Classroom Guidance during COVID-19   (updated 01-20-2022)

General Principles

Keeping our MC community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic requires attention to basic COVID-19 safety guidelines outlined on our [Return to Campus: Health and Safety Guidance](#) webpage.

As you develop your course specific plan to bring students to campus safely for face-to-face instructional activities, please keep the following in mind:

- **Face coverings** (masks) are required for all individuals who are indoors, regardless of their vaccination status. Face coverings should **fully cover the nose, mouth, and chin**. To prevent transmission, use higher-grade masks, such as:
    - **KN95**
    - **KF94**
    - **Double masks (one must be a surgical mask)**

- **Assess your health status regularly** Take the MC **[Daily COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment](#)** each day before coming to campus. If you are showing COVID-19 related symptoms, stay at home and get tested immediately. If you start feeling sick while on campus, go home immediately, consult a healthcare provider, and get tested. You may go to one of the [testing facilities in Montgomery County](#). COVID-19 **testing is free** and **no ID or doctor's prescription is required** to get tested.

- **Vaccine Requirement** The student vaccine requirement took effect January 7, 2022. Students must provide proof of vaccination (or have an approved exception on file) to access services and spring classes in person. They should submit forms even if partially vaccinated. Students will be dropped from in-person classes if forms are not submitted. Students taking a fully online schedule of classes with no need for in-person services are exempt from the vaccination and testing requirement. However, the requirement becomes effective if a student wants to access any onsite class or service. Refer to the College's Return to Campus webpage for [vaccine sites on campus](#) .

- **Employee and Student Boosters** Get a booster shot as soon as possible, according to your eligibility (2 months after last dose of Johnson & Johnson or 5 months after last dose of Pfizer or Moderna). Boosters can be obtained at [several sites](#) in the county, including on the Germantown Campus.

- **Respect health confidentiality** Please do not ask another employee, a student, or a visitor to campus about their vaccination or testing status, and do not request such information about others from HRSTM. Please use discretion when speaking with students about their health or COVID status. Asking a student about their vaccine or health status is a violation of FERPA. Failure to comply with the requirements of [FERPA](#) may lead to legal sanctions, loss of federal funding, a formal complaint to the U. S. Department of Education, and disciplinary action by the College.

- **Report positive COVID-19 status** If a student informs you that they have tested positive for COVID-19 or had a possible exposure, instruct the student to report their status to publichealth@montgomerycollege.edu.

- **Quarantine Response** The Office of Public Health and Environmental Safety (OPHES) responds to all positive COVID cases. If any student or employee tests positive through a PCR test (*not rapid at-home test), they are to report their result to the Office of Public Health and Safety (OPHES) through the publichealth@montgomerycollege.edu email address. The OPHES handles the contact tracking and case management of this incident. *It is recommended that rapid at-home tests be confirmed by a PCR test.
    - A student should inform their instructor, and a faculty member should inform their chair/dean. OPHES will contact the dean (for faculty and students) or supervisor (for staff), and working with the individual, will determine the appropriate duration of quarantine.

In most cases, this will be 10 calendar days since most students and faculty will be vaccinated (and many are boosted as well).

- o The College does not want to impose the burden of case management on the faculty member. If a student is positive, OPHES evaluates the case and contacts the dean about moving that class online for a defined period, if necessary. If a faculty member is positive, the chair and dean should see first if they can identify a substitute, but if they can't, then the course may need to go remote for the quarantine period determined by OPHES. Most likely that will be about 10 calendar days.
- o If there is a positive case in a class, faculty have the option of temporarily moving a class to structured remote for a few days while they await case-specific evaluation and guidance from OPHES. If OPHES confirms a positive case, the Chair and faculty should work with OPHES to determine the safest option for the class resuming face-to-face instruction.

This document is divided into three sections to provide recommendations for:

A. Communicate with Facilities

- *Coordinate with your Facilities campus contact* as you plan logistics for returning students to your classroom or lab spaces. Your facilities contact will be able to answer questions about specific building protocols (e.g., cleaning schedules, signage, HVAC / air filtration, etc.)

- *For Service and PPE Requests:* Please use [Facilities Service Desk](.).

Facilities Campus Contacts:

GT	Maurice McCambley	maurice.mccambley@montgomerycollege.edu	**GTFacilitiesHelpDesk@montgomerycollege.edu**
RV	James Gillis	james.gillis@montgomerycollege.edu	**RVFacilitiesHelpDesk@montgomerycollege.edu**
TP/SS	Ali Fadl	ali.fadl@montgomerycollege.edu	**TPFacilitiesHelpDesk@montgomerycollege.edu**
Collegewide	Terry Evelyn	terrence.evelyn@montgomerycollege.edu	**MCFacilities@montgomerycollege.edu**

B. Arrive early. Faculty should arrive to your assigned classroom 5 – 10 minutes early, so students can enter class and avoid congregating in the hallway.

C. Consider your Classroom Space

- *Set-up individual, self-contained workspaces* within the classroom or lab, when possible. Assign each student a workspace that they will use for all class meetings. This minimizes cross-contamination and facilitates contact tracing, if necessary.

- *Minimize student movement around the classroom* to facilitate social distancing. Assure that individual workspaces have necessary tools and equipment (including waste containers) to complete their work. When possible, dispense materials and supplies to individual workspaces before students arrive, so that they do not need to retrieve items from other parts of the room.

- *In situations where social distancing is not possible*, wearing masks and frequent sanitizing are still effective protections. Students and instructors should avoid, when possible, congregating in large groups. Feel free to take opportunities, when they are available, to use larger, more open spaces to meet with students. Department chairs can help faculty explore options for alternate meeting spaces.

D. Plan for Equipment and Supplies

- *Face Coverings* must be worn at all times in MC buildings and workspaces. If a student does not have a face covering, Public Safety has backup supplies available. Each campus has an allotment of cloth and surgical masks that will be distributed and available in classrooms scheduled for use this spring. These masks may be resupplied as needed through the [facilities request form](.).

- *Additional safety supplies* should be purchased by departments when there is a course specific need. For example, some activities may need gloves or surgical masks for course specific

purposes. Courses with instructional activities that require brief, intermittent close contact (less than 6 feet) should consider using **face shields**, in addition to face coverings.

- ***Disinfecting wipes*** are useful for sanitizing surfaces quickly and easily. Facilities will provide a box of disinfecting wipes, usually mounted on the wall adjacent to the door. Facilities will refill the canister as needed and can be contacted directly or through department staff using the *Facilities Service Desk* form.

- ***Plexiglass*** has also been installed where appropriate. Individual faculty should not install plexiglass themselves as it could pose a safety risk, particularly in smaller, enclosed spaces, by limiting ventilation and air circulation. Faculty who choose to do so may request a **face shield** via their campus facilities office.

- ***Consider purchasing microphone headsets for instructors and students*** using department funds*.* Face coverings and masks inhibit clear verbal communication. Instructors and students must speak loudly for others to hear, which can be difficult to sustain over long class periods. Voice amplifying headsets can reduce voice strain and prevent the need to move closer to someone to hear what they are saying.

- ***Avoid sharing tools or equipment*** in classrooms or labs, when possible. Assign each student a dedicated set of tools and supplies that are used through the entire semester.

- ***Develop cleaning and disinfection protocols for any shared equipment.*** Shared equipment or supplies should be cleaned and disinfected between use by each student. For large equipment, cleaning and disinfection protocols should focus especially on frequently touched surfaces.

- ***Consider implementing a workspace cleaning checklist for students.*** This approach is useful if multiple groups of students are using the same classroom and/or the same workspaces, equipment and supplies within the same week. At the end of the class meeting, students use provided disinfectants to sanitize all surfaces on the checklist. The checklist should pay particular attention to frequently touched surfaces in the workspace.

A. Communicate with Students Early About On-Campus Expectations

Students may feel anxious or have questions about attending on-campus instructional activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Outline basic expectations well in advance to alleviate any concerns. For example, communicate with them about how many times they will come to campus, the duration of class meetings, and safety protocols in place. Be flexible with attendance policies for on-campus instructional activities because rigid guidelines could compel sick or vulnerable individuals to come on-campus. A **common syllabus statement on COVID health and safety** has been sent to your department chairs to assist you in communicating classroom expectations and guidelines.

B. Identify Students with Special Accommodations

If there are students with special accommodations requirements registered for your class, discuss the accommodations with them as early as possible. ADA accommodations continue to apply and are mandatory during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, there may be unique masking requirements for some students (e.g., clear masks). Consult with the [Disability Support Services](#) office for guidance providing accommodations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

C. Facilitate Contact Tracing

- **Report positive COVID-19 status.** If a student informs you that they have tested positive forCOVID-19 or had a possible exposure, instruct the student to report their status to publichealth@montgomerycollege.edu. Remember to **respect health confidentiality** and protect students' personally identifiable information under FERPA.

- ***Collect updated contact information for students.*** ***Essential for all on campus classes.*** Current cell phone and/or home phone numbers will allow contact tracers to act quickly in the event of a potential exposure. Hold the current phone numbers with your course records, so that the information is available if needed.

- ***Encourage students to answer the call and stop the spread of COVID-19.*** If students receive a call from **240-466-4488 or MD COVID** they should answer; the call is from a contact tracer.

- ***Develop plans for tracking student attendance.*** Accurate records of students who attend each on-campus class meeting are critical for effective contact tracing in the event of a potential exposure.

D. Train Students on COVID-19 Safety Protocols before Coming to Campus

- *General student training on COVID-19 should be embedded in your course Blackboard site.*

  o   At a minimum, such training should include: a short description of COVID-19, information on how COVID-19 spreads, its symptoms, and ways to stay safe, including social distancing, handwashing, wearing a mask, and the daily health assessment.

- *Provide a course specific COVID-19 orientation for students via Zoom.* In addition to the general training, instructors may conduct a Zoom orientation session before coming to campus for instructional activities. This orientation should review MC COVID-19 safety guidance outlined on the [Return to Campus: Health and Safety Guidance](#) webpage. Additionally, it should discuss any safety protocols unique to your instructional activities or classroom space.

A. Before Coming to Campus

- *COVID-19 safety training should be complete.*

    o *For Faculty and Staff*: Employees must complete MC Required Training, Return to Campus Webinar for Employees – COVID 19, found in Workday

    o *For Students*: Faculty should verify that students have completed the course embedded COVID-19 training (see p. 4) prior to coming to campus.

- *Conduct a Daily COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment before each visit to campus.*
  All students and employees visiting campus should screen themselves for possible symptoms of COVID-19 before coming to campus. Anyone with symptoms (even mild ones) should not come to campus and should STAY HOME.

    o Use MC's online screening tool **Daily COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment**. The tool can also be accessed by scanning the included **QR code** or by clicking on *Take Health Self-Assessment* from the blue banner on the MC Homepage.

Symptom Self-Assessment
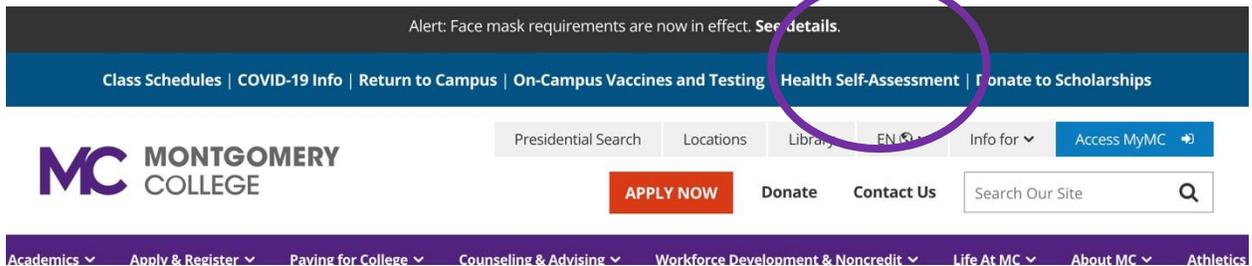
    o If your answers to any of the questions on the Daily COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment result in a RED "X" you should **STAY HOME** and contact your healthcare provider or get tested. If your answers result in green " ✓ ", you may proceed to campus.

    o These personal health assessment data are NOT saved, stored nor retained by the College.

    o A time-stamped email is sent to the student's or employee's email address with a **green** ✓ (clear to go to campus) or **red x** (do not go to campus).

- *Bring a clean face covering or mask* each day you come to campus.

B. Building Entry
- ***When entering MC buildings***, the following should be true for students and employees:
    1) wear a clean face-covering or mask
    2) attain symptom-free results from the **Daily COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment**

- **If a student forgets to bring a mask to campus**, Public Safety and/or designated department will have back up supplies available. Instructors may request a classroom be restocked by placing a PPE request using *Facilities Service Desk* request form.

C. Managing Instructional Spaces Safely
- **Arrive early.** Faculty are encouraged arrive to assigned classroom 5 – 10 minutes early, so students can enter class and avoid congregating in the hallway.

- ***Prop open classroom doors throughout instructional time*** so that students are not touching doorknobs upon entering and exiting the classroom. Except in lab spaces equipped with fume hoods, like in the SC and BE buildings.

- ***Institute "sanitize-in and sanitize-out" protocols for instructional spaces.*** Upon classroom entry, students should perform hand hygiene and then use disinfectant wipes to sanitize surfaces and objects in their assigned workspace before use. After class is over, students should again sanitize their workspace (using a ***workspace cleaning checklist***, if available). Then, they should perform hand hygiene before leaving the classroom.

- ***Assign separate workspaces, tools, and equipment for each student that remain consistent*** throughout the semester to avoid cross-contamination, when possible.

- ***Remind students to follow classroom protocols*** for personal protective equipment (e.g., masks, etc.) and for cleaning and disinfecting any shared equipment between uses.

- ***Allow students to take restroom breaks throughout class time*** instead of designating one break for everyone to use the restroom at the same time. Spreading out restroom breaks will help maximize social distancing.

D. Responding to *What If* Scenarios
- ***What if a student refuses to follow safety protocols (e.g., will not wear a mask)?***

    o The Student Code of Conduct requires students to follow MC health and safety protocols. If astudent refuses to do so, consider a range of options to promote health and safety.
      o Set the tone and expectations for proper mask wearing on the first day of class.
      o Consider class reminders or "mask checks" at various intervals during class meetings.
      o Have a private conversation with a student who repeatedly does not meet masking requirements.
      o Request help from your department chair for advice on dealing with a specific student. A department chair might ask for additional support from Student Affairs.
      o To maintain the health and safety of the classroom, it may be appropriate to ask the student to leave the classroom. Additional assistance from Public Safety
      (240-567-3333) may be requested if a student refuses to leave the classroom.

- *What if an individual develops symptoms of illness during on-campus instruction?*

  o According to MC guidelines found in [Return to Campus: Health and Safety Guidance,](#) an individual (employee or student) who has COVID-19-like symptoms should not be on campus. That individual should suspend on campus activities, return home, consult with a healthcare provider and/or get tested.

  o Any faculty member who observes a student in the classroom with clearly observable signs of illness that are uncharacteristic for that student or may be negatively impacting that student's or other students' performance should <u>discretely speak</u> with the student and advise the student to go home if they are ill. **Remember to maintain health confidentiality when discussing any health concerns.**

  o Students who need to return home should contact their instructor about any missed work, and instructors should be flexible regarding excused absences including providing students the ability to make-up missed work due to illness.

  o Please keep in mind that a cough, sneeze, or other minor symptoms are not automatically indicators of COVID-19. A student could have allergies or another chronic condition.

- *What if an individual involved in face-to-face instructional activities reports that they have COVID-19?*

  o The person who tested positive should contact publichealth@montgomerycollege.edu to report their infection status. The person should be prepared to give their name, contact information, and details about activities while at the College (e.g., building and classroom, course CRN and faculty, etc). All reports are confidential.

  o Concerns regarding a possible case of COVID-19 at MC should be communicated to: publichealth@montgomerycollege.edu or The Office of Public Safety and Emergency Management via phone at 240-567-5333.

  o Provide the following basic information: name, contact number, and name and contact details for the individual directing the person's activities at the College. For example, if a student reports that they are positive, provide the student name, their updated telephone number, and the contact information for the course instructor.

  o The **MC COVID-19 Response Team** (The Office of Public Safety and Emergency Management and The Office of Public Health and Environmental Safety) will follow-up to investigate and determine any actions that need to be taken to protect the health and safety of the community. This includes reporting relevant information to:
    - Public Health officials
    - MC Facilities and MC Communications
    - Dean of Student Affairs and VPP of the course with a suspected exposure

- Should a student notify a faculty member, or should an instructor become aware during class time that a student in class has tested positive for COVID-19, the instructor should discretely have a conversation with the student. If confirmed, the instructor should announce that there has been a possible infection, dismiss class, immediately notify publichealth@montgomerycollege.edu , and use the course Blackboard site to announce any next steps or contingency plans.

- There may be cases where a student mentions they were with someone who tested positive. Please stay calm. This does not automatically mean that student has been exposed. A general reminder to all students to take the Daily Health Assessment, monitor themselves for symptoms, and contact their health care provider if they have any concerns.

- **Respect health confidentiality**. Please do not ask another employee, a student, or a visitor to campus about their vaccination or testing status, and do not request such information about others from HRSTM. Please use discretion when speaking with students about their health or COVID status. Asking a student about their vaccine or health status is a violation of FERPA. Failure to comply with the requirements of FERPA may lead to legal sanctions, loss of federal funding, a formal complaint to the U. S. Department of Education, and disciplinary action by the College.

- What if a student is absent for a significant amount of time (e.g., weeks) due to COVID or any other illness?

  - Discuss options for making up work or alternative assignments with the student.
  - Consider referring the student to DSS for possible accommodations.
  - Seek guidance from your Department Chair.
  - Provide the student with information about the College's Involuntary Withdrawal Process
    - "Ill health of the student or in the immediate family of the student. Immediate family includes a child, parent, spouse, or other regular member of the individual's household. Certification must be provided by the student's or family member's attending physician stating that the student's or family member's illness requires the student's withdrawal. Physician's note must be on professional stationary, specify dates of treatment, and clearly indicate that ill health made it impossible for student to continue enrollment in classes."
    - Students must complete the Involuntary Withdrawal Packet and submit it to the campus Registrar.

Any Questions? You may send questions to publichealth@montgomerycollege.edu