

Public Health and Safety Guidelines

Although the risk of Coronavirus transmission within Canada has been significantly reduced due to vaccinations, the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus remains, and the safety of our traveling youth participants and their host families is our priority. Experiences Canada has put the following protocols into place based on Public Health guidelines:

1. Due to federal regulations related to the requirement for full vaccinations to travel by air, rail, bus, or public transit all youth participating in an exchange and persons living at the hosting home eligible to receive one must therefore be **fully vaccinated** to take part in an exchange.
2. All participating groups will receive free rapid antigen tests to be administered prior to each exchanges. This includes testing prior to travelling and hosting.
3. Organizers of groups **travelling** should ask all parents/guardians to keep their child at home if;
 - a. the youth participant is awaiting COVID-19 testing results or has any fever, cough or cold/flu symptoms
 - b. the youth has been in close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 2 weeks
 - c. they've traveled outside of Canada in the past two weeks and are required to quarantine or self-isolate
4. Similarly, Group Organizers **hosting** should ask all host families/caregivers to decline participating if there are ANY individuals staying in their home who are:
 - a. Awaiting COVID-19 testing results, or have any fever, cough, or cold/flu symptoms
 - b. Have traveled outside of Canada on a cruise ship or to a high risk area (as determined by Public Health Agency of Canada) for COVID-19 in the past month

If the host youth participant fits into either of these categories, we ask parents/guardians to keep their child at home and decline to host a visiting youth in their home.

5. We encourage group organizers to review recommended best hygiene practices with their youth participants prior to traveling. These include:
 - frequent hand-washing for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap
 - use of hand sanitizer when soap and water are unavailable

- sneeze into a tissue and dispose of it or sneeze into the crook of your elbow instead of their hands
 - avoid touching your face with unwashed hands
 - refrain from sharing food, water bottles, cell phones, or other personal items
 - avoid unnecessary touching of dirty or high traffic surfaces that perpetuate germs (particularly metal ones) such as handrails, doors
 - avoid unnecessary physical contact with others such as high fives, holding hands, hand shakes, hugs, kisses - consider making up fun greetings and acknowledgements like jazz hands, finger pistols, or finger snaps instead
6. All groups must be aware of the health protocols concerning Covid 19 in their province/territory as well as their twin's province or territory prior to participating in an exchange.
- **Alberta:** <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-public-health-actions.aspx>
 - **British Columbia:** <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restrictions>
 - **Manitoba:** <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/prs/orders/index.html>
 - **New Brunswick:** <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/corporate/promo/covid-19.html>
 - **Newfoundland and Labrador:** <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/>
 - **Northwest Territories:** <https://www.gov.nt.ca/covid-19/en/services/gatherings-and-events>
 - **Nova Scotia:** <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/restrictions-and-guidance/>
 - **Nunavut:** <https://www.gov.nu.ca/health/information/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>
 - **Ontario:** <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/public-health-measures>
 - **Prince Edward- Island:** <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/topic/peis-response>
 - **Quebec:** <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus>
 - **Saskatchewan:** <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/covid19-measures>
 - **Yukon:** <https://yukon.ca/en/covid-19-information>
7. If there is a youth participant who develops any symptoms during the exchange, Organizers must take the following steps:
- a. Notify the parents/guardians.
 - b. Contact Public Health authorities for further direction. They will advise of the steps that they will need to take to prevent transmission. In some cases, based on the nature of the infection, this may mean hospitalization but in other cases, this may mean quarantine.
 - c. Keep Experiences Canada informed of the situation.

8. In the event a youth participant is unable to travel as a result of these protocols, we ask the Organizer to determine, in full consultation with the parent/guardian of the affected child, the best next steps. This may involve the child staying in hospital care; staying in the host home (if that is an acceptable option); staying with friends or family in the area; or securing a hotel room and assigning a chaperone.

As a general rule, there will be no cancellation or change fee penalties charged to families for any youth who cannot participate due to being symptomatic or having to delay their travel due to possible exposure or public health required quarantine or isolation

If you have any questions, please consult with your Experiences Canada coordinator who is always happy to assist you on a case-by-case basis.