

Spring 2021 COVID-19 Informed Decision

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) reports that COVID-19 infection occurs mainly through exposure to respiratory droplets when a person is in close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

All members of the Saint Mary’s community must have a face covering that conceals their nose and mouth at all times when in public spaces including, but not limited to, common areas, classrooms, laboratories, performance spaces, the library, and when in someone’s office. All members of the campus community should have a face covering on hand at all times, even when outside. The face covering shall be worn outdoors when it is not possible to maintain a 6 foot distance from others.

In order to begin the semester with as close to 0 COVID cases as possible in our student population, the College requires all students who will live on campus and/or attend classes in person to submit negative results from a PCR COVID-19 test within a week from their move in date or first class, whichever is first. Exemption to this rule is granted for students who provide proof of a COVID positive diagnosis within 12 weeks from their move-in date or first class, whichever comes first, in accordance with CDC testing guidelines. In addition, all students living or participating in classes on campus and all employees working on campus are required to participate in screening testing when selected during the semester.

Roommates are considered “family” for the purposes of CDC guidelines. When socializing with those who are “family,” in the residential space, face coverings are not necessary. However, the face covering must be on hand to be worn if another person enters the residential space. The cloth for facial coverings must be opaque and not have any openings that would allow respiratory aerosol or droplets to escape.

Saint Mary’s has initiated a self-screening protocol for individuals on campus. Residential and commuter students who have a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms will not report to class and are to call the Health and Counseling Center for instructions. Quarantine and isolation space is available for residential students.

Saint Mary’s has reconfigured classrooms to accommodate appropriate physical distancing. The filters in the air handling system for buildings on campus have been upgraded. A contact tracing system is in place.

Saint Mary’s College has initiated enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of common areas of residence halls and academic buildings. These enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols are CDC compliant. Campus Dining at Saint Mary’s will comply with all CDC, Indiana, and St. Joseph County Health Department regulations regarding food service. In addition, the Noble Family Dining Hall has been configured for appropriate physical distancing and an outdoor tent has been erected to serve as an alternative dining option to further promote safety.

Guidance on gatherings of any size is provided by the St. Joseph County and/or the State of Indiana health departments. For the safety of the entire community, Saint Mary's strongly recommends that members of the campus community do not engage in large gatherings, or frequent events or establishments that pose a high risk of infection.

Students engaged in academic, volunteer, or clinical education, or work at agencies in the community, must follow the COVID-19 safety guidelines of Saint Mary's and those of the agency.

Saint Mary's College is taking steps to reduce the risk of transmission as much as possible. However, before an efficacious vaccination is widely available, communal living, dining, and learning are endeavors that entail risk.