



Return to Campus Plan

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Introduction

Mount St. Mary's University's policies and protocols for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic have, and will continue to be rooted in these Guiding Principles:

- First and foremost is the health and safety of our community. No decisions will be made without first considering the health and safety of our community, informed by guidance from federal and state public health authorities.
- We will emphasize student success as we fulfill our Mount mission to graduate ethical leaders who are inspired by a passion for learning and lead lives of significance in service to God and others.
- We will be flexible in responding to the uncertainty caused by this pandemic. Our faculty, administrators, staff and students have demonstrated this principle as we moved quickly to remote instruction this semester and we will continue responding with innovative solutions to tough problems.
- We will treat our students and employees with respect emphasizing empathy and compassion as you re-socialize physically into the Mount community as we know this pandemic has seriously impacted some in our community more than others. We are committed to helping our community members in keeping with the traditions of Catholic social justice.
- We will steward our financial resources to ensure the university's strength and stability for the long term. Our decisions must consider the future as well as the present so we are positioned to enjoy another 212 years.

Protecting the health of the Mount community will require long-term effort and commitment, cooperation, teamwork and understanding. As we confront this health crisis, the Mount Community must remain steadfast in the pursuit of our mission which is grounded deeply in our Catholic faith and vision of the human person.

We anticipate that these guidelines will evolve as the changing severity of the pandemic and our ability to respond to it allow us to move through the phases of our framework, subject to federal, state and local regulations and public health guidance. As we move forward together, flexibility will be critical.

The University's Return to Campus Plan will be executed in phases. These phases **DO NOT MEAN A RETURN TO BUSINESS AS USUAL.**

As outlined in the President's community memo dated May 20, 2020, the 1st phase – the assessment and preparation of facilities, offices and classrooms to ensure physical separation and increased distance between people, the establishment of a uniform system of visual cues such as signs and floor decals to reinforce safe traffic patterns and the development of procurement policies for personal safety supplies such as face masks and hand sanitizers – is already underway.

Every member of the Mount community will be expected to fully comply with the policies, protocols and guidelines included in this Plan. To ensure that everyone is doing their part to control the spread of this virus, all employees and students will be asked to make a commitment to the Mount Safe Pledge and undergo specialized on-line training on the use of safety equipment and procedures prior to returning to campus.

Those essential employees who have been working to ensure the safety of our residents during these past several weeks will have until June 15 to complete the Pledge and on-line training.

All others will do so prior to returning to campus under one of the phases outlined in this document.

And finally, your feedback and input are important as we mitigate this risk while moving forward to ensure the success of our students, both new and returning. Please do not hesitate to provide your department head, dean or director with any feedback or suggestions you may have.

Phased Process

Mount St. Mary's Return to Campus Plan will occur in phases of increased activity and will involve the careful evaluation of data, models and public health recommendations.

Plans for expanding on-campus operations and increasing the presence of faculty, staff and students will be steered by the following criteria:

- The intentional effort by all faculty, staff and students to exercise both personal and community responsibility. The combined efforts by all members of the Mount Community will create a culture that sustains a healthy and safe on-campus environment.
- Existing and projected government restrictions (e.g., safer-at-home orders, masking requirements, physical distancing, gatherings, etc.)
- Public health status: recommendations from the federal government (recently-released Opening Guidelines), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Frederick County Department of Public Health.
- Resource availability: including personal protective equipment for students, faculty and staff.
- Contact tracing and case management protocols.
- Physical distancing strategies.
- Financial feasibility.
- Alignment with the University's primary strategic objectives (student success through on-campus teaching and instruction with residential living and learning).

Individuals who have been authorized to return to campus must fully comply with the policies, protocols and guidelines outlined in this Return to Campus document. It is our shared duty as a community to act responsibly. Violations (e.g., blatant disregard for infection prevention measures) may result in the immediate revocation of building access privileges, disciplinary action, and/or other interventions.

The phased Return to Campus Plan will be tightly coordinated to mitigate potential risks and promote the safety of our community.

Central to this process is an understanding that some members of our community face a greater risk from COVID-19 than others, and we have set forth the mechanisms that are available for faculty, staff, and students to seek accommodations or adjustments as warranted by their individual circumstances.

Phase I – Begin Returning to Campus

Any and all activities that can be accomplished at home via telework should continue to be done at home until employees are notified otherwise by a department head, dean or director, and persons should only be on campus for the time periods necessary to accomplish required on-campus activities.

During Phase I, departments will bring not more than 30% of their workforce back to campus. Only employees deemed essential to support academic, research and extra-curricular activities should be scheduled to return to campus during this time period. A gradual approach to resuming increased research activities will also be implemented using additional research-specific guidelines.

The university will use Phase I to test the institution's ability to exercise systems and procedures, care for our workers, and mitigate risk. Departments/units will use Phase I to learn and make adjustments as necessary in preparation for the beginning of the fall semester.

Returning to normal functions should not be the focus of Phase 1. Employees should return in a limited capacity to support institutional operations, research and teaching activities, student support services, athletics and the needs of the returning students, faculty, and staff.

Employees who are high-risk and vulnerable should not return during Phase 1 and should remain working remotely. Employees that can effectively work from home and whose presence is not required to support the return of students and university functions should also continue working from home. Adjusting work schedules, limiting the number of people in the workplace, alternating workdays for employees, adjusting start and end times for employees, and adjusting entry and exit points in the workplace should all be considered and will help promote flexibility and social distancing.

If childcare availability is limited and/or K-12 schools are closed, departments are encouraged to work with faculty, staff and students and provide flexible scheduling as duties permit.

Phase II – Preparation for Fall Semester

Any and all activities that can be accomplished at home via telework should continue to be done at home until employees are notified otherwise by a department head, dean or director, and persons should only be on campus for the time periods necessary to accomplish required on-campus activities.

During Phase II, departments will bring not more than an additional 30% of their workforce back to campus (total employees should not exceed approximately 60% of the workforce) for the purpose of increasing operational capacity and support activities on campus. Although a complete/full return to normal campus operations are not anticipated during Phase 2, departments should enhance preparations for the return of students for the fall semester.

All guidelines and requirements established for Phase I above continue to apply and must be implemented.

Phase III – Launch of Fall Semester

Phase III will introduce the start of the 2020 academic year and the return to campus full operations with appropriate and ongoing mitigation strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

All safety policies, protocols and guidelines outlined in this Return to Campus document continue to apply and must continue to be implemented by departments. The university will closely supervise all aspects of campus operations to monitor the participation of employees and students in socially responsible behavior throughout the university community, the use of personal protective equipment and compliance with measures consistent with local, state and federal guidelines, and the commitment to the highest level of excellence in education, research and extra-curricular activities.

Employees who are high-risk and vulnerable, may not be required to return during Phase III if they can remain working remotely and whose presence is not required to support the return of students and university functions. If arrangements have been made with their supervisors, these employees should continue working from home.

Staffing Options

There are several options departments should consider to maintain required social distancing measures during our phased Return to Campus Plan:

Alternating Days or Shifts – In order to limit the number of individuals on campus and interactions among them, departments should consider partial-day or alternating work schedules. Such planning will help enable social distancing, especially in areas with common spaces.

Staggered Schedules and Reporting/Departing – The beginning and end of the workday typically brings many people together at common entry/exit points of buildings. Staggering reporting and departure times by at least 30 minutes will reduce traffic in common areas to allow for social distancing.

Return to Campus

General Expectations & Guidelines

All members of the Mount community are expected to fully comply with the policies, protocols and guidelines outlined in this Return to Campus document. Non-compliance with COVID-19 campus health and safety guidelines could result in loss of access to university facilities as well as corrective and/or disciplinary action.

Symptom Monitoring Requirement

Campus-wide approaches to safety and the practice of physical/social distancing are important as individuals can be without symptoms and still be COVID-19 positive. Individuals who have been authorized to return to campus must conduct symptom monitoring every day BEFORE coming to work. It is your responsibility to comply.

All employees will be sent a **Health Attestation Form** through Workday at the beginning of each day. Responses will be returned to the Office of Human Resources. Supervisors do not receive specific responses to the survey, but rather, that an employee has completed said Attestation and is cleared to report to campus. Self-assessment is not considered protected health information and as such is neither stored nor subjected to HIPAA protections.

You must be free of ANY symptoms related to COVID-19 to be on campus.

At this time, these symptoms include one or more of the following:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Runny nose or new sinus congestion
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Fatigue
- New GI symptoms
- New loss of taste or smell

Employees who develop any of these symptoms, have tested positive for COVID-19, or have been potentially exposed to someone with COVID-19 must stay home, limit contact with others, and contact their health care provider or, if needed, visit their local emergency room.

Support for Vulnerable Persons

The University is aware that some members of our community face a great risk from COVID-19 than others and encourages faculty and staff who have concerns about their individual circumstances to consider consulting with the Office of Human Resources (HR) about the process for accommodation or adjustment as warranted. Students may consult with the Office of Learning Services.

Among adults, the risk for severe illness from COVID-19 increases with age, with older adults at highest risk.

There are also other factors that can increase your risk for severe illness, such as having underlying medical conditions. People of any age with the following conditions are at increased risk:

- 1) **Chronic kidney disease;**
- 2) **COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease);**
- 3) **Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant;**
- 4) **Obesity (body mass index of 30 or higher);**
- 5) **Serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies;**
- 6) **Sickle cell disease; and**
- 7) **Type 2 diabetes mellitus.**

People with the following conditions might be at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19:

- 1) ***Asthma (moderate-to-severe);***
- 2) ***Cerebrovascular disease (affects blood vessels and blood supply to the brain);***
- 3) ***Cystic fibrosis;***
- 4) ***Hypertension or high blood pressure;***
- 5) ***Immunocompromised state from blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines;***
- 6) ***Neurologic conditions, such as dementia;***
- 7) ***Liver disease;***
- 8) ***Pregnancy;***
- 9) ***Pulmonary fibrosis (having damaged or scarred lung tissues);***
- 10) ***Smoking;***
- 11) ***Thalassemia (a type of blood disorder); and***
- 12) ***Type 1 diabetes mellitus***

Note that these categories may change based on evolving circumstances around the virus as well as public health and regulatory guidance.

Individuals who do not fall within the CDC's COVID-19 guidelines for a "vulnerable person" but have other concerns about returning to campus due to their individual circumstances (such as household members who may be at higher risk) should contact their department head or dean to discuss their concerns and whether adjustments to their work environment may be made to address them. You may also contact the HR Office for additional assistance. Students with similar concerns should contact the Dean of Students.

Maintaining Our Inclusive Community

Mount St. Mary's University is committed to maintaining an educational, working, and living environment that is free of all forms of discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct. For every member of our community to thrive—especially as we continue to navigate life and university operations during a global pandemic—each of us must seek to foster mutual respect, support, and inclusion.

During this public health event, where there are many unknowns, taking care of each other is just as important as taking care of ourselves. Making assumptions about or engaging in negative treatment of others based on perceived symptoms, medical conditions or abilities, national origin, racial and ethnic characteristics or any other protected status hurts our community. Every person's care, compassion, and empathy for each other makes a positive difference.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct run counter to university values and policies, including our Sexual Harassment, Sex Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Health Safety Measures and Policies

Policies will go into effect on July 7, 2020 and remain in effect until rescinded by the President.

Conceptual Framework

Layers of Protection – Because the university is an open community (people moving in and out on a daily basis), it is impossible to prevent the introduction of COVID-19 to the Mount population. Furthermore, until a vaccine is widely available, there is no single treatment or practice (except for complete isolation) that will prevent community transmission of the virus. Therefore, our goal is to reduce the health risk to students and employees by implementing multiple layers of protection. By itself, each layer or practice does not confer complete protection but when implemented together, by the whole community, we achieve the best possible protection given our circumstances.

The five key Layers of Protection that everyone in the Mount community can impact are:

- Face Coverings
- Physical Distancing
- Handwashing
- Self-Quarantine
- Limiting Exposure

Face Coverings:

Face coverings must be worn by all employees, students, visitors/guests, and contractors/vendors on all University campuses (Main, Frederick, Seminary, Grotto) when in the presence of others and when indoors. Face coverings are not required while alone in private offices, in residence hall rooms (unless visitors are present) or outdoors when not in the presence of others.

Employees, students, visitors/guests, and contractors/vendors are expected to bring their own face covering but face masks will be provided to anyone who has forgotten to bring one.

Appropriate use of face coverings is critical in minimizing risks to others near you. You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick. The face covering is not a substitute for social distancing.

Use and care of face coverings

Putting on the face coverings:

- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer prior to handling the face covering.
- Ensure the face covering fits over the nose and under the chin.

- Situate the face covering properly with nose wire snug against the nose (where applicable).
- Tie straps behind the head and neck or loop around the ears.
- Throughout the process: Avoid touching the front of the face covering.

Taking off the face covering:

- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth when removing the face covering.
- When taking off the face covering, loop your finger into the strap and pull the strap away from the ear, or untie the straps.
- Wash hands immediately after removing.

Care, storage and laundering:

- Keep face covering stored in a paper bag when not in use.
- Cloth face coverings may not be used more than one day at a time and must be washed after use. Cloth face coverings should be properly laundered with regular clothing detergent before first use, and after each shift. Cloth face coverings should be replaced immediately if soiled, damaged (e.g. ripped, punctured) or visibly contaminated.

Handwashing:

Employees, students, visitors/guests, and contractors/vendors should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after being in a public place, or after blowing one's nose, coughing, sneezing, or touching your face. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer should be used that contains at least 60% alcohol.

While our custodial crews will continue to clean office and work spaces based on CDC guidelines, additional care should be taken to wipe down work surfaces and shared equipment. Before starting work and before you leave any room (or classroom) in which you have been working, individuals should wipe down copiers, printers, computers, A/V and other electronic equipment, coffee makers, desk, tables and other hard surfaces with EPA-registered 60% alcohol solution.

Washing hands and sanitizing work spaces will eliminate viruses and reduce the chance of spreading the disease.

Physical Distancing:

Employees, students, visitors/guests, and contractors/vendors must follow these physical distancing guidelines wherever feasible:

- Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people at all times.
- Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings.
- Obey posted maximum room occupancy limits.

Using Restrooms:

Use of restrooms should be limited based on size to ensure at least 6 feet distance between individuals. Wash your hands thoroughly afterward to reduce the potential transmission of the virus.

Using Elevators:

No more than one person may ride in an elevator at a time **unless there is a medical or ADA reason or the second person is a family member. A face covering must be worn in the elevator and the rider should avoid touching the elevator buttons with exposed hand or fingers by using the blunt end of a pen/pencil to push elevator buttons, if possible.**

Classes:

Employees and students must obey the posted maximum classroom/lab occupancy limit and must maintain 6 feet distance between individuals. Face coverings must be worn in classrooms/labs.

No eating is allowed in the classroom. Drinking is permitted.

Faculty and students should avoid sharing items such as papers, calculators, demonstrations, tools, and books.

Upon entering a classroom, individuals must wipe down hard surfaces such as desks, tables, podiums, etc. with an appropriate disinfectant.

Meetings:

In person meetings are limited to the restrictions of local, state and federal orders and should not exceed the posted maximum room occupancy (typically 50% of normal room capacity, assuming individuals can still maintain 6 feet of separation). Participants must maintain 6 feet distance between each other and wear face coverings.

Virtual methods of communication such as email, instant message, telephone or other collaboration tools (e.g. Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, Jabber, etc.) are preferred over in person meetings where feasible.

Participants should avoid sharing items such as papers or calculators.

Upon entering a meeting room, individuals must wipe down hard surfaces such as desks, tables, podiums, etc. with an appropriate disinfectant.

Meals:

Before and after eating, hands should be washed thoroughly to reduce the potential transmission of the virus. Face coverings may be removed while eating in public but then replaced immediately afterward. Employees, students and visitors/guests, are encouraged to take food back to their room or office area or to eat outside, if this is reasonable for your situation. Wipe all surfaces, including table, refrigerator handle, coffee machine, etc. after using in common areas.

Individuals should not sit facing one another. Staff are encouraged to take food back to their office area or eat outside, if this is reasonable for your situation.

Policy for Distribution of Personal Protective Equipment and Disinfection Supplies

Approved (8/7/2020)

Masks and Face Shields

- Face coverings must be worn by all employees, students, visitors/guests, and contractors/vendors on all University campuses (Main, Frederick, Seminary, Grotto) when in the presence of others and when indoors. Face coverings are not required while alone in private offices, in residence hall rooms (unless visitors are present) or outdoors when not in the presence of others. Everyone is expected to bring their own face coverings but face masks will be provided to anyone who has forgotten to bring one.
- Physical Plant maintains an inventory of disposable masks but quantities are limited because of the high demand in the marketplace.
- Each Department or Office administrative assistant should maintain a small supply of masks (5-10) for employees and students in their areas by submitting a work order request through GoFMX. These are meant to be used as “back ups” when someone forgets their face covering or when one gets damaged or becomes unusable during the day.
- Offices that receive a large number of visitors (Admissions, Public Safety) may need a larger supply on hand.
- A limited supply of face shields is available for faculty to use while teaching in cases where face masks impede instruction. The effectiveness of face shields in mitigating virus emissions is unknown whereas face masks are recommended by state and federal health agencies. Therefore, face masks are the preferred option.
- If a student is not able to purchase or obtain their own face coverings, they should contact Student Life who can provide them.

Gloves

- Gloves are needed primarily for individuals whose duties include cleaning and disinfecting and for health care workers. Physical plant maintains an inventory of gloves and administrative assistants may order them for types of employees by submitting a work order request through GoFMX.
- If other individuals whose work duties do not include cleaning or health care wish to wear gloves on a regular basis, they are expected to bring their own.

Disinfection

- Hand sanitizer wall dispensers have been installed throughout university buildings and are maintained by the custodial team.

- Enviroshield® (SD90) is a long-term disinfectant that is applied to any work surface, furniture, or high-touch object and inactivates viruses. It has been applied to virtually all rooms at the Mount, providing a full six months of antimicrobial action, greatly reducing the need to wipe down surfaces with disinfection liquids.
- Employees and students are responsible for regular (at least once daily) cleaning and disinfection of your personal items (keyboard, mouse, laptop, phone, purse, tablet, etc.) to which Enviroshield® was not applied.

Addressing Non-Compliance with Guidelines

Failure to comply with these guidelines places our community at risk for spreading the virus which could endanger community health and result in further disruption of educational and business activities.

Every member of our community is empowered to request compliance with guidelines set forth here and in other university communications. Those who encounter non-compliance with guidelines, may notify the university by contacting the Office of Human Resources for employees or the Dean of Students Office for students.

Repeated noncompliance with current COVID-19 workplace safety guidelines will result in suspended facility access for a period of time and corrective and/or disciplinary action dependent on the severity and frequency of the infraction. Human Resources and/or Student Life must be consulted regarding any proposed corrective and/or disciplinary action for employees or students, respectively.