



COVID-19 Directive

Use of Masks/Face Coverings on Campus

1.0 Directive – July 5, 2021

1.1 Consistent with Step 3 of BC's Restart (effective July 1) and guidance from the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), Okanagan College recommends masks be worn by students, employees and visitors in indoor public places for all people 12 and older who are not yet fully vaccinated.

The complete mask guidance from the PHO for Step 3 is available at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restart#step-three>. It includes:

Mask guidance

Masks are recommended in indoor public places for all people 12 and older who are not yet fully vaccinated. The [mask mandate order](#) under the Emergency Program Act was lifted July 1.

- *You're fully vaccinated 14 days after [dose 2](#)*
- *Masks are optional for children aged 2 to 12*
- *Children under 2 should not wear masks*
- *Proof of vaccination does not need to be requested by service providers*
- *Some people may choose to continue to wear a mask after they're fully vaccinated and that's okay*

Following the Provincial COVID-19 Return to Campus Guidelines, that allows for careful social contact from July 1-Sept. 6, the College also recommends mask use when physical distancing of two metres from others cannot be maintained when learning or working, including outdoors. See sections 4 and 5 below for details and exceptions.

As an individual's ability to wear a mask and vaccination status are both private health information, members of the OC community are reminded that they should not enquire about an employees' or students' vaccination status. All students and employees will be supported in their decision to wear a mask or not.

2.0 Introduction and Background

2.1 Introduction

- a. This Directive is responsive to the provincial context of COVID-19 and may be updated periodically. It may also be modified in response to local conditions.
- b. The College will continue to follow the guidance of the Provincial Health Officer, Interior Health, WorkSafeBC and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training.

2.2 The College is committed to the health and safety of its employees, students, contractors and visitors.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 For purposes of this Directive, “mask” means a non-medical face mask that covers the nose and mouth, ties around the ears or back of the head, fits snugly against the sides of the face, is secured under the chin and is designed to protect persons other than the wearer. “Masks” do not include N95 and other filtered masks required by healthcare workers.

4.0 Scope

4.1 This Directive applies to College employees, students, contract workers, vendors and visitors.

4.2 Wearing a non-medical mask is recommended while in indoor public places on campus. Indoor public places include but are not limited to building entryways, washrooms, hallways, stairwells, shared office spaces (until seated at your desk/work station), a workplace vehicle when being used to transport more than one worker for work-related purposes, a vehicle provided by a post-secondary institution when being used to transport students, and other high-traffic areas. Non-medical masks are also recommended where physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained.

4.3 Per guidance from the PHO, Okanagan College is transitioning away from a COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan to a Communicable Disease Plan as part of its ongoing response to support the health and safety of students, employees and visitors. This plan will be posted to the College’s COVID-19 / Return to Campus page when available.

5.0 Exemptions

5.1 The recommendation to wear a mask does not in any way replace or eliminate an employee’s, student’s or visitor’s obligation to use respirators, surgical masks, face shields or any other job-specific personal protection equipment (PPE) required by the College’s safe-work procedures or Occupational Health and Safety policies, regulations and directives.

5.2 Masks are not recommended when:

- a. The person has received advice from a medical professional that wearing a mask may pose a health risk to or impair the breathing of the wearer;
- b. Wearing a mask would create a health or safety risk to the wearer as determined by federal, provincial or local regulators or Occupational Health and Safety guidelines;
- c. The person is physically unable to put on or take off the mask without assistance;
- d. The person has trouble breathing, is unconscious or cannot remove the mask without help;
- e. The person is deaf or hard of hearing and relies on facial and mouth movements to communicate;
- f. The person is under two years of age; or
- g. The face covering is removed temporarily for the purpose of identifying the worker or student wearing it;
- h. The face covering is removed temporarily to communicate with a person with a disability or diverse ability, where visual cues, facial expressions or lip reading or lip movements are important;
- i. The worker or student is consuming food or a beverage in an area designated by Okanagan College for that purpose, in which case the worker or student must be seated and must maintain a distance of two metres from other workers or students in the area;
- j. The worker or student is carrying out personal hygiene;
- k. The worker or student is on their own in a workplace vehicle or a post-secondary institution vehicle;
- l. The worker is working on their own in a workplace;
- m. The student is playing a musical instrument in the course of the student's educational program and is unable to play the instrument while wearing a mask;
- n. There is a physical barrier between the worker or student and other workers or students which blocks the transmission of droplets.

6.0 Application

6.1 This Directive applies until rescinded or amended by the College.

7.0 Accommodations

7.1 This section previously outlined formal accommodation processes for students, employees and visitors unable to wear masks when these were provincially mandated. As that mandate has been rescinded effective July 1, 2021, there is no further need for a formal accommodation process.

Attachment A: Face Mask Use Do's & Don'ts

Do's

- DO make sure your mask completely covers your nose and mouth
- DO put on your mask properly using the tie loops or elastic bands that secure behind your head or ears
- DO wear your mask snugly around your face and adjust it as necessary throughout the day
- DO, when taking off your mask and putting it down, place it with the outside down on a tissue. If a tissue isn't available, clean the surface on which you placed it afterwards
- DO wash your hands and face after removing the mask and before touching your face
- DO keep your mask clean and launder it once a day in warm water
- DO store your mask in a clean and dry space or properly dispose of it
- DO request a new mask if the one you're using becomes unsanitary or damaged

Don'ts

- DON'T wear your mask under your nose or mouth
- DON'T let a strap dangle down or cross the straps
- DON'T touch or adjust your face mask without cleaning your hands before and after
- DON'T wear your mask on your head (other than covering your nose and mouth) or around your neck or arm
- DON'T let your mask fog your safety glasses or otherwise obstruct your vision
- DON'T lay your mask on a surface that could be contaminated or where your mask might contaminate the surface
- DON'T wear your mask near machinery, equipment or parts in which it may become entangled
- DON'T use a mask if it is damaged in any way