

## Weekly COVID Message



Bennington College - Laura Walker

Sep 21, 2021



### BENNINGTON COLLEGE MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Bennington Community,

On this stunningly beautiful day, I am pleased to provide some updates from the COVID task force, including about the upcoming fall weekend.

I write to share some good news: **there are currently no student cases**. The student who was in isolation has recovered and has tested negative. There is one new employee case, for a total of four. We believe that the exposure risk to our campus community is very low, and we are in touch with the employee and the Department of Health. If you are not contacted by Ali Tartaglia, you are not considered a close contact.

Thank you for all your work keeping each other safe, and I hope you enjoy this gorgeous day.

Laura Walker

#### Mandatory Weekly Testing for All

- **We will begin ongoing mandatory weekly testing for ALL faculty, staff and students who have a presence on campus, REGARDLESS OF VACCINATION STATUS beginning next week (week of September 27).**
- Testing will take place at Newman court in VAPA, Mondays through Thursdays, 8:00 am-12:00 pm and 1:00-3:00 pm. You can schedule a test on any of those days.
- Please schedule your test through the CoVerified app to prevent crowding and waiting in line. (On the app: click "Testing" on the bottom right, then click the "+" next to the calendar icon on the top right corner to schedule.)

#### Update on Fall Weekend

- We are looking forward to welcoming families to campus for [Fall Weekend](#) in just a few days. We announced some slight changes to the registration process to assure that everyone who comes on campus is vaccinated or for those not eligible to be vaccinated, they will be required to test before arrival, in order to further ensure the safety of our campus community, and wanted to share these changes with everyone.
- As a reminder:
  - **All guests must be vaccinated in order to attend Family Weekend.**
  - Anyone who is not eligible to be vaccinated (such as children under 12) may attend but **are required to have a negative COVID test result within 72-hours prior to arrival on campus and to show that proof when they arrive. They may attend outdoor events, but they must show proof of the negative test. They cannot go inside buildings.**
  - Everyone must fill out the [visitor form](#) before arrival. **This includes uploading your vaccine card through the form.**
  - Everyone must be masked at all times, except when they are eating (guests will walk through the line at the Dining Hall to pick up food but must eat outdoors).
- To summarize the changes/updates:
  - Everyone must upload proof of their vaccination card. Negative test results will only be accepted for those who are not eligible to be vaccinated.
  - We have adjusted the schedule to minimize large group gatherings and to limit the number of scheduled events. Unfortunately that means that we have had to postpone the bonfire. It will be rescheduled for the community for a later date.
  - If visitors do not adhere to COVID protocol, including sharing proof of vaccination, they will be turned away.

#### Common Cold

- Health Services has reported a significant uptick in students with common colds since last week. Colds travel the same way as COVID—many cold viruses are also coronaviruses. If a cold can spread, so can COVID. Please make your best effort to recommit to diligent mitigation measures.
- Because there is significant overlap in the symptoms of COVID and colds, each case of a cold must be taken seriously, and evaluated with a high degree of suspicion. If you have cold symptoms, please self-

isolate and contact Health Services to consider whether you should have a rapid antigen test. Routine self-service testing should NOT be used to rule out COVID when you have symptoms, but is intended only for screening of people who do not have symptoms.

#### **Webinar with Vermont experts about COVID**

- We will host a webinar with Dr. Patsy Kelso, State Epidemiologist for the Vermont Department of Health; Dr. Trey Dobson, Chief Medical Officer for Southwestern Vermont Medical Center; Dr. Randy Anselmo; and Ali Tartaglia, DrPH.
- This will be an opportunity for all members of the community—students, families, staff and faculty—to hear from experts and to ask any questions you have about COVID, testing, vaccination and more.
- Time and date to be announced in the coming week.
- Feel free to [submit any questions](#) you have ahead of time.

#### **Best practices for being in the community**

- When you are off campus, we recommend that all community members wear masks, social distance when possible, and practice good hygiene habits just as we do when on campus. Thank you so much for your cooperation.