas, they can be done so safely while observing social distancing.
6. **Weekly Logistics**
    a. **Arrivals**- We will have tents set up outside to assist in the registration process. Counselors will be on hand to help move campers into their cabin/Hogan. Parents will not be allowed inside the facilities (except for bathrooms in the Dining Hall).
    b. **Contact during the week** – Parents/guardians will be required to give a phone number that is the best to reach them at in the case do an emergency. As we will be on high alert regarding possible Covid risks, we ask that parents/guardians be especially attentive to calls from Camp so that we may be able to address any issues as rapidly as possible.
    c. **Cabin Groups** – While this impacts some camp programs more than others, we will be having cabin groups stay together most of the week. Whenever more "close quarters" situations are absolutely necessary (i.e. overnight, meal times, shower times) cabin groups will stay together for this part of the day.
    d. **Daily Routine** – Many aspects of our daily programming will be altered to be able to accommodate for increased social distancing. We will include several hand washing breaks throughout the day. Every cabin will have designated hand washing areas and times so as to not overlap with other cabin groups. We will have scheduled shower times for different cabin groups so there is not overlap between cabin groups in the mornings/evenings. This will also allow for cleaning by our staff in between shower times.
    e. **Meal Times** – Campers will go through the serving line as usual. Items that are self-serve will be in individual containers. Tables will be spread out throughout the dining hall, and areas will be available outside to sit as well.
    f. **Singing**—If the weather permits, we will go outside for singing. Masks will be required during singing.
    g. **Weekly Programming** – Each week is responsible for its own programming (i.e. CYF, Chi Rho, JYF will all have to examine their own schedule of activities) but will be required to adhere to enforcing social distance and masked programming at all times. It may be possible to modify some of our existing programming, but new ideas will be needed to take the place of some of our traditional weekly practices at Camp. Additional information regarding each specific week's schedule will become available as the directors develop new programming.

CONCLUSION

Camp at Camp Walter Scott might still look and feel differently than in years prior to the COVID19 pandemic. In many ways, it will be an incredibly difficult summer for us to be so close to old friends and loved ones without being able to connect with them in the ways that we normally do. It will be difficult to not be able to engage in some of our beloved traditions that we have known for many years at Camp Walter Scott. As it was last summer, this might also be a difficult summer.

It will also be a beautiful time when we can be together, united by the Holy Spirit. It will be beautiful to see the creativity and resilience of our campers, our volunteers, our staff, and the way that God is at work at Camp Walter Scott. Many religious traditions were born out of trials and tribulations. The Passover meal came as a response to the plagues and exodus story. When Solomon's Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians, the Jewish people developed new religious practices to be able to worship in a decentralized location – thus local tabernacles (or temples and eventually churches) were developed. The people who were taken into exile, away from their homeland and their loved ones, wrote some of the most beautiful and poignant sections of what we read in the Bible today. Even the Last Supper was a sacred meal shared on the eve of death.

We are in the middle of a plague (pandemic), a confusing time when our sacred locations are not safe and our holy rituals cannot comfort us. While it is difficult and painful, it is also an opportunity for us to create new beauty in our relationships with one another and with God. In fact, these are the times when we might see some of God's most amazing work. We look forward to being open to God shaping us during this summer, but we know we can only do this if camp is a safe and healthy environment for everyone who walks onto this hallowed ground.

We will continue to work with the Health Department, closely follow the updates from the Center for Disease Control, and be in communication with parents, campers, volunteers, and staff as we move forward in the coming months. We will share updated programs and developments/ changes to our protocols if the state of the pandemic changes. Most importantly, and to reiterate from the introduction: ***We believe that it is possible to hold week-long summer camps as well as other youth events so long as we continue adhering to the policies and procedures implemented last year with a few revisions made. However, if we are advised that it is unsafe to hold programs or if the State of Illinois announces any changes that would prevent us to hold camps safely, we will not open camp.***

Lastly, we ask that you please be in prayer as we continue living through COVID times. Pray as we, collectively and individually, discern what is best for our health and safety. Pray so that leaders make wise decisions. Pray for those that have known grief from this virus. Pray that the world may know the healing and wholeness that comes from our God whom we know in Christ.