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Coronavirus Update 8-6-21

The Coronavirus Planning Team

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Friday August 6, 2021 10:31AM

Coronavirus Planning Contact Us coronavirusplanningcontactus@sacredheart.edu

Coronavirus Update 8-6-21

Dear members of the Sacred Heart University community,

Happy August! It's hard to believe that in a few short weeks, you will all be back on campus for what we hope will be an exciting and much more normal semester. As you know, the rise of the delta variant has put a little bit of a damper on things by necessitating, for now, that everyone wears masks indoors whether vaccinated or not. We know you are disappointed—we all are. But it is a small price to pay for the health and safety of our community. Here are some things we know about COVID-19 and the delta variant:

- Getting vaccinated prevents severe illness, hospitalizations and death and helps prevent spread of the virus within communities
- Delta is different than past versions of the virus as it is much more contagious and there have been small instances of breakthrough infection (vaccinated people getting it) and transmission
- The CDC and state DPH are recommending that even fully vaccinated individuals wear masks indoors in areas of substantial or high transmission. Fairfield County currently falls into that category

We know from your emails that many of you have questions as you prepare to return to campus, so we are going to attempt to answer as many as we can in today's message.

Vaccination Deadlines

We want to remind you that your first dose needs to take place by August 13, and students will need to upload the documentation to their health portals. The second dose needs to be completed by September 15. If we do not have information in your health portals (either proof of a first dose or an approved exemption), we will be unable to allow you on campus.

Exemptions

We have formed two separate committees to review requests for exemptions—one for medical and one for religious. The deadline to submit [requests for exemptions](#) is August 13. You can expect to receive a decision within two to three business days of August 13 at the latest.

Prearrival Testing

We are asking all of you to upload to your [health portal](#) a negative PCR test taken within five days of moving into your residence hall or within five days of attending classes if you do not live on campus.

Options for Remote Learning during Illness

As you know, there will not be SHU-Flex or "Zooming" into classes in the fall, but that does not mean you will be left behind should you get sick and need to miss a few classes. We learned a lot during the past year about ways we can use technology to enhance the learning experience, especially when students cannot be in class. As always, your professors will work with anyone who has to miss more than two consecutive classes because of illness or the need to isolate or quarantine. This could include recorded lectures, virtual office hours or alternate instruction and supplemental course materials as

appropriate. Our goal is to provide options that will support anyone who must miss classes without impacting the learning environment for those who are physically in the classroom. A standard classroom experience is a critical step in providing a more normal experience for all of you.

We also learned over the past year that we have the ability to move quickly when circumstances dictate. We will be monitoring the virus and its variants and will be ready to respond should the situation change dramatically.

Move-in

This year's move-in will also be mostly back to normal. Freshmen will be moving in August 26-27 and may be accompanied by family members. Family members will need to be masked and will be able to go inside. As in the past, volunteers from various University clubs and organizations will be on hand to assist with unloading and getting things into your rooms. Upperclassmen will move in August 28.

Isolation and Quarantine

This year, we will need anyone who needs to isolate or quarantine to do so off campus at home. There will be temporary arrangements (less than 24 hours) available for those who can't leave campus immediately. The best way to avoid this necessity is to be careful about larger gatherings—even outside—if you aren't sure everyone is vaccinated and to wear a mask indoors both off campus and on when you are not at home.

Campus Clear

We are reinstating [Campus Clear](#), so we are asking that you make sure you have the app on your phone and check in whenever you plan to be on campus. You can download it free of charge from the app store. While we can track how many people check in each day, Campus Clear is a self-checking app. You do not need to let us know if you accidentally provide the wrong answer, but we do ask that you stay home if you are experiencing any of the symptoms that are asked about.

We are Pioneers

We are all a bit frustrated that we are not as far out of this pandemic as we had hoped. But we are also confident that the SHU community will work together to keep everyone safe while having a really wonderful academic and social experience this fall. We know you, and we know how much you care for one another. Vaccinated or unvaccinated, we are all one community, and we are confident that as we work together to keep the community safe, there will be no discrimination or commenting on anyone's vaccination status or their need to isolate or quarantine. Next week we will share with you this year's updated version of the Pioneer Promise.

See you soon,
The Coronavirus Planning Team

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Please note: Given the unpredictability of the variants, we will continue to consult with and follow the guidance of the CDC, the Connecticut Department of Health and state and local health officials. We will all need to be flexible and understand that as we continue to work in the best interest of the University community, there will likely continue to be changes and updates. We also suggest that all students come to campus with preliminary plans in place should there be a need to return home for isolation, quarantining, etc.

[SHU Coronavirus Website](#)

This message was sent to the following groups: !Campuswide-Students, !Campuswide-Employees