

Dear MU Community,

Another exciting academic year is underway and homecoming weekend is just days away and the campus has felt more alive than it has in a few years. There is so much to look forward to both inside and outside the classroom such as in person service trips during fall break, campus activities and transformative interactions with your faculty. To ensure we continue to enjoy a full, in person campus community experience, we are resharing information that was released in August about COVID-19 practices and policies that are in place.

4 Key COVID Policy Changes Fall 2022-2023

1. Masking will be optional both inside and outside the classroom for the fall semester. Masks remain required in the Health and Wellness Center. Persons who have been exposed to someone who tested positive to COVID-19 are asked to wear a well-fitted mask for 10 full days when indoors around others.
Persons who have returned after a previous infection of COVID-19 on day 6 or 8 are asked to wear a well fitted mask indoors around others through day 10.
2. Students and staff are asked to reach out to their “close contacts” and notify them of their exposure. Cougarcare will provide a template to the positive COVID case that can be shared with their close contacts.
A person is deemed to be a “close contact” of a COVID-19 positive person if they were within six (6) feet of the person for more than 15 minutes within a 24-hour period, two (2) days prior to symptoms beginning or with no symptoms a positive test result.
3. Exposures who are not vaccinated or are not considered “up to date” are no longer asked to quarantine at home, as guidance from the CDC has been updated August 11, 2022.
4. If you have been exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 you should:
 - a. monitor your symptoms for 10 full days after the exposure, test if develop symptoms
 - b. wear a mask indoors around others for 10 full days after the exposure
 - c. if no symptoms develop test on 5 full days after the exposure (last day of exposure is day 0)

Masking policy

Masking will be optional both inside and outside the classroom and will continue for the fall semester. **Masks remain required in the Health and Wellness Center.** If circumstances arise within a classroom a recommendation to mask may be requested. Please be mindful that we all have a personal responsibility to keep the campus healthy and in-person without disruptions and mitigations measures such as masking, handwashing and distancing are effective in preventing the spread of germs. Please be respectful of others, we do not always know each other’s circumstances and need to be supportive of everyone.

Please keep a mask in your pocket whenever you leave your room or office, so you are prepared if someone kindly asks you to wear one.

COVID vaccinations and boosters

MU does not require vaccination however we strongly encourage all faculty, staff and students to be fully vaccinated and stay up to date with booster shots for COVID-19. New MU students who are

vaccinated against COVID-19 can upload their vaccination card into the Health and Wellness Center patient portal (Medicat) <https://misericordia.medicatconnect.com/home.aspx> Returning students who have a vaccination record already on file, no further action is required unless you received a booster shot.

COVID vaccination clinics will be offered on campus to students and employees based on interest.

COVID testing

Weekly surveillance testing of non-vaccinated individuals will be discontinued. On-campus testing will be available to students who are symptomatic by calling the Health and Wellness Center for an appointment 570-674-6276.

The campus bookstore has rapid tests available for purchase.

Also please check with your health insurance or pharmacist COVID tests might be covered by your insurance carrier.

Isolation Protocols

Students who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate off campus, we urge every student to have a plan in place. Due to the limited availability of on-campus isolation housing, residential students who test positive will be asked to travel home to isolate.

- Please review our detailed isolation protocol for residential and off-campus students. <https://resources.finalseite.net/images/v1663082754/misericordia/auo1m5ntbxx3jpd3p4px/CougarCareFLOWSHEET82222FinalFall2022.pdf>

Students in clinical/educational placements

Students in healthcare related clinical settings and or educational settings must comply with the settings policies and procedures regarding vaccination, quarantine/exposure and or isolation should you test positive for COVID-19. Clinical and fieldwork policies supersede any policies and or procedures Misericordia University has set forth, the university cannot guarantee alternate clinical placements if a student does not comply with the clinical partner's vaccination/booster requirements or other policies.

As we continue to evolve and learn to live safely with COVID-19 and other viruses please remember basic effective measures such as staying home when sick, testing, handwashing and masking are personal behaviors that can negatively or positively affect others. We will continue to monitor the health and safety of our campus and within our community, our COVID-19 policies and procedures will continue to be updated and reflective. Should community health conditions change, the safety of our campus community remains our top priority and we will continue to monitor and adjust these policies accordingly.