



Policy Name:	COVID-19 Policy on Visitors, Facilities Use, Face Masks and College-Related Events		
Associated Form(s):	N/A	Policy Number:	2021-4
Reviewed:	Non-Academic Policy Review Committee	Approved:	June 9, 2021
Approval Authority:	President <i>Timothy L. Hall</i>	Adopted:	June 28, 2021
Responsible Executive(s):	1) VP Operations and Facilities 2) Chief Advancement Officer	Revised:	December 14, 2021
Responsible Office(s):	1) Facilities 2) Advancement	Contact(s):	1) Director of Operations 2) Director of Alumni Relations

## **I. POLICY STATEMENT**

In an effort to continue to protect the health and safety of the entire Mercy College community during the COVID-19 pandemic and to prevent and control the spread of the virus, the College has implemented the following procedures for visitors coming to any Mercy College campus or location (hereinafter “Mercy College facilities”); limitations on facilities use by alumni and external organizations; imposed face mask requirements; and limitations on organized Mercy College events, whether those events take place on or off Mercy campuses, until further notice.

## **II. VISITORS ON CAMPUS**

### **A. General Restrictions for Visitors**

Access to all Mercy College facilities is restricted to students, faculty, staff, designated vendors and service operators, and invited guests (i.e. parents/guardians, prospective students and families, board members, alumni, donors, partners, etc.) who are essential to our business model. All other visitors will be admitted by appointment only. In addition, all visitors to campus shall comply with the following guidelines:

#### **1. Proof of COVID-19 Vaccine.**

- All visitors ages 12 and older seeking to enter any Mercy College’s facilities must show proof of full COVID-19 vaccination.
- Full vaccination means: two weeks after their second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna Vaccines, or the single dose of the Johnson and Johnson vaccines.
- Starting January 28, 2022, children ages 5 to 11 must also show proof of full vaccination.
- Starting January 31, 2022, boosters are required for anyone currently eligible, which means:
  - 2 months after receiving the J&J vaccine
  - 5 months after receiving the second Pfizer or Moderna dose
- For those who are not currently eligible, they must obtain the booster within one month of when they do become eligible.

- Acceptable proof of the vaccine includes showing the CDC vaccine card (or copy of the card), the Excelsior Pass, the NYC COVID Safe App, or the CLEAR Health Pass.
  - The only exception to this policy are delivery-persons or other contractor/vendors who come indoors for a very limited duration.
2. **Masks.** Visitors are required to wear masks at all times while indoors except while eating or drinking and are encouraged to wear masks outdoors when social distancing is not feasible. See below for guidelines on acceptable masks.
  3. **Self-Screening.** Visitors shall refrain from coming to any Mercy campus location if they are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days, or have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 14 days.
  4. **Employee responsibilities.** Employees must meet their visitor at the designated entrance to the building where they will be meeting and escort them to and from the meeting space. All employees should consider meeting visitors via virtual platforms as much as practicable, in order to limit the number of visitors to Mercy's campuses.

#### B. Alumni Restrictions

Mercy College alumni must be fully vaccinated and must also obtain an alumni identification card prior to accessing any of Mercy's indoor facilities. To obtain an alumni card, proof of full COVID-19 vaccination (in accordance with the guidelines above regarding receipt of boosters) must be submitted in advance online at: [https://mercy.formstack.com/forms/alumni\\_campus\\_visit](https://mercy.formstack.com/forms/alumni_campus_visit). They can contact the Office of Alumni Relations at [alumni@mercy.edu](mailto:alumni@mercy.edu) or 914-674-7759 if they have any questions. Alumni must abide by the terms and conditions of the College's policies, including the Visitors Policy, and current COVID-19 gatherings and mask guidance.

#### C. Spectators at Athletic Event

Spectators at all Mercy College sporting events must abide by the following requirements:

1. **For outdoor sports**
  - They must wear face masks whenever they go indoors, and outdoors when they cannot maintain social distancing.

- Mercy fans will be required to sit opposite the Mercy team bench; the opposing team's spectators will be required to sit opposite their team's bench.
- 6-foot social distancing is required, except between families or groups that came together.
- No one shall be permitted to stand by the fence abutting the field.
- Tailgating is not permitted.

## 2. **Indoor Sports**

- Proof of vaccination must be provided before entering the gym to spectate. No exemptions permitted for any visitor, including Mercy community members.
- Face masks must be worn at all times, regardless of vaccination status.
- Athletes are permitted up to 2 spectators each. Lists containing the names and contact information of the expected spectators must be provided to Mercy's Athletic Director by both Mercy and the opposing team prior to the game.
- Anyone present must have 6-foot spacing except those with whom they came.
- Mercy fans must sit opposite the Mercy bench; opposing teams will sit opposite their team's bench.
- Athletes from opposing teams who do not have proof of vaccination may submit a negative COVID-19 test for the same day as the game is being played.

### D. External Groups

So that Mercy can remain focused on maintaining the health and safety of its College community, currently Mercy is not permitting groups external to Mercy to rent or utilize of any Mercy's facilities, except for certain circumstances which shall be approved by the President.

### E. Safety Precautions

Campus visitors must comply with the College's established personal safety practices, which currently include:

1. Wearing a face covering at all times while indoors and outdoors when social distancing is not feasible.
2. Complying with social distancing norms and other established safety guidelines while on campus.
3. Sanitizing hands upon entry to the campus.
4. Refraining from coming to campus if experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.

#### F. Contact Tracing

All Mercy employees who receive visitors shall obtain their contact information and retain that information for two weeks in the event there is a positive case on campus. Any visitor who shows signs or has a positive COVID-19 test after a visit to Mercy College should email [healthalert@mercy.edu](mailto:healthalert@mercy.edu) to inform the College when they were on campus and who they met with.

#### G. Disclaimer

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, is a highly infectious, life-threatening disease declared by the World Health Organization to be a global pandemic. While COVID-19 vaccines are widely available to those 12 and older, COVID-19, including its variants, still remains a significant threat. Mercy College continues to implement comprehensive safety measures to help to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19, which can be found on the College's website at: <http://www.mercy.edu/oncampus-plus>.

Despite the College's best efforts to control the spread of the virus, the College cannot guarantee a virus-free environment. As such, visitors to campus voluntarily assume full responsibility for any and all risks of illness or injury associated with their exposure to COVID-19, and completely absolve Mercy College, its trustees, officers, employees, agents, and contractors from any and all legal or financial responsibility, including, but not limited to, any personal injury, disability, illness, damage or death from exposure to COVID-19, whether such exposure occurs before, during or after the visit at any campus of Mercy College.

### **III. Mask Usage for All Community Members**

Acceptable face coverings indoors include surgical masks, N95 masks, KN95 masks and cloth masks (though Mercy strongly encourages surgical and N95 masks where possible). Bandanas, neck gaiters or fleeces and valve masks are not considered acceptable face coverings. Face shields may not be worn in lieu of face masks, though can be worn in conjunction with face masks. Individuals with disabilities may request an accommodation to the face mask requirement.

The following guidelines are currently in effect:

- A. **Outdoors:** masks are currently **not required while outdoors** on Mercy's campuses, though encouraged in large gatherings and/or where social distancing cannot be maintained.
- B. **Indoors: masks are required** inside all of Mercy's buildings in common spaces, including but not limited to the following areas:

1. Classrooms
  2. Common spaces (i.e., hallways, bathrooms, elevators, cafeteria lines, bookstore, library, etc.)
  3. Health and Counseling Offices
  4. Visitors to offices or cubicles (including students)
  5. Shared offices (regardless of vaccination status)
  6. Meeting rooms
- C. **Indoors: masks *not* required in:**
1. Individual offices

#### IV. **Mercy-Run Organized Events**

Mercy College reserves the right to limit any events, gatherings and meetings that will take place for any event it organizes, whether on or off-campus.

A. **For all organized events** (that are beyond ordinary student activities):

1. Visitors must show proof of vaccination
2. Employees and students must show their *Mercy safe app* with a green or yellow QR code (indicating either full vaccination status or having an exemption and compliance with testing requirements).

B. **Currently, due to the high transmission rate relating to the Omicron variant, all indoor events**, except for athletics, must be expressly approved in writing by the President, the Provost and the Vice President for Operations and Facilities.

C. All Mercy College-related organized events run by the College, whether on Mercy campuses or off-campus, **where food is served** must be approved in advance in writing by the President, Provost and the Vice President for Operations and Facilities, and must abide by all pertinent rules, regulations and orders relating to the venue and activity.

#### V. **Off-Campus Events and Travel**

- A. All off-campus events relating to Mercy College business but not run or organized by the College itself must adhere to any current local, state, and federal guidelines

as well as any restrictions imposed by the business/entity in which the location is being operated.

- B. Business-related travel, including conference, domestic, and international travel must be in accordance with all local, state and federal guidelines, including any travel restrictions that may be imposed, *and* must have the advance written approval of the area Vice President or Dean.

If there are any questions about this Policy, please contact the General Counsel at (914) 674-7544, or [kbowes@mercy.edu](mailto:kbowes@mercy.edu). Any exceptions to this Policy must be reviewed and approved by the President in writing.

***The College maintains the discretion at all times to modify this policy, including but not limited to, denying access to Mercy's campuses in order to maintain the health and safety of the College community in light of the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic.***