

COVID-19

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR THE COLUMBIA COMMUNITY

Enhanced Health and Safety Policy and FAQs About the Compact Requirements

October 27, 2020

Effective: August 31, 2020

The following Enhanced Health and Safety policy has been established to help protect individuals in the Columbia community and our neighbors as we prepare for return to campus. In addition to the expectation that all members of our community follow health and hygiene practices that include washing hands frequently with soap and water, not touching one's face with unwashed hands, and sneezing or coughing into one's elbow, the following measures will be expected at all times, both indoors and outside, of anyone on campus.

Everyone on Columbia's campuses must:

- Wear a **face covering** over one's nose and mouth at all times, except when alone in a private office or in an enclosed room with the door closed.
- Keep at least **6 feet (about 2 arms' length) distance** between oneself and other people whenever possible.
- Follow signage and guidance on **use of campus spaces**.
- **Stay home if not feeling well.**
- Follow **workplace and shared-space hygiene** (wipe workplace surfaces used frequently, including desk surfaces, keyboards, light switches, and shared equipment such as copiers, printers, A/V, etc.) with disinfectant sprays or wipes that the University will provide. Columbia staff will do frequent specialized cleaning of high-touch surfaces throughout campus.

ENFORCEMENT PLAN

[We support adherence to the health and safety policy by all on our campuses.](#)

We strongly encourage our community to use this policy as guidance for activities off campus.

FAQs About Compact Requirements

▼ I have questions about the face-covering requirement on campus.

Eating or drinking:

When you remove your face covering to eat or drink, you must be at least 6 feet (2 arms' length) from others.

- Being side by side at that distance is fine, but try to avoid being directly across from someone else.
- If you smoke, this same rule applies—and only in outdoor areas on campus where smoking is permitted.

Passing someone in a narrow hallway/stairwell or other narrow space:

Keep as much space as you can, wear your face covering and keep moving.

Riding an elevator:

Elevator capacity will be limited. Follow the instructions on the sign nearby whatever elevator you plan to use. If the elevator permits more than one person at a time and you're in the elevator with someone else, stay as far apart as the space allows, and keep your face covering on. Everyone will know that this is about keeping our community safe. And if you are able, take the stairs instead.

Using the restroom:

Keep your face covering on.

- Restroom signs will show how many people can use the restroom at one time. This occupancy limit will be based on restroom size to ensure at least 6 feet distance between individuals.
- Wash your hands thoroughly (20 seconds, with soap) afterward to reduce the potential transmission of the virus. If there is someone already at the sink, wait until they have left the restroom to use the sink yourself.
- In certain shared facilities, Columbia Facilities and Operations/CUIMC Facilities Management and Campus Services will have easy-to-use cleaning materials for you to wipe your sink area.

Exercising:

Keep your face covering on, both inside and outdoors. We understand it can get hot – if you need to pull your face covering down for a moment to wipe off your face, be sure you're more than 6 feet from others.

Sitting or walking outside on campus with someone:

Keep your face covering on and keep six feet between you. Even if you're with a roommate, partner or family member, keep your face covering on and keep at least six feet from other individuals or groups.

Alone in a private office:

Face coverings are not required when you are alone in an enclosed office with the door closed.

Hanging out/studying/organizing/working on a project with friends or colleagues:

Keep your face covering on and stay 6 feet (2 arms' length) apart.

Getting around campus and NYC:

Keep your face covering on. It's important for your health and the health of others [*if applicable*: and it's required by NY law in public places whenever you cannot keep 6 feet apart]. Avoid crowds and remember to use hand sanitizer too.

▼ How does the Compact apply to off-campus dining, parties, and other student gatherings?

The health and safety of our students, faculty and staff are the University's highest priority. This is embedded in our [policies and procedures](#) .

Because transmission of COVID-19 poses a threat to the health of other members of our community, actions both on and off-campus that risk exposing our community to COVID-19 are prohibited by University policy governing student conduct.

This includes interactions between students inside off-campus apartments and in other off-campus settings, both indoors and outside. Of particular concern are social gatherings and parties, as these pose a high risk of transmission if students do not follow Compact requirements regarding face coverings and physical distancing.

There have been questions if dining at restaurants and in parks off campus are Compact violations. Students are expected to follow their state and city rules and consider the associated public health risks.

- ▼ I need to have some places where I take off my face covering, and some people who I'll be with, without face coverings on. What's the guidance for me?

At home?

You and your suite/apartment-mates can agree to be home in shared spaces without your face coverings on. BUT this works only if you all agree to keep face coverings on at all other times. Without everyone being very careful, one roommate can unintentionally expose others to the virus.

- Guests should not come over to socialize. (See above), If there is an urgent need to have a guest in your home, for healthcare or other reasons, you'll need to keep face coverings on, and your guests will too.
- And you'll need to keep face coverings on if anyone in the apartment has symptoms of COVID or other communicable diseases.

This will help keep you, your apartment-mates, your guests and others in our campus community safe and healthy.

- If you live alone, you can choose to be a "family unit" with a very small number of people BUT following the same guidance as above. This only works if you and the others agree to keep face coverings on at all times when you are not together in your homes.

With close friends?


We know it's hard but for your own protection and the health of others, it's important to keep your face covering at all times, even with close friends. Talking over FaceTime, Zoom and other apps can help you remember what each other's facial expressions look like under the covering.

With a romantic or intimate partner?

If you are in a room with the door closed, you can remove the face covering. Remember to put it on when you leave the room—this is for your benefit and the health and safety of everyone in our community. Please remember to use your best judgment when engaging in intimate contact with casual partners.

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- ▼ I have questions about the physical distance requirement.

Can we get together in groups for events, meetings or to socialize?

University policy on group gatherings will be updated to reflect changes in health policy and New York law. For now, group gatherings are not permitted on campus for socializing or regularly scheduled events. Here is current [New York State guidance](#)  on the subject.

- Wearing face coverings and keeping physical distance (6 feet of distance between each person at all times) will be required.
- All events and meetings that can take place online should happen online, even if it means modifying the event.

Are elbow bumps OK?

Yes, stepping in for a quick elbow bump is ok but then step back so that you're two arms lengths away.

What about walking side by side?

Yes, this is permitted, but avoid turning toward the person you're walking with. This is hard to do, so it's safer for you and the other person to keep 6 feet apart.

Can I hug my friends if I have a face covering on?

No. We know this is a hard one but it's all part of keeping our campus open and safe for all.
