

# YOUNG HARRIS COLLEGE

## Spring 2022 Public Health Protocols

*approved by Pres. Van Horn & the Pandemic Recovery Task Force 1/4/22*

*updated 1/14/22*



## INTRODUCTION

Young Harris College's Pandemic Recovery Task Force continues to monitor all local, national, and international developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its potential impact on College programs, services, and community members. The protocols outlined below represent the College's best efforts to balance the need to reduce the potential for viral transmission among community members with the need to respect individuals' choices regarding their health and wellness, and they depend on each community member's recognition that a personal decision may have an unintended impact on other individuals. Nothing in this document is intended to form a guarantee or legal contract between any individual and the College.

On 9 January 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released updated [recommendations for isolation and quarantine](#), based on increasing infection numbers caused by the Omicron variant and expanded research on transmissibility. The College's updated protocols are based on the CDC's recommendations. As the situation continues to be fluid, the College reserves the right to alter its protocols further at any time and to communicate any new protocols to members of the campus community.

## ACADEMIC CALENDAR & CLASS MEETINGS

The College will continue to use its published, unmodified academic calendar for the spring 2021 semester. Classes will begin on 10 January, and finals exams will conclude on 4 May. Classes will not meet on 17 January for Martin Luther King Jr. Day, on 7–11 March for Spring Break, or on 15 April for Good Friday.

Classes delivered on-campus will be held in-person at full capacity. MAT classes will continue in their hybrid delivery format, and those Young Harris Early College classes designated as being offered via distance education will continue online.

## VACCINES

The College strongly encourages all members of the campus community to be vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, if they are able to do so. Rigorous studies and ongoing safety monitoring have demonstrated that all three vaccines authorized for emergency use by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) are safe and effective at decreasing the risk of moderate to severe cases of COVID-19 and of hospitalization, including those arising from the

Omicron variant. Vaccines approved for use outside of the United States have shown similar levels of efficacy. The College also encourages all community members to get a COVID-19 booster shot if they are eligible for greater protection.

Individuals are considered “fully vaccinated” two weeks after receiving a single-shot vaccine (e.g., Johnson & Johnson/Janssen) or two weeks after receiving the second shot of a two-shot vaccine (e.g., Moderna, Oxford–AstraZeneca, Pfizer/BioNTech). Individuals who are not fully vaccinated will face additional requirements and/or restrictions (see below).

While the omicron variant has led to an increase in “breakthrough” infections among the fully vaccinated, infection rates are far higher among the unvaccinated, and vaccinated individuals typically experience milder symptoms or are asymptomatic.

## **MASKS<sup>1</sup> & PHYSICAL DISTANCING**

Protocols for masks and physical distancing are based on updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), which may change with minimal or no notice.

The College strongly encourages all members of the campus community, regardless of vaccination or recent infection status, to wear masks when they are indoors in public and less than 6 feet from others. The omicron variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus has proven to be highly transmissible, even by those with asymptomatic infections. While a mask provides some benefit to the wearer, its primary benefit is to others, reducing the likelihood that the wearer will inadvertently spread the virus to others.

In general, it is not necessary to wear a mask outdoors. However, the College encourages community members to wear masks outdoors in crowded settings whenever Towns County is identified as an area of substantial or high transmission.<sup>2</sup>

### **Offices & Classrooms**

Employees may designate their offices, classrooms, labs, rehearsal spaces, or other indoor locations for which they have primary responsibility as “mask required” spaces. To do so, notice must be given to all who enter that a mask is required (e.g., a sign on an office door, a notice on

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<sup>1</sup> The College uses the term “mask” to denote a face covering designed to reduce the spread of droplets and aerosols from the nose and mouth. These include medical and non-medical disposable masks, respirators (e.g., N95, KN95, KR94), and multi-layer cloth face coverings (with or without filter materials). They do not include single-layer masks or gaiters, face shields, scarves, mesh masks that do not appreciably impede the flow of droplets or aerosols, masks with exhalation valves (e.g., those designed for exercise or work in dusty environments), turtleneck shirts or sweaters pulled up over the face, or other makeshift face coverings. To be effective, a mask must be worn over the nose and mouth with minimal or no gaps around the edges.

<sup>2</sup> County-based transmission rate data is published and regularly updated at <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/>.

a syllabus, a comment in an event invitation). Individuals who are not wearing a mask are prohibited from spaces where masks are required. Instructors in mask-required instructional spaces may dismiss a student who is not wearing a mask, or who regularly fails to wear a mask correctly after redirection/reminding, from that class meeting and mark the student absent.

All brass and woodwind instrumentalists must use bags, covers, additional distancing, or similar aerosol mitigation efforts when practicing or performing indoors with others.

## **DAILY SELF-WELLNESS CHECK**

Prior to leaving their home or residential facility each day, employees and students are required to perform a daily self-wellness check in accordance with [CDC symptom guidelines](#). Currently recognized symptoms include the following:

- Fever (100.4°F/38°C or more) or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

An individual who has any of the above symptoms that are not attributable to another health condition or activity must immediately report the symptoms (see below).

## **REPORTING COVID-19 SYMPTOMS & ISOLATION**

Any employee or student who exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 or who has received a positive COVID-19 test result must report this information to the Pandemic Recovery Task Force immediately by sending an email to [ReportCOVID@yhc.edu](mailto:ReportCOVID@yhc.edu). The on-call member of the Task Force will screen the individual reporting symptoms to determine whether the situation necessitates putting the individual in isolation.

An employee or student who is required to isolate must remain away from campus for 10 days from the date of symptom onset or from the administration date of the positive test. This period may be shortened or lengthened by a member of the Task Force in compliance with CDC guidance. Any individual required to isolate away from campus is prohibited from returning to campus until explicitly permitted to do so by a Task Force member.

An individual who reports symptoms but subsequently tests negative for COVID may be released from isolation and allowed to return to campus without restriction.

An individual who tests positive for COVID but meets CDC-recommended criteria for early release must wear a mask when they are indoors in public on campus and less than 6 feet from others through the conclusion of 10 days after symptom onset or the administration date of the positive test.

### **Employees in Isolation**

An employee in isolation may telecommute provided the employee's health allows this and the employee's work duties permit this. A faculty member may temporarily convert classes to a distance learning format while in isolation. A staff member who cannot telecommute must take leave for any time spent in isolation. Telecommuting and leave must be coordinated with the employee's supervisor.

### **Students in Isolation**

If a student is required to isolate, the Office of Academic Affairs will communicate with the student's instructors to confirm that all class absences are administratively excused during the period of isolation. The student must also reach out to all instructors, health permitting, to determine whether reasonable temporary accommodations may be arranged so that the student does not get behind in coursework. Such accommodations may include, but are not limited to, lecture capture videos, alternative assignments, a designated peer note-taker, videoconference meetings, and revised due dates. The student's academic advisor and the Success Center staff may also provide support and guidance on how best to keep up with studies during isolation.

A residential student required to isolate must leave campus unless provided an exception by a Task Force member due to extenuating circumstances.

## **CLOSE CONTACT EXPOSURE<sup>3</sup> & SELF-QUARANTINE**

Close contact exposure occurs when an individual has spent at least 15 minutes in a 24-hour period indoors within 6 feet of another individual who is presumed or confirmed to have COVID-19 without wearing masks.

### **Fully Vaccinated, Boosted, & Recently Positive Individuals**

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<sup>3</sup> Close contact exposure means an individual has spent at least 15 minutes in a 24-hour period with a person who is presumed or confirmed to have COVID-19 in one of the following circumstances: within 3 feet outdoors (regardless of masks), within 3 feet indoors if both individuals were wearing masks, or within 6 feet indoors if either individual was not wearing a mask.

An employee or student who has had close contact exposure is not required to self-quarantine if the individual meets at least one of the following criteria:

- The individual has been fully vaccinated and has received a booster shot.
- The individual has been fully vaccinated and is not yet eligible for a booster shot.
- The individual has been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the past 90 days.

Any employee or student who has had close contact exposure but is not required to self-quarantine must wear a mask whenever indoors on campus in public for 10 days after exposure. Such an individual is encouraged to be tested 5 days after exposure. Any symptoms or positive test results must be reported to the Pandemic Recovery Task Force immediately by sending an email to [ReportCOVID@yhc.edu](mailto:ReportCOVID@yhc.edu).

### **Unvaccinated & Partially Vaccinated Individuals**

Any employee or student who has had close contact exposure but is not fully vaccinated (unvaccinated or partially vaccinated) and has not been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the previous 90 days must self-quarantine away from campus for 5 days from the date of exposure and is strongly encouraged to be tested at the end of this period. Once allowed to return to campus, the individual must wear a mask whenever indoors on campus in public for an additional 5 days.

In limited instances where a 5-day quarantine is not feasible, as approved by a senior administrator, an employee or student who has had close contact exposure but is not fully vaccinated and has not been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the previous 90 days may be exempted from self-quarantine with the provision that the individual must wear a mask whenever indoors on campus in public for 10 days.

### **Employees in Self-Quarantine**

An employee in self-quarantine may telecommute without taking leave provided the employee's work duties permit this. An employee in self-quarantine who cannot telecommute must take leave for any time spent in isolation. Telecommuting and leave must be coordinated with the employee's supervisor.

### **Students in Self-Quarantine**

A student in self-quarantine must reach out to all instructors to determine whether reasonable temporary accommodations may be arranged so that the student does not get behind in coursework. Absences resulting from self-quarantine are not administratively excused but may be excused at the individual instructor's discretion.

Any individual in self-quarantine who develops symptoms or tests positive must report this information to the Pandemic Recovery Task Force immediately by sending an email to [ReportCOVID@yhc.edu](mailto:ReportCOVID@yhc.edu).

## **FAILURE TO ADHERE TO PROTOCOLS**

Any individual who fails to report symptoms or a positive test result, fails to abide by all isolation or self-quarantine instructions, intentionally misrepresents one's vaccination or recent positivity status, fails to wear a mask when required to do so, or otherwise violates these protocols is subject to discipline. Employees who violate protocols will be subject to the progressive discipline procedures published in the Employee Handbook. Students who violate protocols will be charged with violations of the Code of Conduct published in the Guide to Student Life. Discipline may range from a verbal warning to discharge or dismissal, depending on the severity of the violation.