Amelia Park Children's Museum
imagination, inspiration

PLAY it SAFE

Museum Reopening Plan
A Note from the Executive Director

When we closed our doors on March 15, we did not know when we would be reopening them. Our first official guidance was to close for two weeks. Even then, when the full scope and severity of the pandemic was barely understood, that seemed optimistic. Still, we had hoped for a closure measured in weeks, not months. But the further we got into the closure, the more we understood that this would be long-term.

Realizing that, we shifted our focus. Except for continuing to care for our animal residents (and repairing the HVAC system when it partially broke down) we turned our attention to fulfilling our mission virtually and planning to safely reopen the building.

For the latter, APCM set up a committee that included staff, museum members, and board members (including those with career experience in education and in healthcare). In addition to relying on our own expertise, we were in contact with many children’s museums across the country. We consulted with health experts and the Westfield Public Schools. And we relied on our professional networks, the Association of Children’s Museums, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the New England Museum Association, for guidance. The committee held virtual meetings to discuss all aspects of safely reopening and operating the museum.

The key question was not “how can we return to what we had been doing before the closure?” It was “how can we take this as an opportunity to improve on what we had been doing?”

This Reopening Plan is our first step in answering that question.

Ray Radigan
Executive Director
Our knowledge of Covid-19 is constantly evolving. As such, the policies and procedures outlined in this Reopening Plan have been developed in accordance with the most currently known and available information as reported by the Centers of Disease Control, state and local health officials, and the REALM Project (developed and implemented by IMLS and Battelle).

As new or updated information becomes available, we will modify our safety procedures and protocols accordingly to continue to maintain a healthy and safe facility.
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Before the Museum Reopens

Prior to reopening to staff and visitors, the facility will be modified to create a safer space for everyone.

★ First, the building and all of APCM’s exhibits will be deep-cleaned by APCM staff. All dust and debris will be removed. All frequently touched surfaces will be sanitized.

★ The full building will be disinfected with electrostatic disinfecting equipment. This will evenly cover all surfaces with a safe disinfecting solution which will kill all virus particles, even those in hard-to-reach places.

★ For the protection of staff and visitors, Plexiglas shields will be added to both work stations at the museum’s front desk. These will allow for safer interactions between staff and visitors.

★ Prior to reopening, APCM will add a washing machine to the facility. This will allow staff to wash all costumes and cloth or foam props on a daily basis.

★ Additional hand sanitizing stations will be added throughout the museum. These will supplement the three existing stations already in the museum.

★ Additional “Clean Me’ bins will be added throughout the museum. Staff and caregivers will be encouraged to place dirty props in them so that they can be removed from circulation and sanitized by staff.

★ Signage will be added throughout the museum to inform all visitors of safety procedures and new policies.
To maintain a safe environment, all staff and volunteers will be required to follow new safety protocols.

* Prior to arriving at work, all staff and volunteers will need to take their temperature and confirm it is under 100.4 F. Any temperature above 100.4 F, or any other symptoms of illness will require an employee or staff member to remain at home until recording three consecutive days with no symptoms or providing a negative coronavirus test.

* All staff and volunteers will be required to sanitize their hands when arriving for a shift.

* All staff and volunteers will be required to wear face masks at all times while in the museum.

* Staff will maintain a safe distance of 6 feet from visitors and one another whenever possible.

* When handling cash, staff will wear disposable gloves. Staff will sanitize the credit card machine after each use by a visitor by wiping it down with a disinfectant.

* Staff not following all safety procedures will be subject to disciplinary action.
**Staffing Plan**

To best maintain a safe and clean space, and to assure that policies and procedures are understood and followed, APCM will make some modifications to staffing levels.

- Staff members/volunteers will be on the museum floor during all open hours to ensure the safety of visitors.

- Two staff members will be at the front desk at the beginning of each session. One will shift to working on the floor after 30 minutes.

- One staff member will clean and sanitize during open hours. This will include sanitizing all frequently touched surfaces and monitoring exhibit props.

- All staff will clean the museum following the end of each session, from 12:00-1:00 and 3:00-4:00. In addition to the procedures described above, this will include switching out all props and replacing them with clean sets, checking and refilling all soap and hand sanitizer stations, emptying all “clean-me” bins, and wiping down all flat surfaces.
The museum will be professionally cleaned every day that it is open to visitors. Professional cleaning will occur from 9:30-12:30 and include all routine facility upkeep procedures such as vacuuming/mopping floors, cleaning counters, trash removal, etc. Bathrooms will be cleaned twice daily, at 9:30 and 12:00.

Staff will clean and sanitize all exhibits and public spaces with a CDC approved disinfectant solution after each play session, at 12:00 and 3:00.

Staff will sanitize high-touch surfaces with a CDC approved disinfectant solution throughout the museum during play sessions.

All props and costumes will be cleaned after each play session, at 12:00 and 3:00. Cloth and soft foam props and costumes will be machine washed with detergent. Hard plastics and metal will be dishwasher-sanitized. Wood props, books, and art materials will be wiped with a CDC approved disinfectant.

Two sets of props, a morning set and an afternoon set, will be switched for one another before each session begins, assuring that all props and costumes are safe for use.

The water in the cow will be changed after each play session.

Exhibits will continue to be deep-cleaned on a rotating basis.
**Play Sessions**

Moving to a reservation-based system with defined time slots will assure that APCM is able to avoid crowding and to close between sessions for cleaning.

- APCM will have two two-hour sessions per day: a morning session from 10-Noon and an afternoon session from 1:00-3:00. This will allow for cleaning time between sessions. Daily programs will occur at 11:00 and 2:00 in the program room.

- Visitors will be required to sign up in advance for a play session. Sign ups will be available through Eventbrite, with links on the APCM website. Payment for non-members (as well as membership renewals) will be available through the website reservation system.

- Visitors will be able to sign up for a reservation up to three weeks in advance.

- Visitors wishing to make a reservation via phone will be allowed to do so by calling the museum during museum operating hours. Staff members will enter callers into the online system.

- Visitors arriving at the museum who did not sign up in advance will be allowed to enter only if the play session is not already at capacity.
Visitor Safety Requirements

APCM’s safety procedures are designed to keep visitors safe while visiting the museum. All visitors will be required to follow the procedures. These procedures have been developed in consultation with many other children’s museums.

- When entering the museum, visitors will be required to sanitize their hands. APCM will provide hand sanitizer at the main entrance.

- Reentry will not be permitted during a play session.

- All visitors over age 5 will be required to wear a face mask at all times while in the building. APCM will have masks available for any visitor who needs one.

- Food and beverages will not be allowed in the building. Water will be available at the front desk and must be consumed there. APCM’s drinking fountains will be closed.

- Capacity limits will be posted at each exhibit area to eliminate the risk of overcrowding in any portion of the museum. Museum staff and volunteers will be available to monitor capacity issues.

- Signage will be posted throughout to museum to inform/remind visitors of these policies.
Birthday Parties

Birthday parties will be available with some modifications to ensure for the safety of all guests.

★ Birthday party time slots will remain the same, 10-12 and 1-3 on Saturdays and Sundays.

★ Parties will be required to book at least three weeks in advance, to avoid exceeding building capacity with general visitors.

★ A full guest total for each party will need to be known at least three weeks in advance. Staff will record the total and adjust the visitor reservation availability accordingly.

★ Party hosts will be permitted to access the party room 30 minutes before their party begins. Party guests will not be allowed to enter the museum until the start of the party.

★ All party participants will need to exit the museum at the conclusion of their party. Staff will give party hosts 15, 10 and 5 minute warnings.

★ To prevent room-sharing between two birthday parties, all parties will reserve the full party room at the existing rate of $300 per party.

★ Food and beverages will be permitted, but strictly limited to the party room. No food or beverages are allowed onto the museum floor.

★ The bubbles and slime party theme add-ons will continue to be offered. The animals theme will be replaced with another because it involves close contact.
The gift shop at APCM will become a touch-free space. This will allow for continued purchases without the risk of objects being handled by multiple visitors.

- Examples of all sale items will be displayed on the rear shelves, which will be covered in Plexiglas.
- Staff will have access to all inventory, which will be retrieved upon request.
- Staff will wear gloves when handling gift shop purchases.