

Dear Students,

For those of you who are new to the University, welcome to William Carey. For those of you who are entering another academic year, we look forward to your return to campus.

The WCU COVID response team would like to share an overview of the University's COVID-19 policies and expectations for the upcoming school year. Given the University's high vaccination rate, and in consultation with public health officials and partners across the Hattiesburg area, the University's COVID protocols have adapted to the updated changes according to CDC guidelines.

For the 2022 fall semester, the following protocols will be in place.

### **Vaccinations and Boosters**

The University encourages all students to be fully vaccinated against COVID. To be considered fully vaccinated, all William Carey students—students should have received:

- Two shots of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines or any WHO approved vaccination, plus a Pfizer or Moderna booster 6 months after completion of prior series; or
- A single shot of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, plus a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna booster 4 months after initial J&J vaccine.

### **Testing**

#### **Symptomatic Testing**

Symptomatic testing for students is available through the University Health Clinic. Please call 601-318-6736 to schedule an appointment for evaluation and testing.

#### **Asymptomatic Testing**

Screening testing is no longer recommended by the CDC. However, CDC continues to recommend testing for those vaccinated or unvaccinated on Day 5 after a known exposure. This testing can be performed via at home testing or at the Student Health Center by scheduling an appointment. We encourage you to know your status if you think you have been exposed.

#### **At-home Testing**

Students who receive a positive test result through an at-home test should upload their positive test to their Carey Connect. If at-home test results are positive outside of normal business hours, students should upload their positive test and start quarantine procedures. A WCU COVID team member will be in touch the next business day regarding next steps. Until students hear from a COVID response team member, they should isolate in their residence, whether living on or off-campus. Please report your positive test to the Mississippi Department of Health at [COVID-19 Home Test Reporting \(ms.gov\)](https://www.ms.gov/COVID-19-Home-Test-Reporting). If symptoms persist and/or you need to seek medical treatment, please contact the Student Health Center on campus at the number above.

## **All Positive Tests, regardless of vaccination status**

Isolate for 5 days (with your day of symptoms onset or positive test, whichever comes first, as Day 0). i.e test positive and symptoms started on August 1<sup>st</sup>, isolation would go through August 6<sup>th</sup>.

### *Asymptomatic/Minimally Symptomatic Individuals*

As long as you remain asymptomatic (having no symptoms) or minimally symptomatic and have improvement by end of isolation in addition to being fever free for 24 hours, then you can return to campus and activities with masking around others until Day 10. After day 10, masking is no longer required.

### *Moderate or Severe Symptoms*

If symptoms persist past the normal 5 day isolation or if symptoms are severe, CDC recommends isolating for total of 10 days.

\* Regardless of your symptoms, it is important to remember that you are at increased risk of transmitting the virus through day 10 and should avoid unnecessary exposures to individuals with increased risk of developing severe illness.

## **On-campus Students**

Students living on campus who have residences within a 150 mile radius of the school that test positive for COVID-19 will be required to leave campus and isolate in their off-campus residence for five days or 10 days as directed above. International students and those students who do not have regional residences will be able to isolate on campus in limited spaces, and meals will be delivered to students with a meal plan. Students who test positive are required to wear face coverings until day 5—ideally a KN95 mask—if living with roommates and when leaving the room for food or to use the restroom.

While off-campus quarantine space is not available to on-campus students whose roommate(s) tests positive regardless of vaccination status, students are welcome to temporarily relocate to a friend's room or off-campus space at their own discretion. The risk for contracting the virus from a roommate can be significantly mitigated by wearing a KN95 mask or other face covering, which is encouraged of all students for five days whose roommate(s) tests positive.

## **Off-campus Students**

Off-campus students should utilize their homes for quarantine or isolation.

## **Exposures**

Regardless of vaccination status, once you have known exposure CDC recommends that you take extra precautions by avoiding large gatherings or to wear a mask around others for 10 days from day of exposure. Monitor for symptoms including runny nose, cough, body aches, fever, nausea, and vomiting. Test on day 5 from exposure (this can be done with home test or testing at Student Health Center).

## **Masking**

With the exception of those who test positive and roommates of students who test positive, masking is optional indoors and outdoors on campus, including at events, for all William Carey, staff, students and

visitors. Regardless of vaccination status, masks are required while visiting the Student Health Center per Hattiesburg Clinic policy. Mask will be provided upon arrival at clinic if needed.

All University community members are encouraged to remain mindful of their health and wellness. Students who feel unwell should call the WCU clinic for a testing appointment or take an at-home test. Additionally, students who feel sick are encouraged to defer to best wellness practices such as wearing a mask and remaining home if possible to help keep the campus community safe.

Although this pandemic has waned, the University continues to monitor the local and national landscape and will adjust its policies accordingly to safeguard the health and well-being of the entire campus community.

For the latest information on the University's COVID policies and protocols, please refer to <https://www.wmcarey.edu/page/coronavirus-update> . If you have any questions or need any additional information, please feel free to contact Dr. Haney at [jhaney@wmcarey.edu](mailto:jhaney@wmcarey.edu).

We wish you a healthy and safe fall semester.

COVID Response Coordinator,

Dr. Jude Haney