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Coronavirus Update for July 23, 2021

The Coronavirus Planning Team

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Fri 7/23/2021 12:45 PM

Coronavirus Planning Contact Us coronavirusplanningcontactus@sacredheart.edu

Coronavirus Update for July 23, 2021

Dear members of the Sacred Heart University community,

One thing we have learned during this 18-month battle with COVID-19 is that things are constantly changing and, if we want to stay safe, we need to keep up with the latest news. We are aware of the recent rise in COVID Delta variant cases around the country, and in the state, as well as the number of our athletic and clinical partners who are now requiring the vaccine. **As a result, and in consultation with state and local health officials, we have made the decision to mandate COVID-19 vaccinations for all students, faculty and staff who plan to be on campus in the fall.** This does not apply to those students who are enrolled in fully online degree programs and who have no plans to come to campus.

We have not come to this decision lightly. As you know, it was not our intent to require the vaccine. However, as we have done throughout the pandemic, we adapt our policies and procedures as we learn and consult with experts and professionals at the highest levels in an effort to keep our community as safe as possible. This practice will continue to guide us as we move forward. State and regional discussions are already underway regarding reinstating travel restrictions, masking and other precautions. And, as of this writing, almost all of the colleges and universities in the state, both public and private, have mandated the vaccine. As always, we are doing what we believe is best for the health and safety of the SHU community.

Upload Your Vaccination Information

Given the widespread availability of the vaccine in all areas of the country, we will require all students to have received at least the first dose before move-in, with the second dose to be administered no later than September 15. We are working with our clinical partners to provide vaccinations on campus. More information on where and how to get the COVID vaccination will be forthcoming. Once vaccinated, community members will need to upload vaccination information as soon as possible. Students should post it to [their health portal](#). Employees should use the link that has been provided by HR.

Like all other Sacred Heart University students, all international students will be required to upload proof of vaccination in their health portal by September 15. We strongly recommend everyone who is able to get a vaccine to do so before departing for the U.S. However, Sacred Heart University understands that this may not be possible. If you are unable to get vaccinated before leaving your country, you must arrive at Sacred Heart University and receive your first vaccination early enough to receive your second dose on or before September 15.

Exemptions

Sacred Heart will be allowing medical and religious exemptions relating to the COVID vaccination. To apply for an exemption, please fill out the medical or religious exemption request forms as well as the Waiver and Agreement Regarding Immunization Against COVID-19 for Medical and Religious Exemptions [available here](#) and follow the instructions for providing any necessary documentation. As stated previously and under current guidance (which is subject to change), anyone who is unvaccinated will

need to wear a mask indoors and be tested weekly. A separate exemption process will be emailed to employees next week.

Please note, nursing and other health students, as well as education students, who receive exemptions from vaccination may be unable to be placed with our clinical partners and schools due to the requirements set by these organizations (not the University), and will therefore be unable to continue to progress in their programs. Similarly, athletes who receive exemptions from Sacred Heart may be unable to compete at other schools due to the vaccination policies at those institutions.

The Delta Variant

The Delta variant is highly contagious and is currently sweeping throughout the world, including within the U.S. COVID cases are rising in all 50 states and Delta is now the dominant strain in the U.S.

Here are a few facts about the Delta variant:

- It is highly contagious—much more so than the other COVID strains.
- Unvaccinated people are at highest risk for the Delta variant, including children
- Vaccination is the best protection against the Delta variant—both for yourself and others

Follow Safe Practices

Please continue to follow safe practices including washing hands frequently, wearing a mask when appropriate and—especially—staying home if you feel at all ill.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone back next month!

Be safe,
The Coronavirus Planning Team

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[SHU Coronavirus Website](#) | [SHU Covid-19 Dashboard](#) | [If You Become Ill](#) | [Testing, Tracking, Treating & Tracing](#)