



# **COVID-19 POLICY & PROCEDURE**

## **Spring 2022 Protocol**

# Pacific Discovery (PD) Risk Management Philosophy: COVID-19

## Introduction

COVID-19 is prevalent in society and in inherent risk permeating our current lives. PD understands that risk of communicable disease and illness, including COVID-19, is a risk of bringing people together in person.

The COVID-19 safety precautions and procedures outlined in this document have been carefully thought through by PD to ensure the health and well-being of our students, staff and local community.

PD will alter operations in alignment with state and local health department guidance, and evolving industry practices.

This operating plan identifies the various hazards of traveling in today's world and lays out our risk management strategies to mitigate each one. We ask that you carefully review this document as an Instructor, Student or family. Students must commit to engage in the safety protocols outlined in this document and do their very best while with PD to act in a responsible, safe and respectful manner in order to maintain their safety, the safety of the group and respect the safety of our host communities and partners, in fighting back against COVID-19.

## Risk Management Overview

Risk assessment is completed in a cascading format. Risks and accompanying hazards require management strategies, and these strategies formulate the policy and procedures adopted in each stage. The cascading stages utilized are:

1. Federal, State and Local regulations
2. Pacific Discovery's Safety Management System and Risk objectives
3. General COVID-19 risk assessment and policy
4. Review by medical practitioner, against host community authorities' regulations
5. Itinerary & Activity specific risk assessment and policy
6. Dynamic risk assessment and leadership through the Field Educators, managed by the Headquarters

This document comprises stage 3, Pacific Discovery's 'General COVID-19 Risk Assessment & Policies'. These policies supersede and work in conjunction with our Safety Management System.

## Objective(s)

Our objectives for operations with risk of exposure to COVID-19, are:

1. Protect Students from the risk of infection from COVID-19
2. Protect local host communities from the risk of infection from COVID-19
3. Protect Field Educators (and any deployed staff member) from the risk of infection from COVID-19
4. Reduce the risk of intracommunity transmission by a Pacific Discovery program, being either:

- a. Host community to host community within the program
- b. Student origin community to program destination, or program destination to student origin community

While many risks are inherent in experiential education and field education, and these cannot be eliminated, our goal with regard to COVID-19, is:

*“Students, Staff members and host communities, **should not be at any additional risk to infection from COVID-19, to that experienced in their ‘normal daily life’, while participating in a Pacific Discovery program”.***

## **Commitment**

These policies are to be read by all Pacific Discovery Staff, Instructors, Students and Parents. Additionally, they are to be disseminated to all operators and suppliers, and any local governing bodies that may provide feedback, review, or support the execution effectively of the policy and procedures contained within.

The Operations Director is responsible for the dissemination, training, adherence and continuous improvement of these policies and procedures.

Pacific Discovery is committed to safe operating that protects our host communities, students and staff from all identified risks.



Zach Johnston  
**Executive Director**  
Pacific Discovery Ltd

## **Sections**

1. Risk Assessment
2. Prior to Departure
3. Travelling to Program Start
4. Program Underway
5. Quarantine
6. Departure from Program
7. Mask recommendations
8. Travel Insurance
9. Instructor Programming Protocol
10. Liability Release & Waiver

# RISK MATRIX

| HAZARD  | MANAGEMENT STRATEGY   |
|---|---|
| <b>Student Arrives with Active Infection</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students maintain contact tracing history prior to departure, and confirm no direct contact with a known infection</li> <li>● Students maintain a daily health log during self-isolation, listing temperature and symptoms</li> <li>● Students obtain negative test less than 72 hours prior to departure</li> <li>● Students are to follow pre-departure protocol, safe travel protocol, and any and all local and state regulations and advice</li> <li>● Students are to complete testing upon arrival (5 days after potential transit exposure)</li> <li>● In the event of symptoms and/or positive test, students are required to seek medical advice and refrain from travel and/or joining the program until cleared by a medical professional</li> <li>● Students who may be at a higher risk for severe illness (defined by the CDC) should be encouraged to seriously consider with their health professional, if attending a program at this time is appropriate</li> </ul> |
| <b>Student Infection Risk (External Transmission)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students maintain contact tracing history log while on program, as well as daily logbook for symptom, signs, and temperature checks</li> <li>● Students will be required to bring a digital thermometer, face masks x3 (reusable &amp; washable), disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer</li> <li>● Instructors enforce social distancing , mask wearing and hand washing</li> <li>● Hand, eye, nose and mouth touching is to be avoided</li> <li>● Disinfectant wipes are encouraged to be carried to clean surfaces</li> <li>● Cover coughs and sneezes with the elbow, not hands</li> <li>● Activity operators COVID-19 Plans to be audited &amp; cross referenced</li> <li>● Essential activities such as food shopping is to be controlled and limited</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Student Infection Risk (Internal Transmission)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Instructors rigorously enforce hand washing</li> <li>● Vehicle interior is wiped down start/finish daily</li> <li>● Individual seats are assigned</li> <li>● Surfaces are disinfected upon entering any closed space including accommodation &amp; transportation</li> </ul>   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Suspected Student Infection</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Any student displaying signs and symptoms is separated from the group immediately</li> <li>● The group will immediately enter quarantine protocol</li> <li>● The student demonstrating signs and/or symptoms will seek professional medical advice immediately</li> <li>● Students are required to cover (through health insurance or otherwise) medical treatment and any other costs, such as individual accommodation, special meal requirements and transportation home</li> <li>● All student costs associated with covid infection are at the cost of the student regardless of the situations applicability to insurance cover</li> <li>● The student will remain in isolation at student’s expense and may only re-join the group if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It has been 10 days since first symptom appeared;</li> <li>○ It has been over 72 hours since any signs of a fever (without using fever-reducing medications)</li> <li>○ COVID-19 symptoms are improving*; and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ *Loss of taste &amp; smell may continue to persist and do not count towards an improved symptom</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ It is logistically feasible If a student is confirmed to have been infected, the student will be required to leave Pacific Discovery’s care, and into the care of the guardian</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Confirmed Student Infection</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If a student requires in-person medical attention due to COVID-19 symptoms, the student will be released from Pacific Discovery’s care and into the care of their guardian</li> <li>● Dependent on medical advice (local authority) at the time, the group may have to remain in self-isolation for up to 10 days</li> <li>● Students should be aware that COVID-19 infection within the group is possible at any time, and Pacific Discovery cannot eliminate this risk. Students choose to travel with this knowledge, and with the knowledge that if infection occurs they can choose to discontinue travel at any time</li> </ul>  |

# Policy & Procedure - Prior to Departure

## Student & Instructor Preparation

Students and Instructors are required to provide a detailed 5 day self health monitoring logbook as prior to departure, to minimise the likelihood that they are infected, and introduce the infection to the program. This means:

1. **Self-monitoring.** Students and Instructors are asked to maintain a 5-day logbook throughout the 5 days prior to departure that includes the following:
  - a. **Signs and Symptoms.** Including cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle pain, chills, fever, sudden loss of taste or smell.
  - b. **Temperature.** A daily temperature log taken with a digital thermometer.
  - c. **Contact.** Contact tracing, to ascertain if any contacts have become suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.
2. **Testing.** Students and Instructors are required to show proof of a negative test less than 72 hours prior to departure. Negative results prior to departure do not change Pacific Discovery's procedures while travelling, or prevent infection travelling to your program, or during the program.
  - a. **Lack of Results.** In the event a student or instructor does not have results in time and travels to program start without proof of a negative test, the student may not join the group and student/guardians are physically and financially responsible for student movements until negative results are provided.
  - b. **Exception to Testing.** If a student or instructor has tested positive for COVID-19 in the previous 90 days (3 months) prior to program start, the student or instructor is not required to undergo any Pacific Discovery required testing. Students will need to show a doctor's notification detailing the date of the positive test. Please note that depending on what country the student is traveling to, there may be a requirement to get tested by the local health facilities.
  - c. **Vaccinations.** Vaccinated students and instructors will still be required to undergo Pacific Discovery testing standards, as even though they are rare, breakthrough infections are possible.
3. **Physical Distancing.** Avoid attending any public spaces or gatherings and in event of essential movement, maintain appropriate space with non-household members during the 5-days prior to departure for program.
4. **Handwashing.** Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly (more than 20 seconds with soap and water) as often as possible. Use hand sanitizer (65%+ alcohol) whenever proper handwashing is not available.

## Instructor Training

In addition to standard Instructor training requirements, COVID-19 specific training will occur as a part of Instructor pre-program preparation, including:

1. An introduction to the corona virus and COVID-19, and higher risk groups in our communities,
2. General COVID Procedures,
3. Itinerary and Activity Specific COVID-19 Procedures,
4. How to build a safe and self-regulating student culture,
5. Using Pacific Discovery behaviour management systems to establish clear expectations,

6. COVID-19 Terms & Conditions (Addendum to standard T&C's) and what these means for Students and Instructors.

## Student/Guardian Terms & Conditions

In addition to our standard terms and conditions, students and guardians are required to accept a special addendum relating to COVID-19, to participate on program. These terms & conditions are introduced to enable:

- Disclose additional foreseeable risks,
- Ensure diligent application of screening and pre-departure protocol,
- Facilitate prompt removal of students who are deemed to be unsafe, or not wholly conforming to safe practices,
- To enable Pacific Discovery to take action, such as isolating, seeking medical advice, and mid-program quarantining at our discretion, and
- Set clear expectations of what will happen if a student or travel companion of a student becomes ill.
- All student costs associated with covid infection are at the cost of the student regardless of the situations applicability to insurance cover
- Our guidelines are designed to protect the group as well as others. In some circumstances our guidelines may lead to additional costs incurred by the student which are not covered by travel insurance as the guidelines are not mandated by country.

## Travelling to Program Start

As important as taking the time and vigilant care for the 5-day period prior to your program, is ensuring you minimise or eliminate risks to your group while travelling to your program start destination.

1. **Safe Travel Guidelines.** Students are required to follow these while travelling.
  - a. These include, but are not limited to:
    - i. ALWAYS wear a mask covering nose and mouth in airports and airplanes
    - ii. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
    - iii. Wash your hands regularly, especially following bathroom use, eating/drinking, and other movements that require encountering surfaces or people
    - iv. Use hand sanitizer (65%+ alcohol) regularly
      1. As a rule of thumb, it's good to use every hour on the hour while in transit (feel free to set a phone reminder!)
    - v. Maintain social distancing from others whenever possible
    - vi. Avoid touching shared surfaces
      1. Carry and use disinfectant wipes to clean used surfaces including tray table, armrest, seatbelt buckle, air vents, entertainment screen/remote, call button etc.
      2. If you need the bathroom, use a disinfectant wipe to clean the seat, faucet, door handle, lock, and other highly used surfaces.
    - vii. Cover coughs and sneezes
2. **Travelling to Airport.** Students are required to take private transportation to the airport. That can be in the form of guardian/known companion drop-off or private ride-service.

3. **Contactless Check-In.** Students should check in online prior to arriving at the airport and use the virtual boarding pass while checking bags and passing security.
4. **Baggage.** Checked bags should be placed in large garbage bags (or other disposable or washable container) to minimise foreign contact.
5. **Security.** Personal items (e.g. phones, keys, wallets) should be placed in larger carry-on to avoid contact with security bins. Any liquids and electronics must be placed in a separate bin to avoid need for screeners to open your bag and take it out themselves.
6. **Shopping.** Try to bring everything you need to the airport to avoid the necessity of purchasing items. Use the water refill stations rather than purchasing water. Bring a snack rather than purchasing one. If you do need to buy something, use a contactless purchase rather than cash.
7. **Flight Etiquette.** Be vigilant of your row passengers (particularly if they are exhibiting signs of coughing and/or illness). Most airlines enforce mask usage at all times, besides eating/drinking – do not be hesitant to speak up to a flight attendant if you see a passenger not wearing their mask during the flight. We encourage you to eat separately from your row neighbours, as you are more vulnerable while you remove your mask to eat/drink.
8. **Upon Arrival.** Head to the conveyor belt to collect your baggage – make sure to sanitize hands and bag handle after collecting, this is the time to remove your covering plastic bag. Immediately head to airport exit to find transportation to program start.
9. **Lost Baggage.** In the event your baggage does not come out on the conveyor belt, exit the airport immediately and contact your program instructors. You will be shuttled to program start and your delayed luggage will be delivered to you.
10. **Transportation to Program Start.** The only transport utilised for transfer from the airport to program start is private shuttle, or transport arranged by Pacific Discovery.



# Policy & Procedure – Program Arrival

## Creating our Pacific Discovery Pod

Despite all the pre-program protocol vigilance, we are aware that we cannot completely eliminate the possibility of contracting COVID-19 while in transit to program start. For this reason, it is important for the group to take the following additional measures:

- **Incubation Period.** Groups will do their best to wear masks around one another until post-arrival test results are received. Students will be assigned the same roommates and bus assignments for those first days and all of orientation will be conducted outside in a socially distanced manner.
- **Program Start Testing.** In order to confidently assemble ourselves as a COVID-free pod, every student and instructor will be tested on day five of the program, as this is the average incubation period according to the CDC. Once results are received, we will be able to drop restrictions amongst group members.
  - **Exception to Testing.** If a student has tested positive for COVID-19 in the previous 90 days (3 months) prior to program start, the student is not required to undergo any Pacific Discovery required testing. Students will need to show a doctor's notification detailing the date of the positive test. Please note that depending on what country the student is traveling to, there may be a requirement to get tested by the local health facilities.
  - **Vaccinations.** Vaccinated students will still be required to undergo Pacific Discovery testing standards, as even though they are rare, breakthrough infections are possible.

# Policy & Procedure - Program Underway

## Instructor Responsibility

Instructors' play a critical role in ensuring the safety of students and host communities. Instructors should have clear expectations of what is expected from Students, and build a strong culture of care, respect, and responsibility towards appropriate adherence to direction and safe behaviour.

Through consistent daily planning and communication to students, Instructors should:

1. Identify daily COVID risk areas and management strategies to students in a daily briefing,
2. Intervene early if nonadherence is observed,
3. Ensure they are positioned for maximum supervision of students regarding COVID practices,
4. Utilise dynamic risk assessment to identify any unforeseen circumstances that require attention,
5. Ensure students are informed and remain aware of the consequences to various groups within, and to the community, or their travel companions if they let their guard down.

Behaviour management is a key area in the management of any severe risk on program. It is expected Instructors will utilise Pacific Discovery's Behaviour management systems firmly and early in the program to ensure a clear precedent and culture is set with students.

Instructors' decisions will always be supported by Headquarters regarding managing safe and conforming behaviour from students, so long as they follow the processes provided.

## Health & Hygiene

Instructors are to enforce and reinforce vigilant hygiene and safety precautions:

- Frequent hand washing & sanitizer instructions
- Ensuring washing facilities are available and utilised when:
  - High touch surfaces are present/used
  - Any meals are consumed
  - Public or common spaces (even without members of public present)
- Safe usage/wearing of masks
- Not touching face (especially mouth, nose, eyes)

Instructors are to always carry the following:

- Hand sanitizer
- Disinfectant wipes
- Spare masks

## Physical Distancing

Having completed Pacific Discovery pre-departure, testing and program start quarantine, the primary cause of infection or transmission is through interaction with the community outside of the program bubble, whether physical direct contact, or high touch common surfaces.

Therefore, the following applies:

1. The Program Director is to ensure:
  - a. All accommodation, activity, transport, and other suppliers are briefed on cleaning of high touch surfaces, physical distancing to be maintained, and where physical distancing cannot be maintained, masks and safe hygiene practices are to be enforced. Operator or supplier staff interaction is to be restricted to only essential contact.
  - b. Program schedules are to be delivered or amended as required to ensure community safety is maintained and certain activities will only be included in accordance with an acceptable risk assessment of the activity.
  
2. The Operations Director is to ensure:
  - a. A high degree of safe hygiene is enforced throughout all programming,
  - b. Instructors are consistently identifying and cleaning high touch shared surfaces. Specific risk areas are transportation, accommodation, dining areas, shared ablutions, and activity provider premises.
  - c. That instructors are enforcing mask wearing and hygiene practices at any time, where members of the public are present and reasonable physical distancing is not easily adhered to,
  - d. That daily dynamic risk assessment and management strategies are being implemented by Instructors, with the students, and clearly communicated in a daily briefing.

## **Program Underway**

While on program, students and Instructors will be required to comply with the following procedures to minimize the risk of spreading and/or contracting infection.

### **Daily Requirements**

- **Health Checks.** The program will be required to complete a weekly health check. This will be a group activity completing temperature checks, daily health notes and contact tracing logs.
- **Physical Distancing.** The students will be required to physically distance from others outside the group as much as is possible. This will be monitored by the Program Instructors but will take each students' care and attention to ensure this is followed.
- **Masks.** Masks will always be worn, when physical distancing from non-cohort members is not possible.
- **High Touch Surfaces.** High touch surfaces will be identified, disinfected and cleaning procedures put in place where this is in our control and as practicable. This will include shared spaces such as bathrooms and cooking areas.
- **Transportation.** Private transport will be prioritised during the program if applicable, the use of public transport has the potential to increase the risk of transmission from Pacific Discovery students to the local community.

### **External Community Transmission**

Our goal is to minimize community interaction as much as practicable to mitigate external community transmission.

- **Operators.** Partner operators' COVID-19 protocol strategies have been reviewed by our Operations Director to ensure they are following regulations of local authorities.
- **Grocery Shopping.** We are limiting the number of shoppers per trip to one instructor and three students. Instructors are to brief students on etiquette including through preparation prior to arrival (i.e. detailed shopping list to only touch what we take), disinfecting handles of carts, socially distancing, and paying contactless.
- **Rest & Relaxation Days.** Instructors are to thoroughly brief students on risk areas. No public transportation, no socializing with non-cohort members. In general, instructors are encouraged to prioritize R&R days in areas that enable easy social distancing capabilities.

### **Internal Community Transmission**

Our goal is to minimize risk of students passing an infection from one to another. Instructors are to build a strong routine of hand washing/sanitizing and disinfecting surfaces throughout program.

- **Transportation.** In the morning and evening, students will disinfect seats, van handles, and other frequently touched surfaces. Students will be encouraged to use hand sanitizer whenever entering the vehicle.
- **Accommodation.** When arriving at the group accommodation, instructors will prioritize disinfecting shared/high-touch surfaces throughout the space.
- **Rest & Relaxation Days.** See above.
- **Self-Led Week.** While students are provided with the information and guidance to develop and determine route for self-led week, the plan must be sent to the Operations Director for approval no less than 72 hours prior to departure so it can be reviewed against our official travel risk assessment.

### **Internal Exposure/Suspected/Confirmed Infection.**

Pacific Discovery will seek medical advice on behalf of student/group and follow the medical guidance and local public health advice provided, as well as support contact tracing for the local community.

1. **Exposure, No Symptoms.** If member(s) of the group have determined to be in close contact with someone who was diagnosed, we will immediately implement a 10-day quarantine following Pacific Discovery quarantine protocols.
2. **Exposure, Symptoms.** If a student or instructor develops any symptoms of COVID-19, they will immediately be isolated from the group. If COVID-19 is suspected/confirmed, the program will be paused, and all cohort members will be tested.
  - a. **Group Quarantine.** As soon as student is suspected of having COVID-19, or being exposed to someone who has tested positive, program will be paused as the group enters quarantine protocol (explained below) to limit further exposure until professional medical advice is received.
  - b. **Medical Advice.** We will immediately seek medical advice on behalf of individual.
  - c. **Negative Test.** In the event of a negative test, the student might be able to re-join the cohort 72 hours after all symptoms subside (without the use of medicine to reduce fever/symptoms) and written recommendation from a health care provider to return to the cohort.
  - d. **Positive Test.** In the event of a positive test, the student will immediately be isolated from the group. The student will remain in isolation at student's expense and may only re-join the group if:

- It has been 10 days since first symptom appeared; (there may be differing recommendations here depending on the mandates of the local authority we are travelling within)
- It has been over 72 hours since any signs of a fever (without using fever-reducing medications);
- COVID-19 symptoms are improving\*; and
  - \*Loss of taste & smell may continue to persist and do not count towards an improved symptom
- It is logistically feasible

The costs associated with meeting the local quarantine or isolation requirements will be at the student's expense until they are able or allowed, per medical advice, to return home or re-join the group. We will provide indirect supervision of the student, for only as long as we deem the itinerary allows us to safely do this, without impacting our policies for the remainder of the program cohort.

- e. **Program Continuation/Cancellation.** In the event symptoms arise while in group quarantine, the program will be postponed for a minimum of 10 days. If there are no symptoms and a negative test in a minimum of 10 students, the itinerary will be resumed. If the program needs to be postponed for longer than 2 weeks, the program will be cancelled. If a second infection is determined, it initiates immediate headquarter review regarding immediate program cancellation.

# Policy & Procedure - Quarantine

In the event of a group quarantine, students and instructors are to vigilantly adhere to the following guidelines, as supported by Pacific Discovery's operations team. Quarantine can be either:

- Required by Pacific Discovery as directed by destination specific policy **on arrival**,
- Required by Pacific Discovery's General Policy and Procedure during program (mid-program quarantine), or
- Mandated by local authorities.
- All student costs associated with covid infection are at the cost of the student regardless of the situations applicability to insurance cover

## **Daily Checks & Self-Monitoring.**

To be supervised by at least one instructor, checking:

- **Signs and Symptoms.** Including cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle pain, chills, fever, fatigue, sudden loss of taste or smell.
- **Temperature.** A daily temperature log taken with a digital thermometer.
- **Contact.** Contact tracing, to ascertain if any contacts have become suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- **Medical Advice.** Immediately seek instructor and medical professional in the event of serious trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, sudden confusion, inability to stay awake, bluish lips and/or face.

## **Accommodation**

Where possible, "pods" will be no fewer than 2, and no more than 4 students. Each pod will have a private bathroom as well as space to prepare meals unless catering is arranged.

If accommodations have a shared communal space, Instructors are to ensure:

- Students will be provided with roster periods for usage,
- Surfaces are disinfected pre- and post-use.

Students are guaranteed to have access to fresh air for a minimum of 30 minutes daily.

## **Instructor Supervision**

While instructors cannot have physical contact with students during quarantine, they will be responsible for overseeing the following:

- Daily health checks (as described above)
- Individual student emotional wellbeing check-ins,
- Group bonding, expectation management and entertainment check-ins.

### **Student Nutrition.**

In some cases, students will be provided with some, or all their daily meals catered. In other cases, students will be provided with groceries to prepare their own meals. In all cases, dietary needs will be catered for.

Instructors are required to ensure students are receiving adequate nutrition, using good cooking hygiene and safety practices. This will be facilitated through program Zoom interaction and workshops.

### **Communication**

While we cannot guarantee that every quarantine scenario will provide students with access to Wi-Fi, we can guarantee that guardians will have direct communication with and daily updates from Pacific Discovery headquarters.

### **Medical Incident.**

Non-COVID-19 related medical incidences (physical and/or mental) will be addressed by an on-site instructor and/or deployed staff member depending on severity.

### **Student Conflict.**

While instructors are trained and experienced in group facilitation, this can be much more difficult to manage during quarantine. Students are expected to self-manage their behaviour, communication, and actions at all times. In the event of serious conflict amongst students sharing accommodations during quarantine, instructors will intervene virtually. If the issue cannot be assuaged, instructors & operations will assess the risk of separating the students.

### **Student Absconding.**

If any student refuses to abide by Pacific Discovery protocol, local authority protocol, and/or engages in risky behaviour, they will immediately be removed from the program and released from Pacific Discovery's care.

# Policy & Procedure - Program Departure

While we hope for and anticipate a completion of our gap semesters, it does not mean that students can let their guards down upon program completion. Maintain protocols while travelling back home from program end is as important as program arrival and program underway protocols.

- **Testing Prior to Flying.** We encourage student testing 3 days prior to program departure. Pacific Discovery can facilitate testing, however this will be at the students expense.
- **Airport Etiquette.** Students should follow the same protocol at the airport upon departure as they did upon arrival.
- **Home Sweet Home.** While there is no doubt that families and friends will be excited to spend quality time with students upon arrival back home, students need to be aware of the potential risks they are bringing with them. We highly recommend a post-program 10-day self-isolation period to ensure students are not transmitting infections to their families. We further emphasize this point if students are returning to homes where there are at-risk members in close quarters.



# Policy & Procedure - General

## Group Sizes

It is important that group sizes enable low impact on the community and environment, and a high degree of supervision, management, and teaching. Group sizes must enable the formation, through effective pre-departure and arrival measures, of bubbles or households.

Pacific Discovery's established small program sizes and ratios are:

- Semester programs – 8-14 students and 1 Educator: 7 Students
- Residential programs – 12-32 students and 1 Educator: 16 students

## Residential programs

Residential programs are to observe strict control of students 'away from residence' movement. This means:

1. Activities are through selected operators in accordance with this document
2. Students movement off residence is in groups no larger than 12, to minimise potential community interaction and reduce unwanted attention or concern
3. Students are supervised directly, or indirectly always. This is achieved through accompanying instructors, approved transportation, briefing of students, time restrictions, location approval and out of bounds areas
4. Unstructured free time is at the discretion of the Instructor, through the Operations Director. This is a privilege and may be withdrawn or approved based on the situation at any given time throughout the program duration. Unstructured free time should be taken by no less than 2 students, and no more than 6.
5. Any off-residence movement is conducted in accordance with the policy and procedures of Pacific Discovery. Instances of non-compliance are treated as serious misconduct, and subject to Pacific Discovery's behaviour management system, and student terms and conditions.

## Testing

Testing is to occur through local health agencies if on medical advice, however Pacific Discovery has identified a preferred agency with 72-hour turnaround of results once received. These tests are compliant with FDA standards.

## Mask Recommendations

There are various masks available for purchase, some more effective than others. You can [read about a recent study conducted](#) that revealed the best and worst of available masks. The following is a list of the most common masks found, and whether they are recommended:

- **N95 Respirators.** These professional respirators require specific fit-tests to ensure an appropriate seal on individual faces. They are in very short supply around the USA right now and while they are incredibly effective, they should be reserved for health care providers and first responders who are often in close contact with positive cases for extended periods of time.
- **3-Layer Surgical Mask.** These disposable masks are very common and work well. However, they are not reusable and must be thrown out after each use. We are encouraging the use of reusable and washable masks.

- **Cloth Mask.** Well-fitted cloth masks work well as long as they consist of three layers: an inner layer that gets wet from breath, saliva, etc; a middle layer that filters; and an outer layer exposed to the outside environment.
- **Bandanas/Bufs.** These are proven to be the most ineffective of all tested materials; further, they can have a completely adverse effect by breaking big droplets into smaller particles that travel further. It is potentially worse than not wearing a mask at all. We will not accept either of these options as masks on program.

## **Travel Insurance**

If a student is required to leave a program because they have become unwell, it is important that all students' health insurance or travel insurance covers both the medical expenses, and the associated expenses of self-isolating or quarantine and return travel in these instances.

Travel insurance that covers these scenarios is a mandatory requirement to attend a Pacific Discovery Program.

## **Additional Student Equipment Requirements**

In addition to the standard student packing lists, the following is required packing for COVID-19:

1. 3-Layer, manufactured, fabric, washable and reusable face masks x 3
2. Hand Sanitizer 65%+ Alcohol
3. Disinfectant Wipes
4. Notebook for Daily Health Check and Contact Logging x 1
5. Digital Thermometer and spare battery x 1
6. Add the need for 4 antigen tests

## **Additional Group Equipment Requirements**

In addition to standard group equipment, the following is required for COVID-19:

1. Disinfectant Wipes
2. Hand Sanitizer

# Liability Release & Waiver

## Additional Declarations

### Acknowledgement of Risk

1. It will not always be practicable for students and instructors to maintain physical distancing, nor does the nature of an overland journey enable this to be practised.
2. Students may be exposed to illnesses such as COVID-19, or other illness caused by coronaviruses. These diseases can be life threatening and cause serious illness.
3. Advice, recommendations, regulations, and other constantly evolving factors may cause changes at any time to Pacific Discovery programs.
4. Human error through differing perception, judgement, abilities, and other reasons may result in decisions, actions or behaviour that impacts the program group, or the ability to minimise health risks. Whether this is students, instructors, operators, suppliers or external parties this risk is present and cannot be eliminated.

### Screening

5. I acknowledge that by departing from my home location to program start, that I am declaring that for not less than 5 days, including the day prior to program commencement date, I have:
  - a. Maintained contact tracing and have had no direct or casual contact with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19, and
  - b. I have maintained a daily log of my temperature and signs or symptoms of illness, and that I have not had any symptoms, signs or abnormal temperature indicating fever.
  - c. I will submit these to Pacific Discovery electronically, signed as true and correct, prior to departure.
6. I am aware that COVID-19 may present a higher risk of severe illness to some individuals. I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to consult with a medical professional and obtain advice to make an informed decision to travel, and the risk to me personally.

### Travel to Program Start

7. Whilst traveling to program start, I declare that I will adhere to any guidelines provided to me by Pacific Discovery, and in addition will ensure I understand and comply with the travel safe guidelines as provided above.

### Program Underway

8. I acknowledge that if Pacific Discovery believes I am not complying with policy or instructions that this may breach health and safety for the group. In the event where Pacific Discovery believes I am not fully supporting the policy or direction provided, that at their discretion, I may be removed from the program. In this event, no refund will be eligible.
9. I acknowledge that, due to unforeseen circumstances, COVID-19 may cause disruptions to my group's itinerary. This includes changes in destinations (start, mid-way or end), cancelled experiences, and programming pauses or outright cancellation.
10. I acknowledge that, if another student contracts an illness, that this may cause delay, disruption, curtailment, or cancellation of the program. Pacific Discovery will make these decisions based on the advice of medical professionals at the time, and I understand that I am responsible for any associated expenses incurred as a result of the decisions made, such as but not limited to,

additional costs resultant from amendments to the itinerary, or return travel home from a new finish point.

11. I acknowledge that if I become ill, I will be separated from the group and asked to consult a medical professional. If a medical professional deems me unsuitable to continue with the program, I acknowledge that I will be released from the program at this time. Additionally, I acknowledge that the expenses incurred in complying with any quarantine or self-isolation requirements required by the local health authorities, is my responsibility, including return travel home. I understand that Pacific Discoveries care ceases once I am released from the program.

#### **Insurance**

12. In addition to Pacific Discovery's standard terms and conditions regarding insurance, I acknowledge that I am required to ensure I have adequate coverage to meet all the circumstances outlined in this document, and in any other written correspondence by Pacific Discovery.

#### **Changes at Any Time**

13. I acknowledge that the circumstances of COVID-19 are dynamic and subject to change. Pacific Discovery may change its policies and procedures at any time, as recommendations, advice and regulations change. Pacific Discovery may modify, amend, change, reroute, curtail, or otherwise change programs at its discretion, at any time.