COVID-19 MITIGATION
and
RESPONSE PLAN
for
STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

Updated January 2022
Preface

This plan is designed to be a living document that is used throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This plan is subject to change at any time based on new information about COVID-19 or lessons learned as the pandemic continues.

The decisions made which form this document are guided by the Massachusetts Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control recommendations. If either of these organizations change their guidance or recommendations on the topics described below, this document will move to match those revised guidance or recommendations. Additionally, all mandates by the Commonwealth or local government will be immediately implemented and enforced. The College will always err on the side of health and safety and if circumstances occur on campus, or in the immediate geographic area, which necessitate stricter guidelines in the name of safety then the plan may change.

Best efforts will be made to include a representative sample of the College community when updating the plan, however there may be instances where decisions must be made quickly for the health and safety of the College Community, therefore distribution prior to consensus may take place.
Guiding Principles

- that work areas are modified, if need be, for optimum safety
- the precautions outlined in this document are such that when a positive case occurs areas are not totally incapacitated by quarantine and services can continue
- that classroom capacities provide safe social distancing measures
- cleaning of buildings can be maintained and supported by Facilities
- that personal contact tracing is in place, and employees understand why it is necessary
- An evaluation of how the outside community coming onto campus will affect various areas has been conducted and a policy has been adopted
- That all students and employees are fully vaccinated unless they have received an accommodation.

Face to Face Classroom Instruction

It is fully appreciated that returning our students to campus is a priority; As such, face to face classroom instruction will continue in the Spring of 2022 for the majority of classes. There are still many online and hybrid classes being offered for those students who do not wish to come to campus or wish to spend minimal time on campus.

Mask Requirements

The College has determined that everyone entering a college owned building must wear a mask through the Spring 2022 semester. It is important for all individuals to continue to wear a mask at all times while inside to help prevent the spread COVID-19. Surgical type masks are available at all major entryways to the campus buildings. Surgical masks, along with N95, KN95, and KF95 masks are the most effective types of masks available to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Face shields are not allowed unless a person receives a medical accommodation.

Any student or employee who feels sick, believes they have come into contact with someone who has an active case of COVID-19, or who tests positive, MUST immediately report that information to the College Health Officer or COVID-19 Emergency Manager.

Campus Health Officer / COVID-19 Emergency Manager
Dan Nietsche - 413-775-1493 - COVID-19@gcc.mass.edu
Symptom Monitoring and Positive Case Mitigation

With the current spread of COVID-19, it is likely that fully repopulating the campus will result in contact with individuals who test positive for COVID-19. Although precautions will be taken to prevent spread of the virus, the College must be prepared to mitigate any effects.

Detection

The College must be prepared for the potential of needing to address positive exposure cases within our campus community. Employees and students will need to communicate if they come in contact with a person who has a lab confirmed case of COVID-19, themselves become ill or have had a lab confirmed positive test. The college will immediately respond by performing appropriate contact tracing procedures in conjunction with the local health department, implement mitigation responses such as decontaminating work areas, and informing personnel and student(s) that they may have been exposed.

It is important that all employees and students that come onto campus are able to account for all individuals they have come into contact with 2 days prior from the onset of symptoms or lab confirmed positive test.

All individuals must be free of ANY symptoms potentially related to COVID-19 before coming to the College.

Students who believe they are sick should notify the following people:
- Campus Health Director / COVID-19 Emergency Manager
- Faculty or instructors for your classes
- Their primary care physician

Employees who believe they are sick or have come in contact with someone who has a verified positive test for COVID-19 shall notify their supervisor, and the College Health Officer / COVID-19 Emergency Manager.

Campus Health Officer / COVID-19 Emergency Manager
Dan Nietsche – 413-775-1493 – covid-19@gccc.mass.edu

At this time, COVID-19 symptoms include one or more of the following per current CDC Guidelines:

- Fever 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

For the most up-to-date list, please visit: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html

Procedures for Returning to Campus

In any of the scenarios below you must email covid-19@gcc.mass.edu for further instructions. Based on each individual scenario, the guidance given may differ than what is described below.

For Those That Have Been in Close Contact with A Covid-19 Positive Person

Protocol for Unvaccinated People

The date of your exposure is considered day 0. Day 1 is the first full day after your last contact with a person who has had COVID-19.

● Stay home and quarantine for at least 5 full days.
● Wear a well-fitted mask if you must be around others in your home.
● Even if you don’t develop symptoms, get tested at least 5 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.

After Quarantine

● Watch for symptoms.
● Watch for symptoms until 10 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.
  o Cough
  o Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  o Fatigue
  o Muscle or body aches
  o Headache
  o New loss of taste or smell
  o Sore throat
  o Congestion or runny nose
  o Nausea or vomiting
  o Diarrhea

● If you develop symptoms, Isolate immediately and get tested. Continue to stay home until you know the results. Wear a well-fitted mask around others.

Take precautions until day 10

● Wear a mask.
● Wear a well-fitted mask for 10 full days any time you are around others inside your home or in public.
● Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask.
● Avoid travel.
● Avoid being around people who are at high risk.

Protocol for Vaccinated People

If you were exposed to COVID-19 and are **up-to-date** with vaccination OR had confirmed COVID-19 within the past 90 days (you tested positive using a viral test).

**You do not need to quarantine.**

● You do not need to stay home unless you develop symptoms.
● **Get tested** - Even if you don’t develop symptoms, get tested at least 5 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.
● **Watch for symptoms** - Watch for symptoms until 10 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.
  - 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

● **If you develop symptoms** - Isolate immediately and get tested. Continue to stay home until you know the results. Wear a well-fitted mask around others.
For Those That Are Symptomatic
You will need to get a PCR test as soon as practically possible. You must get a PCR test (not a rapid antigen one) as soon as practically possible. If the PCR test is negative you can return to campus the day after you receive a negative result and you log your results via the link below.

You must also actively monitor yourself for the symptoms described below for the next ten days.

- 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

Please use this [LINK](#) to enter your test results.
For Those That Have Tested Positive

Isolation

Day 0 is your first day of symptoms or a positive viral test. **Day 1 is the first full day after your symptoms developed or your test specimen was collected.**

**IF YOU:**
Tested positive for COVID-19 or have symptoms, regardless of vaccination status

- Stay home for 5 days and isolate from others in your home.
- Wear a well-fitted mask if you must be around others in your home.

**Ending isolation if you had symptoms**
[End isolation after 5 full days](#) if you are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and your symptoms are improving.

**Ending isolation if you did NOT have symptoms**
[End isolation after at least 5 full days](#) after your positive test.

**If you were severely ill with COVID-19**
You should isolate for at least 10 days. [Consult your doctor before ending isolation](#).

Severely ill is defined as needing assistance or medication under the direction of a medical professional.
Campus Access Plan

- Campus buildings will remain on normal operational hours. These hours are:
  - Main Campus
    - Monday- Thursday 7am-10pm
    - Friday & Saturday 7am-5pm
    - Sunday Closed
  - Downtown and Smith Vocational School
    - Hours are currently set based on classes and programs at these locations.
- The general public is allowed in campus buildings. Please see the Campus Visitor Plan for more information.
- No outside events will be hosted on campus without approval from the College Health Officer or designee.

Social Distancing

Aside from being fully vaccinated and wearing a mask, keeping space between you and others is one of the best tools we have to avoid being exposed to the COVID-19 virus and slowing its spread. Since people can spread the virus before they know they are sick, it is important for all people to wear a mask and to follow the social distancing guidelines, even if you have no symptoms. Social distancing is important for everyone, especially to help protect people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

Classroom Distancing

The enrollment capacity for each class has been determined by the size of the classroom in which the class will take place. Each student and the instructor will have 36 square feet allotted to them to maintain social distancing. In many cases classes were capped at a level that provides more than 36 square feet’

Meetings

It is encouraged that in-person meetings are limited to keeping 3 feet distance between each person. All attendees are required to wear a mask or face covering while sharing space in a common room. It is encouraged that meetings held in-person also have the availability for individuals to attend virtually.

Mental and Emotional Wellbeing

All employees are eligible to anonymously access the services offered by the college’s Employee Assistance Program. The EAP is designed to help employees, their dependents and household members manage all aspects of their lives. It offers professional short-term counseling, referrals, and resources. The EAP can be contacted at 1-844-263-1982.

Students should contact the Wellness Center to access service to assist with mental and emotional wellbeing. The Wellness Center can be reached at (413) 775-1332 or X1332 from a campus phone.
Visitor Policy

Everyone on campus must wear a mask and respect physical distancing.

- All employees and students at GCC (Community Members) are required to be fully vaccinated and have proof of vaccination on file with the College
- All visitors to campus must present their vaccination card to the Office of Campus Safety before proceeding to their destination on campus.

Visitors include:
- Visiting guests of students or employees
- People seeking information about the college
- Alumni conducting business or using college services
- Contractors
- Vendors
- Service providers
- Guest speakers
- Visiting instructors
- Visiting performers
- Program attendees

VISITOR POLICY DETAILS
This policy applies to individuals outside of the Greenfield Community College community who visit campus property.

Visitors coming to campus
- Must possess an official vaccination card, scan, or photocopy, or transferable electronic image.
- Should first proceed directly to the Office of Public Safety where the visitor will present a proof of vaccination to the safety official, sign and submit an attestation form, and receive a wristband or attestation passport permitting presence on campus.
- The vaccination records and attestation forms will be delivered by the Office of Public Safety to the Campus Health Officer who will keep these documents on file.
- This procedure must be undertaken for each day that a visitor is on campus.
- Visitors must at all times abide by current College protocols related to mask-wearing and physical distancing.

Employees or students hosting visitors on GCC property
- must provide them with a copy of this policy,
- remind the visitors that they must be in possession of an official vaccination record,
- guide them directly to the Office of Public Safety.
- Once at the Office of Public Safety the visitor will present proof of vaccination to the safety official, sign and submit an attestation form, and receive a wristband or attestation passport permitting presence on campus.
- The vaccination records and attestation forms will be delivered by the Office of Public Safety to the Campus Health Officer who will keep the documents on file.
- This procedure must be undertaken for each day that a visitor is on campus.
- Visitors must at all times abide by current College protocols related to mask-wearing and physical distancing.
**Additional Matters**

No visitor is permitted to be on campus if they are experiencing symptoms of illness or COVID-19 or have received a positive COVID-19 test in the previous ten days. Visitors who have been identified as a “close contact” of someone positive with COVID-19 within the previous 14 days may not come to campus until they have concluded an adequate quarantine. Visitors must notify the Office of Public Safety if they test positive within 48 hours of leaving campus. Visitors must follow all relevant federal and state travel advisories or orders.

Notwithstanding the provisions outlined in this Policy, the College maintains complete discretion when restricting or permitting access to campus and may, in its sole discretion, amend this policy at any time.
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Will vaccinations be required at GCC for students or employee?
A: Yes, The Presidents of the 15 Community Colleges have made the decision that students and employees will be required to be vaccinated starting January 4, 2022.

Q: Will social distancing guidelines still need to be followed?
A: MA DPH and the CDC recommend that people continue to follow social distancing guidelines. The College has gone a step further in setting classroom capacities in accordance with a minimum of 36 square feet for each individual whether vaccinated or not.

Q: Can students work in groups/pairs?
A: Yes, they can. If a student feels uncomfortable working in a group, reasonable efforts should be made to accommodate the student.

Q: What are the guidelines for classes that meet outdoors?
A: If a person is unvaccinated, they should wear a mask while in a group even if outdoors.

Q: Can a person, working alone, take off their mask while indoors?
A: Yes, if a person is alone in a closed space, such as an office or study room, they do not need to wear a mask.

Q: Will there still be caps on the number of people allowed into each space at the college?
A: With the Governor lifting all capacity limits there are not currently capacity limits for any common space on campus beyond normal posted limits.

Q: Can we ask fellow employees if they are vaccinated/unvaccinated?
A: It is not against HIPAA to ask a fellow employee their vaccine status. They are, however, not required to answer you or show proof of vaccination. It is strongly discouraged to ask for this information unless there is a justifiable reason such as contact tracing. It is against HIPAA to ask a health care professional for this information or for them to give you the status of an individual.

Q: Can we ask students if they are vaccinated/unvaccinated?
A: It is not against FERPA to ask a student their vaccine status. They are, however, not required to answer you or show proof of vaccination. It is strongly discouraged to ask for this information unless there is a justifiable reason such as contact tracing. It is against FERPA to ask a health care professional for this information or for them to give you the status of an individual.

Q: Do I have to leave between classes?
A: No, common spaces are open to everyone and should be used as individuals are comfortable.

Q: What will the procedures for coming to campus be? Will everyone need to check-in somewhere?
A: There will not be mandatory check-in upon entry.

Q: Will there be mandatory attendance taking for every class (to keep track of who is present due to COVID tracking)?
A: No. If there is a confirmed case in a classroom the College will use the official roster to alert everyone.
Q: Will classes with students who are immunocompromised have to run under stricter guidelines?
A: An immunocompromised person should consult their primary care physician on what is the safest way possible for them to attend classes. Disability Services can assist with accommodations as needed. Additionally, if a student would feel more comfortable with online or hybrid classes, they should contact their advisor.

Q: Will COVID-19 testing still be taking place at the college?
A: There will be some form of testing taking place on Campus. Currently, the CIC Stope the Spread site is located in the East Building and offers free testing.

Q: I am concerned about transmitting COVID-19 to my family at home.