

Zoo School COVID-19 Response

We are so excited to announce the launch of our new Home-School Program, Zoo School! Zoo School will follow health and safety guidelines as released in the “Field Guide for Camps on Implementation of CDC Guidance,” released by the American Camp Association (ACA) in May of 2020. This document was developed in partnership with the CDC, State Boards of Health and county health departments across the country, as well as the American Academy of Pediatrics. We have been closely monitoring the situation regarding COVID-19, and after careful consideration of federal and local recommendations, will be implementing the following precautions to keep your children safe!

Here is what we are doing in class to keep your children safe:

General Class Changes

- Classes will cap at 20 students each.
- Students and teachers will be required to wear masks throughout class with the exception of meal times, which will be taken with 6’ of distance between all individuals.
- Racine Zoo School will use the concentric group circle approach to keep children safe during classes, as described in ACA’s CDC Guidance Implementation Guide. This approach insures groups will be kept separate as much as is feasible, and groups kept small and consistent to minimize risks of exposure.
- All students will be required to bring a backpack or bag with personal belongings, including their lunch, to avoid spread or contamination from common storage.
- No communal craft supplies will be provided. Instead, each student will receive their own set of craft supplies at the start of the class, to be turned in at the end of the sessions for a full disinfection.
- All areas will be thoroughly disinfected during and at the end of each class.
- Currently, animal encounters will take place but be non-contact. We will be continually reevaluating this and will make changes as conditions permit.
- Class activities will be done outdoors as much as weather permits. Please send your child dressed for the weather.
- Staff training will include a new module on facts about COVID-19, new policies, and how to reduce potential risks and spread associated with Racine Zoo School.

Food and Beverages

- Students will bring their own lunches. Rather than storing these lunches together, lunches will be kept in individual bags/backpacks and stored separately.
- Snacks will be provided. Only individually wrapped snacks will be available. If your child has dietary restrictions, we highly recommend packing snacks for our daily snack time for your child, as restrictions will be more difficult to accommodate. We will still do our best to accommodate these restrictions.

- Social distancing will be enforced while eating.
- Children should bring their own reusable water bottles. Non-touch water refill stations will be available for students to refill their water through the day, as we will not be using drinking fountains. We will have disposable cups available if water bottles are lost/forgotten.

Pick-up/ Drop Off

- Students will be dropped off/picked up at the Augusta Street gate (Located at the northeast corner of the Zoo).
- To avoid bunching up at pickup/dropoff, all parents may choose to drop off anytime from 8:45am-9:00am in the morning, and pick up anytime from 1:00pm-1:15pm in the afternoon, without an additional charge.
- To keep the flow of traffic during drop off, we ask that parents say goodbye in the car as much as feasible in the morning. At pick up, staff will diligently try to facilitate students having all of their belongings together in their bag before you arrive.
- Parents and students will be asked to maintain social distance during pick up/drop off times.
- While we will check IDs at pickup, staff will initial students in/out to avoid sharing of pens and passing papers.
- All students will hand sanitize upon arrival to class.
- ACA best practices recommend the same adult picking up and dropping off students every day, and not bringing siblings/other family members along. While we recognize this is not possible for every family, please try to accommodate this request as you are able.

Symptom Monitoring

- Parents will be asked to take their child's temperature daily before coming to class. Temperatures over 100F should not come to the Zoo. Temperatures will also be taken each day by the teacher using a laser reader.
- Any children exhibiting any symptoms associated with COVID-19 (fever, unusual shortness of breath, cough, severe headache, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or other symptoms as determined by the teacher) should stay home.
- If a student has a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, all parents, as well as local health officials, will be notified. The individual child's name and any identifying information will NOT be disclosed.
- If you or a member of your household has been in contact with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, we request that you refrain from bringing your child to class.
- If a child is sick during the day, the child will be pulled from class to the education office until an authorized adult is able to pick them up. This will be done with care and consideration to the child as to not cause stress for the student, and activities will be provided until they are able to be picked up.

- These same procedures will be applied to staff, and additional staff will be available to fill in should your child's teacher become ill. If any teacher or student has a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, all parents, as well as local health officials, will be notified.
- In order to accommodate these classes at a low cost, funds for missed days for any reason will not be refundable.
- Any absent student who has already attended class will be contacted to follow up and make sure they are not absent due to symptoms.
- Particularly if your student is at a higher risk of complications associated with COVID-19, please talk with your child about regular hand-washing and avoiding touching their face through the day. We will take handwashing breaks and distribute hand sanitizer through the day and before meals and snacks, but consider sending your child with their own bottle of hand sanitizer to keep with them.

Additional Resources:

If you would like to reference materials used in creating these guidelines, below are the resources used. These new guidelines were created through close reading of these resources, as well as conversations with other AZA Zoos in the state and around the country, and careful consideration by our Racine Zoo education team.

American Camp Association's Camp Operations Guide Summer 2020

<https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/coronavirus/camp-business/camp-operations-guide-summer-2020>

CDC Guidance for Camps

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/Camps-Decision-Tree.pdf>

CDC Considerations for Youth and Summer Camps

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/summer-camps.html>

We understand this is an incredibly difficult and stressful time for children and families, and the decision to have your child attend Zoo School is a personal decision for you and your family. We hope these measures alleviate some of your concerns!