



To the Campus Community:

As we approach the start of the new academic year, it is hard to imagine we are in year three of the global SARS-COV-2 (aka COVID-19) pandemic. Throughout the summer hiatus, the Center for Health and Wellness—Health Services Team has been following the developments of SARS-COV-2 very closely and is pleased to share with you the following **COVID-19 Guidelines for the Fall 2022 semester**.

COVID-19 Guidelines- Fall 2022

Transmission Levels

As required for the health and safety of the WNE community, WNE will follow all federal, state, and local guidelines. Where there is discretion, WNE will use the [CDC Community Transmission Levels](#) as the key metric to inform our decision-making on policy formation.

Community Members

WNE defines Community Members as faculty, staff, students, and guests of the campus community.

Vaccinations

The [WNE COVID Vaccination Policy](#) is unchanged for the Fall 2022 semester; **proof of vaccination with a Primary Series of the SARS-COV-2 vaccine is required** for all WNE community members (faculty, staff, and students) that intend to live, learn, conduct research, or access any on-site campus resources. **If you have already submitted proof of vaccination, you do not need to do so again.**

Primary Series

Vaccine	Doses
Pfizer	2 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech
Moderna	2 doses of Moderna
Johnson and Johnson/Janssen	1 dose of Johnson & Johnson's Janssen
Novavax	2 doses of Novavax

Exemptions

Consistent with prior years, WNE Community Members may request an **exemption** from the SARS-COV-2 vaccine requirement. Exemption requests may be for medical and religious reasons and should be requested by completing the [WNE SARS-COV-2 Vaccine Exemption Request Form](#) and submitting all completed forms to Covidvac@wne.edu for review.

Medical exemption requests will require a verification letter from a medical provider. The medical exemption must indicate that the SARS-COV-2 vaccine is medically contraindicated or otherwise detrimental to your health.

If you have already requested and been approved for an exemption, you do not need to be re-approved.

Please be aware that WNE Community Members granted an exemption for medical or religious reasons might be subject to heightened surveillance testing to mitigate the risk of infection should community transmission levels increase. Any questions about this policy should be directed to Health Services at healthservices@wne.edu or **413-782-1211**.

Boosters

The guidance and science surrounding boosters have evolved considerably in the past year, and WNE leadership has reflected on that body of evidence. Effective immediately, **WNE will no longer require SARS-COV-2 booster shots but strongly recommends** that all Community Members be aware of their personal level of risk and [stay up to date](#) with their vaccinations as directed by their Primary Care Provider. Current research indicates that SARS-COV-2 vaccine boosters can further enhance or restore protection that might have decreased over time after vaccination with the primary series and decrease the risk of serious health outcomes related to the virus.

Positive Cases

WNE Community Members must notify the Center for Health and Wellness if they test positive for COVID-19 or exhibit signs and symptoms of potential illness. Community Members should call **413-782-1211** or email Healthservices@wne.edu.

Signs and Symptoms of SARS-COV-2

People with SARS-COV-2 have had a wide range of symptoms, ranging from mild to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms. People with these symptoms may have SARS-COV-2:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Net loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Diagnostic Testing

WNE is adopting a **Test Ready Policy** and to assist the campus in being **Test Ready** we will provide rapid antigen test kits in each dorm room at the start of the semester, in addition to having some stocked in the commuter lounge for easy access by commuter students. Faculty and staff can access testing supplies in the Center for Health and Wellness.

As in prior years, the Center for Health and Wellness will continue offering on-site testing with both rapid antigen and PCR tests. PCR testing will be conducted in partnership with Baystate Medical Center's lab, and results are expected within 24 hours.

Isolation Program

WNE Community members that test positive for SARS-COV-2 **are still required to isolate** themselves from the rest of the campus community.

Isolation Period

The isolation period is **a full ten days**; this is a best practice reinforced by the evidence and science of SARS-COV-2.

- Day zero (0) is the onset day of symptoms or the day of a positive SARS-COV-2 test.
- Day ten (+10 post-infection) is the final day of isolation.
- Return to school or work is on day eleven (+11 post-infection).

Location

WNE Community Members are encouraged to discuss housing options with the Center for Health and Wellness—Health Services team, who can assist in determining the best location for isolation based on the Community Members' risk level and set of circumstances.

Designated isolation housing on campus will be available to community members on a limited basis.

If students choose to isolate in designated campus housing, meal delivery is arranged and students will be charged as applicable to their student account.

Early Release from Isolation

The isolation period can be decreased to five (5) full days with a return to class, campus activities, or work on day (+6) if the following conditions are met:

1. You are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
2. Your other symptoms have **improved**, as assessed by Health Services.
3. You have a negative Antigen SARS-COV-2 test (rapid home test)

****If you test positive on Day (+5 or later), you are not fever-free, or symptoms are not improving, you must continue to isolate for the entire ten days. You can self-test daily, and when negative, notify Health Services to validate and further direction.**

Early Release Testing Options

To be released from isolation early, the WNE campus community has several options for testing out of isolation. All negative tests must be reported to a Health Services provider for clearance and to obtain further requirements and individualized recommendations.

Options:

- Rapid test daily once you are symptom free. Once you are negative contact Health Services.

OR

- You obtain an antigen test at an outside facility.

OR

- You obtain an antigen test on-site at WNE's Center for Health and Wellness—Health Services.

Additional Requirements

You must continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when around others in the residence halls, the classrooms, and other public places on campus for five additional days; day (+6) through day (+10).

You should avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe diseases](#), such as nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after the entire 10-day period.

Do not go to places where you cannot wear a mask for Days (+6) to (+10).

Contact Tracing

The Center for Health and Wellness—Health Services staff will continue to conduct contact tracing on all positive cases and assist WNE Community Members with gaining access to testing for monitoring if identified as having been close contact and exposed to the virus.

Close Contacts/Quarantine

WNE has **eliminated all quarantine requirements** following exposure for both vaccinated and unvaccinated Community Members and instead has transitioned to a **Serial Testing Program**.

Serial Testing Program

Serial testing is testing the same person more than once over the course of several days **to increase the chances of detecting asymptomatic infection that a single test might not detect**. Point-of-care serial testing can provide rapid results and is critical to identifying people with SARS-COV-2 who do not have symptoms and slowing the spread of SARS-CoV-2.

Close contacts or exposed WNE Community Members in the Serial Testing Program are permitted to attend class and community events and eat in the dining hall; however, **they are required to wear a mask until cleared by the Center for Health and Wellness—Health Services**.

Serial Testing Requirements

WNE Community members who have been exposed to or identified as a close contact of a positive case of SARS-COV-2 are required to test **on Day + 5 post-exposure, on Day +7 post-exposure, and if they develop symptoms of SARS-COV-2.**

WNE will accept PCR test results or rapid antigen tests (home tests) as proof of meeting the serial testing requirements.

If a WNE Community Member has been identified as a close contact or has a known exposure and subsequently becomes symptomatic, they must isolate and notify the Center for Health and Wellness at 413-782-1211 for further direction.

Entry Testing

Currently, the **Community Transmission Level in Hampden County, MA, is rated as LOW**. Therefore, WNE Community Members **are not required to submit entry test results** before moving in or resuming classes this fall. We will monitor this metric closely, and if there is a sudden spike in cases requiring a policy change, we will inform the campus community.

Surveillance Testing

Currently, the **Community Transmission Level in Hampden County, MA, is rated as LOW**. Therefore, WNE Community Members **will not be required to participate in routine surveillance testing** this fall. We will monitor this metric closely, and if there is an increase in transmission levels, we will inform the campus community of surveillance testing requirements.

Masking

There is no change to the [WNE Mask Ready Policy](#). Mask-ready means all individuals must carry a mask with them at all times to comply with any request to wear a mask from faculty or staff members holding classes, labs, gatherings, or meetings. Outside such requests, individuals may decide whether to wear a mask based on their comfort level, risk, and health history. Masks are still welcome to be worn in any setting.

There are a few exceptions that should be noted. Consistent with federal and local requirements ([MA DPH Mask Requirements in Certain Locations](#)), **WNE will still require masks in the following locations** or situations:

- Center for Health and Wellness
- Community Patient Care Center
- Academic clinical work that involves or interacts with community members
- Traveling by bus for University-related functions or events

In addition, faculty and staff members who convene classes, labs, or meetings may require attendees to wear masks.

Community Member with symptoms, a recent known exposure, or a history of being a close contact with a positive case must wear a mask until cleared by Health Services.



WESTERN NEW ENGLAND
UNIVERSITY

Western New England will be suspending the weekly COVID-19 Dashboard and Newsletter. Updates to the campus community will be provided as conditions warrant. Feel free to reach out to the Center for Health and Wellness if you have any specific questions about the guidelines at **413-782-1211** or via email at Healthservices@wne.edu .

Respectfully,

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