

HMNS Statement to Parents/Guardians Regarding 2021-2022 Weekday Lab Operations

The health and safety of our patrons is always our first priority. The HMNS Weekday Lab program has extensive health and safety procedures in place every year. This school-year, in light of COVID-19 and the Delta variant, HMNS Youth Education is updating these procedures extensively, informed by current recommendations from local agencies and federal health officials, including CDC guidelines. The modifications include:

Social Distancing and Crowd Limitations

- Conducting each lab in a double-classroom with spaced seating.
- Reducing the number of staff per classroom to one teacher and up to three parent assistants – all other parents will need to wait outside the classroom and stay socially distant.
- No more than three students per classroom table. Siblings may sit together.
- Teachers and assistants will remind students to remain separate.
- Individualized projects and activities.
- Only students, up to three parent assistants and staff will be allowed in the classrooms. Floor decals will indicate 6-foot spacing for parents to queue outside each classroom for drop off and pick up.
- Museum staff will monitor all public spaces to facilitate social distancing; and have installed signage and floor decals throughout the facility to encourage and remind visitors to practice social distancing and hand washing and sanitizing.
- Eating outside the Butterfly Center, in Hermann Park, or offsite is encouraged.

Health Monitoring

- The temperature of all employees will also be measured before entering the museum; any employees exhibiting a fever of 100.4 or above will be sent home. Upon entering the building, employees must wash or sanitize their hands. The museum is also putting extensive health maintenance requirements in place for employees to follow throughout the day.
- Please monitor your own temperatures prior to leaving your home to attend HMNS Labs.
- Do not attend labs if you or your student have any symptoms associated with the COVID-19 infection, a confirmed case of the COVID-19 infection, or a suspected case of the COVID-19 infection within the last 14 days.

- Do not attend labs if you or your student have had any contact or potential contact with anyone with symptoms associated with COVID-19, a confirmed case of the Covid-19 infection, an individual under investigation for the Covid-19 infection within the last 14 days.
- If you or your student show symptoms associated with the COVID-19 infection and you or your student does get evaluated by a medical professional and tests positive for COVID-19, you or your student cannot return to HMNS lab programs until you have met the following criteria: at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever above 100.4 without the use of fever reducing medications); and you or your student has improvement in symptoms; and at least 14 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- If a student or chaperone within your group has a confirmed case of the COVID-19 infection, please notify the HMNS Education Department immediately. According to the State Texas Health Protocols the following are possible symptoms of COVID-19:
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills
 - Repeated shaking with chills
 - Muscle pain
 - Headache
 - Sore Throat
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Diarrhea
 - Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit

Cleaning and Sanitization

- Upon entering the museum, patrons are encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands.
- Patrons are encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands often throughout the day.
- All staff who engage with students will wear face masks.
- All patrons and students above 2 years old are required to wear a face mask while on the Lower Level and inside the classrooms.
- The museum has installed more hand sanitizing stations and instituted heightened cleaning protocols, including frequent environmental cleaning and disinfection of “high-touch” door handles, elevators, and restrooms.
- Classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized at the end of each day.
- Students will be asked to wipe down their personal area with sanitizing wipes at the beginning and end of their class.
- Teachers will sanitize surfaces and handles in the classroom at the beginning and end of the class.

- The museum is implementing cleanliness “patrols” in all exhibition galleries and other public areas. These patrols will clean and sanitize all public surfaces in the museum frequently throughout each day.

Staff Training

- All museum staff have been trained on all operational changes the museum is implementing.

General modifications for HMNS are available for review on the Museum’s Health and Safety page here: <http://www.hmns.org/visit/health-and-safety/>. We will continue to be informed by local, federal, and CDC guidelines and make necessary operational modifications as needed. The HMNS Youth Education staff will continue working non-stop to develop additional protocols and procedures that prioritize the health and safety of our participants.

We are looking forward to providing your students with fun, engaging, and educational programs in a healthy and safe environment. We hope you all are staying safe and taking good care of yourselves, and we look forward to seeing you again soon!

Sincerely,

The HMNS Youth Education Team