



**University of the Incarnate Word  
INSTITUTIONAL POLICY ON WEARING  
MASKS/FACE COVERINGS ON CAMPUS  
(COVID-19)**

**Effective Date: June 1, 2021**

**Contact: Dr. Nathan Johnson, Associate Vice  
President for Public Safety**

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to amend existing campus policy and guidelines regarding wearing masks or face coverings for COVID-19 on the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) main and regional satellite campuses.

## **SCOPE**

This policy was developed in compliance with the By-Laws of the University of the Incarnate Word, including all Amendments thereto, which stipulates that the UIW Board of Trustees shall formulate and determine such general policies as deemed necessary for the development and administration of UIW.

## **DEFINITION(S)**

*Institutional Policy:* A written document that prescribes decisions, actions, standards, and other matters applicable to UIW as a whole or to a significant area of its operations. UIW institutional policies are approved by the President and/or the Board of Trustees and are published or otherwise made available for access by UIW faculty, students, administrators, staff, and others.

## **BACKGROUND**

Current UIW policy and guidelines require wearing masks or face coverings while on the UIW campus. In May 2021, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) revised its COVID-19 guidelines, essentially stating that individuals who are fully vaccinated can be near like individuals without concern or need to wear a COVID-19 mask. Specific language (found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/participate-in-activities.html#print>) reads:

- *Fully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance.*

The outcome of CDC's guidelines prompted many agencies and organizations to eliminate the use of masks or face coverings in most cases. In addition, the Governor issued an Executive Order (EO) on May 18, 2021 prohibiting governmental entities from mandating the wearing of masks. While the EO does not pertain to private institutions, UIW created a task force to discuss the interpretation of the CDC guidelines and their applicability to the UIW campus. This topic was addressed again with the larger Business Continuity group on May 24, 2021.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, UIW implemented a robust business continuity program consisting of abatement efforts, safety plans, regular COVID-19 testing, and active cleaning and sanitizing of work and living areas. This policy is intended to align the campus with current best practices concerning the use of wearing masks or face coverings in the wake of COVID-19.

## POLICY

1. Pursuant to the provisions outlined in the CDC guidelines, updated on May 13, 2021, fully vaccinated persons are no longer required to wear a mask or face covering indoors or outdoors for COVID-19 on the main or regional campuses.
2. The use of COVID-19 related masks or face coverings is required for unvaccinated persons while indoors on the main or regional campuses. It is also the intent of this policy to encourage those not yet vaccinated to receive a vaccine if medically able to do so, continue practicing social distancing, and wear a mask or face covering indoors until such time a vaccine is received. While UIW will not require proof of vaccination, we remind everyone about our collective commitment to *shared responsibility* to ensure the safety of coworkers and students.
3. Unvaccinated participants of *indoor* high intensity sports or other activities are required to wear such masks or face coverings while not actively engaged in competition. Further, Athletics will ensure that practice and game activities will follow NCAA mask wearing guidelines for the various athletic activities and games (<https://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/championships-safety-overview>).
4. This policy does not pertain to areas where the use of masks or face coverings is required as part of the academic program or regulatory agency that requires it. Pursuant to CDC guidelines, this policy is not intended to conflict with requirements for health care settings where masks should be continued worn.
5. Summer camps by external agencies may follow the sponsoring organization's guidelines provided such guidelines are NOT less restrictive than the provisions listed herein.
6. This policy strongly encourages everyone to continue following CDC guidelines related to other COVID-19 provisions such as social distancing and regular handwashing.
7. Nothing in this policy prohibits persons on campus from wearing such masks or face coverings should they choose to do so.
8. COVID-19 testing at an interval deemed appropriate might be required. Individuals traveling to or from abroad are required to test for COVID-19 in accordance with CDC guidelines related to international travel. (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>)

9. Areas deemed as “high-touch” or receive regular visitors from the public may be considered a candidate for plexiglass or other barrier type system if necessary.
10. Persons who are ill are encouraged to stay home until all symptoms have passed. UIW expects everyone to monitor themselves and abide by the provisions of this policy, whether vaccinated or not.

#### **OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THIS POLICY**

1. Oversight of this policy is assigned to the CFO & Vice President for Administrative Services
2. The policy will be published on UIW’s public web resources.
3. UIW Vice Presidents will ensure compliance for policies that originate in their divisions and report results through the University President’s Cabinet.
4. This policy will be reviewed periodically for possible updates as conditions warrant, but the period of review will not extend beyond three years.

**First Approved:** May 25, 2021

**Revised:**