

**Frequently Asked Questions on Keewaydin and Songadeewin's Covid-19 Preparedness Plans (Updated February 22, 2021)**

**1. *Are Keewaydin and Songadeewin planning to open in the summer of 2021?***

Yes! We believe that we can operate our camps safely with the appropriate procedures and systems in place. We are awaiting guidance from the state of Vermont that might impose restrictions.

**2. *What are the appropriate procedures and systems to keep camp safe?***

While no one can promise a 100% Covid free environment, the key to preventing and mitigating spread in the camp environment is being diligent in multi-layered public health interventions. These interventions include low-risk pre-camp behaviors, testing, proper indoor ventilation and being outside as much as possible, organizing ourselves into small groups (i.e. cohorts,) wearing masks when necessary, physically distancing and hand/cough hygiene.

**3. *What will your testing policy and system be?***

The technology of Covid-19 testing continues to evolve, so it remains to be seen the exact form that our testing will take. Nevertheless, we anticipate that we will be asking our families and staff to change their pre-camp behaviors for approximately 10-14 days before coming to camp and to get tested shortly before arriving at camp. Only staff and campers with a confirmed negative result on a diagnostic test will be allowed to come to camp. There will likely be testing throughout the summer at camp, but the exact nature of that remains to be determined.

**4. *What does a cohort system mean and why does this help?***

A cohort system means dividing age groups (i.e. longhouses and wigwams) into smaller groups of roughly groups of 16-20—and having those cohort groups live, eat and, initially, do many of their activities together, physically distanced from other cohort groups. The advantage of operating in cohorts is that if someone does test positive during the summer, it facilitates effective contact tracing and quarantining. As the summer progresses and the camp remains healthy, gradually cohort groups can merge.

**5. *Is mask wearing necessary at camp?***

Yes. While campers are operating just within their cohort—in their tent or cabin, or in activities with just their cohort—they will not have to wear masks. A cohort will be considered like a family. But there will be many situations where the intermingling of cohorts will be inevitable that will require mask wearing and physical distancing (e.g. using the bathrooms, meetings with the entire age group, many free time situations, etc).

**6. *Will Keewaydin and Songa be able to run trips this summer?***

We are planning a trip program. We are working on several different scenarios, based on possible restrictions in other states and in Canada. Currently, the Canadian border is closed.

**7. *What physical changes have you made to make camp safer?***

- We have large event style tents for Keewaydin and Songa which we will erect next to the dining halls (on tennis court number one behind the Wangan Room). This will allow us to

seat most of the campers and staff outdoors and allow for maximum physical distancing inside our dining halls.

- We have installed fans in certain buildings to facilitate the circulation of fresh air.
- We have constructed sinks on the outdoor walls of our bathrooms to make handwashing easier and safer.
- We have added an extra row of benches in the Songa Circle to allow for campers and staff to be more spread out.

**8. Will there be any pre-arrival behavioral expectations for staff and campers?**

Yes. Staff, campers and parents or guardians driving campers to camp will have to adhere to strict low-risk behavior for approximately 10-14 days before camp (we will be more specific when we know what the state of Vermont requires). This means following all the best practices when outside one's household to avoid Covid: wearing a properly fitting mask, maintaining proper distancing, keeping most interactions with others outdoors and frequent handwashing. **Most importantly** it means no contact with anyone outside your immediate household, except what is mandatory for work and school; and no travel except travel to camp. **This part of the plan is absolutely critical for the success of camp this summer. We need everyone to arrive healthy! We are counting on everyone—parents, campers and staff—to comply with the pre-camp low-risk behaviors. This is the ultimate form of "Help the Other Fellow" and being "Strong of Heart!"**

**9. Are there special instructions regarding transporting campers to camp?**

Yes!

- *By Car:* Drop-off will be short and sweet in 2021! On June 27 and July 25, parents will arrive at designated parking lots and designated times to drop off their children. Parents and campers will be greeted by our staff who will get the campers' belongings and accompany them to meet their staff and get settled in their tents or cabins. Unfortunately, because of Covid-19, parents won't be able to enter onto the campus, as is our normal custom. We will miss this feature of opening day, but in the interest of safety, this is what we have to do in 2021.
- *By Bus:* Federal and state rules will guide us; however, at this point, we plan to provide bus service from and to New York City and Westchester County, New York on June 27, July 25 and August 21. Buses will only be occupied at 50% maximum so that campers and staff will be physically distanced. Staff, campers and drivers will be masked and the buses will be ventilated.
- *By Air:* Federal and state rules will guide us. At this point, the state of Vermont is requiring a 14-day quarantine (or 7 days and a Covid Test) upon arrival in Vermont for anyone flying to the state. Keewaydin and the Vermont Camp Association are working with the state to modify this rule, given our own strict pre-camp low-risk behavioral expectations and a negative PCR test result requirement as well as cohorting upon arrival at camp.

**10. Will there be a Mid-Season parent visiting weekend in 2021?**

Unfortunately, no. Because of Covid-19, we will not have parent visiting during the Mid-Season weekend this summer. We will all miss having this event as we normally do, but we hope you understand!

**11. Does Keewaydin recommend that families get Tuition Insurance to cover their loss in the event that they have to cancel for approved circumstances?**

Yes. As always we recommend that you purchase tuition insurance. The data management program we are now using, CampMinder, offers such a product.

**12. Will Keewaydin require campers and staff to be vaccinated in order to attend camp?**

Unlikely. The vaccine is unlikely to be available to children for several months—not soon enough for camp. While the pace of vaccination is increasing and our hope is high that many of our staff will get vaccinated before camp, it is likely that some staff will not be able to be vaccinated before camp, due to availability in their state. Nevertheless, we strongly encourage anyone coming to camp who can get the vaccine to do so! The CDC counts summer camp counselors in the category of “child care providers,” which places them in a prioritized category in many states.

**13. Is your Covid-19 preparedness plan 100% complete?**

No. While there is much that we know and much that we have already planned for, we also know that we are going to learn more over the next few months that will help us finalize our plans. We expect that we will have our plans fully in place by the spring.

**14. What resources are you using to develop your Covid-19 preparedness plans?**

We have hired Dr. Laura Blaisdell as a consultant. Dr. Blaisdell MD/MPH, FAAP is a pediatrician with a public health degree focused on infectious disease. As an expert author of *The Field Guide for Summer Camps*, she is one of the lead consulting physicians for the American Camp Association (ACA). For nearly 20 years she has been the Medical Director for Camp Winnebago in Maine.

- We consult regularly with the Vermont Health Department and follow guidelines from the ACA and the CDC.
- We consult regularly with peer leaders from the ACA, the VCA (Vermont Camp Association) and a group of New England Camp leaders called the Camp Consortium.
- Finally, we consult with a Keewaydin network of people with expertise in testing, pediatrics, and infectious disease.

Thank you for your patience and your understanding as we get ourselves ready for the summer. As we know more, we will be in touch. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.