

Subject: Information for faculty, advisors, and academic staff on vaccine and mask mandates

From: "Largent, Mark" <largent@msu.edu>

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To: "Largent, Mark" <largent@msu.edu>

Dear Faculty, Advisors, and Academic Staff,

As the start of the fall semester approaches, we wanted to provide instructors, advisors, and academic staff with some information and guidance around the mask and vaccine mandates that will help ensure a safe and respectful setting for us to reconvene in person this fall.

Vaccines and Early Detection Program Participation

MSU requires all students and employees to have been vaccinated against COVID-19 by Aug. 31, 2021, (either fully or with at least one dose of a two-dose vaccine and completing the two-dose vaccination process in a timely manner) or have applied for an exemption. In the interest of the health and safety of the entire MSU community, exemptions to the vaccine requirement are limited to:

- **Religious exemptions:** Persons requesting an exemption based on a sincerely held religious belief or religious practice that precludes them from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine may submit a request for a religious exemption. A religious exemption is not the same as a philosophical, moral, or conscientious exemption.
- **Medical exemptions:** Persons requesting an exemption based on a medical condition that precludes them from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine may submit a request for a medical exemption. Documentation from a medical provider is required.
- **Online only courses (students only):** Students requesting this exemption must attest they are taking only online courses for the fall 2021 semester and will not physically be present on campus or in any MSU owned or governed property for any reason, including attending or participating in courses, services, programs, recreational or sporting events or other activities of any kind throughout the semester.

Online forms to verify your vaccine or submit an exemption [can be found here](#). Individuals with an approved medical or religious exemption must participate in the [Early Detection Program](#), which will require weekly testing.

Face Coverings

Appropriate face coverings must be properly worn – covering both mouth and nose – by everyone (including all faculty, staff, students, vendors, and visitors) while on property owned or governed by MSU and while participating in any indoor MSU-related or MSU-sponsored activities. If someone has a medical condition that prevents them from safely wearing a face covering, they should contact [MSU's Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities \(RCPD\)](#) to begin the accommodation process. They must receive documents attesting to their exemption from the mask mandate before entering an MSU building without a mask.

At the beginning of the semester, faculty should remind students that the university has put in place a mask mandate and students are required to wear properly fitting masks during indoor class meetings. They should refrain from eating or drinking during class to avoid having to remove their masks. If they

do consume food or drinks inside, they should remove the mask only to take a sip of beverage or a bite to eat, and they must replace the mask properly between each bite and sip. Our colleagues in IPF are hanging signs inside and around classrooms about the mask mandate and the necessity to wear masks consistently and properly.

If you encounter a student not wearing a proper face covering during class, please address the situation using the following progressive steps:

1. Remind the entire class of the mask requirement and request that everyone comply. There will be signs in classrooms describing the mask mandate to which instructors can refer.
2. Directly request a non-compliant student to either comply with the mask requirement or leave the building. If a student has forgotten their mask, they should be allowed to leave to go get one. Please refer to [Keep Teaching](#) for resources about how to have that conversation, and please note that a student's refusal to wear a mask warrants a referral for disciplinary action.
3. If a direct request to comply with the mask mandate is ignored, the instructor should inform the class that the entire class will be dismissed for the day unless everyone is in compliance with the mask mandate.
4. If a non-compliant student refuses to wear a mask or leave the classroom, class should be dismissed. In these situations, instructors should notify their department chairs and work with the college to ensure appropriate measures are taken to help ensure that the next class meeting can be held safely.
5. Should an emergency develop that you feel cannot be resolved by classroom dismissal, the instructor should call 911 for assistance just as they would with any other emergency. **Note: Calling the police should be a last resort for genuine emergencies and not used to handle non-emergency conduct issues. An emergency that would warrant calling 911 would include an imminent threat of violence or a medical emergency.**

If there is an incident related to properly worn face coverings in class, instructors should immediately file a report with their academic unit's leader (e.g., department head, director of academic affairs, or director) that includes a written record of the facts. Similarly, supervisors will use the regular processes outlined by Human Resources for any situation involving an employee. Academic Human Resources should be contacted for situations involving faculty and academic staff.

Additional resources, such as how to enforce classroom standards, can be found on [Keep Teaching](#), which is regularly updated.

Compliance with Vaccine and Mask Mandates

Students and employees who fail to attest to having been vaccinated and fail to apply for and receive an exemption will be subject to progressive disciplinary action beginning Sept. 1 and leading to removal from the university. Non-compliance by students with the mask requirement while in residence halls or disruptions in the classroom will result in the initiation of disciplinary actions, up to and including removal from the university.

Employees who violate the vaccine or mask requirements may be subject to discipline, including termination from the university.

If you have reason to believe that a student or employee is out of compliance with the vaccination mandate, you should file a report with the [MSU Misconduct Hotline](#). You should not take it upon

yourself to investigate compliance issues. You should assume that all employees and students are in compliance and report any information that may suggest otherwise to the MSU Misconduct Hotline.

Syllabus Guidance

Syllabus guidance can be found on the [Keep Teaching](#) website to assist instructors in ensuring that syllabi are in line with student rights as outlined in the Code of Teaching Responsibility. As you are creating or reviewing syllabi, we encourage you to consult these resources, which are regularly updated.

Attendance Policy

Attendance policies and repercussions for non-attendance are the purview of the class instructor. MSU suggests the following guidance related to COVID-related absences to ensure student success, learning, and the preservation of the health and safety of our community members:

- Clearly state the class expectations for attendance and consequences for non-attendance in the syllabus, including your policy for illness.
 - Consider how you will accommodate students who might need to be absent for two or more weeks because they have contracted the novel coronavirus.
 - Instructors are encouraged to give students the benefit of the doubt and not require medical evidence and make accommodations as best as possible.
- Clearly state the class policies related to missing quizzes and submitting late work and the consequences for missing or late work.
- Suggest to students that they reach out to their advisors, College Student Affairs offices, and instructors if they will need to miss class due to COVID.
- Encourage the students to establish a peer network of support in case they need to miss class.
- Provide information about the grief absence process and consider being generous if students report they have experienced a loss; consider putting in links to [CAPS](#) and other support services listed on the [Keep Learning Website](#).

Contact Tracing, Isolation/Quarantine Policies and Procedures, and Testing

Contact tracing and notification of positive cases will be handled centrally by the university in collaboration with local health officials. You should not take it upon yourself to notify people of possible exposures to COVID-19 as this would be a potential violation of privacy. All positive cases should be reported to MSU's COVID-19 Triage Hotline at 855-958-2678.

Quarantine expectations for anyone who has been in close contact (within 6 feet of someone who tests positive for COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more) will follow the [CDC's guidance](#) of a 14-day quarantine for people who are not fully vaccinated. People who are fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine after close contact with someone with COVID-19 unless they develop [symptoms](#). It is recommended that fully vaccinated people who are in close contact with someone who tests positive should themselves be tested 3-5 days after exposure to ensure that they do not have an asymptomatic case of COVID that they could spread to others.

Anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 should isolate from others for at least 10 days after symptoms first appear and for 24 hours after fever has subsided without the use of fever-reducing

medications and other related symptoms are improving. If you tested positive for COVID-19 but showed no symptoms, you should isolate for 10 days after your positive COVID-19 test.

All members of the MSU community, regardless of their vaccination status, are welcome to participate in the Early Detection Program. Information about the program and registration links are available [here](#).

Your students and colleagues will need to follow these guidelines in order to protect both their own health and yours. Please help them by providing appropriate flexibility and support.

Together We Will

We are looking forward to the start of the semester and to the return of in-person activities on campus. To support this, each of us must behave in ways that respect the safety and dignity of all those around us. Thank you for all that you are doing to help keep our Spartan community safe.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Amey, Interim Associate Provost for Faculty and Academic Staff Development

Thomas Jeitschko, Associate Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and Dean of the Graduate School

Mark Largent, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of Undergraduate Studies