



The National Norwegian-American  
Museum and Folk Art School

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

*Updated April 4, 2022*

Dear Folk Art School Community,

Due to recent updates on COVID-19 protocols and guidelines from the CDC concerning the rise of the Omicron variant, Vesterheim Museum and Folk Art School has revised its policies. **Starting April 18, Vesterheim Folk Art School will relax the mask mandate for all instructors, students, and staff making it an independent choice for all visitors to the Folk Art School. Vesterheim does reserve the right to require masks if an instructor requests them and this will be communicated in the course description on our website. Vesterheim is still committed to a vaccine mandate and air filtration in our classrooms. We will also continue to provide masks as needed.** The details of these requirements are outlined below.

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*. Failure to follow these policies will result in being asked to leave the program without a refund. 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.

*The Folk Art School Team and Vesterheim Staff*

**Vesterheim is following best practices toward health and safety as recommended by the CDC and guided by scientific data, to make informed and safe decisions:**

1. State positivity rate of Iowa as reported by [coronavirus.iowa.gov](https://coronavirus.iowa.gov).
2. National positivity rate as reported by [covid.cdc.gov](https://covid.cdc.gov).
3. 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).

**The museum's President/CEO will make institutional decisions about opening/closing and modifying protocols.**

**Vesterheim will reevaluate these policies IF:**

- Community case numbers increase beyond acceptable percentages
- National case numbers increase beyond acceptable percentages
- 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 increasing 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 [vesterheim.org/folk-art-school/](https://vesterheim.org/folk-art-school/).**

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

### Vaccination

Due to the length of time that students and instructors interact with each other over the course of a typical class, **as of February 1, 2022, Vesterheim will require all students, instructors, and visitors to the Folk Art School to show proof of vaccination against COVID-19:**

- CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Card (or digital photo) or
- An official immunization record from outside the U.S.
- Proof of vaccination can be submitted online here <https://vesterheim.org/covidstatus/>.
- Vaccination information will be checked before and upon arrival to class.
- A person is fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving two doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or one dose of the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine.

### Masking

Because onsite classes involve working in proximity with others over an extended period, the following mask requirements will be in place:

- **Starting April 18, Vesterheim Folk Art School will relax the mask mandate for all instructors, students, and staff making it an independent choice for all visitors to the Folk Art School. Vesterheim does reserve the right to require masks if an instructor requests them and this will be communicated in the course description on our website and/or through class correspondence to registrants prior to their arrival.**
- If a student or instructor does not have a KN95 mask when they arrive to start their class and the instructor has previously indicated that masks will be required, Vesterheim will provide them with one at the start of class.

## Classroom Management

- Air Filtration
  - Folk Art School classrooms are equipped with [ISO-Air medical grade air filters](#), which utilize both particulate filters and medical-grade HEPA filters. Air is filtered and replaced in the classroom every 20-30 minutes.
- Limited Class Sizes
  - Classes are limited to 10 people (including instructor(s)).
  - Youth classes are limited to 12 people (including instructor(s)).
- Physical Distancing During Class:
  - The Folk Art School encourages you 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.
  - A hand sanitizer station will be at the classroom entrance and hand washing can be done in restrooms or in classroom sinks where available.
  - Public visitors not enrolled in a course will not be allowed in classroom spaces.
- Food and Refreshments
  - Eating is only permitted indoors, socially distanced by traveling pod or household group in the Westby-Torgerson Education Center on the first floor in the Bruening Visitor Center. Eating indoors is done at the student's own risk. We encourage students to eat outside, in a personal vehicle, or off-campus.
  - Indoor dining tables are available in the first-floor welcome space, as well as a refrigerator, microwave, sink, and dishes for student use.
  - We ask that when you are done eating if you want to remain in an indoor space to mask up promptly after.
  - Outside 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.
  - We will not be offering treats or coffee at this time. Please do not bring any food or treats to share.

- Eating is not allowed in classroom spaces, but a personal beverage is allowed in the classroom.
- We encourage students to bring a water bottle that can be filled up at a sink or water fountain. Drinking from water fountains is discouraged.
- Teaching
  - 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 and Facilities
  - There will be extra cleaning and sanitation of facilities.
  - Sanitizing stations will be in every classroom with sanitizer, wipe, disinfectant, and towels.
  - 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.

### 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.
  - Please self-check for COVID-19 symptoms. *If you are experiencing any of the symptoms related to a COVID-19 infection, please stay home and your tuition will be refunded in full.*
- At arrival:
  - All participants must enter through the front of the Westby-Torgerson Education Center and check-in at the newly remodeled Bruening Visitor's Center at the corner of Water Street and Mechanic Street.
  - Please put your KN95 mask on before entering the building.
  - 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.

- If you did not submit your proof of vaccination online, please have a physical copy ready at check-in.

#### Refund Policy:

- Full refunds provided to sick students up until class starts.
- If a student signed up for a class prior to February 1 and chooses to cancel their registration due to their vaccination status, a full refund will be given.
- Failure to follow Vesterheim's COVID-19 policies while at the Folk Art School will result in being asked to leave the program without a refund.
- If any student tests positive during the duration of a class:
  - Vesterheim will ask that student to leave and will issue a pro-rated class credit voucher to the student.
  - The other students and instructor can choose whether 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 at the discretion of the instructor.
- If a class is cancelled 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 Vesterheim 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 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.  
[vesterheim.org/folk-art-school](http://vesterheim.org/folk-art-school).