

To the Campus Community:

The Center for Health and Wellness—Health Services Team has been following the developments of COVID-19 very closely and is pleased to share with you the following guidelines for the **Spring 2023 Semester**.

## COVID 19 Spring 2023 Guidelines

### Transmission Levels

As required for the Health and Safety of the WNE community, WNE will follow all federal, state, and local guidelines. Where there is discretion, WNE will use the [CDC Community Transmission Levels](#) as the key metric to inform our decision-making on policy formation.

### Community Members

WNE defines Community Members as faculty, staff, students, and guests of the campus community.

### Vaccinations

[WNE COVID Vaccination Policy](#) is unchanged for the Spring 2023 semester. **Proof of vaccination with a Primary Series of COVID-19 vaccine is required** for all WNE community members (faculty, staff, and students) that intend to live, learn, conduct research, or access any on-site campus resources.

#### Primary Series

Vaccine	Primary Series
Pfizer	2 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech
Moderna	2 doses of Moderna
Johnson and Johnson/Janssen	1 dose of Johnson & Johnson's Janssen
Novavax	2 doses of Novavax

### Exemptions

Consistent with prior years, WNE community members may request an **exemption** from the SARS-COV-2 vaccine requirement. Exemption requests may be for medical and religious reasons and should be requested by completing the [WNE SARS-COV-2 Vaccine Exemption Request Form](#) and submitting all completed forms to [Covidvac@wne.edu](mailto:Covidvac@wne.edu) for review.

Note that medical exemption requests will require a verification letter from a medical provider. The medical exemption must indicate that the SARS-COV-2 vaccine is medically contraindicated or otherwise detrimental to your health.

Please be aware that WNE community members granted an exemption for medical or religious reasons might be subject to heightened surveillance testing to mitigate the risk of infection should community transmission levels increase. Any questions about this policy should be directed to Health Services at [healthservices@wne.edu](mailto:healthservices@wne.edu) or **413-782-1211**.

### Boosters

The guidance and science surrounding boosters have evolved this past year considerably, and WNE leadership has reflected on that body of evidence. WNE will no longer require SARS-COV-2 booster shots

but **strongly recommends** that all community members be aware of their personal level of risk and [stay up to date](#) with their vaccinations as directed by their Primary Care Provider and receive a booster when they are eligible. Current research indicates that SARS-COV-2 vaccine boosters can further enhance or restore protection that might have decreased over time after vaccination with the primary series and decrease the risk of serious health outcomes related to the virus.

## Positive Cases

WNE community members must notify the Center for Health and Wellness if they test positive for COVID-19 or exhibit signs and symptoms of potential illness. Community members should call **413-782-1211** or email [Healthservices@wne.edu](mailto:Healthservices@wne.edu).

## Signs and Symptoms of SARS-COV-2

People with SARS-COV-2 have had a wide range of symptoms, ranging from mild to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms. People with these symptoms may have SARS-COV-2:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Net loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

## Diagnostic Testing

As in prior years, the Center for Health and Wellness will continue offering on-site testing with both rapid antigen and PCR tests. PCR testing will be conducted in partnership with Baystate Medical Center's lab, and results are expected within 24 hours.

## Isolation Program

WNE community members that test positive for SARS-COV-2 **are still required to isolate** themselves from the rest of the campus community.

## Isolation Period

The isolation period is **a full ten days**; this is a best practice reinforced by the evidence and science of SARS-COV-2.

- Day zero (0) is the onset day of symptoms or the Day of a positive SARS-COV-2 test.
- Day ten (+10 post-infection) is the final Day of isolation.
- Return to school or work is allowed on Day eleven (+11 post-infection).

## Early Release from Isolation

The isolation period can be decreased to five (5) full days with a return to class, campus activities, or work on Day (+6) if the following conditions are met:

1. You are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
2. Your other symptoms have **improved**, as assessed by Health Services.
3. You have a negative antigen SARS-COV-2 test.

\*\*If you test positive on Day (+5 or later), you are not fever-free, or symptoms are not improving, you must continue to isolate until you are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and Your symptoms are improving.

### Additional Requirements

**Regardless of when you end isolation and until at least day 11:**

- Avoid being around people who are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19.
- Remember to wear a high-quality mask when indoors around others in the residence halls, the classroom, and in public.

You should avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe diseases](#), such as nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after the entire 10-day period.

Do not go to places where you cannot wear a mask for Days (+6) to (+10).

### Contact Tracing

The Center for Health and Wellness-Health Services' staff will no longer conduct contact tracing on all positive cases.

### Close Contacts/Quarantine

WNE has **eliminated all quarantine requirements** following exposure for both vaccinated and unvaccinated community members.

Close contacts or exposed WNE community members are permitted to attend class and community events and eat in the dining hall; however, they are encouraged to wear a mask when doing so.

### Entry Testing

The WNE community **will not** be required to submit entry test results before moving in or resuming classes. We will monitor this metric closely, and if there is a sudden spike in cases requiring a policy change, we will inform the campus community.

### Surveillance Testing

The WNE community **will not** be required to participate in routine surveillance testing. We will monitor this metric closely, and if there is an uptick/change in transmission levels, we will inform the campus community and reinstate routine surveillance testing for exempted non-vaccinated community members should transmission levels indicate that necessity.

### Masking

There is no change to the [WNE Mask Ready Policy](#). Mask-ready means all individuals must carry a mask with them at all times to comply with any request to wear a mask from faculty or staff members holding classes, labs, gatherings, or meetings. Outside such requests, individuals may decide whether to wear a mask based on their comfort level, risk, and health history. Masks are still welcome to be worn in any setting.

**There are a few exceptions that should be noted.** Consistent with federal and local requirements ([MA DPH Mask Requirements in Certain Locations](#)), WNE will still require masks in the following locations or situations:

- Center for Health and Wellness
- Community Patient Care Center
- Academic clinical work that involves or interacts with community members
- Traveling by bus for University-related functions or events

**In addition, faculty and staff members who convene classes, labs, or meetings may require attendees to wear masks.**

As always, please reach out with any questions or concerns. We are here to assist and support.

Most Sincerely,

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