

Friends General Conference

**Pandemic Health
& Safety Policy**

2022

Created: February 2022

Last Updated on: May 27th, 2022

Pandemic Policy Working Group

In the Fall 2021, Friends General Conference (here on out referred to as FGC) formed a Pandemic Policy Working Group to create a policy for reinstating in-person events. This group is made up of staff and volunteers with a variety of gifts and identities. These include, but are not limited to: a legacy of resilience, empowerment, and building alliances with the commitment to establish equitable structures within and outside of the Religious Society of Friends; public health and medical backgrounds; decades of concern for racial equity with years of employment in factories, warehouses, restaurants and working at institutions of higher education; extensive experience with Gathering, FGC committee work and smaller FGC meetings; and having children of a variety of ages.

The folks listed below represent the following FGC committees: Personnel, Long Range Conference Planning, Development Committee, Organizational Guide Committee and Committee for Nurturing Ministries.

Knowing that this working group does not encompass the diversity we hope to represent, the draft policy was shared with a number of FGC committees and staff for feedback.

This group is responsible for facilitating the policy creation process.

Pandemic Policy Working Group:

Frank Barch (he/him, European Descent)

Elaine Giletta (she/her, White)

Pim Halka (ze/zir or he/him, White)

Vanessa Julye (she/her, African Indigenous)

Katrina McQuail (she/her, [White](#))

David Nachman (he/him)

Anne Pomeroy (they/them, White)

Melissa Rycroft (she/her, White)

Lori Sinitzky (she/her, Ashkenazi and Caribbean)

Karen Snare, (she/her, European-American)

Given that the policy may need to be modified as the situation and science understanding around COVID-19 changes, and people need to know what they are committing to; The Pandemic Health and Safety Policy version that is in place at when an event registration goes live - is the version that will be used for that event.

Friends General Conference Health & Safety Policy, 2022

OVERVIEW

Friends General Conference constitutes a broad and resilient spiritual community in which individuals care for one another and follow long-held Quaker testimonies. Implicit in each testimony is the recognition that Friends live in close relationship with one another. We envision a vital and growing Religious Society of Friends—a faith that deepens spiritually, welcomes newcomers, builds supportive and inclusive community, and provides loving service and witness in the world. We are led by the Spirit joining together in ministry to offer services that help Friends, meetings, and seekers explore, deepen, connect, serve, and witness within the context of Friends' living faith.

The current global pandemic has affected the world and Friends lives and ways of being in unimaginable ways. The spread of COVID-19 has required us to take precautions as individuals and as a community and has affected Friends' daily lives in ways large and small. In the summer of 2020, Friends General Conference did not host an in-person Gathering for the first time in 43 years. It suspended and/or transitioned to virtual all in-person committee work as well as retreats for youth and people of color through December 2021. For so many Friends, these changes highlighted the importance and value of in-person gatherings. As a result, it has strengthened Friends' resolve to safely commence gathering together in-person again.

This Health and Safety Policy provides COVID-19 pandemic guidelines for all conference operations and activities. The policy was created by the Pandemic Policy Working Group in consultation with FGC staff and some committees. It has incorporated many sources of knowledge and guidance, including best practices within the broader conference community, labor practices that protect the health and safety of staff and volunteers, and requirements from local, state, and federal agencies. Given the dynamic nature of the pandemic, this policy attempts to account for multiple scenarios and contingencies and will be updated in order to adapt to changing conditions.

As an international organization, FGC will use the World Health Organization's (WHO) guidelines in general and the Center for Disease Controls (CDC) when appropriate or necessary due to the event location.

Decisions about canceling, postponing, or pivoting in-person events to virtual events will be made by FGC's General Secretary, Presiding Clerk, and Clerk of the committee overseeing the event (e.g. Long Range Conference Planning committee in the case of the Gathering). The General Secretary will also consult with staff and appropriate committees. Due to the constantly shifting nature of this pandemic, FGC may choose to cancel an in-person event at any time, though will try to do so with as much notice as possible. Leading up to any event throughout 2022, staff will monitor implementation of this policy. The policy will be updated and adapted as needed and all updates will be communicated to the community.

As long as there are cases of COVID-19, no strategies can completely eliminate transmission risk at an in-person event. However, it is possible to keep the risk level as low as possible, combining mitigation strategies and programmatic alterations to produce magical, fun-filled events. As the authors of this policy, we are cautious, diligent, and eager to welcome people back to in-person FGC events in 2022.

The Pandemic Policy Working Group

Policy Summary

To attend an FGC event, participants will be required to have:

(1) Up to date vaccinations, completed at least 2 weeks prior to the event. (WHO [definition of up-to-date](#)). This includes any boosters for which the individual is eligible. The only non-vaccinated attendees allowed will be children not currently eligible per the WHO.

Explanation: There are many reasons members of the Quaker community may not be vaccinated. This recommendation is made in light of the increased risk of transmission by, infection of, and severe illness to a non-vaccinated person; and that there will be many FGC events offering a virtual alternative. As young children are not currently eligible for vaccination (at the time of this writing), proof of their vaccination cannot be required.

(2) Please take either a PCR or rapid test 72 hours prior to departure.

Explanation: To avoid becoming sick upon arrival, please monitor your symptoms and get a PCR or rapid test if you are exhibiting COVID symptoms in the weeks prior to an event. PCR tests are more sensitive than rapid (antigen) tests at detecting COVID-19 infection, and are therefore preferred to a rapid antigen test. PCR tests, however, can be difficult to attain and are more expensive when needing a quick result turnaround. In the unfortunate event of a positive test, please report this positive result to the organizing FGC staff person.

(3) Negative rapid (antigen) test upon arrival (provided by FGC).

Explanation: With the possibility of asymptomatic transmission, FGC will provide testing for everyone upon their first arrival at the event. PCR tests are more sensitive than rapid tests, but due to the time needed for result turn-around, rapid tests are the best option.

By registering for and attending an FGC event, attendees are agreeing to:

(1) Properly wear approved masks whenever/wherever required:

- Inside = always (except when actively eating and drinking);
- Outside = recommended (required for activities with close group contact)

Explanation: Proper masking and distancing have been shown to effectively reduce the likelihood of transmitting the aerosolized SARS-CoV-2 virus.

(2) Self-check symptoms each day of the event before leaving their on-site residence, and to contact the event organizer and get a rapid test if they experience symptoms of COVID-19.

Explanation: As care of the community stands paramount, each member of the community is asked to complete a symptom self-check each day of an event. Because symptoms might arise from allergies or another virus, confirming through a negative COVID-19 test helps to ensure the safety and care of the community.

(3) Participate in on-site rapid testing at the start of the event, as well as mid-event rapid testing for any event 5 days or longer (provided by FGC).

Explanation: The hope is to catch anyone who was exposed to SARS-CoV-2 while traveling to the event.

(4) Participate in contact tracing.

Explanation: Many sites require FGC to file a contact tracing plan before they allow use of their facilities. The details of how contact tracing will be implemented will vary according to the event and the facility.

(5) Monitor symptoms for two weeks after the end of the event. If symptoms develop, promptly obtain a COVID-19 test.

Explanation: By attending an event, there is risk of exposure. Monitoring symptoms, promptly testing if symptoms develop, and reporting a positive COVID-19 test to FGC will allow FGC to follow appropriate protocols of notifying others of possible exposure.

And if a member of the FGC event community tests positive, they are agreeing to:

(1) If the test precedes arrival at the event, stay home. The individual may choose to cancel or switch to virtual participation (if the event has a virtual option) at no additional charge. (Refunds or partial refunds will depend on each event's specifics. Please discuss with the FGC staff responsible for the event).

Explanation: The protection of the community is primary and is held in tension with the monetary impact of canceling participation.

(2) If the positive test occurs while onsite; plan to quarantine off-site, at the individual's expense, with an option to switch to the virtual program at no additional charge.

Explanation: Quarantine reduces the further exposure and spread of COVID-19 in the community.

(3) If symptoms develop within two weeks after the event, obtain a COVID-19 test. If it is positive, report the result to FGC.

Explanation: By attending an event, there is risk of exposure. Monitoring symptoms, prompt testing if symptoms develop, and reporting a positive COVID-19 test to FGC will allow FGC to follow appropriate protocols of notifying others of possible exposure.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In creating this plan and overall strategy for reopening FGC in-person events, we (the Pandemic Policy Working Group) followed these guiding principles:

Remain committed to equity

FGC will place considerations of equity, diversity, inclusion, and access at the center of all event planning efforts. All discernment will incorporate the query: ***How does this decision support FGC in its goal to transform into an actively anti-racist faith community?***

Stay grounded and intent in FGC's mission

Amid all that has happened and all that will happen, FGC will remain focused on our vision:

We envision a vital and growing Religious Society of Friends—a faith that deepens spiritually, welcomes newcomers, builds supportive and inclusive community, and provides loving service and witness in the world.

Through Friends General Conference, we see Quakers led by the Spirit joining together in ministry to offer services that help Friends, meetings, and seekers explore, deepen, connect, serve and witness within the context of our living faith.

Prioritize the health and safety of all members of the FGC community

The physical, spiritual, social-emotional wellness of all participants, staff, volunteers, and host location communities are of primary consideration.

Maintain integrity and trust

When planning events, FGC will act with integrity, strive to build and maintain the trust and confidence of the Quaker community, and communicate clearly and transparently with all registered participants, all staff, and all other stakeholders and community members.

Build community

FGC commits to holding events that build and maintain a wise spiritually resilient community, where faith and relationships flourish and grow, where they are nourished all year round, where these bonds that sustain us then go deeper and become stronger every time Quakers gather.

Utilize the following guiding queries:

- *How do we prepare to gather together as Friends?*
- *How can we act with love for our beloved community's physical and spiritual health to thrive?*
- *What does care for our spiritual community mean and look like for you?*
- *What behaviors and expectations do I need to adjust to actively demonstrate my care of our spiritual community?*

FGC will share a statement of community agreements and collective responsibility to all attendees upon online registration. FGC asks all attendees and all staff to sign the statement, indicating their understanding and affirmation. A potential draft of this statement appears in **Appendix A** (attached).

FURTHER EXPLANATION OF REQUIRED HEALTH & SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Required Vaccination for Everyone who is eligible:

- Up-to-date WHO recommended vaccinations are required of each staff member, volunteer and attendee no less than two weeks before their arrival at the event. For the safety of the community, event participants should also have any boosters for which they are eligible.
- If WHO recommendations change within 2 months of the start of the event, Friends will be encouraged to adhere to the most up-to-date recommendations but will be allowed to attend as long as they comply with the recommendations that were in effect 60 days prior to the start of the event.
- Staff, volunteers, and participants will all be required to submit proof of vaccination during registration or check-in at their event.

- As of the writing of this policy, all children who are 5 years old or above are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. They will therefore be expected to follow the above expectations around vaccination. If vaccine recommendations change for children under 5 more than 60 days prior to the event, they will be expected to meet the vaccine requirement. *To request assistance, or ask questions contact the staff person for your event.*

Mask Wearing

- Properly worn surgical, n95, kn95, or kn94 masks limit the spread of COVID-19. Double masking is acceptable as long as one of the masks is from the list above. Free choice programming and inter-age friendships are fundamental to FGC programs and culture. To keep these safe and possible at in-person events, masks must be worn at the appropriate times. Friends are asked to honor the community by wearing masks whenever and wherever it is feasible. It is required that everyone who is 5 years and older wear masks whenever indoors (except when actively eating or drinking).
- When interacting with anyone the **2-of-3** rule is recommended. This means that two out of the following three conditions outdoors, distanced, and masked.
 - Outdoors + Distanced = Mask Recommended
 - Outdoors + No Distance = Mask Required
 - Not Outdoors = Mask Required
- Specifically, masks are required **in all indoor public spaces** except when actively eating and/or drinking. When in a residence room/space by yourself or with your roommate, no masking is required. If in a dorm room that is not your own and with other people the expectation is that you will mask.
- Attendees should arrive at the event with enough WHO-recommended or CDC-approved masks to make it through the event. Attendees are asked to keep a mask on hand at all times. FGC will provide a sufficient stockpile of extra masks for when one might be needed. *If access to appropriate masks or ADA accommodations would be a barrier to your participation please contact the FGC staff person for your event.*

Testing Requirements for All Attendees - regardless of age

FGC asks all event attendees to test at various points, and to accept that in order to protect the health of the community, a positive result will mean not being able to and/or stop attending the event. By registering for an FGC event, you as the the attendee agree to:

- Take a PCR or rapid test 72 hours before the event. *If the cost of these tests is a barrier to your attendance, please contact the FGC staff person organizing your event.*
 - Please report any positive tests to your coordinating FGC staff
- Take a rapid test (provided by FGC) upon arrival at the event.
- Take a second rapid test (provided by FGC) at the mid-event point if the event is longer than 5 days.
- Take a rapid test (provided by FGC) if you develop symptoms, per your daily symptom self-screen.
- Should you have symptoms, self-isolate and contact your designated FGC Staff *remotely* to receive and complete a rapid test (provided by FGC)
- Self-isolate and leave the event should you test positive.

Response to Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Case

- As always, the goal is to keep everyone healthy and safe at an FGC event. FGC staff and designated key volunteers will be ready to support attendees in getting their medical needs met should they fall ill. If an attendee needs medical attention for any reason while at the event, please contact the designated FGC staff person in your event materials.
- The requirement for someone testing positive with COVID-19 to quarantine off-site from an event is in part due to site requirements. Most of the sites FGC uses have confirmed that they cannot accommodate quarantining onsite. FGC is committed to providing community care and support of individuals who need to quarantine off-site through a variety of modalities. These will be discerned and offered based on

the capacity of the specific event.

- As COVID-19 is a communicable disease, the local health department must be notified following any positive test results. FGC will work with their procedures for contact tracing both for the FGC community but also for the site and local community.
- Follow-up of exposed persons:
 - Due to limited resources, FGC will rely on the local health unit to implement contact tracing as designed by them in accordance with the CDC guidelines when there is a positive case of COVID-19.
 - In all decisions, operational guidelines, alternative programming, scope of exposure, presence of symptoms, assessment by medical staff, and the use of testing, will be considered before sending anyone home.
- If there is a positive case of COVID-19, FGC will work with the individual to identify and notify close contacts. Depending on the event, and where appropriate, the wider community will be notified after close contacts* (if any) have been approached. (*[For COVID-19](#), a close contact is anyone who was less than 6 feet away from you for a combined total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.)
 - In the two weeks following your return home from an FGC event, you are asked to notify FGC if anyone in your household who attended the event tests positive for COVID-19. For the Gathering, contact COVID.reporting.FGC@gmail.com due to staff being out of office for the weeks following.

Daily Health Screening & Monitoring

- The standard procedure for 2022 will require attendees to self-screen for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to arrival at an event and each morning of the event, prior to participation. Each attendee will be provided with a list of COVID-19 symptoms, as currently set by the WHO at the time of the event. As temperature monitoring is part of the symptom check - attendees are asked to bring their own thermometers.
- If an attendee does not pass the daily self-screening they should (remotely) contact the FGC staff/volunteer designated in their event materials and follow the directions provided, including self isolating until they can get a test, which will be supplied by FGC. They must provide proof of a negative COVID test before resuming in-person participation.

Contact Tracing

- Site specific requirements for contact tracing will be followed if there are any. When possible, contact tracing protocols for any organized activity at an FGC event will be provided by the event organizer. FGC will work with the local health department if contact tracing will be necessary.

Residence Mates

- FGC will follow the host site's policy about whether rooms can only be inhabited by residents of the same household, or whether residents of multiple households can room together.

Singing / Music / Dancing

- All singing activities will be planned to prioritize mitigating the spread of COVID-19. Ideally outside, preferably under a covered location in the case of inclement weather or hot sun. The organizers of the activity, in consultation with others, will be responsible for determining appropriate safety measures.
- When and where possible, partner/group dancing activities (such as contra dance) will be held outside. If dancing cannot be held outside, live music will be limited to instruments that can be played while performers are fully masked, and all dancers will be masked.

Youth

- All youth who are eligible to be vaccinated (according to WHO guidelines) are required to be vaccinated to attend an FGC event.
- All youth will be subject to the same testing requirements as the rest of the attendees.
- All youth 5 years and older are subject to the same masking requirements as the rest of the attendees.
- In order to reduce the likelihood of asymptomatic transmission to unvaccinated youth, volunteers will take daily rapid tests if they are working with youth who are too young to be vaccinated.
- Youth in the High School program will be asked to sign the community agreement along with their sponsor.

Appreciate and take advantage of fresh air and the great outdoors

- SARS-CoV-2 is an aerosolized virus transmitted through the air and the risk of transmission while outside is small. Event organizers are encouraged to consider which activities could be hosted outdoors.

Physical Distancing and Dining

- FGC encourages Friends to support a culture shift where eating is for the purpose of fueling bodies and that it is separate from time for fellowship.
- FGC staff person(s) in consultation with other event leaders will implement measures and create logistics that support the limited spread of COVID-19 during meal times. At any FGC event, FGC staff and key volunteers will work with the site staff to expand dining options to maximize the potential for take-away meals and grab-and-go meals, allowing attendees to eat in the comfort of their own room or outside.
 - When and where possible FGC will create additional outdoor dining options and work with the site staff to ensure spaciousness for distancing in any inside dining options. When possible family friendly spaces and/or spaces that will not have unvaccinated children in them will be designated.
- Friends are invited to be extra compassionate and thoughtful when engaging with others, especially the site's food service staff.

Bathrooms

- In communal bathrooms, when not showering or brushing your teeth, masks will be required.
- Generally, there will be a limit on the number of people who can use the bathroom at one time, and folks will be asked to wait outside until there is room to enter and maintain sufficient distance between each person.

Group Activities

- Outdoor activities are encouraged when possible; Masks will be required for indoor events.
- The event staff have general discretion over which activities are permitted, and which must be altered, taking into account the understanding of COVID-19's transmission dynamics at the time.

In-Home hospitality - Committee Travel - *Under further discernment. Will be brought for approval later.*

Host Meeting Community - *Under further discernment. Will be brought for approval later.*

Transportation

- Shuttles and carpooling in FGC-arranged vehicles will require attendees to wear masks during the

transport. In order to maximize ventilation and air flow, windows will be open whenever possible.

Temporarily leaving an FGC event

- Whether through shopping, dining, or exploring local culture, connecting with the local community may enhance the experience of an FGC event. At this time, however, you are invited to consider the consequences to the local community if your presence unwittingly exposes them to COVID-19, and to modify your behavior accordingly.

Field Trips

- The FGC staff member(s) responsible for an event will make a decision about whether FGC will organize field trips based on data relevant to the local community and the current situation.

Event Site

- The requirements of Friends in attendance at FGC events do not automatically apply to employees of the host venue or local community members. Local regulations may prohibit certain mandates, including vaccinations and mask utilization. FGC is not limited by local or state regulations.

Safety of Volunteers / Good Samaritans / Staff Safety

- When caring for and supporting someone at an FGC event tests positive for COVID-19, appropriate PPE (face shields, properly fitting N95, KN95, or KF94 masks) must be worn by all parties. If in a vehicle with someone who has tested positive, PPE must be worn and vehicle windows left open.
- No one is (and to be explicit, FGC staff and key volunteers are not) required to physically interface with individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19.
- FGC asks that anyone volunteering to serve in the role of supporting individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 acknowledge the potential risk to which they are exposing themselves. FGC asks that individuals who make use of work grant positions for the financial assistance aspect only choose this role if they are called to it and at low risk. FGC does not want the need for financial assistance to attend an event to cause someone to put themselves in an unsafe situation. *If the cost of these tests is a barrier to your attendance, please contact the FGC staff person organizing your event.*

Hygiene & Frequent hand washing

- Everyone will be encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands frequently. Everyone is encouraged to use standard cough and sneeze etiquette (of sneezing or coughing into your mask).

Medical Support

- At FGC events, there are occasionally medical professionals who volunteer their time and expertise for the community. When FGC seeks medical support from these volunteers, it is for non-COVID issues such as a fall, broken arm, or other health concern. If an attendee uses this volunteer service, everyone involved will remain masked, unless the care requires removing the patient's mask.

Administration & Staffing

- The staff will foster a culture of safety at the event; all staff and attendees are accountable for following the Health & Safety Policy so as to keep each other healthy and safe.
- Each event attendee shares responsibility for co-ensuring adherence with the Health & Safety Policy. Reminders of appropriate behavior must come from a place of love and compassion. A tone which is heard as harsh is unlikely to have the desired effect. Attendees who see issues of noncompliance that they can't address directly are asked to share what they've seen with event staff.
- Event staff and designated key volunteers have authority to help interpret the Health and Safety Policy.
- In the event of a COVID-19 outbreak (as with any other emergency), FGC staff will be responsible for real time decisions.

Noncompliance

- Event attendees are invited to share with appropriate staff or key volunteers when they notice the Pandemic Health and Safety Policy is not being followed early, so that interventions can be made early and before the issue becomes larger or more heated.

“FGC events and programs are places where Friends can meet together for the sharing of the unfolding nature of the Spirit within. FGC seeks to provide an environment where we may be as enriched by our differences as by our similarities. Preservation of the Community in Spirit is a function of FGC committees and staff. We seek to provide a place of safety for all who attend, regardless of race, income, age, gender or sexual orientation. Behavior which disrupts program activities, or is threatening or harmful to others may result in expulsion from FGC events and/or prohibition from attendance at future events.” *From the LRCP Policy on Addressing At-Risk or Disruptive Behavior.*

Due to the nature of COVID-19, all attendees of FGC events are affirming their commitment to follow the Pandemic Health and Safety policy and community agreements. Deviating from these community agreements puts the physical health and safety as well as the spiritual safety of the community at risk.”

Procedure:

- a) Violations of the Pandemic Policy will be reported in confidence to the FGC staff responsible for the event.
- b) If needed, the FGC staff will meet with appropriate individuals such as committee clerk(s) or other staff (this becomes the team)*.
- c) The team or their designated representatives will talk with the parties involved. d) A support system for parties involved will be ascertained and activated by the team, where possible.
- e) The designated team will determine the appropriate actions and communicate them to the individual(s):
 - i) Should the risk not be perceived to be significant, the individual(s) may be warned. ii) Should the risk be determined to be significant, the individual(s) will be asked to leave the program activity and/or the event.
 - iii) Repeated inability to follow the Pandemic Health and Safety Policy and community agreements will result in expulsion from the event and/or from future FGC events.**

*Whether this will become a standing committee or be set up event to event is under discernment.

**Friends are asked to be mindful of the potential impact of internalized racism on these decisions. Thoughtful, spiritual and loving care must be used before this level of action is warranted.

COMMUNICATION & TRAINING

Pandemic Policy Communication Plan:

In light of known, upcoming events as of February 2022:

February: The General Secretary, the Presiding Clerk, and certain committees (LRCP, IAIC, CNM, Personnel & Executive Committee), will receive a draft policy for use in 2022 for all in-person/hybrid events. The policy will be approved by Executive Committee and implemented for any committee meetings

and retreats for 2022.

March: Everyone (FGC Staff, committee members, registered event attendees and the community at large) will receive the approved Health & Safety Policy. Attendees for any upcoming in-person events will receive the Health & Safety Policy as part of the pre-event documents and communications. Clerking Retreat registrants will have the opportunity to participate in an online question and answer session with members of the Pandemic Policy Working Group, with opportunities for asking questions and having concerns directly addressed.

April: POC Spring Retreat registrants will have the opportunity to participate in an online question and answer session with the Committee for Nurturing Ministries, Ministry on Racism Coordinator and other members of the Pandemic Policy Working Group, with opportunities for asking questions and having concerns directly addressed.

High School and Adult Young Friends clerking retreat occurs. FGC receives feedback and reviews if modifications to the policy need to be considered. Attendees who test positive for COVID-19 in the 2 weeks following are requested to notify FGC by emailing COVID.reporting.FGC@gmail.com. As Friends register to attend the 2022 Gathering in-person, they will be asked to read and sign a COVID community safety practices agreement (as well as the Gathering Expectations agreement) and upload proof of vaccination (unless ineligible due to age) during the registration process.

May: The POC retreat will occur. FGC will receive feedback and review how it went and if modifications to the policy need to be considered. Attendees who test positive for COVID in the 2 weeks following are requested to notify FGC by emailing COVID.reporting.FGC@gmail.com.

June: Friends registered for YAY will have the opportunity to participate in an online Q & A session with the Conference Director and other members of the Pandemic Policy Working Group, with ample opportunities for asking questions and having concerns directly addressed. Everyone will receive updates on procedures and protocols, plus reminders of the known symptoms and transmission dynamics for COVID-19. Gathering attendees will be sent a reminder of the Statement of Community Agreements & Collective Responsibility as part of their Gathering materials. Training of key Gathering volunteers and staff on any implementation that they need.

July: The Gathering.

Any attendees who test positive for COVID in the 2 weeks following the Gathering are requested to notify FGC by emailing COVID.reporting.FGC@gmail.com. This email will be monitored by a key volunteer while FGC staff are out of the office. FGC Staff take their usual lieu time and vacation to recover from the Gathering.

August: Receive Gathering feedback and review any small events and committee meetings that have occurred thus far. Review of the Gathering. Thoughts on moving forward - Central Committee and other in-person/hybrid retreats and committee meetings.

September: Central Committee registrants will have the opportunity to participate in an online question and answer session with members of the Pandemic Policy Working Group, with opportunities for asking questions and having concerns directly addressed.

October: Central Committee Sessions

POC Fall Retreat registrants will have the opportunity to participate in an online question and answer session with the Committee for Nurturing Ministries, Ministry on Racism Coordinator and other members of the Pandemic Policy Working Group, with opportunities for asking questions and having concerns

directly addressed.

November: Review policy - If necessary, modify for 2023 events.

December: If necessary, approve modified policy for 2023 events

APPENDIX A

Draft Statement of Community Agreements & Shared Responsibility (Gathering Example)

The adjustments required by the pandemic have highlighted the importance and value of gathering in-person. We have also been reminded that the decisions and actions of each individual impact those around us. Though we can't completely eliminate the chance of spreading COVID-19, we can significantly mitigate the risk of contagion. The FGC Health & Safety Policy is intended to break the chain of spread and to provide a safe and joyous environment for all to live, work, worship, and play together.

If we each bring seriousness of purpose to protecting others and ourselves, we will greatly reduce the chance that COVID-19 may be transmitted in the community.

FGC is committed to resuming an in-person gathering. We firmly believe that to prioritize the health and safety of all of our community members, we must each:

- ❖ **Commit to following the rules and requirements outlined in the FGC Events Health & Safety Policy, including:**
 - **Having up-to date vaccinations;**
 - **Pre-event, on arrival and midweek testing;**
 - **Reporting a positive test result to FGC within 72 hours prior to, during, and within two weeks after an event**
 - **Being prepared to leave an event if a COVID test result is positive;**
 - **Doing a daily self-symptom check;**
 - **Masking in all indoor public spaces (except while eating).**
Masking outside when not distanced;
 - **Quarantine off-site if you get a positive test, at the individual's expense.**
- ❖ **Observe the guidance of the WHO, [CDC](#) and other federal, state, and local public health agencies in the weeks leading up to our arrival at any event;**
- ❖ **Recognize that our decisions and actions on a daily basis may have consequences not only for ourselves but for others in our community.**

I affirm that I have read and agree to comply with this policy and understand that my noncompliance could have consequences including being asked to leave the event.

Signature Date
Name Name of minor (if applicable)

APPENDIX B

Understanding Transmission Dynamics, Mitigating Risk, Prioritizing Joy & Healing

FGC's Scientific & Philosophical Underpinnings in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The pandemic policy working group based the Health & Safety Policy on the reading of the latest science and the attempt to have a flexible mental model of the pandemic and the world, to best serve the FGC community in 2022.

The working group understands that science does not equal the final truth, that science is always provisional, that scientists often disagree with each other, and that great harm has been done to historically marginalized communities in the name of “science”. Science can help us quantify risk, can help us understand what’s happening and why. But only humans and their institutions can decide what feels safe, and what seems healthy.

With that in mind, here are the four core understandings of and beliefs about the virus and the pandemic, which serve as the foundation for the larger plan.

1. COVID-19 is an aerosolized virus.

- o Indoor spaces, especially if unventilated and crowded, present by far the most danger.¹
- o Spread is airborne, not via droplets or fomites.^{2,3}
- o COVID-19 is an over-dispersed virus. Conditions have to be just right – indoors, crowded, unventilated – but if they are, it can really spread, which leads to super-spreader events.^{4,5}

2. Outside is safer.

- o Outdoor transmission has been very rare, less than .01% of all cases.^{6,7,8}

3. The vaccines work.

- o The mRNA vaccines in particular have essentially resulted in the elimination of severe disease, hospitalization, and death among those vaccinated.^{9,10}
- o They have also demonstrated a dramatic reduction in asymptomatic disease and transmission, as illustrated by the CDC’s updated guidance for the vaccinated.^{11,12}
- o FGC respects the spiritual right of Friends to make medical decisions about their own bodies as led by spirit. The decision to require vaccination for in-person activities is not meant to ostracize people who cannot or choose not to vaccinate, but rather an acknowledgement of FGC and the FGC community’s limitations. FGC does not have the staffing or logistical capacity to provide the support needed to handle the substantially increased severity of disease among unvaccinated individuals if an outbreak occurred at an FGC event, nor can FGC guarantee that the medical resources of the host community could provide adequate care to multiple severely ill individuals in such an outbreak. FGC commits to providing some virtual participation options for any in-person events held while the vaccination requirement stays in effect.

4. Kids need and deserve joy and healing this summer.

- o Children face lower risk of severe illness from COVID-19, thank goodness, but have borne a disproportionate burden for the larger society’s failures.^{13,14,15}

REFERENCES

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- ² Low Risk of Surface Transmission in Real Life - The Lancet
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- ⁴ This Overlooked Variable Is the Key to the Pandemic - The Atlantic
- ⁵ 2% of positive individuals carry 90% of the virus - Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences
- ⁶ Outdoor Transmission Accounts for 0.1% of COVID-19 Cases - The Irish Times
- ⁷ Why Covid's Airborne Transmission Was Acknowledged So Late - The New York Times
- ⁸ A Misleading CDC Number - The New York Times
- ⁹ The Science Behind "When You've Been Vaccinated" - The CDC
- ¹⁰ Vaccine Efficacy, Statistical Power, and Mental Models - The Insight
- ¹¹ COVID-19 vaccine coverage in health-care workers in England and effectiveness of mRNA vaccine against infection - The Lancet
- ¹² Vaccine Effectiveness in Preventing Infection - CDC
- ¹³ Risk for COVID-19 Infection, Hospitalization, and Death by Age Group - The CDC
- ¹⁴ The Students Left Behind By Remote Learning - ProPublica
- ¹⁵ The Lost Year - ProPublica

RESOURCES

[ACA Field Guide for Camps](#)

[CDC Guidance for Operating Youth Camps](#)

[CDC Camp Readiness and Planning Tool](#)

[CDC COVID-19 FAQs](#)

[Association of Camp Nursing – Communicable Disease Management in the Camp Setting](#)

[Virginia Department of Health](#)

[Philadelphia - Department of Health](#)

[Pennsylvania Department of Health](#)

[Roanoke Virginia - Department of Health](#)

[Oregon Department of Health](#)

[Portland-Oregon-Department of Health](#)

[World Health Organization - Masking](#)

[World Health Organization - Vaccines](#)

[World Health Organization - COVID-19 Q&A](#)