



The Return of the Flock

COVID UPDATE – Mask-Optional Policy Reinstated – 4/20/22

To the Washington College Community,

Effective immediately, we are transitioning back to a **mask optional status** for our campus. This change is based on the following data and criteria:

- **CDC guidance** around masking in Low Community Transmission areas;
- Kent County's classification by the CDC as a **Low Community Transmission** rate;
- **Low number of cases among our campus** community which have steadily decreased since we reinstated the mask mandate on April 1.

After reaching a high of 23 active Covid cases two weeks ago, as well as a 50% occupancy of our isolation dorm, our numbers have since steadily decreased and we currently only have **one** active student case and **one** active employee case, with one student isolating on campus.

We **strongly recommend the continued use of face masks in indoor public settings in the following scenarios:**

- You are experiencing any **cold or flu-like symptoms** at all, even if mild. Those who become symptomatic should seek a COVID test ASAP as well.
- You have had a **close contact exposure** to someone who tested positive.
- You are **unvaccinated or are not yet fully vaccinated**, to include the booster shot.
- You have **underlying health concerns** that increase your personal risk factors.

We also **strongly recommend that, as we get closer to some important end-of-the-academic-year events**, everyone consider taking the following steps:

- **Limit any indoor activities** where you are unable to socially-distance
- Before or after the Birthday Ball, **don't attend a pre- or post-Ball indoor gathering** where you may be in close contact with a wider variety of social groups on campus
- **Don't share cups or drinks** (this is smart for many reasons in addition to Covid!)

Wearing a **face mask is always an option and** will remain so. As a community, we should be sensitive to the fact that some classmates and colleagues **will prefer to continue to wear a mask indoors** and be supportive and respectful of that decision. N95 and KN95 masks have been **proven to be effective in safeguarding the wearer**, even when others around them are unmasked. On the flip side, **feeling comfortable with not wearing a mask indoors is also a choice that is to be respected.**

Face masks will **continue to be a requirement** for anyone who is visiting **Health Services or the Counseling Center**, as well as anyone who has an appointment for COVID testing. As was the case before, this mask-optional setting is **wholly contingent** upon our current Low status for Community Transmission as well as the number of positive cases on campus and occupancy of the isolation dorm. Should those conditions change, or we receive updated guidance from local or state health officials, we may need to shift back to an indoor mask mandate.