



NORTHWEST MISSISSIPPI
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

COVID-19
STUDENT HEALTH
AND SAFETY PLAN

FALL 2021

KEEP THE US IN
Campus
MASK UP | WASH UP | BACK UP RANGER UP

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Health & Safety

Northwest Mississippi Community College is committed to minimizing the risks of COVID-19 infection and spread among all members of our College community. While the introduction of the COVID vaccines have significantly reduced the risk of infection, it remains vital that we continue to take personal responsibility for our own health AND understand how our actions affect the health of our community. Our commitment to maintaining the health and safety of our students is particularly important. This guide is designed to inform you about how to protect yourself and others throughout your educational experience at Northwest. Please note that due to ever-changing nature of the pandemic, these plans may change and modifications to these plans may take place periodically.

COVID-19 Definitions

Isolation – Isolation refers to the time period that an infected person with COVID-19 must spend alone, away from others, to prevent the transmission of disease. The period of isolation is ten days from the onset of symptoms (or the date of testing for those who are asymptomatic at the time of diagnosis). Students may return to classes after ten days of isolation if they meet the following criteria:

- It has been ten days past the onset of symptoms (or date of test if they were asymptomatic);
- Have been fever free for at least 24 hours;
- Have improvement of other symptoms.

Quarantine – Quarantine is defined as a period that those exposed to an infectious COVID-19 patient must spend alone, away from others, to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 should the person become infectious. Quarantine is required because exposed individuals can become contagious up to 14 days after exposure and not realize it.

High Risk Exposure – A high risk exposure (or close contact to an infected person) is specified as spending 15 minutes within six feet or less of someone infectious with COVID-19, with or without a face covering. The 15-minute timeframe is not required to be continuous, it is cumulative throughout one day.

Close Contact – An individual who has a high-risk exposure.

Group Exposure – A group exposure is identified if three or more individuals within a group are diagnosed with COVID-19 within a 14-day period. A group exposure can happen with a collection of individuals in regular contact or proximity when social distancing of six feet or greater has not been strictly maintained. Special protocols will be used to deal with group outbreaks.

Infectious Period – The infectious period is two days (48 hours) prior to symptom onset (or a positive test if no symptoms are apparent at the time of diagnosis) and then an additional ten days from symptom onset or test positivity.

Fully Vaccinated Individual – Individuals are considered fully vaccinated when it has been two weeks since their last dose of a two-dose vaccine, or two weeks past receiving a single dose vaccine.

Face Coverings

Consistent with CDC Public Health Guidance, MSDH directs that masks be worn universally indoors for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status. Due to the prevalence of the highly transmissible Delta Variant, masks must be worn in all indoor facilities to mitigate the risk of infection at this time.

Consistent and correct mask use regardless of vaccination status is vital to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for persons who cannot wear a face covering due to medical conditions. Students should request these accommodations via Disability Support Services.

Screening

Screenings are non-intrusive health checks on a regular, consistent basis.

If you are a student taking just eLearning classes, you are not required to complete the questionnaire UNLESS you are coming to campus to take a test, use learning resources, or attend meetings or training sessions.

Testing

Students interested in being tested for COVID-19 must visit their doctor, a medical clinic, the Student Health and Wellness Center or other testing facility.

Contact Tracing/Exposure Notification

When a student indicates that they have tested positive for COVID-19, the following questions will be asked.

1. Have you been in close contact with any member of the college community for 15 minutes or more during one day (with or without a face covering)?
2. Do you live on campus, and if so what hall and who are your roommates?

Names and contact numbers of individuals who meet the above criteria will be contacted by the college.

The positive student will be required to isolate from other individuals for 10 days. Any close contacts of the positive students will be required to quarantine as recommended by the Mississippi State Department of Health. Notification of the beginning and the end of the quarantine will be sent to the students' instructors.

Quarantine

Quarantine is defined as a period that those exposed to an infectious COVID-19 patient must spend alone, away from others, to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 should the person become infectious. Quarantine is required because exposed individuals can become contagious up to 14 days after exposure and not realize it. The Mississippi Department of Health advises that activities such as dining out, shopping and social events are not permitted during quarantine. Commuter students who must quarantine cannot come to campus. The Student COVID Reporting Center will assist students to continue their studies remotely.

As health care officials have learned more about the virus, they have determined that quarantine periods can be reduced when combined with testing and careful monitoring of body temperatures and symptom development. The following schedule can/should be followed throughout the 14-day quarantine:

Vaccinated Students

Individuals who have been fully vaccinated who are exposed to someone with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 are not required to quarantine as long as they are not exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms.

Unvaccinated Students

Students who are not fully vaccinated and are identified as close contacts to COVID-19, as outlined above, should be in Quarantine for a full 14 days.

As health care officials have learned more about the virus, they have determined that quarantine periods can be reduced when combined with testing and careful monitoring of body temperatures and symptom development. The following schedule can/should be followed throughout the 14-day quarantine:

10-day option: Quarantine can end after 10 days if the individual has no symptoms during the entire 10-day period.

Sometimes an individual cannot be tested or chooses not to be tested. For such individuals, on day **TEN**, if no symptoms have developed during daily monitoring, quarantine can be discontinued. Because a low risk of developing the virus remains, for days **ELEVEN** through **FOURTEEN**, individuals should continue daily symptom monitoring, wear a face covering and practice social distancing. The risk from the exposure ends after day **FOURTEEN**.

7- day plus test option:

All individuals must quarantine for the first **SEVEN** days after exposure.

Between days **FIVE** and **SEVEN**, an individual may be tested. This test must be a PCR test, and not a rapid test. Testing may be completed at our Student Health and Wellness Center. On day **SEVEN**, if the test was negative and no symptoms have developed, quarantine can end. Because a low risk of developing the virus remains, for days **EIGHT** through **FOURTEEN** individuals should continue daily symptom monitoring, wear a face covering and practice social distancing.

The risk from the exposure ends after day **FOURTEEN**.

A negative test collected prior to day **FIVE** should never be used to justify modifying or ending quarantine. Results of a rapid test or absence of symptoms before day **SEVEN** should not be used to justify modifying or ending quarantine.

Ongoing Evaluation by the College

A COVID-19 Task Force meets as needed to monitor infection data for the College and local communities to enable rapid decision-making in the case of community spread. The College maintains direct lines of communication with health care providers, the Mississippi State Department of Health, and local emergency management agencies in order to adapt to any newly offered guidance.

Cleaning and Sanitization

All campus custodial staff have been trained on enhanced cleaning and sanitization procedures. All classroom facilities will be deep cleaned on a regular basis. High-touch areas will be cleaned frequently. When positive cases arise, additional cleaning and disinfecting will occur as needed. Supplies will be available for students to clean their desks or lab areas.

Signage and Education

Signage providing instructions on enhanced safety and health measures is deployed across campus.

Teaching and Learning

The college will use a combination of physical distancing, face coverings, and special cleaning procedures to facilitate the safest environment possible for faculty and students for in-person classes.



2021 FALL SESSIONS

	Standard Sessions			Online Sessions		
	FULL TERM	TERM 1	TERM 2	FULL TERM	TERM 1	TERM 2
REGISTRATION	AUG 11 - 13	AUG 11 - 13	OCT 6 - 7	AUG 16 - 20	AUG 16 - 20	OCT 14 - 15
CLASSES BEGIN	AUG 16	AUG 16	OCT 12	AUG 23	AUG 23	OCT 18
DEADLINE TO REGISTER	AUG 17	AUG 17	OCT 13	AUG 25	AUG 24	OCT 19
MIDTERM GRADES SUBMITTED	OCT 12	SEP 13	NOV 8	OCT 18	SEP 20	NOV 15
DEADLINE TO WITHDRAW	NOV 12	SEP 24	NOV 19	NOV 5	OCT 1	NOV 26
FINAL EXAMS	DEC 6 - 10	OCT 4 - 5	DEC 6 - 7	NOV 18 - DEC 3	OCT 11 - 15	DEC 6 - 10
FINAL GRADE SUBMITTED	DEC 10	OCT 5	DEC 7	DEC 3	OCT 15	DEC 10

Guidance for Face-to-Face Instruction

The College recognizes that face-to-face instruction is a vitally important element for many students. Students wishing to have face-to-face instruction will be given that opportunity to the extent possible under health guidelines. Facial coverings for all students and faculty are required in classrooms and teaching labs, and signage throughout all spaces reinforces safety measures. Students will be allowed remote options when possible if they are experiencing COVID-19-related symptoms.

Class Absences

For Academic Classes:

Students will be marked absent if they do not attend class in person for meetings designated as in person. Students will be directed to an alternate online assignment in place of the in-person meeting at the direction of the instructor (for isolation or quarantine purposes). Participation in the alternate assignment takes the place of the in-person meeting in those instances. Students who are too sick to attend in person or participate online will be counted absent (regardless of type of illness or other reason for non-attendance). Students who have been out due to legitimate illness and have thus missed too many classes should follow the absence appeal procedure if they wish to be reinstated into the class. For students with extended absences due to illness or similar emergency, an incomplete grade may be assigned or a course withdrawal may be made.

For Health Science classes:

Each Health Science Program has a specific absentee policy detailed in the program student handbook. Licensure requirements mandate that students complete a designated number of classroom, laboratory, and clinical hours. Therefore, the number of absences in a health science program may vary from those in the NWCC absentee policy. A student who is quarantined related to the COVID-19 policy must communicate to their faculty member concerning online assignments and/or classroom experiences. If the student completes the required online assignments and/or classroom experience the student will be counted present. If the student is too ill to

participate, the student will be counted absent. A student may follow the absentee appeal policy located in the NWCC handbook if they wish to appeal the absence. For students with extended absences due to illness or similar emergency, a course withdrawal may be made.

For Career and Technical classes:

Class attendance will follow the standard class attendance policy as outlined in the course syllabus with flexibility for legitimate illnesses where allowed. All program accreditation standards will be met. Students will be marked absent if they do not attend class. Students may be directed to an alternate assignment in place of the in-person meeting at the direction of the instructor (for isolation or quarantine purposes). Participation in the alternate assignment takes the place of the in-person meeting in those instances. Students who are too sick to attend in person or participate online are to be counted absent (regardless of type of illness or other reason for non-attendance). Students who have been out due to legitimate illness and have thus missed too many classes should follow the absence appeal procedure to be reinstated into class. For students with extended absences due to illness or similar emergency, an incomplete grade may be assigned or a course withdrawal may be made.

Classroom Density

Students will sit in assigned seats in classrooms to assist with any needed contact tracing.

Continuous Learning

Contingency plans have been developed to best meet educational needs safely should health conditions change.

Student Life

Housing

Housing requires face coverings in all common spaces when social distancing cannot be achieved. Signage displays COVID-19 protocols and expected standards of behavior. Visitors to residence halls are not permitted. Residents who have COVID-19 or are suspected to have COVID-19 will be sent home or temporarily isolated in a separate location pending a return home.

Cafeteria

All dining facilities will allow for to-go and pre-packaged options. Disposable goods will be used and there will be no buffets or self-service permitted in any dining facility. Frequent sanitization of dining facilities will occur.

Counseling Services

We recognize the difficulty the COVID-19 crisis may place on the mental and emotional well-being of our students. Students can access free, confidential counseling services. In-person services are provided at the Student Success Centers, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Student Organizations & Campus Events

In-person meetings and activities are permitted. Student organizations are required to register all events through usual channels, and attendance tracking at all indoor events and meetings is required.

College Recreation

Fitness Centers will be open with reduced capacity. Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols are in place along with physical distancing of patrons.