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Fall EMU Safe Policies, August 30, 2021

Eastern Michigan University

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Fall EMU Safe policies, August 30, 2021

Monday, August 30, 2021

Students, faculty and staff:

As the fall semester begins, we are pleased to summarize in one communication a current overview of the University's COVID-19 mitigation policies and practices.

The "EMU Safe" program for fall 2021 expands on last year's successful strategies and adds additional layers to those contained in our comprehensive 2020-21 safety program. We remain committed to an ongoing and routinely updated response to the changing pandemic environment.

OVERVIEW

The EMU Safe program is a comprehensive and multi-layered set of policies designed to mitigate and reduce the spread of COVID-19 on our campus. Thanks to our collective commitment to keeping each other safe, there were no cases of COVID-19 transmission in EMU classrooms last year. This successful program will continue this year and includes:

- Indoor face masks
- Physical distancing
- Daily health screenings
- Mandatory reporting of COVID-19 cases, close contacts, and COVID-19 symptoms
- On campus contact tracing managed by trained experts in collaboration with WCHD
- Wastewater testing
- An online dashboard publishing key COVID-19 data for our campus
- Enhanced cleaning in classrooms and other public areas
- Plexiglass in classrooms
- Improved building ventilation
- Onsite COVID-19 Testing
- EMU-Telehealth Clinic

In addition to continuing these successful measures, the University is expanding its EMU Safe Program this year with the following:

- "Get the Vax to Win" program to promote vaccination
- "Students Stay Safe" program requiring either vaccination or weekly testing
- Mandatory vaccination requirements for students in settings that create a higher risk of exposure, such as congregate housing (e.g., on-campus student housing residents) and other programs involving close contact, maskless activity, and/or congregate travel (student-athletes, Marching Band, performing arts, forensics, and academic teams)
- Mandatory COVID-19 testing, including proof of a negative COVID-19 test, as clearance for all housing residents (regardless of vaccination status) to move into on-campus student housing.

Each of these policies are outlined in more detail below and can be found on our [EMU Safe website](#).

FACE MASKS

All members of the campus community (including all students, employees, and visitors) must wear a face mask while indoors, regardless of vaccination status, except in the following circumstances where indoor masking is not required:

- You are an instructor teaching in a classroom, you are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, and you have [verified your vaccination status](#) to the University. Instructors may remain unmasked during the class period only.
- You have a University-approved accommodation from wearing a face mask (see accommodations below).
- You are alone in a private office, living space, or private motor vehicle with the door closed, or in another similarly isolated space.
- You are actively eating, drinking, or swimming.
- You are undergoing a physical exam of your mouth, nose, or throat by a medical professional.
- You are attending an event that has been approved for a special exemption. Requests to consider exemptions for events must be submitted to the Office of Conference & Event Services (CES) at book_emu@emich.edu.
- Face masks are not required outdoors regardless of vaccination status.

Individual University employees and offices cannot waive the University's indoor face mask requirement -- including the mandate that face masks be worn by all students in classrooms -- without the approval of the President's Office.

It is considered disruptive classroom behavior under EMU's Conduct and Community Standards to refuse to comply with the University's face mask mandate or other COVID policies as directed. When necessary, instructors should reference and follow the [University's Guide to Classroom Management](#) in the event an individual in the classroom refuses to comply with the University's face mask policy.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

All members of the campus community must engage in three feet of physical distancing in classrooms and other indoor venues regardless of vaccination status. Three feet is the minimum safe distance. In outdoor areas, individuals are not required to maintain specific levels of distance, but it is always recommended that individuals carefully consider the density of people and the space maintained between individuals.

DAILY HEALTH SCREENINGS

All individuals who are on campus for any reason must complete the online [COVID PASS Daily Health Screening](#) each day they come to campus. Check-in desks inside various buildings will periodically be staffed and people entering the building will be required to show proof (usually through their cell phone) that they have completed the daily screening.

For students and instructional staff at external agencies, you must also complete the daily COVID Pass for any activity at which you represent EMU (as a student or employee), in addition to following the external agency requirements.

REPORTING COVID-19 CASES, CLOSE CONTACTS, AND SYMPTOMS

All employees and students are required to complete the University's online [COVID Report Form](#) if you meet any of the following criteria:

1. You are known to have COVID-19 by medical diagnosis or by testing positive - even if you are not showing symptoms of COVID-19.
2. You have been informed that you were in close contact with another person who was medically diagnosed or tested positive for COVID-19.
3. You have any of the following symptoms of COVID-19: fever/chills, cough shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle/body aches, headache, new loss of taste/smell, sore throat, congestion/runny nose, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, new rash.
4. You have learned that an EMU Community member (student, faculty, staff, employee) has tested positive for COVID-19 or has been medically diagnosed with COVID-19, has been exposed to COVID-19, or is exhibiting symptoms.

If you learn of an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 or has been in close contact with someone with COVID-19, you must complete the [COVID-19 Report Form](#), but you may not share that information with other individuals.

CONTACT TRACING

Since last year, the University's Telehealth Clinic has managed a comprehensive contact tracing program led by trained staff who work closely with the Washtenaw County Health Department. It is a privilege for EMU to be authorized to conduct contact tracing on campus in collaboration with WCHD. Consistently, our contact tracing efforts have been effective and efficient.

You should not attempt to "contact trace" yourself. You may not inform other individuals of someone's health status, nor inform your entire class. There are legal protections for an individual's privacy around health information (HIPAA) and educational records (FERPA) that guide these policies.

WASTEWATER TESTING

The University will continue to use a comprehensive system to regularly test wastewater generated in various campus buildings. The system helps provide early identification of possible

cases of COVID-19 among occupants in campus buildings. In turn, this allows for rapid testing and identification of individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19.

ENHANCED CLEANING

All public areas in campus buildings (e.g., rest rooms, hallways, classrooms, offices) are subject to regular and frequent in-depth cleaning. For example, large areas and spaces that are difficult to clean using traditional methods (such as locker rooms) are cleaned with a disinfectant electrostatic fog. Touchpoints such as light switches, elevator buttons, desks, and door handles are cleaned daily. The specific standards and frequency of cleaning for each area vary based on the area's size, layout, use, time of year, day of the week, government regulations, and other criteria.

Additionally, as part of this layered approach to providing a safe campus environment, EMU applied a special antimicrobial polymer covering on hard and soft surfaces in classrooms, public areas, and elsewhere. This coating, used by many hospitals and other public universities in Michigan, creates a long-lasting film on the treated surface that is proven to kill many viruses upon contact.

Classrooms are supplied with hand wipes. Instructors may also request hand sanitizer for classrooms [here](#).

PLEXIGLASS IN CLASSROOMS

The University is near completion of our comprehensive effort to install plexiglass in classrooms except in the following circumstances:

- The instructor can consistently maintain at least six feet of distancing from students;
- In labs/studio space; and
- If the classroom is proprietary to an academic department, in which case requests for plexiglass must be submitted to the applicable dean (many of these requests are already complete).

If an instructor wishes to have plexiglass placed in a classroom to which they are assigned, the instructor should contact their dean's office.

VENTILATION

The University has modified building systems to use ventilation filters with higher ratings and to increase the use of outside fresh air. The type and number of ventilation filters used varies depending on the type of work performed in the building and any limitations on the building's filtration systems.

Fans should not be used in classrooms and other interior public spaces.

Due to the increased use of fresh air instead of recycled air, you should anticipate that temperature and humidity regulation will be more challenging.

COVID-19 DASHBOARD

The University regularly updates an online [dashboard](#) of key COVID-19 data for the campus. The dashboard includes data such as the number of positive cases involving individuals associated with campus, number of students temporarily residing in on-campus isolation or quarantine housing, and the number of COVID-19 tests administered at the campus [testing center](#).

VACCINATION

Along with the above described long-standing COVID mitigation policies and procedures, the University has added vaccination as another layer of defense against the spread of the virus. Our goal is to have every member of the campus vaccinated against COVID-19 unless they are medically unable. Vaccines are safe and effective, and vaccination is the most efficient way to move through this pandemic. EMU has therefore enacted several policies and programs to promote vaccination.

The University urges all students and employees to be vaccinated and complete the [COVID Vax Certification](#) even if you are not coming to campus on a regular basis. You only need to report and certify your vaccination status through this system one time, unless your vaccination status changes. Information will be confidentially and securely stored, separate from an employee's personnel file and student records, and accessible only by authorized individuals.

Students and employees who receive a COVID-19 vaccine and [certify their vaccination](#) status will be entered in a drawing to receive prizes through the EMU [“Get the Vax to Win” program](#). Prizes available to students include a \$5,000 credit to your student account, free semester of housing, free parking pass, a new computer, and Bookstore gift cards. Prizes available to employees include cash awards and dollars to be used at EMU Dining facilities.

The University's [Students Stay Safe](#) program requires any student who attends an on-campus class to be vaccinated. Students who are not fully vaccinated must undergo weekly COVID-19 testing until and unless they [present evidence of vaccination](#). Testing is available at EMU's [campus testing center](#) (appointments required) or you may upload a test result from another facility as required. Students will receive a separate email describing testing requirements and detailing how to access the portal.

Further, students living in [University student housing facilities](#) are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19. The deadline for housing residents to receive their final vaccination shot and verify their vaccination status through the University's [COVID Vax Certification](#) is Thursday, September 30, 2021. You may learn more about the vaccination requirement for on-campus housing residents [here](#).

In addition, other students participating in certain activities that create a higher risk of COVID-19 exposure are also required to be vaccinated, including student-athletes, students participating in Marching Band, and students participating in several performing arts areas and on academic teams (such as theatre, music, forensics, Moot Court, and Model UN). Those students will be notified separately of their vaccination requirements and must report their vaccination status through the University's [COVID Vax Certification](#).

Employees may not ask students or coworkers to share or produce proof of vaccination status, test results, or any other health related information. These data are managed by designated trained employees, and mandatory sharing of health information is guided by the legal limitations mentioned earlier in this note.

You can learn more about the safety of vaccines, and where to receive a free COVID-19 vaccine, including clinics being held on campus, [here](#).

COVID-19 TESTING

COVID-19 testing is free to students and employees at the on-campus testing site in the Student Center. You may request an appointment [here](#). The hours of the testing center change depending on the academic calendar; you may learn more [here](#).

Students living in on-campus housing will be required to undergo COVID-19 testing shortly before or immediately upon arriving on campus regardless of vaccination status. Students not living in on-campus housing may be required to undergo COVID-19 testing on a periodic basis throughout the year. Students who are required to undergo COVID-19 testing for any reason will be notified via email of such testing requirements.

Employees will be notified in advance if they are required to undergo periodic COVID-19 testing.

EMU TELEHEALTH CLINIC

The EMU Telehealth Clinic provides a convenient option for both students and employees to inquire about COVID-19 protocols, symptoms, test results, exposures and more. This virtual clinic is staffed by nurse practitioners with remote support from our IHA medical partners.

In collaboration with the Washtenaw County Health Department, the nurse practitioners working in the EMU Telehealth Clinic have been trained to conduct case investigations and contact tracing for COVID-19. The clinic manages the [COVID Daily Pass](#), reviews COVID-19 tests for students prior to moving into on-campus housing, and can assist with the [COVID-19 Vaccine Certification and Testing portal](#). EMU Telehealth also coordinates with campus offices to assist international students and can answer questions related to both international and domestic travel.

You may contact EMU Telehealth at emu_telehealth@emich.edu or 734-487-3865.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Reasonable accommodations may be sought from (1) EMU's masking and distancing policy or (2) EMU's vaccine policy for specific higher-risk activities or living situations (e.g. athletics, band, performing arts, academic teams, housing) for medical reasons or because of a sincerely held religious belief. Please follow the instructions below to request an accommodation.

- Employees requesting an accommodation should contact hr_benefits@emich.edu

- Students should submit a request through the [COVID-19 Accommodation Request Portal](#). If your request is for medical requests, please have your healthcare provider complete this [form](#).
- If you are a student placed, or an employee at, an external agency (e.g. a hospital, school, or other organization) that requires vaccination, and that organization requests that the accommodation come from EMU, you should submit a request through the [COVID-19 Accommodation Request Portal](#). For medical requests please have your healthcare provider complete this [form](#) (note this is not the same form as the one above).

It may take 7-10 days to process requests for reasonable accommodations. The evaluation process is interactive and individualized. In the interim, you must wear a face mask and undergo weekly (or more frequent) COVID-19 testing to be on campus. This is provisional until your request has been reviewed and a decision has been made and shared with you.

OTHER RESOURCES

All of the University's COVID-19 mitigation measures are published and updated [online](#); we encourage you to regularly review the [website](#) for the latest information.

The University's Stay Safe website also includes [additional resources](#) such as signs and information from the CDC.

Working together, we can ensure another healthy and successful semester for our students and co-workers.