

COVID-19 Guidelines for Fall Term

Bennington College - Human Resources hroffice@bennington.edu

August 10, 2021

Dear staff and faculty,

The email below was sent to current and new students regarding the COVID-19 policies that will be in place when term begins. Please note that, for the safety of the community, **we will be reinstating the mask mandate effective tomorrow, Wednesday, August 11, until further notice**. This includes all faculty and staff, regardless of vaccination status.

- Tomorrow through August 21—faculty and staff should wear masks INDOORS (except in private offices)
- Tuesday, August 22 through the end of Convocation on Tuesday, August 31 at 12:00 pm—all community members should wear masks INDOORS and OUTDOORS
- After Convocation—all community members should wear masks INDOORS (except in private offices) until further notice

This decision has been made in response to the change in risk due to the increased number of visitors on campus for arrival, the Delta variant, and the possibility of breakthrough infections. While vaccinations are an important tool in our ability to protect ourselves and make infections less severe, masking will be another layer of defense. We will assess the long-term plan after arrival and based on guidance from the CDC and Vermont Department of Health.

In addition, we've updated the College-sponsored work-related [travel policy](#). Please see the Q&A for Faculty and Staff for full information.

Please review the additional information below for your reference.

Heather Faley
Director of Human Resources

Sarah Harris
Dean of Faculty

Dear Students,

We are excited to welcome you back to campus in just a few weeks. This memo will outline important COVID-19 safety measures that will be in place when you arrive.

We are committed to ensuring the health and wellbeing of our community, while preserving the key elements of a Bennington education. In keeping with this goal, vaccinations are required for all students, faculty, and staff. As COVID continues, and there are a lot of uncertainties with the Delta variant, Bennington will be nimble. We aim to meet or exceed last year's extraordinary record and will need the continued support and cooperation of everyone on campus. Vermont continues to lead the way as the #1 state in the nation for vaccinations (68% percent are fully vaccinated) and it has the second lowest infection rate of any state.

Below are the highlights of what students need to know to plan for arrival. You can also check the [COVID webpage](#).

If you are fully vaccinated:

- And you have submitted proof of vaccination, thank you! If you have not, please [report your vaccination status to us](#) as soon as you can. Proof of vaccination was to have been submitted by August 1, 2021. If you have yet to submit this, please make this a priority this week.
- **Testing**-- Every student will be tested upon arrival and again at day 4 or 5. More details to come.
- **Quarantine** -- Fully vaccinated students will not be required to quarantine.
- **Masking** -- Please plan to wear a mask indoors and outdoors at least through Convocation (Tuesday, August 31 at 12:00 pm). Then you should wear a mask while indoors—except when eating in the dining hall, or in a private office or room—until further notice.

If you are not yet fully vaccinated

- **Testing**
 - You are required to get a COVID test 72 hours before travel to Bennington, and submit it upon arrival on campus.
 - You will be tested upon arrival, and again 3-5 days later.

- **Quarantine** -- You will need to quarantine upon arrival until you receive a negative result from your COVID test at arrival. More information to come with details about that.
- **Masking** -- All students—vaccinated or unvaccinated—should plan to wear a mask at all times, indoors and outdoors, at least through Convocation. After Convocation, those who are not fully vaccinated must continue to wear masks at all times—except when eating in the dining hall, or in a private office or room.
- There are some students who are currently unable to get vaccines. If you need access to the vaccine when you arrive, [please let us know](#) and we will assist you. (Thank you to those who have already filled out this form.)
- If you would like to request an exemption for medical or religious reasons only, please email healthservices@bennington.edu. The deadline to submit an exemption request was August 1, 2021, so if you have yet to submit this, please make it a priority this week.

For Families and Friends:

- Vaccinated family members and friends are welcome to help with move-in. Please wear a mask at all times, indoors and outdoors.
- Unvaccinated family members and friends may help unload the car, but may not enter any buildings. They are asked to wear a mask at all times.

We are committed to keeping our community healthy and are requiring all staff and faculty to get vaccinated and to wear a mask while indoors (except while in a private office) from today until further notice, and both indoors and outdoors from the time students begin arriving on August 22 through at least Convocation.

We will host a webinar on Friday, August 13 at 12:30 pm EST. Please [join us](#), and please feel free to [submit questions at any time](#).

Thank you for your attention as we finalize these details and keep an eye out for weekly emails from us with COVID updates. We look forward to seeing you at the Q&A, as well.

These plans have been developed by a COVID Task Force, led by Ali Tartaglia, the Director of Student Health Promotion, who holds a PhD in Public Health, Dr. Randy Anselmo, Director of Health Services, and Christine Winget, Acting Dean of Students, along with representatives

from across the College. You'll be hearing from Ali and me throughout the term with updates.

Best,

Laura Walker
President