

Misericordia University COVID-19 Information

COUGAR CARE

August 13, 2021

It is important that we continue to work together as a community to care for and support one another. Each one of us needs to do our part to demonstrate our commitment to keeping our community healthy and strong. We are #MUCOUGARSTRONG!

COVID-19 remains an ever-changing and fluid situation. COVID-19 still poses a significant health and safety risk. The University is continually monitoring the situation locally, nationally, and globally. We will remain flexible throughout the academic year and will notify you immediately if changes need to be made.

COVID-19 Vaccination:

Choosing to forego vaccination puts you and others at risk for getting the disease with the associated risk of long-term medical problems or death. While the cautious approach is understandable, individuals who elect not to be vaccinated against COVID-19 may put others they interact with at risk. Right now, all members of the Misericordia University community (faculty, staff, and students) are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated. However, once the FDA grants final approval for one of the vaccines, the University will require everyone on both the Pittsburgh and Dallas campuses to be vaccinated. Once any of the vaccines are approved, the University will allow 45 days from approval to have all persons vaccinated.

- Misericordia University will allow COVID-19 vaccine exemption based on clearly documented medical or religious grounds. Only authorized Misericordia personnel will know you have been granted an exemption unless you volunteer the information to others. Waivers for students can be found in MEDICAT, and employees should contact Human Resources (HR). When the University moves to requiring vaccination, a deadline date will be released for submission of forms. Waiver forms that have already been submitted will be held for review until vaccination is required.
- **Individuals who have been granted a COVID-19 waiver will receive information on the protocols that must be followed by those who are unvaccinated at that time.**
- Students in the College of Health Science and Education in programs with clinical, student teaching, or other off campus components should reach out to their program director to see if the exemption will impact their progression in the program.
- **Any student who has NOT uploaded a copy of their vaccination card into MEDICAT or employees who have NOT submitted their vaccination cards to HR by Thursday August 26, 2021 will be considered unvaccinated by the University and must follow the unvaccinated protocols.**
- **Vaccinations are free and readily available to everyone. To find a vaccination site near you, go to www.vaccines.gov.**

- **For students and employees on the Dallas campus, vaccinations can be scheduled through the Health and Wellness Center by calling 570-674-6276. A vaccination clinic is planned for the early part of the Fall 2021 semester.**
- The CDC web site and the University's Health and Wellness Center can provide information on the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines.

Masking

- Masks will be required for **everyone** (both vaccinated and unvaccinated) **indoors** until further notice, except when you are alone in a private office or room.
- Masking outdoors is not required for anyone at this time.
- **Masks will be required of everyone using Misericordia transportation, including the Passan shuttle, vans, athletic buses, etc.**

It is the responsibility of each individual to follow the facial masking requirements.

The University will continue to monitor local, state, and national infection rates and the percentage of vaccinated individuals on campus and will update the community to any changes.

Testing:

If you are not vaccinated, you will be required to undergo frequent COVID-19 surveillance testing.

Entry Testing:

- Unvaccinated and not fully vaccinated (2 weeks after final shot of 1 or 2 shot series) students on both the Pittsburgh and Dallas Campuses must provide evidence of a negative PCR test administered within 72 hours of their return to campus by uploading the results into Medicat. Students cannot return to campus until that is done. Resident students must also present a copy of the negative test at check in to gain entrance to their residential living space. Athletes should submit their proof of a negative result to the Athletic Department when they come to preseason. Preseason athletes will not be permitted to move into their residence hall without evidence of a negative PCR test.
- If the PCR test is positive, **DO NOT COME TO CAMPUS.** Complete the symptom tracker in Medicat, and upload your positive test result. A member of the Cougar Care team will notify you with further guidance.

Exemptions:

- Any student who tested positive for COVID-19 after May 31 and is currently free of any symptoms does not need to get tested again prior to the fall semester. Results of the positive COVID-19 test **must** be uploaded into Medicat to meet this exemption. This is consistent with current CDC guidance.
- Fully vaccinated students. This is consistent with current CDC guidance.

Surveillance Testing:

All **unvaccinated** students and employees who are living, learning, or working on the Dallas campus this semester or accessing any campus building will be required to participate in surveillance testing per CDC guidelines.

Exemptions:

- Fully vaccinated students and employees.
- Students and employees who tested positive after May 31. (All positive COVID-19 tests after May 31 must be uploaded into Mediat to be removed from the testing list.)
- You are working or learning completely online and have no plans to visit the Dallas, PA campus for the duration of the semester.
- You are enrolled in the weekend program.
- You are in isolation.
- You are in quarantine.
- You are a student or employee on our Pittsburgh, PA Campus

Surveillance testing will be conducted Monday and Tuesday each week from 8 am – 1pm in the Henry Student Lounge on a drop-in basis. Unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated residential students and athletes will be tested weekly. All other unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated individuals will receive an email indicating they have been selected for testing that week. No appointment is necessary for testing. Everyone is who is scheduled to participate in surveillance is expected to fulfill this responsibility. Those who fail to test on their scheduled day will immediately be required to submit a rapid/antigen test via the University's Health and Wellness Center within 24 hours of the missed test and also participate in a subsequent surveillance test on the next available testing date. Resident students will not be allowed to remain in their residence hall, and athletes cannot compete until a negative result is received. Continued failure to comply may result in restrictions on any and all in-person campus interactions for students and employees.

Diagnostic Testing

Anyone with COVID-19-like symptoms vaccinated or not vaccinated should get a diagnostic test.

- **If you are experiencing COVID-like symptoms or believe you have been exposed to COVID, please complete the Mediat symptom tracker.**
- **Rapid response diagnostic testing** is available for all full-time students on the Dallas campus at the Health and Wellness Center in the Anderson Center who suspect they have COVID-19. Both resident and commuter students can access this service M-F 8:30am-4:30pm. To make an appointment call 570-674-6276. The Mediat symptom tracker must be completed prior to testing.
- Students who feel sick and subsequently test at an off-campus site must complete the symptom tracker in Mediat and upload the off-campus test results into Mediat. It is

imperative that the University knows your status in order to manage the risk of exposure to others.

- Employees should seek medical care by calling their primary care provider PCP and asking to be evaluated for COVID-19. Complete the symptom tracker through Medicaat. It is imperative that the University knows to manage the risk of exposure to others.

Handwashing:

Handwashing remains a primary method of reducing exposure to germs and viruses. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place or after blowing your nose. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces on your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Hand sanitizer stations are available throughout campus. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Academics:

The University looks forward to welcoming students back to the in-person classroom without capacity restrictions. **Until further notice, masking is required in all classrooms, labs, and inside study areas at all times.**

Students in clinical placements, internships, and service-learning experiences must follow the requirements of the site.

Cougar Care will notify the VPAA's office if a student will be out of class, and their faculty will be notified of the absence. Students are responsible to stay in contact with their faculty members and keep up with their academic requirements.

Campus Life:

Campus life is an integral part of the on-campus student experience. The University looks forward to offering rich and diverse programming this semester. In-person activities will return fully with some additional virtual programming for those who are interested. In person participation will follow the University masking policy.

Residence Life:

Students may schedule **early drop off** of their residence hall items on August 17, 18, 19, or 20 through the residence life department. Otherwise, first-year resident students will move in the morning of August 26th, and upper- class students can move in on August 28 and 29.

Students will mask inside their residence hall when in the company of others, even in their own room or living space. Masks are required in lounges. When you are alone in a private space, you can remove your mask.

Only Misericordia students may visit the University residence halls; other guests are not allowed. The only exception to this is early drop off or move-in. Overnight guests are not permitted.

The University will continue to monitor local, state, and national infection rates and the percentage of vaccinated individuals in the residence halls and will update the community as to any changes in our policies and procedures.

Dining: A reusable “to-go” container for dining room food will be available for those who wish to eat outside or in a private space. The containers can be purchased for \$5 at the cashier. The \$5 can be refunded at the end of the semester if the container is returned. Seating will be available in the Metz Dining Room, Starbucks, and Chick fil A. Masks can be removed while eating or drinking but should be worn once you are done eating.

Travel:

- **Domestic** -The University will permit domestic travel for all authorized business purposes for those who are vaccinated. All who travel for official business must be vaccinated.
- **International** - The University will not support any international travel through December 31, 2021. The University will continue to monitor international travel and update this policy as appropriate.
- **University transportation** – Masking is required for everyone unless otherwise directed.

Cleaning, Disinfection, and Housekeeping:

Housekeeping continues to follow CDC protocols for cleaning the campus. All Housekeeping staff are trained in the proper use of cleaning materials. Cleaning chemicals will be available for students and employees for use in their campus space.

Symptom Tracking:

The University will not require daily symptom tracking unless conditions worsen or it is required by government officials. **For now, anyone on any MU campus, vaccinated or not, should report COVID like symptoms using the Mediat symptom tracker.** Students, if you don't feel well, stay home, fill out symptom tracker and someone from the health center will reach out to you and triage/evaluate you. **Employees**, stay at home and contact your PCP for further guidance.

Reporting:

The University requires formal reporting by all Misericordia University faculty, staff, and students who:

- Have COVID -19 like symptoms.
- Have tested positive or are awaiting test results for COVID-19.
- Have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19.

Employees and students must complete the symptom tracker [through Mediat \(click here\)](#) to make a formal report. Cases will be tracked through Mediat, and a member of the Cougar Care team will contact you to provide guidance.

Quarantine:

The University continues to follow the CDC quarantine protocols. Quarantine is required for **unvaccinated** students and employees who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

Close contact means:

- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- You had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them)
- You shared eating or drinking utensils
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you

All students will be required to quarantine for at least 10 days **off campus**. The University will **not** provide on campus quarantine space to students on the Dallas campus, except in extreme emergencies or circumstances.

We encourage students to return home for their comfort as campus-based quarantine space will be limited when we are operating in a normal or near normal capacity. A member of the Cougar Care team will discuss quarantine options with you and remain in contact with you throughout the quarantine period. Unvaccinated students will not be tested prior to going off campus to quarantine.

Exceptions:

- Fully vaccinated students and employees who do not have any COVID-19 like symptoms. (Symptoms to watch for include fever or chills, cough, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting and diarrhea.) Per CDC guidelines, vaccinated students who have been exposed must wear a mask in all indoor settings and will be tested 5 days after the exposure.
- People who have tested positive to COVID-19 within the past 3 months and do not have any COVID-19 like symptoms. (see above) Positive test results must be uploaded into Medcat.
- People who develop symptoms again within 3 months of their first bout of COVID-19 may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.

Isolation:

All students and employees vaccinated or unvaccinated, who **test positive for COVID -19** will be required to isolate. Isolation may be discontinued after the following:

- At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset **and**
- At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Other symptoms have improved.
- All students will be required to isolate for at least 10 days **off campus**. The University will **not** provide on campus isolation space to students on the Dallas campus, except in extreme emergencies and or circumstances.

We encourage students return home for their comfort. A member of the Cougar Care team will discuss isolation options with you and Health and Wellness Center will send out a daily symptom check throughout the isolation period. A member of the Health and Wellness Center will contact you prior to your return.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FEEL SICK

Students, faculty, and staff should stay home when sick and complete the symptom tracker through Mediat immediately. It is imperative that the University is aware of any exposure risk to members of the Misericordia community. A member of the Cougar Care team will contact you with guidance.

Students will be connected to the Health and Wellness Center for rapid response testing and follow up care.

Faculty and staff should seek medical care by calling your primary care physician and ask to be evaluated for COVID-19.