

## Public Health and Safety Guidelines

As of June 20, 2022, the Government of Canada announced that it will suspend vaccination requirements for domestic and outbound travel. Other public health measures, such as wearing a mask, continue to apply and will be enforced throughout a traveller's journey on a plane or train. 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 encourages all group organizers and twinned families to discuss their expectations with respect to health and safety protocols well in advance of the exchange.

Experiences Canada has put the following protocols into place based on Public Health guidelines:

1. 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
2. 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.

3. 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
4. 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>
5. 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.

6. 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.

Presently, and until further notice, our agreements with airlines allows cancellation or one name change without a change fee. This is temporary due to COVID and could be changed at any time without notice. Should there be additional change fees charged by the airlines related due to contracting COVID, or other illnesses during the exchange, these additional costs shall be borne by the group and/or parent-guardian. The same conditions apply to additional accommodation fees (when applicable).

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.