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

Last Updated November 17, 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.

Plainly stated, Ball State University’s Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities (Code) prohibits conduct that causes or threatens harm to the health or safety of another person, both on and off campus. Such conduct can include the failure to follow health and safety protocols, or directives of University officials, related to COVID-19. Thus, a student who is alleged to have engaged in these types of unsafe behaviors may be subject to investigation and adjudication under the Code, which could involve an interim suspension while the matter is pending and the full range of disciplinary measures should the student be found responsible for the conduct, up to and including suspension and expulsion.

III. Information Regarding COVID-19 Vaccinations

A. Vaccination Sites and Incentives

Students 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 Students

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

- Exempt from pre-arrival testing for the Spring 2022 semester (with attestation of vaccination status)
- 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 Students

The following standards apply to unvaccinated students:

- Subject to pre-arrival testing for the Spring 2022 semester if attending classes on campus or residing on campus
- 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 submit to mandatory surveillance testing. Failure to submit to mandatory surveillance testing will result in progressive disciplinary action, including an official reprimand, educational requirements, conduct probation, restriction and loss of privileges, possible suspension, and possible expulsion. Disciplinary steps will be administered in a manner consistent with the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

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 a student 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 student 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. Health Considerations

A. Daily Symptom Self-Check
Students must continue 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 diagnosed 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. 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 5-7 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, students 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.

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

VI. 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.

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