

Child Family Health International

COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

Updated January, 2023

The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the central role of global health in our lives, the interconnectedness of our global community, and at the same time has exposed and exacerbated existing health inequities worldwide. Now more than ever, Global health education and experiential learning play an essential role in shaping future health professionals who recognize the complexity behind the quest for health equity and social justice in this ever-changing landscape. At the same time, the responsibility to engage in global health activities safely and ethically has never been greater for organizations and individual participants in these experiences.

The virus continues to evolve and, in many countries, increases in the number of COVID-19 cases do not necessarily coincide with severely ill and hospitalized patients. Nor are hospitals in our partnering communities in imminent danger of exceeding capacity. We continue to emphasize the health and security of CFHI participants and our communities, CFHI will follow local regulations while continuing to abide by CDC guidelines.

With over thirty years of experience offering programs, CFHI is a leader in developing and carrying out best practices and fair-trade learning principles in the field of global health education. To develop and maintain the document that follows, CFHI works closely with its global team to understand the ethical principles, and resulting protocols, that underpin experiential learning in the COVID-19 era. As needed, changes have been made to CFHI program structure, activities, and safety protocols in order to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to CFHI participants and host communities, and respect local and CDC protocols. In making these changes and enacting these protocols, CFHI upholds its commitment to do no harm in global health settings, and instead to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of both our program participants and our longstanding host communities around the world.

All decisions have been made in close consultation with CFHI's team of health experts and leaders in 10 countries, as well as a variety of internal and external expert stakeholders such as the CDC, US Department of State, WHO, and others.

This document describes the CFHI approach to COVID-19 health and safety management. For more information, please contact Wanda Dutton, Director of Health & Safety, at wanda@cfhi.org

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Guiding Principles

- For CFHI, the safety, health, and security of students, faculty, staff, and host communities is a top priority.
- These guidelines are designed to help reduce the risk of contraction and transmission of COVID-19 and support incident response.
- CFHI will regularly update these guidelines and travel recommendations as governments adjust policies and recommendations, to maintain a country-specific approach.
- Students, faculty, staff, and the CFHI team share the responsibility for adhering to practices that minimize COVID-19-related health risks such as face-coverings, physical distancing, and enhanced hygiene measures.
- CFHI risk assessment and incident response work are founded on open and honest communication to support collaborative and transparent decision-making among all parties involved.

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How is CFHI making decisions about place-based programs?

Monitoring and assessment

CFHI Central Leadership monitors COVID-19 at all program sites together with a risk assessment group comprised of CFHI global team members and in consultation with multiple external expert stakeholders.

CFHI employs multiple U.S. and international data sources to determine when to cancel a program, taking into account the health and safety of the students, faculty, and host communities. While a single criterion can in certain cases trigger a program cancellation, multiple assessment criteria are included in a benchmarked rubric and include:

- Favorable travel health and risk advisories by governmental and independent parties.
- Strong local support is available from CFHI global team and their on-the-ground partners;
- Regular and consistent availability of flights in and out of the program site
- Resources such as COVID-19 testing, basic and intensive medical care (COVID and non-COVID) are reliably available.
- Rising vaccination rates, lowering COVID-19 infections rate, clear national protocols, and self-isolation capabilities in place.
- Acceptable in-country health and safety risks indicators besides COVID-19 are present.
- All contracted CFHI partners are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. For partners who submit a formal proof of vaccination exemption for medical reasons, their ability to engage in the program will be analyzed case-by-case. If approved to engage in the program, additional requirements include but are not limited to agreeing to twice-weekly testing beginning one week prior to the arrival of CFHI participants/faculty/staff at the program site.

Timeline

- CFHI leadership team holds bi-weekly team meetings to assess current statistics and country reports and analyze changes within the context of a detailed benchmarked rubric
- CFHI analyzes historical trends every two months to appraise the feasibility of resuming place-based programs with a country-specific approach.
- The decision to launch a program is made 60 days before the start date in collaboration with local teams. Program cancellations may be made less than 60 days before program start dates if needed. Participant and host-community safety is a paramount priority.
- Program dates are updated on the CFHI website.
- Students and academic partners are contacted if program modifications need to be made.
- CFHI continues to monitor the travel recommendations and make changes to protocols as governments adjust policies.

Predeparture

Orientation

CFHI's regular Pre-Departure Training will include virtual training about the specific COVID-19 guidelines, mitigation measures, and rules, and recommendations for each site.

Vaccination

Participants are required to have the best vaccination protection against COVID-19. Per [CDC recommendations](#) this is achieved two weeks after the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer or Moderna), or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine (Johnson & Johnson) plus the most up to date booster (currently the bivalent booster) when eligible. Participants must be able to show proof of full vaccination, for all CFHI place-based programs. CFHI will only accept COVID-19 vaccines approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Vaccination requirements may be updated to reflect other measures as CDC guidelines change. Students with a documented medical condition prohibiting them from receiving the booster should begin a petition process by email to the Director of Health and Safety, Wanda Dutton, at wanda@cfhi.org.

Vaccination requirements may be updated to reflect other measures as CDC guidelines change.

Supplies

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is available locally at all CFHI sites. Nevertheless, participants, faculty, and staff are required to bring their own PPE to avoid depleting local supply. Participants are required to travel with the following items in sufficient quantity for the duration of their program:

- Properly fitting N95 masks for use in clinical and health settings
- KN95, medical/surgical or cloth masks for general use in public
- Medical Gloves for use in clinical settings
- Safety Glasses for use in clinical settings
- Hand sanitizer
- Thermometer
- 4 COVID at home antigen tests

Pre-departure test

Upon arrival at their CFHI program site participants must present the local CFHI team with a negative viral COVID -19 test taken within the past 48 hours. This test can be self-administered or done in a laboratory/clinic. It is the participants' responsibility to understand requirements in any transiting airport that may be different requirements than their destination country.

Any participant who tests positive will be required to quarantine according to local COVID guidelines. Participants who receive positive test results prior to their departure may choose to quarantine at their home base prior to joining the program. Student will generally be responsible for costs associated with changing start date. Please follow [CDC guidelines](#) for isolation and subsequent [travel](#).

Pre-departure behavior

CFHI advises that participants limit, to the greatest extent possible, contact with large groups in the 10 days prior to travel to the program site. The goal is to be healthy when the program begins and limit potential exposure to the virus.

On-Site

CFHI support

CFHI central leadership team and CFHI local team will provide support to the students, faculty, and staff throughout the duration of the program. Participants will receive an on-site orientation to include information on student health, local public health guidance, and expectations of student behaviors.

CFHI Central Leadership Team

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Logistics

Housing

Homestays

In programs with homestay accommodations, besides CFHI standard homestay vetting process, eligible homestay family members will be vaccinated. However, CFHI cannot guarantee that everyone who enters the home will have been vaccinated (house cleaners, grandchildren, etc.). All participants are placed in private or shared rooms with vetted housing conditions that meet CFHI's safety criteria.

Other lodgings

When placed in hostels, apartments, or hotels, no more than four people per room will be allowed.

Transportation and public spaces

Participants, staff, and faculty are required to follow [CDC recommendations](#) in vehicles at all times. Depending on local conditions, CFHI may recommend that students utilize taxis or other transit rather than public busses to avoid crowded conditions. Participants should be prepared, as requested, to:

- Wear masks
- Keep as much physical distance as possible
- Practice hand hygiene
- Refrain from eating or drinking in transit
- Avoid touching surfaces to the extent possible

Classrooms and shared spaces

- Classrooms and communal spaces will be cleaned, ventilated, and disinfected regularly.

- CFHI leaders at each program site will advise participants as to how to adhere to COVID safety protocols in classrooms and shared spaces. Required measures may include: wearing masks, frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer.

Face masks

Face masks must be worn during all program related activities unless explicitly otherwise stated by the CFHI on-site leadership, and wherever else required by regulations and local guidance. CFHI utilizes CDC recommendations on when and how to use masks.

Monitoring symptoms

Students will be asked to monitor their health daily and be alert of COVID-19 symptoms. If symptoms develop, students must isolate themselves in their rooms and notify the CFHI local team immediately to ensure they are tested and follow the protocol for symptomatic individuals. Symptoms may include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Clinical Settings

CFHI participants will not be assigned to rotate or visit clinical facilities designated for screening or treatment of COVID-19 cases, and in general, will not be asked to take part direct contact with known COVID patients. Nevertheless, there are always risks in clinical settings. In clinical and public health settings, CFHI participants are expected to:

- Practice diligent hand hygiene
- Wear a well-fitted N95 grade face mask at all times. Some healthcare centers will request students to wear a surgical mask over the N95.
- Use eye protection and disposable non-sterile gloves when in direct contact with patients.
- Remove PPE using best practices to prevent self-contamination.
- Monitor closely for any symptoms associated with COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell), and measure body temperature daily.

Independent travel

Limits on independent travel for CFHI participants vary from site to site. In general, CFHI prohibits travel outside of the country of placement during program dates to minimize potential COVID-19 exposure as well as potential travel disruptions. CFHI advises limiting travel within the host country independently organized by students, faculty, or staff outside the program schedule. In all cases you must follow the guidance of your local team in regards to independent travel during your program.

COVID-19 response protocol

Quarantine & Contact Tracing

As recommended by the CDC, CFHI will follow local guidelines for quarantine/isolation for all participants, faculty, or staff in close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual. If symptoms develop, they will be put in isolation and get tested immediately. They should wear a well-fitted mask for 10 full days whenever they are around others, avoid travel and avoid being around people who are at high risk. They are also required to contribute to all contact tracing requests by local authorities.

According to the CDC, close contact refers to someone who was within six feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over 24 hours starting from two days before illness onset even if both individuals were masked (or, for asymptomatic patients, two days before test specimen collection) until they meet the criteria for ending isolation.

Local guidelines for close contact must be applied when different from the definition above. Local team will support contact tracing activities and help arrange access to COVID-19 tests to close contact individuals

Positive test or symptomatic individuals

As recommended by the CDC we will follow local guidelines for fully vaccinated people. Any participant who tests positive or is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms will perform the following steps:

- **Symptomatic:** Participants who develop symptoms of COVID-19 must self-isolate in their room immediately and notify the CFHI local team. Participants should utilize a self-test to check for COVID-19. Medical evaluation will be arranged for any participants with severe symptoms (shortness of breath, chest pain, dehydration, severe fatigue or underlying co-morbidities) or any participant who requests medical evaluation regardless of symptom severity. They should wear a mask at all times except for when eating/drinking in isolation until they receive a negative test result.
- **COVID-19 positive:** If tested positive for COVID-19, participants with or without symptoms will follow isolation protocols until the criteria to end isolation is met.

Within homestays, if a member of the homestay family presents symptoms, they will follow the self-isolation protocols within their room in the home, wear a mask, and get tested for SARS-CoV-2. If they test positive for COVID-19, the student will be relocated to another family until they meet the criteria to end isolation. Following local and CDC guidelines participants in close contact with a COVID-19 positive case will

be asked to get tested 3-5 days after exposure but do not need to quarantine. Local team will arrange access to clinical evaluations and COVID-19 tests for symptomatic individuals. CFHI local team will help with the implementation of isolation protocols for COVID-19 positive individuals. They will also relocate participants to another homestay if needed.

Isolation

CFHI will follow local regulations while continuing to abide by CDC guidelines. When a student, faculty, or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, even when asymptomatic, the CFHI team will transport them to a predetermined location for isolation to include a clean, private room and bathroom with Wi-Fi and/or mobile service available. CFHI will coordinate delivery of 3 meals per day, daily well-check, and 24/7 nursing care if needed. The individual in isolation should closely monitor their symptoms, perform temperature checks daily, and immediately report any changes to the CFHI local team.

CFHI will coordinate all COVID-19 tests and medical care as needed for the individual. CFHI Central Leadership will give support to the local team and notify the participant's emergency contact. If the student feels well enough to engage in virtual activities and Wi-Fi is available, and assuming availability of CFHI virtual programming, CFHI will arrange their inclusion in a separate virtual program called Global Health Professional Development Hub, where they can participate in online seminars and activities outside of their regular program.

Ending isolation

As recommended by the CDC we will follow local guidelines for ending isolation, being around people, and discontinued elevated precautions when participants meet the following conditions.

1. Five days after symptom onset.
2. After resolution of fever for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medications) and the improvement of other symptoms. Participants should continue to properly wear a well-fitted mask around others for 5 additional days after the 5-day isolation period.

Most countries do not request a laboratory test to decide when to end isolation. However, the local team will advise if there is such a requirement. Local team will help arrange access to COVID-19 tests when needed.

COVID-19 expenses

CFHI does not cover the cost of testing, treatment, or isolation including meals, well-checks, nursing care, or any additional expense related to COVID-19. Participants should be prepared to cover this out-of-pocket expense or seek coverage through insurance. If enrolled in CFHI's medical and evacuation insurance policy, CFHI will help participants to initiate a claim. Costs vary across countries and insurance coverage varies.

Before traveling back to home country

If a participant tests positive in the days prior to departure, CFHI recommends following the CDC guidelines and not travel until a full 10 days after symptoms started or the date the positive test was taken if there were no symptoms. However, due to the removal of the U.S. re-entry test requirement, CFHI does not require participants to stay beyond the program end date. If they decide to stay, the CFHI local team will implement the Isolation protocol described earlier in this document.

Emergency evacuation

In case of an unexpected increase in the number of cases, a substantial decrease in hospital capacity, or any other emergency, early termination of the program will be determined by the CFHI Central Leadership Team, the CFHI local team, and the participant's home country Embassy, when applicable. The evacuation processes may occur following CFHI protocols or be handled partially or entirely by the student's insurance company. For the students enrolled in CFHI Premium Travel protection Plan, CFHI will support presenting the claim to the appropriate authorities. CFHI will contact participants' emergency contact in their home country and keep them updated as details become available.

Violations to Guidelines

Failure to follow the local and CFHI COVID-19 related guidelines may present a direct threat to the health and safety of the students, faculty, staff, and host community. Students who do not adhere to COVID-19 guidelines, including but not limited to quarantine violations, repetitive mask violations, travel outside of program site, and gathering violations for which the local CFHI team determines a disciplinary response is warranted, will be addressed as disciplinary misconduct. Depending on the severity of violation CFHI may utilize one or more of the following measures:

- Send a written communication notifying the student of the misconduct and advise to review COVID-19 protocols.
- Assign a date and time for a virtual meeting with the CFHI Director of Health and Safety to review the case.
- Send a warning letter to the student with a copy to their university
- Prohibit the participation in certain activities
- Disciplinary expulsion of the program

Frequently Asked Questions

How and when does CFHI decide when it is safe for a program to take place?

CFHI Central Leadership regularly monitors COVID-19 at all program sites together with a risk assessment group comprised of CFHI global team members and in consultation with multiple external expert stakeholders. CFHI employs a variety of U.S. and international data sources to determine when a program can be resumed, taking into account the health and safety of the students, faculty, and host communities.

When should students book the flight?

Students should not purchase airline tickets until your program is confirmed. Following program confirmation announcements, CFHI advises students to wait to book flights until 60 days or less before the program begins, purchase refundable flights, or seek trip cancellation insurance with coverage that would apply if CFHI has to cancel the program due to COVID-19 realities. The local team will seek to minimize any impacts in the program or schedule due to COVID-19 related late arrivals.

Is vaccination required to participate in CFHI place-based programs?

Participants are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, and be able to show proof of full vaccination, for all CFHI programs. CFHI will only accept COVID-19 vaccines approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

What happens if a student has to isolate or quarantine?

When a student, faculty, or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, even when asymptomatic, the CFHI team will transport them to a predetermined location for isolation to include a clean, private room and bathroom with Wi-Fi and/or mobile service available. CFHI will coordinate delivery of 3 meals per day, daily well-check, regular room cleaning, and 24/7 nursing care if needed. The individual in isolation should closely monitor their symptoms, perform temperature checks daily, and immediately report any changes to the CFHI local team. CFHI will coordinate all COVID-19 tests and medical care as needed for the individual. CFHI Central Leadership will give support to the local team and notify the participant's emergency contact if needed. CFHI does not cover the cost of testing nor isolation arrangements, and participants should be prepared to cover this out-of-pocket expense. Isolation costs vary across countries.

If a student is placed in isolation, will they be able to continue the program virtually?

If the student feels well enough to engage in virtual activities and Wi-Fi is available, CFHI will arrange their inclusion in a separate virtual program called Global Health Professional Development Hub, where they can participate in online seminars and activities outside of their regular program.

What are CFHI refund policies?

In the case that a program is canceled due to COVID-19, participants have multiple options which include:

- Withdraw from the program and receive a full refund if it is more than 45 days before the program start-date. Participants will receive a full refund minus the \$350 non-refundable deposit if it is less than 45 days up to the start date of the program. This is to ensure CFHI's ability to maintain its Fair-Trade commitments with host community partners.
- Switch to a CFHI Virtual Opportunity and receive a refund for the difference in fees.
- Postpone the program to a later start date of the student's choosing, with no additional fees.

- Switch to a different CFHI place-based program running for the student's original program month, with no additional fees.

In the event that a program is canceled after the program start date, CFHI standard refund policies apply, and no portion of the program fee is refundable. In such cases, CFHI will receive and review requests for partial refunds on a case-by-case basis and may make exceptions to CFHI's standard refund policy in circumstances where a portion of the ground costs are recuperable.

Can students travel independently during the program?

Limits on independent travel for CFHI participants vary from site to site. In general, CFHI prohibits travel outside of the country of placement during program dates, to minimize potential COVID-19 exposure as well as potential travel disruptions. CFHI advises limiting travel within the host country independently organized by students, faculty, or staff outside the program schedule.

How can participants help prevent the spread of COVID-19 while participating in a program?

Students, faculty, and staff should follow CDC guidelines to help protect themselves and others and obey local protocols outlined by CFHI local team.