

COVID-19 Risk Management Protocols for Outbound World Learning Youth Programs

World Learning has implemented the following health and safety protocols with the goal of reducing COVID-19 infection and the spread of the virus from one location to another.

To achieve this goal, World Learning adheres to both home country entry regulations and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations for mitigating the spread of COVID-19. Because World Learning operates in a global context, the COVID-19 protocols listed below will serve as a minimum requirement across all World Learning youth programs. For example, if a host country does not have an isolation requirement, our programs will adhere to World Learning's isolation protocols. Conversely, if host country COVID protocols are stricter than World Learning's, World Learning will defer to host country protocols.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Responding to the dynamic risk horizon caused by the COVID-19 virus, and out of an abundance of caution, World Learning continues to evaluate and amend many program elements to mitigate risk. These include:

1. Homestays

Homestays have always been an integral part of the World Learning Youth Programs, however due to the elevated health risk posed by COVID-19, they were suspended during the pandemic. As global vaccination rates continue to increase, homestays are allowed under the following conditions:

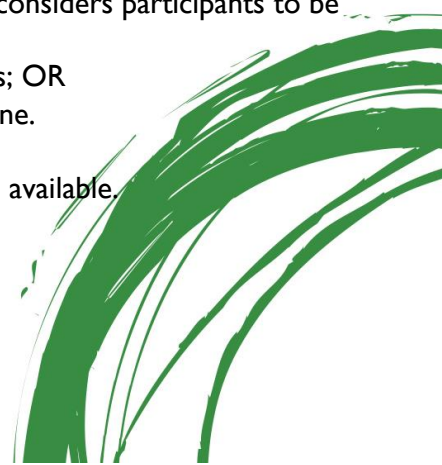
- Key COVID-19 indicators are not at elevated levels (e.g. case numbers, vaccination rate, hospitalizations, and hospital capacity).
- COVID-19 testing, and treatment is readily available at or near the homestay in the event a participant or homestay family member gets sick, and accommodation plans allow for isolation and care of anyone who tests positive.
- In most cases, participants in homestays are placed in single rooms. However, in locations where accommodation resources are more limited and may not allow for single rooms, participants might be placed in a shared room with the standard homestay safety protocols in place.

To the extent possible, in places where these conditions cannot be met or in locations where risk has increased after participants have entered the homestay and the homestay is considered unsafe, World Learning will utilize alternative accommodation such as hotels, guesthouses, apartments or other viable and safe options available in the program country.

2. Vaccinations

As part of our commitment to ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of participants, staff, and host communities, **World Learning requires participants to be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccine prior to the start of their program.** [In accordance with the CDC](#), World Learning considers participants to be up to date once they have received:

- Two (2) doses in a 2-dose vaccine series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines; OR
 - One (1) dose in a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine.
- AND
- Latest dose of the relevant booster when it is [recommended by the CDC](#) and is available.



In short, even if a participant received the original monovalent booster, they still need to receive this updated bivalent booster when it is [recommended by the CDC](#), to be in line with World Learning requirements.

World Learning understands that there are legitimate reasons why participants may not be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccine. In turn, we provide the opportunity to petition for an exemption to our vaccination requirement on the grounds of medical reasons, sincerely held religious beliefs, or unavailability of the vaccine/booster doses.

Petitions will be reviewed by World Learning's Risk Assessment Committee if they do not present undue hardship and/or pose a direct threat to the health and safety of the requesting participant or to other members of our programs.

If a participant's petition is denied and they wish to travel on the program, they will need to be fully vaccinated, including boosters, no later than two weeks prior to their departure date.

3. Masks

[The CDC recommends wearing a well-fitted mask](#) to help prevent severe illness and reduce the potential for strain on healthcare systems.

World Learning requires all participants, regardless of vaccination status, to wear a mask anywhere required by host-country laws or in locations where World Learning and partners on the ground determine it is necessary to mask based on conditions at the time.

World Learning recognizes that COVID-19 prevalence varies from one location to another and conditions, while improved in many places, are still very fluid. World Learning will outline the masking protocols for each location in the location-specific risk management plans developed prior to each term and will adjust protocols at any point if local government regulations change or conditions warrant it.

4. Tests & Quarantine

The following testing guidelines are based on CDC recommendations.

Before Departure to Host Country

World Learning encourages all participants to [obtain a viral test as close to the time of departure as possible](#), but no more than 3 days prior to travel. Participants who test positive should begin isolation (see Isolation section below) and [should not travel](#) for at least 5 full days since the onset of symptoms or since testing positive if asymptomatic. After testing positive, participants can travel if:

- They have completed the isolation period of 5 full days
- Remain symptom free OR if originally symptomatic, their symptoms are improving
- Have not had a fever for at least 24 hours
- Wear a mask in all public settings, especially on any public transportation, until 10 full days since the onset of symptoms or since testing positive if asymptomatic.



During Travel

In accordance with [CDC recommendations for individuals during travel](#), participants should properly wear a well-fitting mask or respirator while on public transportation (such as airplanes, trains, buses, ferries) and in transportation hubs (such as airports, stations, and seaports), especially in locations that are crowded or poorly ventilated (e.g. airport jetways).

Upon Arrival to Host Country

Participants who are NOT up to date with their COVID-19 vaccine must quarantine after arrival for five full days with receipt of a negative test taken between day 3-5 of quarantine **OR** must quarantine for 10 days if no test is administered. The day of arrival is considered day 0. Quarantine requires remaining in a specific room separate from other non-exposed people.

All participants must obtain a viral COVID-19 test 3-5 days after arrival. See *COVID Response Protocol* section below for protocols should this test produce a positive result.

5. Transportation

Traveling on public transportation, including planes, increases the risk of getting and spreading COVID-19 as it puts travelers in close contact with each other, often for prolonged periods of time, and exposes them to frequently touched surfaces. While the [CDC no longer requires wearing masks on public transport](#), World Learning **strongly recommends** that participants mask while on planes and any form of public transport regardless of local masking protocols, in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and help protect the local communities in which participants are immersed abroad.

Some programs may organize private transport, such as vans or buses, for participant groups to travel between program activities. In turn, World Learning staff and partners on the ground will determine if it is necessary for participants to mask based on local conditions at the time.

6. Exposure

Regardless of vaccination status or previous infection, participants who have a [known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 must](#) wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days from the “date of last close contact” (the date of last close contact is considered day 0) and should get tested at least 5 days after the date of last close contact. In turn, if participants test positive or develop COVID-19 symptoms, they should follow the recommendations in the Isolation section below.

7. Positive Test or Symptomatic

If a person tests positive and/or is experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, regardless of their vaccination status, World Learning follows these CDC guidelines:

a. **Isolate.** Isolation is used to separate people infected with COVID-19 from those who are not infected. Isolation means staying in housing accommodations in a specific room and separating from other people for at least five full days (day 0 is the first day of symptoms or the date of the positive viral test for non-symptomatic individuals).

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Those in isolation should:

- Stay in a separate room from other participants, and use a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Take steps to improve ventilation, if possible.
- Do not share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils.
- Take care of themselves (rest, stay hydrated, etc.), and monitor their symptoms. If participants have an [emergency warning sign](#), they should seek emergency medical care immediately.
- Remain in contact with their program staff.
- Wear a well-fitting mask when around other people for an additional 5 days after ending isolation.
- Do not travel on public or private transportation for at least five full days since the onset of symptoms or since testing positive if asymptomatic. Day 0 is the date of the positive test result or the date symptoms first appeared.
- After testing positive, participants can travel if:
 - They have completed the isolation period of 5 full days
 - Remain symptom free OR if originally symptomatic, their symptoms are improving
 - Have not had a fever for at least 24hrs
 - Wear a mask in all public settings, especially on any public transportation, until 10 full days since the onset of symptoms or since testing positive if asymptomatic

Should onsite staff capacity, itinerary, and/or logistical issues cause unique challenges for the participant and program in relation to the 5-day do-not-travel policy, World Learning student affairs and medical staff will assess the feasibility of the participant traveling earlier.

b. **Contact Trace.** An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting 48 hours before the person has any symptoms or tests positive. [Contact tracing](#) helps protect you and your local community by letting one's close contacts know they may have been exposed to COVID. The CDC defines close contact as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, two days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

c. **Ending Isolation.** People who had COVID-19 and **were symptomatic** may be around others after: a) five full days of isolation (day 0 is the first day symptoms appeared), **and** b) 24 hours with no fever (without using fever-reducing medications), **and** c) other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving. These individuals should continue to mask around others at home and in public for an additional 5 days after ending isolation (day 6 through day 10).

People who had COVID-19 but were **non-symptomatic**—and continue to have no symptoms—may be around others after 5 full days of isolation (day 0 is the date the test was conducted). However, these individuals should continue to mask around others at home and in public for an additional five days after ending isolation (day 6 through day 10).

