



## **State University System of Florida Health Policies for the 2021-22 Academic Year**

In order to continue to promote good health practices in our campus communities, and in our laboratory schools, the Board of Governors is emphasizing key health policy issues relating to the ongoing battle against the COVID-19 viruses. Following up to our June 21<sup>st</sup> Statement on preparations for the 2021-22 academic year, you can be assured that each university is continuing to work collaboratively with the state and local health departments so that all relevant health and safety protocols remain in place that will meet the needs of its campus health environment.

To repeat a critical position in the June Statement, we believe that all university presidents, boards of trustees, administrators, faculty, and staff must “over-communicate” academic and student services policies to their students, particularly as they relate to the health and well-being of our 12 campus communities. As students prepare for the new academic year, their knowledge and understanding of these health policies will be paramount.

### **Vaccination Policies**

With the increasing spread of the Delta variant of the COVID virus throughout the country, it is critical and urgent that unvaccinated people get vaccinated and continue to wear a mask until they are fully vaccinated.

- ❖ We strongly recommend that state university faculty, staff, and students be vaccinated for the COVID-19 virus.
- ❖ If an individual is fully vaccinated, the chance of developing symptomatic or asymptomatic COVID-19 infection and/or spreading it to others is markedly reduced and the individual may not need to self-isolate following COVID-19 exposure.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), individuals are considered fully vaccinated:

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine.

An individual who does not meet these requirements is not considered to be fully vaccinated and should keep taking all precautions until fully vaccinated.

*[Individuals who are immunocompromised, even if vaccinated, or with a pre-existing medical condition for which vaccination is not recommended, should follow the standard prevention measures of wearing a mask, maintain social distance, and frequent hand washing.]*

- ❖ We strongly recommend that members and potential members of campus organizations, clubs, and athletic teams be vaccinated for the COVID-19 virus to avoid a disruption of activity that may result from COVID-19 infection or exposure.
- ❖ Depending on each institution's health care facilities, staffing, and resources, universities may offer vaccinations on campus and/or maintain an up-to-date list of vaccination sites in the surrounding community.

### **Testing Policies**

As was recommended in the Board's *Blueprint for Reopening Campuses for Fall Semester 2020*, each university established a COVID-19 testing plan during the 2020-21 academic year, developed in cooperation with the state and local departments of health and local hospitals and health care systems.

- ❖ It continues to be critically important for individuals experiencing symptoms of the COVID-19 virus to be tested for the virus. Primary symptoms include fever, cough, difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell, muscle or body aches, gastrointestinal symptoms, headache, or general fatigue.
- ❖ Depending on each institution's health care facilities, staffing, and resources, universities should continue to offer COVID-19 testing to individuals and should maintain and make available an up-to-date list of testing sites in the surrounding community.

### **Mask Wearing**

The CDC has updated its guidance for fully vaccinated individuals based on new evidence on the Delta variant as follows:

- ❖ To maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission.
- ❖ Wearing a mask is most important if you have a weakened immune system or if, because of your age or an underlying medical condition, you are at increased risk for severe disease, or if someone in your household has a weakened immune system, is at increased risk for severe disease, or is unvaccinated. If this applies to you or your household, you might choose to wear a mask regardless of the level of transmission in your area.
- ❖ In general, you do not need to wear a mask in outdoor settings. In areas with high numbers of COVID-19 cases, consider wearing a mask in crowded outdoor settings and for activities with close contact to others who are not fully vaccinated.

### **Contact Tracing Policies**

Contact tracing is important in slowing the spread of COVID-19 and helps to protect members of our campus communities from the virus.

- ❖ Contact tracing for the COVID-19 virus is under the authority of the Florida Department of Health (FDOH). Universities should continue to work with the FDOH and the local county health departments to determine how universities can assist the Department in contact tracing efforts for individuals testing positive.

- ❖ During the FDOH contact tracing process, individuals identified as having been exposed to the COVID-19 virus will be contacted by a FDOH representative.
  - Per the current CDC guidelines, vaccinated individuals who have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus or those with COVID-19 within the past 90 days and are asymptomatic for the virus will not need to self-isolate and stay away from others. Vaccinated individuals who have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus and are experiencing symptoms need to self-isolate and stay away from others.
  - Individuals who have not been fully vaccinated will be directed by the FDOH to quarantine after exposure from an infected individual. Primary elements of self-isolation include staying away from others for at least 7 days after one's last contact with an infected individual and the personal monitoring of one's health.
  
- ❖ There is no expectation that universities provide separate on-campus housing for individuals who are directed by the Department of Health to quarantine because of exposure to the COVID-19 virus.
- ❖ Students who are directed to self-isolate should consult their university's class policies and course syllabi for guidance during their period of isolation.
- ❖ Campus organizations determined to have COVID-19 cases or exposures may be required to suspend any activity with members or potential members who are requested to self-isolate.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, a vast majority of our State University System students have responsibly faced the dangers of the COVID-19 virus, adapted, and kept moving forward. Students have continued to support the administrative health and safety protocols required to combat the virus even though these policies drastically changed how they take classes, study, socialize, and live on campus.

Our battle with the virus is not over, but we are confident that our students, faculty, and staff will continue to accept a shared responsibility by following a healthy and vigilant lifestyle for themselves and for all members of their campus community.

Let us all work together to encourage and support a 2021-22 academic year marked with good health, full engagement, and meaningful outcomes!

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