



WKU Environmental Health and Safety

Policy EHS-002

**Protective Measures in Response to the
Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic
Updated for Fall Semester 2021**

Policy Number: EHS-002

Policy Name: Protective Measures in Response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
Pandemic

Policy Description: This policy is designed to define required protocols and practices focused on reducing the spread of the COVID-19 virus to protect WKU faculty, staff, students, and visitors.

Policy Guidance: This policy is based on directives and guidance documents from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Office of the Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and state and local health departments.

Scope and Application: This policy applies to all WKU faculty, staff, students, contractors, and visitors.

Protective Measures

The following measures are instituted at all WKU campuses and apply to all faculty, staff, students, and visitors:

- **Health Checks**
 - All persons shall complete a daily health check prior to reporting to campus. Any person exhibiting symptoms consistent with the COVID-19 virus should self-quarantine at their residence, notify their supervisor or professors, and consult with a healthcare provider.
 - Symptoms consistent with COVID-19 include:
 - Fever (> 100.3 F.) or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea

- **Hand Hygiene**

- Understanding that viruses can be transferred from a person's hand into their bodies via their mouth, nose, or eyes, WKU will maintain appropriate facilities in all public restrooms to facilitate hand washing.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be provided and maintained at strategic locations within university buildings.

- **Masks**

For the purpose of this policy, "masks" are defined as cloth face coverings, disposable masks, and gaiters. All persons entering WKU campuses must appropriately wear a mask that covers both the nose and mouth as follows:

- At all times when in public areas or shared spaces within buildings, including hallways, classrooms, laboratories, elevators, etc.
- When in a vehicle with other persons, including cars, vans, and buses.

- **Exceptions to Masking Requirements**

The following are examples of exceptions to the requirement for masks:

- Persons seated in a designated dining area, actively eating.
- Persons actively engaged in physical exercise indoors within designated fitness and/or athletic training facilities.
- In laboratories or other specialized environments where conditions exist that preclude the wearing of masks. In these situations, a written operating procedure must be developed that details the protective measures employed to protect individuals from the transmission of COVID-19.
- Persons who have a condition that precludes them from wearing mask may not enter WKU buildings or otherwise violate this policy by not wearing a mask. These individuals should follow the guidance outlined in the "Requests for Accommodations" section of this policy.

- **Face Shields as an Alternative to Masks**

Face shields may not be worn as an alternative to a mask with the following exceptions:

- Persons in areas where masks cannot be worn as outlined in the previous section. The exception must be limited to periods of time and defined areas where hazards exist, with specific details included in a written operating procedure.
- Persons who have a validated medical condition or disability that precludes them from wearing a mask may request an accommodation as detailed later in this policy.

Face shields may be worn in addition to a mask to provide an extra measure of protection.

- **Alternative Work Arrangements/Operating Practices**

Protecting employees from potential exposure to COVID-19 includes provisions for implementation of alternative work arrangements and modified operating practices in conducting the business of the university. All operational units should explore opportunities to employ practices applicable to their operations. Examples may include:

- Replace in-person meetings with video- or tele-conference calls.
- Provide student support services virtually, as feasible.
- Review options for telework for employees at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Use of technological solutions to process business and academic transactions or deliver remote customer service to eliminate the need for face-to-face interactions or the direct handling of paperwork.

- **Requests for Disability or Medically Required Accommodations**

Exceptions to any provisions of the policy from WKU Faculty and Staff will be reviewed, and a decision rendered by WKU office of Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action/University ADA Services (EEO) joshua.hayes@wku.edu . Exceptions to any provisions of the policy from WKU Students will be reviewed, and a decision rendered by the Student Accessibility Resource Center sarc.connect@wku.edu .

Case Management

- **Environmental Health and Safety/Emergency Management**

The Department of Environmental Health and Safety/Emergency Management is focused on supporting multiple aspects of the university's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The EH&S staff leads the Healthy at Work initiatives and manages the COVID-19 Assistance Line (270) 745-2019 and Covid.Help@wku.edu email.

Reports of confirmed and suspected cases of COVID-19 will be referred immediately to the Barren River District Health Department (BRDHD) for investigation and potential contact tracing.

- **Medical Direction**

Medical direction will be provided by healthcare practitioners from Graves Gilbert Clinic, Med-Center Health, or private physicians selected by individual faculty, staff, or students. Individuals with confirmed infections of COVID-19 may be asked by their supervisor or a Healthy at Work Officer to provide a clearance from their healthcare provider or Graves Gilbert Clinic prior to returning to regular campus activities.

- **Medical Emergencies**

Anyone experiencing or witnessing a medical emergency should immediately dial 9-1-1.

WKU police will respond to the Bowling Green area Campuses including South Campus, Center for Research and Development, and the Farm. Local police, fire and EMS will respond to the extended campus as needed.

- **Access to COVID-19 Testing**

Graves Gilbert Clinic will provide both antibody and live virus testing for faculty, staff, and students. The WKU-GGC location is open Monday-Friday; most other GGC locations in Bowling Green are open seven days per week. In addition, several local pharmacies and clinics provide COVID-19 testing services.

- **Mandatory Reporting of Positive Test Results and Close Contacts**

To help control the spread of the COVID-19 virus, it is mandated that all faculty, staff, students, and contractor employees who physically work or attend classes at any WKU Campus or other WKU locations are required to report to the WKU COVID Assistance Line if they receive a positive COVID-19 test result, or are aware that they have been a close contact with someone (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more) who has received a positive test result. In addition, these persons must also take immediate steps to self-quarantine in accordance with CDC and public health guidelines.

Persons receiving a positive test result are encouraged to notify everyone they have been in close contact with near the date of their test or onset of symptoms. In addition, it is required that WKU faculty, staff, students, and contractor employees cooperate with inquiries from public health officials and WKU COVID Case Managers and fully disclose all close contacts during the interview process.

Persons receiving a positive COVID-19 test result, or who have been in close contact with someone confirmed positive must call the WKU COVID-19 Assistance Line (270) 745-2019 or email covid.help@wku.edu within 4 hours of their receipt of a positive test confirmation or becoming aware of being a close contact.

Additionally, students residing in on-campus housing must follow the provisions outlined in this policy in addition to other requirements proscribed by WKU Housing and Residence Life (HRL). Students testing positive or who are a close contact to a positive case CAN NOT quarantine in their regularly assigned room or apartment.

To be eligible for on-campus isolation/quarantine, a student must:

- Be a resident of WKU's residential buildings during the current term.
- Have a permanent home address three or more hours of travel from WKU's Bowling Green campus OR
- Be too ill for immediate travel with a medical recommendation stating they do not require hospitalization and may isolate/quarantine until able to return to their permanent address OR
- Be an international student with a permanent home address outside the U.S. OR Be an independent student, as defined by federal financial aid and WKU, where WKU is their residence of record.

A student requiring isolation/quarantine and meeting the on-campus eligibility criteria will be assigned to a quarantine facility by an EH&S COVID team member.

A student or employee may seek assistance from a WKU COVID Case Manager in validating their quarantine status to their respective faculty or supervisor.

Failure to make the appropriate notifications to WKU, failing to quarantine, or committing other acts that place other persons at risk from the COVID-19 virus, will result in enforcement actions as noted later in this policy document, or as noted in other university policies and practices.

- **Contact Tracing**

Designated WKU COVID Case Managers will perform case management and contact tracing following reports of positive cases to the COVID-19 Assistance Line or notifications from Graves Gilbert Clinic or the Barren River District Health Department. The identities of persons notifying WKU officials of potential exposures or positive COVID-19 test results will remain confidential and will only be shared with medical or public health professionals directly involved with the case.

- **Quarantine**

All WKU-affiliated faculty, staff, students, contractors, and vendors who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, have tested positive, have been in close contact with someone who tested positive for the virus, have been contacted by public health or healthcare practitioner and have been directed to isolate or quarantine, or have traveled to a state or country that is covered by a travel restriction issued from the Office of the Governor, are required to self-quarantine for the period prescribed, typically 7-10 days. The specified duration of an individual's isolation/quarantine period will be determined by their private healthcare practitioner, WKU-GGC, local Health Department, or WKU Case Manager.

Operational Practices

- **Food Service Operations Areas**

Food and vending service areas provided under the university Aramark or Canteen contracts will be operated and maintained in accordance with prescribed food service general and COVID-19 specific requirements by the vendor personnel.

- **Enforcement of Compliance**

Compliance with all protective measures by all persons is of paramount importance in preventing the spread of COVID-19, reducing the need for quarantine, and sustaining the university's return to in-person classes, athletics, and student and community activities that represent the core mission of WKU.

The primary initiatives to encourage compliance among all persons include clear communication of prescribed protective measures including requirements for mask usage, reinforcement of the implications of COVID-19, and the need to protect each other as members of the Hilltopper community.

The drastic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic require the university take compliance actions when necessary to minimize transmission of the virus and allow members of the campus community to live, work, and learn in a healthy setting. These actions may include:

- **Staff (Non-Faculty)**

Non-Faculty Employees who knowingly fail to comply with the protective measures applicable to their work areas or assigned job functions or the reporting mandates outlined earlier in this document may be subject to disciplinary actions as prescribed in Policy 4.8501 Disciplinary Actions for All Non-Faculty Employees. <https://www.wku.edu/policies/docs/index.php?policy=292>

- **Faculty**

Faculty Employees who knowingly fail to comply with the protective measures applicable to their work areas or assigned job functions or the reporting mandates outlined earlier in this document may be subject to disciplinary actions as prescribed in the Faculty Handbook.

<https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/documents/wku-faculty-handbook-27th-edition.pdf>

- **Students**

Students who knowingly fail to comply with protective measures or the reporting mandates outlined earlier in this document may be subject to disciplinary actions as prescribed in the Student Code of Conduct. <https://www.wku.edu/studentconduct/student-code-of-conduct.php>

Additionally, students residing in on-campus housing may be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including removal from housing for violations of this policy or other policies and procedures established by WKU Housing and Residence Life.

Faculty are authorized to take immediate actions within their classroom and laboratories and other in-person teaching environments to assure that all students comply with the requirements for masking. These actions may include directing a student to leave the area, to secure a mask, or for repeated incidents the administrative removal of the student from the course.

Contractors/Vendors

Employees of contractors or vendors that provide services to WKU campuses who fail to comply with the protective measures, or the reporting mandates outlined earlier in this document, are subject to penalties ranging from a written notification of violation of campus policy to termination of contracts. Incidents of non-compliance involving contractors or vendor should be reported in an email to covid.help@wku.edu.

- **Visitors**

Visitors to the WKU campus must also comply with the provisions of this policy. Visitors who fail to wear masks are not allowed in university buildings. If the visitor is a guest of a university department or employee, the host is responsible for enforcement of this policy.

If the visitor is attending an athletic event or performance, the event staff shall act to enforce the policy. Visitors outside these categories that fail to comply should be reported via email at covid.help@wku.edu.

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