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Coronavirus Update 9-16-21

The Coronavirus Planning Team

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Coronavirus Planning Contact Us coronavirusplanningcontactus@sacredheart.edu

Coronavirus Update 9-16-21

Dear members of the Sacred Heart University community,

We have been back on campus for a few weeks now. There have been some ups and downs, but I think we can all agree that it is great to be back in the classroom, attending events like new-student induction and the President's Gala and cheering on our athletic teams. We had all hoped that the vaccine would allow us to return to pre-pandemic days but, unfortunately, the rise of the highly transmissible delta variant has meant that we need to be patient a little longer. That said, and despite the need for indoor masking, life on campus is much different than it was a year ago.

Last fall, we were taking hybrid classes, masking both indoors and out, visiting friends in our residence halls only, canceling or postponing our athletic seasons, social distancing and canceling most in-person events. Happily, we have been able to lift most of those restrictions.

The main difference this year is that 93% of the campus community is vaccinated and—although students and employees have been infected with the delta variant—cases have been mild or asymptomatic. Until we conquer the variant, it is important that we continue to be diligent with our indoor masking for now, stay home with ANY symptoms of the virus ([CampusClear](#) will help you with that) and get tested if required.

Pioneer Promise/Mitigating Spread

It remains critical that we stick to the [Pioneer Promise](#), which is our roadmap to protecting ourselves and others. The basic tenets that we followed so diligently last year are still important tools for staving off the virus:

- Get a vaccine. This is your best protection against the virus. Even if you catch it, your case will likely be much less severe than if you are not vaccinated. Getting a vaccine helps you and others. Every infection introduces another opportunity for the virus to mutate and another opportunity for the virus to spread
- Wear a mask
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly
- Maintain social distancing as much as possible

Testing Available

As you know, the University is testing all unvaccinated students weekly along with random testing of the vaccinated population. All students, faculty and staff are welcome to take advantage of the testing program at any time. Testing takes place from 8:30 to noon Monday-Thursday. Testing locations are the library basement Monday and Tuesday and the Edgerton Wednesday and Thursday.

What to Do If You Feel Sick or Test Positive

Last week, we introduced [a graphic](#) to our COVID-19 Campus Status page that indicates the protocol and procedures if you test positive or if you think you were a close contact of someone who tested positive. We have updated the graphic in response to feedback and questions from you.

Faculty and Staff are Here to Help

As the number of positive cases have started to rise, the provost and deans have reached out to faculty in the various colleges to remind them to be as accommodating as possible in helping you stay up to date with your work. Depending on circumstances, you may be asked to get notes from your classmates, attend online office hours and/or listen to a recorded version of a lecture. Don't hesitate to reach out to faculty and staff for help. You will not be abandoned while you isolate or quarantine.

Masking

We continue to reinforce the importance of masking indoors. Masks work, which is why it is so critical that we all wear them correctly. Carrying a water bottle or food with you is not a license to be unmasked. Please try to eat in designated areas when inside. If you need to hydrate, take a drink and then replace your mask.

Guest Policy

For now, we are not allowing guests from outside the University in the residence halls. You also need to limit the number of SHU guests in your room or suite, and you all need to wear masks when there are visitors in your room. RSAs will be checking to ensure this policy is followed. Violations will lead to the conduct process as some of you already know.

Make good decisions and have a great weekend,
The Coronavirus Planning Team

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Please note: Given the unpredictability of the variants, we will continue to consult with and follow the guidance of the CDC, the Connecticut Department of Health and state and local health officials. We will all need to be flexible and understand that as we continue to work in the best interest of the University community, there will likely be changes and updates. We also suggest that all students have plans in place should there be a need to return home for isolation, quarantining, etc.

[SHU Coronavirus Website](#)

This message was sent to the following groups: !Campuswide-Students, !Campuswide-Employees