

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

Interim Face Covering Policy

I. Interim Face Covering Policy

As announced by Baylor University on June 22, 2020, face coverings are required to be worn by all individuals (faculty, staff, students, and visitors, including contractors, service providers, and others) inside all buildings on the Baylor University campus (including all extension campuses in cities such as Austin, Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio) and in all outside campus areas where 6' social distancing is not possible or where congestion is likely. This expectation will remain in place until the University makes an official announcement otherwise. Each of us, as a member of a Christian University, has a responsibility to make decisions that place the health and well-being of all members of our community as our highest priority as we work together to acquire education in a mutually healthy way. We wear face coverings for each other and not just for ourselves.

This requirement—a vital part of our many COVID-19 mitigation efforts—is in place until further notice by Baylor University and is subject to change based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and in coordination with the City of Waco and state of Texas health directives. The layering of strategies to prevent COVID-19 spread that we expect all members of the Baylor community to practice include self-assessment for symptoms, handwashing, cleaning and disinfecting, wearing face coverings, maintaining social distance between other people, and staying home when not feeling well. Wearing a face covering is not a replacement for these other COVID-19 preventive measures, and the University strongly encourages the campus community to continue to practice all of these healthy habits daily.

Face coverings can take multiple forms, but the preferred face coverings to be worn within Baylor University buildings are the masks provided to all faculty, staff, and students at the beginning of the fall semester. Face coverings must be worn properly covering the mouth and nose. Based on August 2020 research from the CDC and Duke University, bandanas, scarves, masks with valves do not satisfy the University's face covering requirement. Gaiters are permitted in outdoor locations only. Full face coverings that prevent the recognition of a student are not permitted in accordance with the University's *Student Dress and Appearance Policy*. Regardless of the type of acceptable face covering worn, each must conform to CDC guidelines and must be worn in a manner consistent with those guidelines:

[Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#)

II. Face Coverings at Work and Other Public Activities

The requirement to wear face coverings applies to all employees (students, staff, faculty, and temporary workers), contractors, vendors, suppliers, and visitors on campus. All of these individuals will be required to wear a face covering in order to enter the workplace, including all public settings where individuals might encounter others in spaces such as hallways, elevators, and stairways. All members of the Baylor community are required to wear face coverings when outside of their private office and when physical social distancing measures may not be feasible.

Examples of public settings include areas outside of your enclosed private office such as:

- Entrances and exits of buildings,
- Building atriums such as those found in the Baylor Sciences Building and the Paul L. Foster Campus for Business and Innovation,
- Classrooms,
- Shared workspaces unless other social distancing measures are in play,
- Shared work vehicles,
- Common meeting space, break rooms, or lounge areas,
- Dining facilities, except when specifically eating or drinking,
- Public Restrooms,
- Student Union Building and public event spaces,
- Elevators and hallways,
- Outdoors if safe social distancing is not possible or where congestion is likely

Employees are not required to wear a face covering within their private office space provided that they are alone in that space. If others enter private office space, all individuals within that space are expected to wear their face coverings. All offices on campus should make extra face coverings available for anyone who enters that area and who may not have a face covering available. If an employee must return home to obtain a face covering, the time to return home may be paid through vacation, sick leave benefits, flexible work arrangements with one's supervisor, or may be unpaid time if leave benefits are not available.

Any employee who has concerns about this interim policy should contact his or her supervisor and discuss options available to support the work that needs to be done while maintaining the health and safety of all employees, students, and visitors. Employees should contact their Human Resources Consultant (HRC) to determine needs and accommodations available to meet those needs. Any request for accommodation for a disability should comply with BU-PP 415, Americans with Disabilities Act. All medical information is protected health information and will be confidentially stored within the Human Resources division.

These rules cover all invited visitors to campus, including parents. Further guidance will be issued prior to any events open to alumni or the general public.

III. Face Coverings in Classrooms

All instructors and students are required to wear face coverings throughout the duration of each in-person class session. Face shields or plexiglass barriers do not substitute for a properly worn face covering as outlined in section I above. Students will not be admitted to class without a properly worn face covering that conforms to CDC guidelines. Any student who refuses to wear a face covering for the duration of a class period will be dismissed, and that student will be counted absent for that day's class session. If the student refuses to leave the classroom, the instructor may dismiss in-person class for that day; such a student will be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Code of Conduct. All students should enter and exit buildings immediately before and after class and not loiter in common spaces.

Any student who does not qualify for one of the exceptions below, but who refuses to wear a face covering to class must adjust her or his course schedule so as to enroll only in online courses. The student will not be permitted to attend live classes and will be asked to leave campus. Any student who qualifies for one of the exceptions found below (see Section VI) must adjust his or her schedule so as to enroll only in online courses, unless it is determined that there are less restrictive means to ensure the health of the community.

Syllabus Statement for Faculty

At least through the fall 2020 semester, faculty are encouraged to include the following Face Covering Syllabus Statement in all of their course syllabi for courses that involve in-person instruction:

Baylor University is committed to providing a safe educational environment for all students, faculty, and staff. In order to create the healthiest environment possible, students and instructors must properly wear face coverings over their mouths and noses while in Baylor buildings and while in the classroom. In addition, social distancing should be maintained within all classroom environments.

Any student who does not bring a face covering or refuses to wear one will be dismissed from class and be considered absent. If a student who is not wearing a face covering refuses to leave class, the instructor may dismiss in-person class for that day. Such a student will be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Code of Conduct.

IV. Face Coverings in Residence Halls

Face coverings are required to be worn in all public areas of the residence halls. This includes, but is not limited to, lounges, front desks, hallways, classrooms, reflection rooms, community kitchens, laundry rooms, mail rooms, and elevators. Guests, who may only visit a room, suite, or apartment with prior approval from all roommates and suitemates, must also wear face coverings in all public locations within the residence hall. Residents of the room, suite, or

apartment can pre-determine if their guests are required to wear face coverings within their room, suite, or apartment. Students who fail to comply with this interim policy are subject to disciplinary action through the Student Code of Conduct.

V. Face Coverings in Research and Teaching Labs

Face coverings are required to be worn in all Baylor laboratories. In labs where high heat or open flames are used, the recommended face covering is an FDA-approved surgical mask. Surgical masks are flame-resistant and available upon request from the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) office. A flame-resistant face shield is a permitted alternative to a surgical mask. However, face shields are in short supply and may not be available.

A person who cannot wear a face covering due to a medical condition should contact Human Resources (HR) if he or she is an employee or the Office of Access and Learning Accommodations (OALA) if he or she is a student to discuss accommodation requests. The requirement of face coverings in laboratories does not supersede additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements that are specific to a given research operation (e.g., when a respirator would be required). Researchers should consult with EHS to determine an acceptable practice in these situations.

VI. Special Circumstances

Please note that face coverings may not be required if:

- A. an individual is younger than 10 years of age,
- B. an employee has made an accommodation request with Human Resources (HR) through BU-PP 415, Americans with Disability Act, and has an accommodation that specifically addresses the need not to wear a face covering,
- C. an individual is working alone inside an enclosed office space,
- D. a person is actively eating/drinking in an area appropriately designated for eating/drinking purposes. Note: eating/drinking is not allowed in any classroom (drinking from a water bottle within a classroom without full removing a mask is acceptable)

If a student who is registered with the Office of Access and Learning Accommodations (OALA) has a disability that prevents that student from wearing a CDC approved face covering and the student therefore cannot follow the University's established COVID-19 safety protocols, the arrangement for that student will be online classes.

VII. Points of Contact Regarding Potential Interim Policy Violations

If any member of the Baylor community comes into contact with someone who is not wearing a face covering and should be doing so under this interim policy, these individuals should remind the person of the institution's interim policy in a polite and nonaggressive manner. Please note that the individual may have a medical condition preventing him or her from wearing a face

covering. As a policy matter, the issue should be referred to the appropriate office for remedy. Those office contacts include the following:

1. Student Violations: Student Conduct Administration; 254.710.1715 or judicial_affairs@baylor.edu
2. Faculty and Staff Violations: Baylor Human Resources; 254.710.2000 or askHR@baylor.edu
3. Vendor Violations: Baylor Procurement Services; 254.710.1561 or procurement_services@baylor.edu
4. Visitor Violations: Contact your department leadership or supervisor

*Additional information will become available through Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) posted on Baylor's website.

Revised by W. Null and C. Holmes on August 17, 2020

Revised by W. Null and C. Holmes on August 25, 2020

Approved by President's Council on August 26, 2020