



## Covid and Nature's Classroom Institute as of August 1<sup>st</sup> 2021

### Benefits of NCI

Environmental and outdoor learning boasts an array of scientifically-proven benefits for students, from increased environmental stewardship and awareness, to improved social, academic, physical and psychological health. Nature deficit disorder, as coined by author Richard Louv in his 2005 book *Last Child in the Woods*, is the idea that many behavioral problems and challenges facing our students, such as reduced attention spans and obesity, are actually caused by lack of time outdoors. Nature-based learning has shown to be more effective than traditional teaching, to increase attention spans and to reduce stress. It's no surprise then that pediatricians have started prescribing time outdoors to children.

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### *Guidelines.*

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### ACTIVITIES

The activities of Nature's Classroom Institute include a variety of outdoor and indoor exploration, games, activities, and events that are designed to motivate and expand a student's education and awareness of the world around them. NCI is a place where students and staff are often in contact and near each other every day and every night. This includes but is not limited to: eating at the table together at meals in the dining hall, doing class activities or playing games where the ball or equipment is touched by many participants, and sleeping inside the cabins.

### RISKS

NCI will be taking more health precautions this year. Students who arrive to NCI with a fever, have a cough, or have been exposed in the past two weeks to a friend or family member who had COVID-19 WILL NOT be allowed into activities or to stay on campus. Other precautions during the week of your visit, include encouraging and enforcing frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizers and more wiping down of doorknobs and other high use areas with antibacterial wipes. NCI will send home any student or staff who have a high temperature. But even taking these extra precautions, NCI will still be exposed to the risk of contracting the Coronavirus or possibly some other illness.



The activities and risks of the NCI are an integral part of the student's experience. If eliminated, students would be deprived of the opportunity for the growth and development which NCI and its school clients expect.

NCI has reduced the number of students that participate in our program, based on good faith efforts to protect students and adults who are on campus. If a school participating at NCI with another school or number of schools, the schools will have the option to choose whether to mix with their partner schools or to keep in their respective school pod. This will be discussed with the Education Directors prior to each visit.

Participating students and teachers will need to be screen with a temperature check and a 6 point symptom check (see attach) prior to participating in the program.

**Mask wearing** – NCI staff will allow any student to wear a mask if they so choose, this will be positively supported so students will feel comfortable wearing masks. Please ensure that your child has at least three masks per day. Please send a separate container for used masked to be returned home for cleaning. NCI will follow CDC guidelines as things change in regards to Covid.

**Social distancing**, The CDC guidelines state that 3 foot social distancing is recommended while inside. NCI will take all precautions to comply with this guideline.

**Handwashing and Sanitizing:** NCI will provide hand sanitization stations at entrances to all buildings that the students will use including the dining hall and dorm facilities. Hand wash will be encouraged, and seen as part of each activity, and students will have access to handwashing during and after all activities.

### **Sleeping arrangements**

Sleeping arrangements will be discussed on an individual bass with the school and visiting teachers. One person per bunk is possible and bunks are separated by at least 3 feet. All dorms are AC conditioned and fully winterized.

### **Dining room**

NCI will require all students to wash hands and use sanitization stations on entering the dining hall. We will be reducing the number of participants at each table from 10 to 8.



Kitchen staff will wear mask and all safety protocols will be meticulously supervised. Nice usually conducts its dining service as family style, this will be adjusted depending on Covid and the protocols that we will need to put in place for the safety of the children.

**Staff NCI:** staff will be all vaccinated. No unvaccinated adult from our organization will come in contact with students.

Contact outside of NCI group. There will be no contact with personnel, not part of the NCI staff, or visiting groups staff and students.

### **Paired schools' protocols**

Schools that are paired with another school will have the choice of mixing with activities or staying with their own pods. This will put some challenges on our staff as far as the variety in curriculum we may be able to offer but we will do our best. In the dining hall groups can choose to mix tables or have their own separate tables for Covid reason.

Thank you for all the work you do to give your students this life changing experience.

Geoffrey E. Bishop  
Founder and Executive Director  
Nature's Classroom Institute