

# COVID Protocols Updated for 2021 Fall Semester - Coronavirus Response

June 29, 2021

**Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff,**

Together we have made extraordinary progress in combating COVID-19 on campus. More than 81 percent of our faculty and staff and nearly 10,000 of our students are fully vaccinated, and that number increases every week. We ended the Spring semester with a very low number of positive cases and had a joyous in-person celebration for our graduates. In addition, since May 3, there have been 35,000 surveillance tests completed with only 7 positive results.

In preparation for the Fall semester, we continue to work closely with Duke's infectious diseases experts and follow the guidance of the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, among others, to promote a safe environment for our students, faculty, staff and visitors. While the national news is good, the pandemic is not over yet. Vaccination rates in our region continue to lag and the emergence of new and more transmittable variants of COVID-19 mean we must continue to practice some of our public health protocols as we begin the Fall semester. These protocols include:

- **Vaccinations:** All Duke undergraduate, graduate and professional students must present proof of vaccination in order to attend classes and other campus activities this Fall. All faculty and staff are expected to present proof of vaccination by September 1. Students, faculty and staff may apply for a [medical or religious exemption](#). Individuals granted medical or religious exemptions will be subject to daily symptom monitoring, regular testing, masking and other protocols applicable to those who have not been vaccinated.
- **Testing:** All students will be tested upon arrival at Duke and must then participate in weekly surveillance testing regardless of their vaccination status. All students who have obtained an exemption from vaccination will be required to participate in surveillance testing twice a week. Faculty and staff who have not been vaccinated will be required to participate in surveillance testing once per week. The testing schedule for each group is based on the number of interactions they are likely to have that could lead to the transmission of COVID-19. Students tend to live in congregate settings and will likely have substantially more interactions than faculty and staff.
- **Symptom Monitoring:** Fully vaccinated faculty, staff, and students will not be required to complete daily symptom monitoring. Anyone who has not been vaccinated, regardless of the circumstances, will be required to complete daily symptom monitoring.
- **Masking:** Fully vaccinated faculty, staff and students will not be required to wear a mask in most indoor areas effective July 1. Because masks are still required in certain settings – including health care facilities, buses and shuttles on campus, and childcare centers – everyone should have a mask ready and available if needed. Also, please respect anyone who chooses to continue wearing masks as a means to prevent exposure to themselves or loved ones. Faculty, staff, and students who have not been vaccinated will be required to wear a mask indoors at all times. Masks will be provided to all students as part of the initial testing program.
- **Social Distancing:** Social distancing is no longer required on campus, though distancing is still recommended for those who are not vaccinated.
- **Flu Vaccination:** All members of the Duke community will be expected to participate in the annual flu vaccine program.

We will continue to assess our COVID protocols and test results as the semester progresses to determine whether it is safe to further ease restrictions.

With your participation and support, Duke has led the way back from this pandemic. Your perseverance, creativity and sheer will to overcome the many challenges that confronted us reflects the best of Duke and will define our future.

**Sally Kornbluth,**  
Provost and Jo Rae Wright University Professor

**Kyle Cavanaugh,**  
Vice President, Administration

*This message is being sent to all Duke University students, faculty and staff.*