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## Masking Policy and Community Update 10.27.21

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

Wed, Oct 27, 2021 at 3:22 PM

Reply-To: dos@coe.edu

To: All Students <allstudents@coe.edu>

Dear Kohawks,

We hope you had a wonderful homecoming weekend! See below for important updates and information.

### Mask Policy Change & Extension

The senior leadership team, in consultation with the COVID leadership committee, is making the following amendments to the current masking policy (see below). The policy outlined below is effective immediately and will remain in effect through December 9th, given the time remaining in the fall term.

Masking will be required:

- indoors in all academic spaces **and for academic events hosted in non-academic spaces, which include fine arts events.** This also includes hallways and traveling between classrooms/restrooms.
- during transportation to college events and activities
- in areas where faculty or staff members have identified a need for indoor masking

**The masking requirement for groups of more than 30 has been removed.** Masking will continue to be required for academic and fine arts events, regardless of size or location. Masks will be optional for other groups or events in non-academic spaces.

Additional information:

1. Coe community members organizing campus or campus-sponsored events will need to determine if the event is academic or fine arts in nature, and communicate mask requirements when necessary.
2. For larger venues (Eby, ARC, Kohawk Arena, non-academic/fine arts programs in Sinclair, etc), there will be designated "mask zones" for larger venues with anticipated high attendance.
3. Continue to be courteous if asked to wear a mask in a non-academic setting/meeting where someone makes the request.

Masking requirements by group size are no longer recommended by the CDC, so the committee explored a variety of other considerations. With this change, we are continuing to prioritize masking in academic settings as well as staff settings where needs exist while maintaining consistency with the rest of the student experience in non-academic settings.

Our campus numbers have been low to nonexistent for several weeks, and we have the benefit of having seen almost all of our peer colleges take this same step without an increase in cases on their campus. While we expect our results to be the same, if we do see an impact due to these changes, we are prepared to revisit the decision. We will also continue to review the policy against the benchmarks of campus experience and our external community.

## Campus Community and COVID-19

Our community experience with COVID-19 remains at zero for students, faculty, and staff in quarantine or isolation.

Numbers of students in quarantine or isolation are updated twice per week on the [Coe website](#).

## Linn County and surrounding community

The weekly average of reported positive cases has decreased exponentially in Linn County, though the county is still designated at high risk for transmission given positive test numbers. Additionally, hospital numbers have improved, but there continue to be some capacity concerns due to staffing. You can review Linn County's data [here](#).

As a reminder, below are the benchmarks the committee is monitoring:

- The **Coe community positive rate** continues to be under 1%.
- The Coe community has surpassed 80% **vaccination rate** in the student population and 90% for faculty and staff.
- The CDC continues to list **Linn County** as a high risk for transmission.
- **Hospital capacity** is listed as yellow (some capacity concern).

As the numbers continue to improve related to the benchmarks being monitored, the COVID leadership committee and senior staff are continuing to work through options for more flexibility.

Stay safe and healthy, Kohawks!

~ ~ ~

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