Ball State University’s COVID-19 Response Plan (Employees)

Last Updated October 4, 2021
I. Introduction
Ball State University will continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in a manner that promotes the safety of employees, students, and campus visitors, while furthering the University’s mission and values. BSU’s policies and plans are aligned with guidance from government agencies, public health officials, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

This pandemic is a dynamic situation, and the University will continue to review and appropriately update policies and plans as more information becomes available.

II. Cardinals Care
This plan outlines policies, protocols, and guidelines to inform members of the University community of actions necessary to promote healthy behaviors. These actions reflect our Enduring Value of Social Responsibility; that is, to care for each other as members of the community. Not adopting these behaviors may unintentionally place others at risk, and may result in corrective action.

III. Information Regarding COVID-19 Vaccinations
A. Vaccination Sites and Incentives
Employees are strongly encouraged to get a COVID-19 vaccination, as this will help eliminate or minimize the precautionary measures that have been in place throughout the pandemic (such as mask wearing and physical distancing) and assist in facilitating our return to a normal, traditional on campus educational experience. All individuals in Indiana 12 years of age and older are currently eligible for the vaccine. There are many vaccine sites throughout Indiana, including one on our campus that is under the authority of the Delaware County Health Department (DCHD) and utilizes University personnel. To schedule an appointment at any vaccine clinic in Indiana, visit ourshot.in.gov or call 211. More information is available on this webpage.

While the University is awaiting final approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for regular use of the COVID-19 vaccine, it is implementing a voluntary COVID-19 vaccination incentive program for all employees and students to substantially increase by August 2021 the number of fully vaccinated people who are teaching, working, learning, and living on campus.

B. Protocols for Fully Vaccinated Employees
Effective August 9, 2021, all employees—even those who are fully vaccinated—are expected to wear masks while inside any University building. However, fully vaccinated employees are not expected wear masks outdoors. In addition, the following standards apply to fully vaccinated employees:

- Not required to engage in physical distancing
- Exempt from quarantine requirements if identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (unless symptomatic after exposure)
- Exempt from any mandatory surveillance testing

C. Protocols for Unvaccinated Employees
The following standards apply to unvaccinated employees:

- Remain subject to current mask protocols, as found in the University Face Mask Policy
- Must continue to engage in physical distancing, where possible
- Required to quarantine if identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, even if asymptomatic; must use PTO during the quarantine period and will not be approved to work remotely
• Must submit to mandatory surveillance testing. Failure to submit to mandatory surveillance testing will result in progressive disciplinary action, including a verbal warning, a written warning, suspension without pay, and possible termination. Disciplinary steps will be administered in a manner consistent with the employee’s human resources classification.

D. Enforcement
The University continues to trust its campus community members to behave responsibly, including acting in a manner consistent with our policies and protocols if they have not been fully vaccinated. With that in mind, the University does not intend to actively and routinely inquire into people’s vaccination status. However, if an employee is found to have submitted false or fraudulent information about having been vaccinated, or otherwise misrepresents their vaccination status in order to take advantage of the loosened restrictions for fully vaccinated persons, that employee may be subject to discipline.

IV. University Face Mask Policy

A. Standards for Fully Vaccinated People
Based on current CDC guidance recommending the wearing of face masks for all people—regardless of vaccination status—in public indoor settings in communities where the rate of coronavirus transmission is high or substantial, all employees, students, and campus visitors are required to wear a mask while inside any University building. This requirement is effective on August 9, 2021. Fully vaccinated people are not required to wear masks outdoors.

B. Requirements for Unvaccinated People
Individuals who are not fully vaccinated for COVID-19 are required to wear face masks while inside campus buildings and outside when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

C. Exceptions to Mask Requirements
Exceptions to the University’s mask requirements are as follows:

1. When alone in a private office, work space, or other similar work area;
2. When actively engaged in eating or drinking;
3. When an individual has a health condition related to the wearing of a mask and an accommodation has been granted;
4. When a student is alone in their own room in their residence hall;
5. If an exemption in an active executive order issued by the governor of Indiana applies; and
6. When an exception has been granted by the Dean or Provost, or the area Vice President. Situations where exceptions may be granted include, but are not necessarily limited to, when working behind a plexiglass barrier and ample physical distancing from others can be consistently maintained, academic settings where mask-wearing is not practicable (e.g., applied music lessons), and when a job-related reason necessitates the removal of the individual’s face mask while performing a particular task.

V. Employee Health Screening Process

A. Self-Certification Form Required to Return to On-Site Work
An employee who receives authorization to return to work on campus will be required to complete the COVID-19 Return to Work Employee Health Assessment Self-Certification Form prior to returning. This form is stored separately from an employee’s regular personnel file in order to limit access to this confidential information. Access the COVID-19 Return to Work Employee Health Certification Form.
An employee will again be required to complete the form prior to returning to campus if there is a change in circumstance, such as:

2. Having been advised by a health care provider or government official to stay home and self-quarantine.
3. Having close contact in the last 14 days with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 or who showed symptoms of COVID-19 (this does not apply if the employee is fully vaccinated and remains asymptomatic after the exposure).
4. Experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (without a separate diagnosed cause, e.g., asthma, allergies, etc.).
5. Having been notified of exposure to COVID-19 within the last 14 days (this does not apply if the employee is fully vaccinated and remains asymptomatic after the exposure).
6. Traveling outside of the United States (see the COVID-19 Travel Standards for more details).

B. Daily Symptom Self-Check
Employees working on campus must continue to monitor symptoms every day before reporting to work. If an employee experiences symptoms of COVID-19 (without a separate diagnosed cause, e.g., asthma, allergies, etc.), the employee should not come to campus. The employee must stay home and contact their supervisor.

C. Quarantine
Consistent with the CDC's vaccination guidance, fully vaccinated people are not expected to quarantine after exposure to someone with COVID-19 if they remain asymptomatic. However, fully vaccinated people should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure, even if they do not have symptoms, and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.

Otherwise, employees are expected to abide by the CDC's quarantine guidance, which provides that a person should quarantine after close contact (within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone who has COVID-19.

While the CDC recommends a 14-day quarantine period as the safest strategy, the CDC has indicated that the quarantine period can end after 10 days if the person experiences no symptoms. Note that people who have tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to quarantine (or get tested again) for up to 3 months as long as they do not develop symptoms again.

Employees can find more information about quarantine and related matters in BSU’s Screening, Testing, and Contact Tracing Protocols.

VI. Requests for Disability Accommodations
If an employee has or may have a need for disability accommodations related to COVID-19, the employee should contact University Human Resource Services.

VII. General Resources
Please consult the University’s COVID-19 Website for more information on the University’s response to this pandemic. In addition, other general resources include:

1. CDC’s COVID-19 Webpage
2. Latest guidelines and updates from the CDC
3. World Health Organization information on COVID-19
4. Indiana State Department of Health
5. Delaware County Coronavirus Hub