



Big Brothers
Big Sisters
OF PICTOU COUNTY

Guidelines for Volunteers & Families during a Pandemic

Big Brothers Big Sisters Volunteers and Families:

We have been paying close attention to the local COVID-19 situation as the province continues to move forward with its re-opening plan. Once again, we find ourselves in unfamiliar territory. Our agency is carefully weighing the risks to the safety of our families and volunteers with the opportunity to connect with each other and enjoy activities.

Throughout all the phases, it is critical that our matches adhere to public health measures and restrictions as we progress towards a “new normal” to help protect our communities and loved ones.

We ask that all volunteers and families communicate with each other in order to establish a mutually agreeable plan. Remember that **not everyone is comfortable** with physical outings, and that health issues may also prevent them for the time being. Please consider your exposure to vulnerable populations, your own personal health risks, and the risks of the family, as well as everyone’s comfort with social outings when creating this plan. Please have an open conversation to make sure everyone is comfortable

Please make expectations around future outings clear and help eliminate any confusion. Communicate your expectations for the precautions you wish to ensure safety. Together, you can plan moving forward.

Remember the Risks

Unfortunately, those with COVID-19 may have little to no symptoms. You may not know you have a coronavirus infection because symptoms are similar to a cold or flu, and they may take up to 14 days, or longer, to appear after exposure. Symptoms have included: high fever, cough, difficulty breathing, pneumonia in both lungs, among other symptoms.

We are asking all families to watch for signs of illness in their child and, if sick, to keep their child at home and refrain from participating in BBBS programs and activities. We are also asking that all mentors self-monitor for symptoms of illness and refrain from participating in BBBS programs and activities if sick as well.

As set out by Public Health, these are the COVID-19 unexpected symptoms:

- fever (chills, sweats)
- cough or worsening of a previous cough
- sore throat
- headache
- shortness of breath
- muscle aches
- sneezing
- nasal congestion or runny nose
- hoarse voice
- diarrhea
- unusual fatigue
- loss of sense of smell or taste
- red, purple or blueish lesions on the feet, toes or fingers without clear cause

How you can help

- If you have any of the above symptoms or cold or flu-like symptoms, please stay at home and notify your BBBS staff contact.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds at a time.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer only if soap and water are not available, but do not replace this with proper handwashing.

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands, and dispose of tissues immediately.
- Precautions must be used for all food prepared or served in programs— food should not be shared or consumed from common containers and proper hand-washing must be enforced by those preparing food and before and after eating.

Specific Rules to follow

- If you are comfortable on resuming in person visits, you must keep physical distancing, 6ft distance at all times. **This means no travelling together at this point in a vehicle.**
- Wash hands before and after outing, and after any activity that requires you to clean your hands, i.e. food, sneezing in tissue, etc. and have hand sanitizer accessible
- No sharing of food
- No handshakes or hugs
- If you have travelled outside of Nova Scotia, you are required to self isolate for 14 days.
- Using as few touchable items as possible. Anything shared, requires sanitization with disinfectant, i.e.
- Contact staff for any questions, concerns, or information

Documentation and Meetings

There will be times when we request necessary paperwork signed, or schedule meetings at our office. Please follow the procedures below:

- We encourage you to do as much electronic communication when sharing paperwork as much as possible and documents can be signed electronically.
- If you are unable to do so, your paperwork will be placed in a designated basket in a secure/confidential area for 24 hours.
- Any entry in our building beyond the entryway is by appointment only. If you need to see your designated staff member, call ahead to make an appointment.
- Once in the building you will require a mask, if you do not have one, one will be provided.
- You will be requested to sanitize your hands.
- You will be directed into the sanitized meeting area where you will meet with the appropriate staff member. Room will be sanitized upon departure.
- Do not bring any outside items to meeting, i.e. food, beverages, etc. If in doubt, leave it out.
- If you have any questions at all, please ask your designated staff member

All should practice good personal hygiene habits including:

- Wash your hands. Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. Use hand sanitizers but do not replace these with good hand washing hygiene.
- Sneeze into your arm or sleeve.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and dispose.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches their eyes, nose or mouth.
- Practice other good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

As always, the safety of the BBBS community is our first priority. Please feel free to get in touch if you have any questions 902-752-6260

Resources

<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/>

<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/staying-healthy/>