Ball State University’s Return to Campus Plan for Students
Effective June 19, 2020
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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. Ball State’s policies and plans will also be aligned with guidance from government agencies, public health officials, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

This pandemic presents a constantly-evolving and dynamic situation, and the University’s policies and plans will be reviewed and appropriately updated 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 (your faculty, friends, and family) at risk.

III. Academics

A. Plan for Fall 2020

More specific information about the academic plan for Fall 2020 will be communicated over the course of the Summer. For now, please note the following key components of the plan:

1. All classes will commence on August 24, as scheduled, with on-campus instruction being conducted consistent with prevailing guidance from federal, state, and local public health officials. To achieve this objective, the University will schedule more class sessions in the evenings and, perhaps, on weekends, if necessary. It is also anticipated that courses with large enrollments may be divided into smaller sections or taught online.

2. Faculty will prepare all courses with sufficient flexibility and adaptability to enable them to transition effectively during the semester to online instruction and back to on-campus instruction based on conditions on our campus and in our community.

3. Faculty will front-load those learning activities that are best facilitated by face-to-face instruction so that those activities are completed before the Thanksgiving break. After the Thanksgiving break, all remaining instruction, as well as all final projects and exams, will be completed online. The rationale for this approach is to avoid having students travel home to various parts of the country for Thanksgiving and then return to campus for only a few weeks around the same time public health experts have advised of a potential increase in COVID-19 cases as temperatures begin cooling for Winter.

4. The University will cancel the two-day Fall break and will schedule class sessions on Labor Day. The rationale for these changes to the academic calendar is to enable our students to have 13 weeks of on-campus instruction before the Thanksgiving break.

5. The University will offer more online courses to accommodate faculty and students who may be in higher-risk populations.
B. Classroom Attendance

Students will receive more information from their course instructors about the nature of their specific courses and expectations. Students will generally be expected to wear face masks/shields during in-person class sessions, with some exceptions (the full University Face Mask/Shield Policy can be found later in this plan).

C. Library Access

Beginning July 6, 2020, the University Libraries will be open with some adjustments to operations. More details are available in the University Libraries COVID-19 Operations Plan.

IV. Student Life/Co-Curricular Activities

In addition to the academic engagement of students, the University also anticipates participation in co-curricular activities that promote a sense of belonging and social integration. Student Life and other areas responsible for co-curricular engagement are developing plans to provide a robust array of opportunities that reflect the importance of these activities to student development. More information about co-curricular activities will be communicated later in the Summer.

V. Health Considerations

A. Daily Symptom Self-Check

It is critical for students to understand and be aware of COVID-19 symptoms. Students will be expected to monitor their symptoms every day before coming to campus or leaving their residence halls. If a student experiences symptoms of COVID-19 (without a separate known cause, e.g., asthma, allergies, etc.), the student should seek medical care, either through the Student Health Center or a primary care provider. A symptomatic student seeking medical care should call in advance to schedule an appointment so that intake procedures are understood prior to arrival.

B. Screening, Testing, and Contact Tracing

The University will coordinate readily available COVID-19 testing for students and employees in cooperation with local public health authorities and support efficient and effective contact tracing. The University’s protocols for screening, testing, and contact tracing are still under development and will be communicated at a later date.

C. Influenza Vaccination

Public health experts have advised of a potential increase in COVID-19 cases later this year at the same time the seasonal flu returns with a correlating risk that healthcare providers will not be able to treat all of the ill patients. To help minimize this risk, students are strongly encouraged to get a flu vaccination this Fall. To encourage this responsible behavior, the University will expand access to and the availability of annual flu vaccinations for all students and employees. More information will be provided on this topic later this year.
D. Higher-Risk Populations

According to the CDC, individuals with certain conditions may have an increased risk for COVID-19 infection. Those conditions may include:

1. Older adults (aged 65 years and older);
2. People with HIV;
3. Asthma (moderate-to-severe);
4. Chronic lung disease;
5. Diabetes;
6. Serious heart conditions;
7. Chronic kidney disease being treated with dialysis;
8. Severe obesity; and

Students returning to campus who have a condition that places them in a higher-risk group, as well as those who are pregnant, should be particularly judicious in taking precautions to protect themselves, including observing the safety practices described below.

VI. Safety Practices

Consistent with our Enduring Value of Social Responsibility, students are asked to be considerate of others on campus and to consistently participate in the safety practices in this plan, as they are intended to help make our campus safe.

A. University Face Mask/Shield Policy

i. Requirements

Effective July 1, 2020, all people on campus—including faculty, staff, students, vendors, contractors, suppliers, and visitors—should wear face masks/shields (covering nose and mouth) while inside campus buildings. Face masks/shields are specifically required in the following situations:

1. When in the presence of others (indoors or outdoors) and physical distancing is difficult to maintain, such as in hallways, elevators, stairs, public spaces, and common areas;
2. When in a classroom or laboratory if physical distancing is difficult to maintain;
3. When using campus transportation (such as a shuttle bus);
4. When multiple individuals are in a University vehicle; and
5. When it is determined by an employee's supervisor that wearing a mask/shield is necessary for specific job duties. Environmental Health and Safety will determine if particular types of face masks/shields are required for particular job settings, and this will be communicated through supervisors.

Wearing a face mask/shield is not required when alone in a private office or work space, nor is it required when working behind a plexiglass barrier. This would include, for example, a faculty member teaching behind a protective barrier in a classroom or laboratory setting.
ii. Accommodations

If an individual has a health condition that prevents them from being able to wear a face mask/shield, University Human Resource Services should be contacted, or, in the case of a student, the Office of Disability Services.

iii. Non-Compliance

If an employee declines to wear a face mask/shield as required, the supervisor is responsible for addressing it with the employee. Employees should refrain from addressing non-compliance or perceived non-compliance directly with other employees and should instead report issues to their supervisors.

If a student declines to wear a face mask/shield as required, the student should be referred to the Office of the Dean of Students. If the situation occurs in a classroom or other academic setting, it is considered a classroom management issue, and the faculty member should remind the student of the requirement and give the student a chance to comply with it prior to referring the matter to the Office of the Dean of Students.

Members of the public who are not abiding by face mask/shield requirements will first be offered a disposable face mask, if possible. If they refuse to comply with face mask/shield requirements, they will be asked to leave and given options of how they can be served virtually.

The University Police Department (UPD) is not responsible for enforcing face mask/shield requirements and should not be contacted regarding such issues.

iv. Other Guidance

Individuals may supply their own mask/shield for general use. In addition, the University will provide up to two washable and reusable face masks to every faculty, staff, and on-campus student who requests them. To obtain a face mask from Ball State, employees should contact their direct supervisor.

The Office of the Dean of Students will provide additional information to students about where to obtain face masks prior to the start of the Fall 2020 semester.

Proper use and care of face masks/shields are the responsibility of the individual. For additional guidance on the use and care of face masks, visit the CDC website and World Health Organization (WHO) website.
B. Physical Distancing

Students on campus are expected to maintain appropriate physical distancing in order to reduce the risk of being exposed to or spreading COVID-19. This includes things such as:

1. Maintaining at least a distance of 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people at all times;
2. Avoiding crowded places and mass gatherings;
3. Avoiding physical contact with others, such as hugging and handshakes;
4. Utilizing electronic communications instead of face-to-face interactions where possible; and
5. Avoiding those who appear to be demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19.

The University has also taken steps to assist in physical distancing, including reducing the number of employees on campus at a given time, posting signage and utilizing floor markings around campus, installing protective barriers at employee work stations where there is regular face-to-face contact with others, and adjusting physical spaces in ways to promote physical distancing.

C. Personal Sanitation Measures

Students should maintain good personal sanitation/hygiene, keeping the following in mind:

1. Frequent hand washing is the first line of defense against the spread of COVID-19. Students should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after being in a public places or after coughing, sneezing, blowing their nose, or touching their face. If soap and water are not readily available, students should use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
2. Students are encouraged to carry their own hand sanitizer.
3. Students are encouraged to bring their own water to minimize use and touching of water fountains (and to use the hands-free, bottle filling stations where available).
4. Students should minimize or avoid sharing personal items, supplies, and equipment with others.

The University has also taken steps in order to encourage people on campus to practice good sanitation/hygiene, such as making hand sanitizer available in various locations around campus and displaying hand washing and hygiene posters throughout buildings.
D. Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols

The University intends to make cleaning supplies available for student use in classrooms so they can assist in wiping off surface areas. In addition, the University has implemented the following general cleaning and disinfecting protocols.

1. Deep cleaning has occurred in all academic buildings as well as other facilities around campus. It will also occur at regular intervals once areas open based on occupancy and use.
2. Open buildings are cleaned and disinfected on a daily basis at regular intervals and as necessary based on occupancy and use.
3. Cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surface areas (such as controls, door handles, elevator panels, railings, copy machines, etc.) occurs on a regular basis.
4. Portable ultraviolet lights are used in spaces considered higher risk areas.
5. An electrostatic disinfecting sprayer is utilized where appropriate, such as locker rooms, shower areas, shuttle buses, etc.
6. Additional cleaning measures will be taken if the University is notified that an individual is/was on campus with a positive diagnosis of COVID-19.

VII. Housing and Residence Life

The University has developed a Housing and Residence Life Plan in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, including adjustments to room options, quarantine accommodations, and enhanced safety practices. In addition, please review the University’s responses to common housing-related questions in the 2020 Residence Hall FAQs.

VIII. Dining Services

In-person dining areas will be adjusted in order to promote physical distancing and abide by state and local capacity guidelines. In addition, all meals will be available as to-go options in take-out containers along with individually wrapped utensils. More information is available on the Dining Services webpage and in the Dining Services Plan.

IX. Recreation Services

Beginning July 6, 2020, Recreation Services will resume operations with adjustments to locations, hours, and programming. More information is available in the Recreation Services Plan.
X. Campus Events and Community Engagement

This pandemic has caused disruption to the University's regular campus events and community engagement opportunities. However, it is expected that these types of experiences will begin again later this Summer. When they do continue, they will be conducted in accordance with established guidelines, the specifics of which will be communicated at a later date.

XI. Athletics

As of June 15, 2020, a small number of student-athletes returned to campus for voluntary workouts with an anticipated increase in numbers to occur over the course of the Summer. For more information, see the Athletics Return to Practice Plan. Information regarding intercollegiate athletics in 2020–2021 will be communicated at a later date.

XII. Campus Visitors

Visitors on campus—including vendors, contractors, suppliers, guests, and members of the general public—are expected to abide by face mask/shield requirements, physical distancing guidelines, and personal sanitation/hygiene measures, as described in this plan. Additional information is available in the Campus Visitors Plan.

XIII. Travel

A. University-Sponsored/Funded Travel

All University-sponsored/funded international travel, is suspended at this time. Visit the Study Abroad webpage for more information. There are also limitations in place on domestic travel that is University-sponsored/funded. The appropriate University personnel—such as the department head or program director—should be contacted to discuss if the specific travel at issue is allowable and authorized.

B. Personal Travel

Students are required to follow CDC travel recommendations for personal international travel, including staying at home and monitoring their health for 14 days after returning to the United States. Information about the CDC’s recommendations for international travel can be found here.

Students are also strongly encouraged to review the factors identified by the CDC when considering whether it is safe to travel domestically. Information about the CDC’s recommendations for domestic travel can be found here.
XIV. Wellness

This pandemic can be stressful both personally and while engaging in campus life. Students should be mindful of their well-being and take steps to cope with this situation in a positive way (e.g., eat healthy, exercise, get sleep, talk with a trusted acquaintance, take breaks from the news and social media, etc.). The CDC has published information about Coping with Stress during this time. In addition, students are encouraged to visit the webpages of the Counseling Center and Office of Health, Alcohol, and Drug Education for more information about resources available through the University.

XV. General Resources

Please consult Ball State’s COVID-19 website for more information on the University’s response to this pandemic. In addition, other general resources include:

1. CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
2. World Health Organization information on COVID-19
3. Prevention and Treatment tips (CDC)
4. Indiana State Department of Health
5. Latest guidelines and updates from the CDC
6. Delaware County Coronavirus Hub

XVI. Technology Resources

Information Technology (IT) student services such as the Help Desk, TechTime, the Ball State ID card office, and the Technology Store continue to be available by appointment through the Summer. Beginning Monday, August 3, IT will reopen for walk-in services. Students needing any technology assistance can visit the Help Desk webpage to find the best resource and current hours. The Help Desk can also be reached at 765-285-1517.

XVII. Requests for Disability Accommodations

If a student has or may have a need for a disability accommodation related to COVID-19, the student should contact the Office of Disability Services at dsd@bsu.edu or 765-285-5293.

XVIII. Questions or Concerns

If a student has questions or concerns regarding safety on campus in light of the pandemic or this plan, the student should contact the Office of Student Affairs at studentaffrs@bsu.edu or 765-285-3734.