



Mask Mandate End and Transition Plan

Dean Of Students, Coe College <dos@coe.edu>

Fri, Mar 4, 2022 at 6:20 PM

Reply-To: dos@coe.edu

To: All Students <allstudents@coe.edu>

Dear Kohawks,

On Friday, February 25th, the CDC updated its guidance for masking indoors. In addition, Linn County's lower positive rates have reduced the county's designation status to medium risk, which lowers the recommendation for masking to those who are immunocompromised and wish to continue to wear a mask for personal safety. (See the map and guidance [here](#).) In response to the updated guidance, both Linn County and the City of Cedar Rapids dropped all remaining masking requirements in publicly owned buildings, and so have the surrounding school districts who still had a masking requirement in place.

Overview

Our campus experience has been even more fortunate than Linn County, and all benchmarks that were previously identified for ending the masking mandate on campus have been met.

- Vaccination rates (now 88%)
- Hospital capacity (now green - capacity established)
- Coe community positivity rates (zero students in q/i)
- Linn County positivity rates (reduced by 5x since January)

These have been the factors guiding conversation within the COVID Leadership Committee, Faculty Welfare, Exec and Senior Staff as we decide the best next steps for our campus community.

Due to the improved public health situation and all benchmarks listed here, the current masking mandate within academic spaces and events, as well as in Coe-sponsored transportation, will be lifted utilizing the following timeline:

Masking Mandate End and Transition

March 7 - Masking will no longer be required for Coe sponsored travel

March 12 - 25 - Masking optional is permitted in all campus spaces, but faculty may require masks in classrooms, labs, rehearsal halls and offices. Faculty will communicate with students in classes over the next week to clarify expectations during this period of transition.

March 26 - Masking optional becomes the default approach to all campus spaces. Faculty may request, but not require, masks to be worn in classrooms, labs, rehearsal halls and offices.

Transition Planning

As we prepare for this transition, please reach out if you have a health condition that would not allow you to work or attend classes in a mask optional environment to discuss possible accommodations. Students should reach out to Laura Hayes at lhayes@coe.edu, and faculty and staff can reach out to Human Resources, supervisors, or the Provost Office to initiate this process.

Testing will continue to be widely available through Health Services, and contact tracing will continue as it has, and our community will be prepared for episodic masking as we enter a more endemic strategy.

As we have at every point during the past two years, we ask for grace and support of all community members on campus. As we transition away from required masking, , we hope to maintain a culture of supporting masking for those who need or want to do so and willingly wearing a mask when someone requests it. Also, individuals should continue to wear a mask and/or stay home when ill. Additionally, the college will provide 3 N95 Masks to any community member who would like to request one [here](#).

We also recognize this transition may feel uncomfortable and some of you may have concerns. Students can reach out to wellness@coe.edu for resources and support, and Health Advocate is also available to faculty and staff as we consider the emotional support that may be helpful in the transition.

Thank you.

~ ~ ~

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