

**University of Mary Washington's COVID-19 Preparedness Plan  
for 2021-2022 Academic Year  
Effective Date: August 9, 2021**

The goal for fall 2021 is to return to the time-honored UMW experience: in-person interactions with classmates and professors, participation in unique traditions, and involvement in myriad activities, clubs and athletic events. To achieve that end, we have worked with our local health district and hospital system as well as local, state and [federal](#) health guidelines, and the guidance from the [American College Health Association](#) for fall 2021.

### **Vaccinations**

The University of Mary Washington will require all students physically accessing campus services and classes to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 before returning to campus for the Fall 2021 term.

UMW joins hundreds of other universities nationwide, including the majority of public institutions in Virginia, in requiring students to be vaccinated as a means of protecting the health of the community, particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Research continues to support the safety and efficacy – along with extreme effectiveness – of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) and World Health Organization (WHO). Widespread vaccination is the best tool we have to ensure that UMW can return to a full in-person academic and social environment in the fall of 2021.

Any vaccine approved in the U.S., including Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson/Janssen will be accepted. UMW will work with students who have been vaccinated abroad as well as international students who do not have access to vaccines approved in the US.

Two permitted exemptions to the University's vaccination requirement still allow a student to participate in person. These are the same exceptions for every mandated vaccine at UMW and they must be submitted to the [Student Health Center](#).

- A medical exemption will be granted to students for whom receiving the COVID-19 vaccination is medically inadvisable. Documentation from the student's health provider must be provided.
- A religious exemption will be granted in accordance with Certificate of Religious Exemption (Form CRE-1).

Access to residence halls (for residential students) and University IT systems (for residential and nonresidential students) will be prohibited until a vaccination record or an exemption is filed and verified with the Student Health Center. Students who have not provided proof of vaccination, a medical or religious waiver, or have submitted evidence of vaccination in progress form by August

20 will be dropped from their classes without any guarantee of getting in those classes again. All students who are not fully vaccinated will participate in daily attestation and weekly COVID-19 prevalence testing.

UMW expects that all employees will be vaccinated. Employees who do not meet this expectation will participate in daily attestation and weekly COVID-19 prevalence testing. Regardless of status, all employees must complete the vaccination survey which is managed by Human Resources. **The [August 5 Executive Directive](#) from Governor Northam makes this vaccination expectation a requirement for state employees and most in-person state contractors**, with few exemptions to be laid out from DHRM by September 1. Regardless, all employees that have not provided proof of vaccination will need to attest daily and test weekly as a condition of employment.

## **Masking**

In keeping with CDC guidance, all unvaccinated employees, students and visitors are required to wear masks inside any university building and are strongly encouraged to do so when outside in group settings. The CDC also suggests that fully vaccinated people who are immunocompromised or live with someone who is immunocompromised should wear masks around others.

[The latest guidance from CDC](#) also raises concern about the high transmissibility rate of the Delta variant and recommends that anyone in substantial or high transmission rate regions wear masks while in public indoor spaces. At this posting, Fredericksburg, Stafford County, and Spotsylvania County all fall under the “substantial or high transmissibility” category. **As such, at least through the first few weeks of the return to campus, UMW is requiring that all employees, students, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status, wear masks indoors in public spaces**, which includes all classrooms, laboratories, meeting spaces, foyers and hallways, and auditoriums. Masks are not required in one’s own residence hall room, private offices, other spaces where you are alone, and when eating and drinking. UMW is developing a process for limited exemptions to this indoor requirement for certain academic, co-curricular, and physical activities. UMW strongly recommends wearing a mask when outdoors in large groups.

UMW will continue to monitor this guidance and local conditions and will announce modifications as appropriate.

All individuals, regardless of vaccination status, must wear masks in the Student Health Center, Talley Center for Counseling Services, the Athletic Training Room, and in any university operated/sponsored shuttle, bus, or van where there are multiple occupants.

## **Physical Distancing**

All classrooms, dining facilities, public gathering places, and event spaces will return to normal occupancy limits for fall 2021. Event planners, building managers, and program sponsors should provide opportunities for social distancing by individuals who are unvaccinated or feel more comfortable maintaining their distance from others. In certain cases, this may require decreasing occupancy limits of the event or program space. Specific classroom considerations may also be necessary and should be accommodated to the furthest extent possible. Care must be taken by all members of the University community not to make assumptions or judgments about a person's vaccination status based on whether or not they choose to maintain physical distance from others.

For the first few weeks of the year, however, even with vaccines and masks, at a time when our region is one where there is substantial or high transmission of the virus, we should be sensible about large indoor gatherings until we know more about the transmissibility of the new and emerging variants. This means holding large gatherings outdoors where possible. It also means promoting social distancing by utilizing larger indoor spaces or utilizing streaming options for events that would typically involve congregating in auditoriums at maximum capacity.

## **Meetings**

While there is a commitment to returning to in-person instruction and co-curricular activities for students and everyone is eager to resume face-to-face interactions, meeting organizers should weigh the benefits and risks of holding meetings in-person or virtually. Meeting organizers should take into consideration meeting room size and available distancing, length of meetings, preferences of the attendees, and the potential ramifications of an infection on the unit's daily operations when choosing between in-person or virtual options. UMW will maintain its Zoom license, making virtual meetings available to all faculty, staff, and students who choose to exercise this option.

At least initially, an approach which places a premium on in-person experiences (e.g. classes, office hours, and many other activities where being in the same space is uniquely valuable) that is balanced with virtual convenings where possible is strongly encouraged.

## **Housing**

The on-campus experience continues to complement the academic mission of the university by providing students an opportunity to connect to peers, staff mentors, and the institution. When students experience these connections, they are more likely to succeed academically. UMW's Residence Life and Housing program has always been grounded in the acceptance and celebration of differences and believes healthy communication is the key to a positive and vibrant community. To that end, students are encouraged to speak openly and honestly with roommates about expectations to maintain a healthy living environment.

Vaccination status is not available to the Residence Life and Housing staff and was not considered in the room assignment process. Room change requests based on vaccination statuses will be handled through the established room change process and will not be prioritized over other roommate concerns or room change requests.

During move-in, students will be able to have two guests accompany them into the residence hall to assist with belongings and setting up their space. All guests will be required to wear masks while inside the residence halls regardless of vaccination status.

After move-in weekend, residential students will be allowed to have visitors, however overnight stays will not be permitted initially with the exception of those arranged through Admissions or Athletics recruitment activities. Regional and campus COVID-19 data will be reviewed frequently to determine when the guest policy can return to pre-pandemic parameters. Residential students will be responsible for ensuring their guests are following UMW expectations around masking and distancing.

Students living in off-campus housing should also consider the risks of transmission in their own apartments or houses. Large gatherings in small spaces should be avoided, especially in situations when residents do not know their guests and where mitigation strategies cannot be controlled or enforced.

## **Dining**

Dining locations continue to pose increased risk for transmission of COVID-19 due to the need for unmasking while eating. UMW Dining is committed to resuming in-person dining on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the University Center and at its retail outlets.

- UMW requires the use of masks in all dining facilities when not actively eating. This includes wearing masks while in cashier lines, food lines, and when socializing.
- Consider eating with the same individuals at each meal and avoiding large tables of people. Tables should be spaced out as well.
- Multiple self-serve stations will come back online, including Graze bar and the beverage stations.
- Guests will be permitted to eat on the 4th floor of the UC and in other indoor retail locations. Occupancy is to be determined closer to opening based on local health conditions and VDH recommendations. Outdoor dining is still the best option, where possible.
- The program will return to reusable tableware and flatware while phasing out single use plastics.

- Students will continue to be able to get take-away food if they are uncomfortable eating in the dining hall.
- Delivery options for Vocelli's, Panera, and 1301 Hen House are being expanded.

As long as there is an indoor masking requirement, University Dining staff members will also be required to comply. University Dining staff members have been encouraged to get the COVID-19 vaccine and we are working to determine how the Governor's Executive Directive requiring state employees and contractors to get vaccinated will be implemented, including regarding weekly testing.

Protocols set in place during the COVID-19 pandemic for cleaning and sanitizing will continue.

### **Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**

Protecting self and others from exposure to respiratory secretions is essential to public health. All individuals must be diligent in practicing good respiratory etiquette by coughing and sneezing into a tissue or your elbow and thoroughly washing hands frequently, especially after known contact with respiratory droplets.

UMW will continue to provide signage throughout its properties, especially in bathrooms, reminding the community to practice these mitigation strategies. Members are also reminded to stay home and away from others if experiencing illness and seek medical care and testing if exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status.

### **Cleaning**

Based on data from the CDC and VDH indicating relatively low transmission rates from touching surfaces, Housekeeping will return to cleaning protocols which will still include [once-a-day cleanings](#) with approved disinfectants in all public spaces and enhanced cleaning in dining locations. UMW will maintain supplies of sanitizing wipes and hand sanitizer in classroom and other public spaces for members of the university community to continue to clean their spaces before and after use. Additional supplies can be requested by placing a work order with Facilities.

### **Testing and Daily Attestation for Unvaccinated People**

All students, faculty, and staff who are not fully vaccinated, regardless of reason, are required to participate in weekly prevalence testing and attest daily to any symptoms through the Eagle Health

Journal. The Student Health Center and Human Resources will inform the testing team of individuals required to test. It is the responsibility of the unvaccinated individual to schedule and attend their weekly appointment.

Unvaccinated students will test on-campus and will be able to select a time on either a Monday or Thursday each week. Students are asked to keep a consistent appointment time week to week. Failure to show for weekly testing or complete the daily attestation will result in restricting access to UMW systems. Students may also be subject to loss of privileges including, but not limited to, athletic team involvement, participation in clubs and organizations, and the ability to continue on-campus employment. Egregious behavior may also be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Responsibility.

Unvaccinated faculty and staff will test weekly at Mary Washington Medical Group's Primary Care office located at 10620 Spotsylvania Avenue, Fredericksburg, VA 22408. No appointments are required for testing at this location, walk-ins are welcome. The clinic will be available M-F 7am-5pm (last walk-in accepted at 4:30pm). Faculty and staff are encouraged to test at this location; however, they may test on campus if they choose to do so.

### **Case Investigations and Contact Tracing**

UMW will continue to designate trained staff to conduct case investigations and contact tracing within the University community. Those staff members will maintain confidentiality to the fullest extent possible and only share what is necessary to ensure potential exposures are notified. All case investigations are reported to the Rappahannock Area Health District through secured communication.

It is the University's expectation that all members of the University are forthcoming and honest with information when speaking to the designated case investigators/contact tracers and comply with any instructions given.

With anticipated vaccine rates as well as the lifting of distancing restrictions, UMW anticipates that positive cases will decrease from 2020-2021 but the number of close contacts per case will increase. UMW's contact tracers will use a combination of interviews with the COVID-19 positive individual as well as pull class and organizational rosters to obtain a comprehensive account of potential exposures. Quarantine and Isolation procedures for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals is described in the next section.

## **Quarantine and Isolation**

COVID-19 is still in the community and has the potential of finding its way to UMW's campus. **If someone is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, they should seek medical care, get tested as soon as possible, and stay away from others until they receive the result. Any member of the University community who tests positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, must [report it to UMW](#) and isolate for a period of ten days.** The individual must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, and see an improvement in other symptoms before leaving isolation.

Unvaccinated individuals who are identified as a close contact of an individual who tested positive for COVID-19 will need to quarantine for a period of fourteen days. Vaccinated individuals who are identified as a close contact do not need to quarantine unless they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. In that case, the individuals should get tested immediately and quarantine until they receive a negative result. The newest guidance from the CDC also indicates that vaccinated individuals exposed to a confirmed case should get tested 3-5 days after exposure and should wear a mask around others until a negative test is achieved.

UMW will maintain quarantine and isolation space in several residence halls for students living on-campus. If a residential student must isolate or quarantine, they will be connected with the COVID Care Coordinator, who will make arrangements for meals and regular check-ins. Students, unless otherwise directed by a health official, may also choose to go home for their isolation or quarantine period.

## **Guidance for unvaccinated and immunocompromised individuals**

The CDC and VDH continue to make clear that vaccinations are the most effective mitigation strategy in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. For individuals who are unvaccinated or are vaccinated but immunocompromised, additional care must be taken to protect yourself and each other from potential exposure. A commitment to mask wearing in all indoor and group settings, distancing--and for those unvaccinated, daily attestation in the Eagle Health Journal, and testing--are essential. In addition, individuals in these two categories may need to make decisions about their participation in certain co-curricular activities based on the level of mitigation that is possible in those settings. UMW will also continue to provide disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer in most indoor, public areas of campus. Making use of these items as well as frequent hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette will lower your risk of exposure. Finally, we encourage unvaccinated and immunocompromised individuals to remain in contact with their health provider and follow additional guidance issued by them.

## **Use of University Vans**

Shared use of university-operated vehicles presents potential risk for the spread of COVID-19. The following parameters are designed to mitigate threats to personal health.

- Work vehicles (pick-ups, cargo vans, etc.) are limited to single-person occupancy.
- Passenger vans will not have an occupancy restriction; however, avoiding filling them to capacity is encouraged where possible.
- Sit as far apart from one another as possible.
- Wear masks at all times, regardless of vaccination status.
- When possible, keep windows open to promote air replacement/circulation.
- Do not ask occupants for their vaccination status. Assume no one is vaccinated.

These same rules apply for personal cars being used for university business, but note that the Commonwealth's Risk Management Plan will not cover employees or students traveling in personal vehicles. Risk Management strongly recommends that a pooled or leased vehicle be used when transporting students or traveling for university business.

### **Participation by non-UMW community members in UMW-sponsored programs/activities**

UMW recognizes that there are many individuals who are not members of the UMW community but actively participate in myriad activities (apart from attendance at an event). UMW will collect vaccination information from known volunteers and active community members through the Human Resources department. All volunteers/active community members should provide proof of vaccination or provide weekly negative COVID test results to HR. The sponsoring department or faculty/staff member is responsible for 1) providing rosters of volunteers or active community members to HR and 2) ensuring that they comply with UMW COVID-19 policies and expectations. Volunteers and active community members must also alert the UMW contact tracing team of any positive COVID-19 infection that potentially places the University community at risk.

### **Training**

All new faculty and staff to the University will receive COVID-19 training through the course of their onboarding process to ensure familiarity with policies and procedures they will be expected to follow and, in some cases, provide direction and accountability to other faculty, staff, or students. Current faculty, staff, and students will be expected to read the 2021-2022 COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, complete any available training, and monitor updates sent out by University officials.



## **Reporting Concerns**

Members of the UMW community may report COVID-19 related concerns to the Public Health Advisory Working Group by completing the [Report a COVID Concern form](#). This will be reviewed and routed to the appropriate department or individual for follow-up.

## **COVID-19 Dashboard**

UMW will maintain the [COVID dashboard](#) to document new cases (for entry, symptomatic and prevalence testing), active cases, and quarantine/isolation space availability. The dashboard will also provide vaccination rates among the UMW community.

## **A Fluid Semester**

Unlike last year, because of the widespread vaccinations among the University community, our hope and belief are that we will be able to return to something much more like the typical UMW in-person experience. Initial conditions at the time this plan is published have meant that we are requiring some increased precautions, such as masking indoors for all, but as conditions improve we will revisit those. In general, we all need to be flexible and adjust as conditions change, and the Public Health Advisory Working Group and the Cabinet will keep a close eye on many of the metrics we measure on our dashboard and the local COVID conditions. These include case counts, weekly testing numbers, quarantine/isolation space availability, local hospital capacity, local positivity rates and transmission numbers, among others. And as necessary we will take additional temporary steps to further protect the UMW community, including limiting gathering sizes, changing modality of courses, limiting visitors, etc.

## **A Word of Thanks**

Last year, UMW was one of the most effective Virginia public colleges/universities in preventing the spread of COVID-19 through a comprehensive mitigation strategy. Your commitment to this community by adhering to established policies, following protocols, and having a genuine care for the health and well-being of others ensured our success. The UMW COVID Implementation Team and the Cabinet are grateful to all those who sacrificed self-interests and worked together to maintain a healthy campus community. While we work to return to a sense of normalcy, we look forward to partnering with you once again in keeping rates of COVID-19 infections low at UMW.