



The National Norwegian-American  
Museum and Folk Art School

[vesterheim.org](http://vesterheim.org)

Updated July 13, 2021

To Our Beloved Folk-Art Community,

Due to recent updates on COVID-19 protocols and guidelines from the CDC and the State of Iowa, Vesterheim, the National Norwegian-American Museum and Folk Art School, has revised COVID-19 policies that were previously released this winter. The Folk Art School continues to plan for reopening for on-site classes starting September 1, and registration for these classes will open online on July 20, 2021.

Vesterheim greatly values the health and safety of its learners, teachers, and staff and is continuously monitoring local and national COVID-19 statistics, government recommendations, and peer institution guidelines. As with any activity in a public place, there is an inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19. If you are experiencing any of the symptoms related to COVID-19 infection, please stay home. By registering for a class, attending a program, or visiting the Folk Art School, you voluntarily assume all risks related to COVID-19 exposure and assume them willingly. Thank you for your continued patience, understanding, and respect for the safety of our community as we navigate these difficult times. If you have additional questions, please contact us at [info@vesterheim.org](mailto:info@vesterheim.org) or 563-382-9681.

Thank you!

The Folk Art School Team and Vesterheim Staff

**Vesterheim Folk Art School (FAS) plans to open for onsite classes September 1, 2021. We are following metrics, scientific data, and guidelines from the following in order to make informed and safe decisions:**

1. State positivity rate of Iowa (must be below 5%) as reported by [coronavirus.iowa.gov](https://coronavirus.iowa.gov).
2. National positivity rate (must be below 5% positive covid cases because people travel to FAS from outside the state) as reported by [covid.cdc.gov](https://covid.cdc.gov).
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidelines as written on [covid.cdc.gov](https://covid.cdc.gov).

**We will also continue to monitor peer institution protocols and guidelines as a secondary indicator (staying in alignment with the field).**

**FAS staff in consultation with the museum's President/CEO and CFO will make institutional decisions about opening/closing and modifying protocols.**

**The Folk Art School will move back the reopening date IF:**

- Community case numbers increase beyond percentages we have agreed upon
- National case numbers increase beyond percentages we have agreed upon
- The CDC doesn't recommend travel
- The CDC recommends a quarantine
- Vaccine effectiveness has changed with COVID-19 variants

**The Folk Art School will consider adjusting protocols and/or increase offerings or class sizes if any of the following occur:**

- CDC guidelines allow or encourage this shift
- 75% of the U.S. population is vaccinated
- Class and student safety can be ensured, and demand exists
- Other peer institutions are adjusting their safety protocols

**Any changes or updates to these guidelines can be found on our website at:**

**<https://vesterheim.org/folk-art-school/>**

## Vesterheim Folk Art School Suggested COVID-19 Safety Protocols and Policies

The Folk Art School asks that you arrive on campus healthy. If you are experiencing any of the symptoms related to COVID-19 infection, please stay home and your tuition will be refunded in full.

### Vaccines, Testing, and Masks

- **Vesterheim will not require students to be vaccinated before arrival to campus, but we strongly encourage you to do so to protect our folk-art community – those who are unable to get vaccinated and those who have immunocompromised systems or are still building up immunity.**
  - If you are unvaccinated, you will be required to wear a mask while on campus inside any building or in proximity to another person.
    - Disposable masks will be available if needed.
  - If you are unvaccinated, we strongly encourage you to get tested and practice social distancing for two weeks before arriving on campus.
  - You can find more information about vaccine availability in your area on the CDC website here: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/index.htm>
- **Vesterheim will not require vaccinated individuals to wear masks indoors but will encourage social distancing for those not within a family group.**
  - We encourage everyone to bring a mask for situations where social distancing is difficult.
  - We encourage you to wear a mask if you would feel more comfortable in class.
- **For all youth programs, masks will continue to be required for all participants. Safety is a priority for our folk-art community and we want all participants to feel safe in our classroom spaces.**

### Classroom Management

- **Limited Class Amount**
  - There will be a maximum of two concurrent classes on campus at any time.
  - Classes will be held in separate buildings or on separate floors of the same building.
- **Limited Class Sizes**
  - Classes are limited to 10 people (including instructor(s)).
  - Youth classes are limited to 12 people (including instructor(s)).

## • **Physical Distancing**

- The Folk Art School encourages you to maintain six feet of distance from anyone outside your family group as much as possible.
- To facilitate physical distancing, some classes will be held in larger classroom spaces.
- Workspaces will be socially distanced.
  - We ask for the comfort of your classmates that you consider wearing a mask when approaching workstations or when gathering for demonstrations.
- A hand sanitizer station will be at the classroom entrance and hand washing can be done in restrooms.

## • **Food and Refreshments**

- We encourage you to eat outside or off campus.
- Dining tables are available in the plaza outside of the museum building and seating is also available at the amphitheater or on benches in and around Heritage Park.
- If you are vaccinated, you are welcome to use the newly renovated Bruening Visitor's space to eat your lunch. This space includes a fridge, microwave, and sink for student use.
- If you are unvaccinated, we ask that you eat outside or off campus.
- Eating is not permitted in the classrooms.
- The Folk Art school will provide coffee at specific times, otherwise there are several coffee vendors within walking distance.
- We will not be offering treats at this time. This may change and we continue to evaluate this option. Please do not bring any food or treats to share.

## • **Teaching**

- When possible, instructors will use video monitors, cameras, and microphones for increased visibility and sound and to avoid close group demos.
- If there is good weather, classes will have the option to meet outside.
- There will be no evening studio work time outside of class for the duration of the pandemic.
- Sharing of tools and equipment is discouraged and when possible/appropriate, students are asked to bring their own tools.

## • **Sanitation & Facilities**

- There will be extra cleaning and sanitation of facilities.
- Vesterheim is hiring an additional custodian to help with extra cleaning.
- Hand washing stations will be set up in each classroom.
  - Where hand washing stations are not available, hand sanitizer will be provided.
- Sanitizing stations will be in every classroom with sanitizer, wipe, disinfectant, and towels.
- Daily Cleaning:
  - Facilities staff will be cleaning throughout the day with an increased sanitation plan.
  - Staff will clean at least twice – around lunch and after classes.

- Facilities staff will focus on frequently touched surfaces utilizing EPA registered disinfectants based on OSHA standards, CDC directives, and MDH recommendations.
- Vesterheim will ensure that adequate air filtration is provided wherever possible.
  - We will open doors and windows where we can.
  - Vesterheim will purchase a ventilation/air filtration unit for enhanced classroom ventilation.
- Communal areas and door handles and light switches will be cleaned daily by facilities staff.

## **Administration**

- Before arrival – COVID-19 Safety Protocols and Expectations will be communicated clearly to every student and a printable COVID-19 policies PDF will be on the website.
- By registering for a class, attending a program, or visiting the Folk Art School, all guests voluntarily assume all risks related to COVID-19 exposure.
- All participants must enter through the front of the building and check-in at the newly remodeled Bruening Visitor's Center at the corner of Water Street and Mechanic Street.
  - There is NO entry through the back of the building. Specific details about check-in will be shared closer to the date of your arrival.

## **• Refund Policy**

- Full refunds will be provided to sick students up until class starts.
- If any student is asked to leave because of a health concern once class has started:
  - Vesterheim will issue a class credit voucher to the student.
  - The other students and instructor can choose whether or not to continue the course or end it at that time. Prorated tuition refunds will also be issued as class credit vouchers; materials fee refunds will be on a case-by-case basis.
- If a class is canceled by Vesterheim, students will receive a full refund.
- There will be no refunds or prorated tuition for late arrivals, early departures, or missed class once class has started (non-COVID-19 related).
- If we must cancel a course, students will receive a full refund of any payments made for that course. Students who cancel their enrollment more than 21 days prior to the first day of the course will receive a refund less a \$25 processing fee to cover administrative costs. In recognition of the time and energy instructors invest in preparing for courses, students who cancel their enrollment 21 days or less prior to the first day of the course are not eligible for a refund unless the cancellation is COVID-19 related and then all the aforementioned policies apply.
- These policies are related to COVID-19 protocols and procedures. For all other non-COVID-19 related cancellations or cancellations related to online class offerings please refer to our published refund policy on our website <https://vesterheim.org/folk-art-school/>.