

State University of New York COVID-19 Guidance: Effective as of Summer Semester 2023

The COVID situation has changed significantly over the last several years. As of March 2023, approximately 77.6% of 18–25-year-olds and 79.8% of 26–34-year-olds have completed their primary series vaccinations in New York State. Higher vaccination rates, natural immunity, lower rates of infection, and generally less severe variants have led to increased relaxation of mandates on the city, state, and national level. Nationally, the public health emergency is ending.

This revised guidance reflects current conditions and is grounded in science to maximize the well-being of the community. These protocols are subject to change as COVID conditions evolve. In addition, nothing herein limits the authority of campuses to impose additional COVID restrictions within their current authority if not enumerated in the following guidance. Campuses must continue to comply with any additional requirements imposed by the State, SUNY, and local jurisdictions as appropriate.

I. VACCINE AND BOOSTER POLICY

- a. All students are strongly encouraged to stay up to date on their initial course of vaccinations and boosters consistent with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations. While vaccines are not required at this time as a condition of enrollment, SUNY reserves the authority to change this policy at any time because of changes in local conditions or due to requirements imposed by Federal, State or local authorities.
- b. Students enrolled in any program or course or who are participating in a clinical or internship held at a third-party location must continue to comply with all health and safety guidelines, including any vaccination or testing protocols that are in place at the third-party location. Certain employees, students, and volunteers at healthcare facilities, including SUNY healthcare facilities and hospitals, may be subject to mandatory COVID-19 vaccination pursuant to relevant regulations and policies.
- c. Campuses may, due to changes in local conditions and after consultation with Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Health & Hospital Affairs, and the SUNY General Counsel, choose to keep their current policy in place, or impose additional vaccine requirements, including a requirement for any boosters, for other campus activities including access to certain campus facilities.

III. MASKS & SOCIAL DISTANCING

- a. Campuses will continue to monitor local conditions and determine if mask mandates are required. Such assessment should include an evaluation of CDC guidance and any metrics that exist at that time. Campuses may continue to maintain a mask requirement in any venue or with any specific population on campus in their sole discretion.
- b. Campuses must maintain a clear plan for actions they will take if cases in the community or on campus begin to increase significantly.
- c. All students, faculty, and staff need to follow the masking requirements for activities or instruction delivered at a third-party location.

IV. TESTING

- a. Campuses, in their discretion, may implement a surveillance testing program of all individuals, regardless of vaccination status. This may include testing for certain high-risk activities. Campuses may also include regular testing of employees pursuant to a campus level labor management agreement.
- b. Where possible, PCR-based testing is recommended since rapid antigen tests have lower sensitivity, especially in people without symptoms. Given this, PCR-based testing is the best approach for surveillance testing.
- c. Testing is recommended for people with symptoms of COVID-19 as soon as possible after symptoms begin. Campuses should make testing available for students and employees who show symptoms or who are exposed to someone who tests positive.
- d. If rapid antigen tests are used, it may be necessary to test serially (repeat test).
- e. Testing following an exposure and testing of people without symptoms should be performed in consultation with a clinician or follow institutional testing policies.
- f. Campuses are encouraged to also consider implementing or restarting wastewater surveillance testing. Surges in SARS-CoV-2 levels in wastewater are highly predictive of campus outbreaks, and sampling also enables the monitoring for newly emerging variants.

VI. QUARANTINE & ISOLATION

- a. Campuses are strongly encouraged to maintain an appropriate level of isolation space or quarantine for students who test positive for COVID-19 in accordance with CDC guidelines and the local health department.
- b. For situations in which isolating off campus is not possible, students may remain in their room just as with the flu, strep throat, and other illnesses. Students should be encouraged to engage in protective measures per CDC recommendations to prevent the spread of illnesses to the greatest extent possible.
- c. SUNY continues to strongly recommend that affiliates stay home if they feel unwell and isolate according to CDC guidelines if they test positive for COVID-19.

VII. PIVOT TO REMOTE INSTRUCTION OR ACTIVITY

- a. Campuses should continue to monitor local conditions and must obtain approval from SUNY System Administration to change to a virtual or remote format for academic instruction, delay the start of the semester, modify spring break, or delay or change the format of commencement activities.

VIII. ONGOING DATA COLLECTION

- a. Campuses are required to continue to report the vaccine status of all enrolled students to SUNY System Administration to ensure ability to monitor campus specific vaccination rates and potential outbreaks.
- b. This reporting can be accomplished via SUNY Administration solutions whereby campuses directly report the vaccination status of their students, use the campus-to-System interconnection ([SUNY Vaccine Verification API](#)), and/or a student-facing portal ([SUNY Vaccination Verification Application](#)). For any assistance or questions about these integrations, please contact OAS-SHDR@suny.edu.

IX. COMPLIANCE

- a. Any incidents of non-compliance with any SUNY or campus protocols will be handled through the individual Campus Code of Conduct process for students and Human Resources for employees.