

# **YOUNG HARRIS COLLEGE**

## **Fall 2021 Public Health Protocols — REVISED**

*approved by Pres. Van Horn & the Pandemic Recovery Task Force 8/6/2021*



## **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.

Increasing infection numbers and positivity rates observed in late summer 2021, due in large part to the rise of the Delta variant of the virus, have necessitated revising the fall 2021 protocols approved and published on 14 July. 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 is returning to its standard academic calendar for the fall 2021 semester. Classes will begin on 16 August, and final exams will conclude on 10 December. Classes will not meet 7-8 October for Fall Break or 22-26 November for Thanksgiving Break.

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 highly effective at decreasing the risk of moderate to severe cases of COVID-19 and of hospitalization. Vaccines approved for use outside of the United States have shown similar levels of efficacy.

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).

## **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.

### **Indoors**

The College strongly encourages all individuals who are not fully vaccinated wear masks indoors while in public and less than six feet from others.

The College encourages fully vaccinated individuals to wear masks indoors while in public and less than 6 feet from others whenever Towns County is identified as an area of substantial or high transmission.<sup>2</sup>

### **Outdoors**

The College strongly encourages all individuals who are not fully vaccinated to wear masks outdoors in crowded setting and during activities that involve sustained close contact with others, particularly when Towns County is identified as an area of substantial or high transmission.

Fully vaccinated individuals are not expected to wear masks while outdoors but are encouraged to consider wearing masks in crowded outdoor settings if they or someone in their household is immunocompromised.

### **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

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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), 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/>.

must be given to all who enter that a mask is required (e.g., a sign on an office door, a notice on 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, 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 Task Force member 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. A residential student required to

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

### **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.

## **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 Individuals & Recently Positive Individuals**

An individual who has had close contact exposure but is fully vaccinated and/or was diagnosed with COVID-19 within the previous 90 days is not required to self-quarantine. However, such an individual is required to wear a mask whenever indoors while in public and less than 6 feet from others for 10 days after exposure. Such an individual is encouraged to be tested 3-5 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 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 individual who has had close contact exposure but is not fully vaccinated and has not been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the previous 90 days must self-quarantine away from campus for 10 days from the date of exposure (or for 7 days if the individual receives a negative result from a test conducted at least 5 days after exposure).

### **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.