



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

Effective Date: June 1, 2021

Latest Revision: August 11, 2021

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

I. 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.

II. 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.

III. DEFINITION(S)

Facial Masks: Facial masks for COVID-19 can be in different forms. They can be cloth, disposable, and/or meet certain standards as those recommended by the CDC for health workers, such as N95 and others. You can obtain more information on the various types of recommended masks on the CDC website here: [Facial Mask Types](#). These include those that block light and are of multi-layer material. Facial masks should be worn in a manner that fits snugly over the face and nose, but do not block breathing. Face shields should not be used alone in place of a facial mask. Face covering such as gaiters or masks that contain one-way valves are also not allowed.

IV. BACKGROUND (amended)

Former UIW policy and guidelines required the wearing of masks 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.

The outcome of CDC's guidelines prompted many agencies and organizations to eliminate the use of masks 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. UIW adopted a new policy that eliminated the need to wear a facial mask outdoors and eliminated the requirements or vaccinated persons to wear a mask while indoors.

On July 27th, the CDC updated its recommendations for fully vaccinated people to wear a mask in public indoor settings in areas of substantial or high transmission. While UIW has not experienced substantial or high transmission on campus, we are cautious about the potential impact of related data from the surrounding community.

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.

V. POLICY *(amended)*

1. *The use of COVID-19 related facial masks is required indoors by those who are vaccinated as well as persons not vaccinated. Masks will also be required outdoors in group settings and when social distancing cannot be maintained.*
2. *Masks should only be removed when alone in a private office or living space, or while eating (6 feet social distancing must be maintained while eating). Please be reminded that masks are not a substitute for social distancing.*
3. *No consumption of food or drinks is allowed inside classrooms during class sessions, except for medical reasons.*
4. 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 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.
5. This policy is not intended to conflict with requirements for health care settings.
6. Athletics will notify UIW when exceptions are requested due to potential conflicts with NCAA regulations.
7. Summer camps by external agencies may follow the sponsoring organization's guidelines provided such guidelines are NOT less restrictive than the provisions listed herein.
8. This policy strongly encourages everyone to continue following CDC guidelines related to other COVID-19 provisions such as social distancing and regular handwashing.
9. 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](https://www.uwyo.edu/ncov/travelers/index.html))

10. 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.
11. Persons who are feeling ill, regardless of their vaccination status, should isolate themselves from others until all symptoms have passed for 24-hours, get clinically evaluated and tested for COVID-19.
12. UIW expects everyone to abide by the provisions of this policy, whether vaccinated or not.

V. ENFORCEMENT *(added)*

1. Violations of this policy by students and employees shall be reported to the Dean of Campus Life or the Associate Vice President for Human Resources, respectively.
2. UIW expects everyone to abide by the provisions of this policy. Individuals found in willful violation of this will be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal or termination.

VI. OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THIS POLICY

1. 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.
2. Oversight of this policy is assigned to the CFO & Vice-President for Administrative Services.
3. The policy will be published on UIW’s public web resources.
4. UIW Vice Presidents will ensure compliance for policies that originate in their divisions and report results to the President.
5. 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

Revisions: August 5, 2021

August 11, 2021