

College and University Minimum Recommendations

Background

The Missouri Center for Public Health Excellence is an organization of public health departments dedicated to the improvement of public health services in Missouri. It is not our purpose or intention to mandate any type of activity to be followed by either public health departments, colleges or universities in the state of Missouri. We recognize that the college or university is unique and will have rules to follow based on the conference and other professional organization that it belongs to or is accredited by.

We further recognize that every college, university, and local public health department faces very unique situations specific to the number of students served, number of buildings on the campus, the number of dormitory residents and other facilities. There is no one standard plan that will fit the needs of every college and university. Each campus whether public or private must develop its own plan that meets the needs of its faculty, staff, community, and students. Local public health departments stand ready to assist in this planning, but we are not here to dictate how to provide educational services.

These guidelines are intended to assist colleges, universities, and public health departments develop collaborative procedures to open the schools in their location and to be sure that these schools are able to stay open.

1) General guidelines

- Recommend policy requiring masks for all professors, staff, and students when unable to maintain at least 6 feet of physical distancing.
- Recommend masks when going to and from classes and in congregate areas
- Recommend assigned seating and sign-ins in all classrooms (to assist with contact tracing investigations, if needed).
- Encourage social distancing within the classrooms and in common areas (consider reducing class sizes and cancelling large gatherings).
- Frequent cleaning and disinfection of dorms and common areas.
- Students at high risk (e.g. with underlying medical conditions) should consider utilizing virtual instruction, as well as alternate housing instead of congregate housing.
- Ensure adequate testing / medical resources for students and staff.
- To assure the health and safety of our communities those with signs and symptoms of COVID-19 will need to be tested and if positive, isolated and excluded from in-person schooling.

- All associated contacts with person testing positive for COVID-19 will also be removed from in-person schooling and quarantined.

2) **Communication expectations**

- Coordination will be needed between the public health department and college on contact tracing and other needed quarantine and isolation services.
- Each institution should identify a contact person to work on cases.
- Establish frequent, ongoing communication with students, parents and staff.

3) **Closure and quarantine practices**

- Quarantine all students within 6 feet of an infected student.
- Students will need to be in quarantine for 14 days after exposure.
- Set aside designated space in living facilities for students who need isolation or quarantine. Ideally, this would include a private bedroom and bathroom. Alternatively, set aside separate floors or wings of a residential building away from other residents. In the case of widespread illness, if there are no other options, it may be necessary to work with your local health department to come up with an alternative housing plan.
- Recommendations about prolonged closure will depend on the level of cohorting the school has been adhering to, the community level of disease and the current burden of infection impacting local hospital systems.

4) **Dorms / congregate living**

- Have virtual classes available for infected or quarantined students.
- Consider drop-off meals service for infected or quarantined students.
- Limit or prohibit visitors.
- Limit access to floors and buildings. If possible, limit visitor access to a single point of entry.
- Post signs at entrances instructing visitors to refrain from entering if they are symptomatic or have had close contact with a COVID-19 patient.

Influenza Vaccination Recommendation

It is our goal to have the most productive and least intrusive academic year. CDC states "Ensuring that routine vaccination is maintained or reinitiated during the COVID-19 pandemic is essential for protecting individuals and communities from vaccine-preventable diseases and outbreaks. Routine vaccination prevents illnesses that lead to unnecessary medical visits, hospitalizations and further strain the healthcare system. For the upcoming influenza season, influenza vaccination will be paramount to reduce the impact of respiratory illnesses in the population and resulting burdens on the healthcare system during the COVID-19 pandemic." The co-existence of COVID-19 and influenza may cause high numbers of absenteeism. With these things in mind we strongly recommend influenza vaccination for all who can medically receive it.