



SEA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Environmental Studies at Woods Hole and at Sea

SARS/Covid-19 Protocols, 15 June 2022

Sea Education Association (SEA) and its associated programs fully recognize the significant responsibility for training and housing young people at our campus in Woods Hole, MA and for taking them to sea. Since 1971, SEA has continuously and thoughtfully honed its safety policies and procedures to manage risk to program participants and personnel while achieving programmatic goals. While we take pride in our safety record, SEA regularly monitors and assesses our personnel qualifications, training practices, safety policies, and material condition of our equipment to maintain safety as a priority within our programs and operations. We operate under a philosophy of prevention but prepare for and are capable of a broad spectrum of response.

The SARS/Covid-19 illness is a new risk to humanity; while it cannot be eliminated, risk management strategies are effective at reducing the relative risk to program participants.

Vaccination

All SEA faculty, staff, and program participants must be fully vaccinated, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Exemptions for medical reasons or personal religious beliefs may be considered, but due to the nature of our programs, SEA may choose to require vaccination for all participants. All faculty, staff, and program participants who are eligible to receive a booster are encouraged to boost.

Program Participants: Pre-Arrival

Program participants must provide proof of full vaccination before arriving to SEA facilities unless otherwise exempted. Additionally, program participants must arrive with a negative PCR test which was taken within 96 hours of arrival on campus. Participants are asked to self-monitor for symptoms for seven days before traveling, and to remain masked while using commercial transportation.

Program Participants: Shore Component

Program participants will be tested on arrival to campus and may undergo surveillance testing during the program. After arriving cohorts have received negative tests, masking restrictions on campus may be relaxed. Local community visits and activities may be allowed, and masking requirements will be communicated to students during the program based on local conditions and CDC guidance for fully vaccinated adults. Prior to boarding the ship, some programs may

require further testing, more stringent protocols, and/or a remote shore component to minimize the risk of illness aboard the ship.

Shore Component Response

In the event of positive tests or symptoms ashore, program participants will undergo a subsequent test to ascertain infection status. Other participants or staff may be subject to further testing to determine possible spread. SEA will rely on local medical services for treatment of infection.

Program Participants: Sea Component

Program participants will remain masked during commercial travel to the vessel and may be required to undergo an isolation period in a second shore component location prior to joining the ship. In all cases, participants and staff will self-monitor for symptoms for seven days prior to boarding the ship. Depending on CDC guidance and local conditions, participants and staff may undergo a pre-travel PCR equivalent test as well as a pre-boarding PCR equivalent test.

Sea Component Prevention

During the sea component, programs operate in a variety of locations and environments. In all cases, participants and staff will maintain standard hygiene practices including hand washing, cleaning, and sanitization. Likewise, SEA vessels carry officers with medical training, and have access to remote tele-medicine via satellite communications at all times. The goal for shipboard operations is to reduce the likelihood of illness aboard the vessel via robust testing and, if necessary, isolation before departing near coastal waters.

Sea Component Response

Despite robust preventative measures, there is a risk that participants may become ill underway. In the event of SARS/Covid-19 symptoms underway, program participants will isolate and be evaluated for further treatment or antigen testing. Other staff and participants may be tested to ascertain spread. It is important to note that advanced medical care, proper isolation, and treatment may not be available offshore and is an inherent risk in seagoing programs, despite all preventative measures.

For programs operating near coastal locations, SEA will also rely on local medical services for treatment of infection.

SEA Faculty and Staff Based Ashore

SEA offices are currently open, and all faculty, staff, and participants are fully vaccinated.