

Update on Fall COVID-19 Protocols and Monkeypox Information

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope that you have been enjoying the summer and I am sure that you are now beginning to prepare for your student to start the fall semester at Conn. As you plan for the semester ahead I would like to share with you a message I sent today to students about the College's plans related to COVID-19 and monkeypox. I hope that the details contained in this message and on our website are helpful to you and your student.

Looking forward to seeing your student on campus!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'VA', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Victor Arcelus
Dean of Students

Dear Students,

As we prepare to go into this next academic year, I'd like to begin by sharing protocols related to COVID-19. The COVID-19 planning group has been meeting to discuss Fall 2022 plans and, as always, we are consulting with Hartford HealthCare, CT Department of Public Health, and our CT and NESAC peers.

This is our third full academic year on campus with COVID-19. Our planning has evolved each year based on circumstances with the virus and the tools available to support our health (e.g. testing, vaccines, treatments). Through it all, we've learned more and more about how to live with COVID-19 while continuing to offer an engaging, in-person, residential educational experience.

As we go into this next semester, vaccines are available for children as young as six months; a second booster is available and highly recommended for people 50 or over; and a new version of the vaccine, more effective against omicron and its variants, is expected in September. What seems clear is that COVID-19, with its many variants, will be with us for the foreseeable future. The good news is that the virus, while more communicable, causes less severe symptoms for those who are fully vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and there are also effective drugs available to treat those who become infected. In addition, a well-fitting KN95 mask or the equivalent provides some protection from the virus even when others are not masked.

Our planned protocols for this fall move us closer to more normal operations on our campus but with tools also available to respond to COVID-19 as needed. As we have all recognized, the past two and a half years have contributed to greater isolation which has been challenging for all of us and, in particular, students as you embark on your college experience. It is therefore critical for us to not only be focused on physical health but also mental health. One of the many strategies that we are implementing in addressing this area of concern is to return to an as close to normal Connecticut College education and overall experience as possible.

Below are the protocols we will be implementing this semester.

- **Vaccination:**

- Students are required to be “fully vaccinated,” which means they have the initial two dose vaccine series and a booster

unless they have an approved exemption for medical or religious reasons.

- When a new vaccine/booster is offered during the Fall 2022 semester, the College will partner with Hartford HealthCare and/or the Community Health Center to offer vaccine clinics on campus.

• **Pre-Arrival Testing:**

- All students need to take a rapid antigen (at-home/over the counter) COVID-19 test within 24 hours of coming to campus. When you have your pre-arrival test result, take a picture of it with the date/time of the test and your signature beside the test result. Bring the picture of your negative test result with you when you come to campus. You will be asked to show the picture of your test result in order to pick up your room key.
- If your pre-arrival test is positive, you will need to delay your return to campus in order to recover from COVID. Please email a picture of your positive test result to Dean Cardwell (scardwel@conncoll.edu) and she will provide you with additional information about the process to return to campus.
- If you come to campus without a pre-arrival test, the College will provide you with a rapid test to take before you receive your room key. If you test positive and you traveled to campus by personal vehicle you will be expected to return home to recover. If you traveled by public transportation a Student Life staff member will coordinate with you plans for your recovery period.

• **On-Campus Testing:**

- The College will not be running a PCR testing program for asymptomatic students and employees.
- At the start of the semester, students will receive a test kit with two tests that they can use during the Fall semester. Students will receive their kit upon arrival.
- Rapid antigen tests for symptomatic testing will also be available for students at Student Health Services. These tests are only to be used for symptomatic testing and not used for

travel or other personal reasons. Rapid antigen tests are available at local stores if testing is needed for non-symptomatic purposes.

• **Masks:**

- Masking indoors is optional on campus except in the following locations/circumstances:
 - Masks are required in Warnshuis waiting area for Student Health Services and Student Counseling Services and in Student Health Services exam rooms.
 - Masks are required in campus spaces where signage notes that masking is still expected. You may communicate to people entering your room or workspace that you would like them to wear a mask by posting this [sign](#).
 - Masks are optional in classrooms unless the class is polled and it is determined that masks will be expected to be worn with the particular class group.
 - Masks are optional in meetings unless the meeting facilitator or group determines that masks will be expected to be worn in the meeting space.
- Masks are required if symptomatic with COVID-19 or other upper respiratory infection symptoms, within ten days of a COVID-19 positive test, or if you are identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19.
- People's circumstances are different, and therefore, we will make different choices in a variety of settings on whether we wear masks. As a result, it is important that our campus remain mask-friendly, as many individuals may choose to wear masks in spaces where they are not required or they may ask you to wear a mask. Please be courteous and respectful with regard to the needs and choices of others about masking. Everyone on campus is expected to carry a mask and be prepared to wear it:
 - Upon entering a space where masking is required or
 - Upon the request of another member of the community.
- KN95 masks are available in Student Health Services, Office of Student Life (Cro 218), Human Resources, Dean of the

Faculty Office, Unity House, Harris Dining Hall and Shain Library Circulation Desk.

• **Students Who Test Positive for COVID-19**

- If you test positive for COVID-19, you are expected to notify the College by sending a message to covidresults@conncoll.edu and immediately begin to follow the protocols below.
- Your recovery period is 5 to 10 days (Day 0 is the day you tested positive). The recovery period can end before 10 days if you test negative with a single rapid antigen test between Day 5 and Day 10. Please send a picture of your negative test result to covidresults@conncoll.edu. Once you submit the picture your recovery period is complete—you do not need to wait for a response from Student Life staff. If you complete the recovery period before 10 days, you should continue to take precautions (e.g., wear a well-fitting mask around other people) until Day 10.
- Students who can travel home in a private vehicle without using public transportation are encouraged to recover at home and to return to campus after a single negative test as described above.
- Students who can not travel home will recover in their room (in singles and multi-occupancy rooms) which is consistent with how we support students with other illnesses. Students may only leave their room to secure grab-n-go meals from the dining hall, to access bathrooms and medical care, and to be outside. Students must not go to classes, meetings, or participate in co-curricular programs while recovering.
- Students recovering in their room may use the bathroom on their floor, and are expected to wear a KN95 mask in the bathroom unless engaged in self-care that requires them to take off the mask momentarily (e.g., brushing teeth, showering, shaving).
- Students with COVID-19 may enter the dining hall to select their own food but may not eat in the dining hall. Students must use hand sanitizer before entering the dining hall and wear KN95 masks while in the space selecting their food.
- There are a limited number of dedicated recovery rooms on campus and these spaces, if available, will be used for

students who cannot go home and have roommate(s) with extenuating circumstances that require the student with COVID-19 to recover outside of their room. Students in this circumstance should call Campus Safety and request to speak with the Student Life staff member who is on-call.

- Students should be in contact with Student Health Services if you have any concerns during your recovery period (shs@conncoll.edu, 860-429-2275). If after-hours please contact Campus Safety (860-439-2222).
- The College will not be facilitating a contact tracing process. It is recommended that you notify people who you identify as being a close contact. A person is considered a close contact if they have been within six feet of you for 15 minutes or more during what is considered the infectious period, which is 48 hours prior to positive diagnosis or onset of symptoms.

• Close Contacts:

- You may hear directly from a person with COVID-19 that they tested positive and that you are a close contact.
- Close contacts should test with a rapid antigen test on Day 5 from their last contact with the positive person and should test if they begin to experience symptoms.
- Close contacts are expected to consistently wear a mask and should watch symptoms for 10 days from their last close contact with the positive person.

• Visitors:

- All campus buildings are open to visitors.
- Full-capacity attendance will be permitted indoors for events and other gatherings.
- Proof of vaccination or testing is not required for visitors.
- It is recommended that visitors be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 (initial two dose series and booster) and the College asks that all visitors perform a self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms. If a visitor has symptoms consistent with COVID-19 they should take a rapid antigen (at-home/over the counter) test before coming to campus. If the test is positive they should not come to campus and if it is negative they are

welcome to come to campus but, given the symptoms, should wear a KN95 mask or the equivalent.

We are also closely monitoring the rise in monkeypox cases, which prompted the World Health Organization to issue a [global health emergency](#). This is an evolving situation that Student Health Services is tracking closely so we can implement, if necessary, appropriate health and safety measures that protect our community. Connecticut's Department of Public Health is also building capacity for testing, treatment and vaccinations (for those who meet current criteria and with limited availability). For more details on monkeypox, I recommend that you review a [document](#) that Hartford HealthCare has prepared and posted on the Student Health Services website.

As we know, circumstances can change, and we will adjust, if necessary, but we anticipate these plans will guide us through the coming academic year. We will continue to communicate with the campus as necessary and the [Path Forward](#) COVID-19 website has up to date information about the campus protocols.

Thank you and we look forward to enjoying a successful fall semester together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'VA', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Victor Arcelus
Dean of Students