



Policy on Face Coverings – Effective July 2020

There have been three consistent messages from federal, state and local health authorities regarding the best measures to keep individuals and communities safe from the spread of COVID-19:

- Wearing a face covering;
- Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer when washing hands is not possible);
- Physically distancing at least six feet.

For these reasons, Wittenberg's COVID Response Team and Senior Staff have approved the following face covering policy for the University:

Face coverings that cover your mouth, nose, and chin are required on campus, indoors and outdoors, except in the following cases:

- In an office alone with the door closed;
- In your residential room (when no guests are present);
- While eating or drinking (community members should continue to physically distance and should return to use of face coverings when no longer eating or drinking);
- In the gyms or athletic facilities if participants are able to physically distance (at least 6 feet) and other protective measures are in place (such as Plexiglas separators, not sharing equipment, and the ability to disinfect equipment between users in addition to regular cleanings of the facility);
- In residential hall bathrooms. Those using the bathrooms should seek to physically distance while in the space;
- When outdoors and able to maintain, at minimum, six feet distance from all other persons.

The use of facial shields is only permissible if facial coverings are also worn beneath the face shield. Current guidance from the Ohio Department of Health suggests that face shields alone should not serve as mask substitutes.

The University's COVID Response Team is continuing to work on the issues associated with face coverings. As health and safety standards evolve, this policy will evolve as well. The University assumes students, faculty and staff will exercise common sense to keep the Wittenberg community safe and slow the spread of COVID-19 in all circumstances.

Wittenberg University will provide written justification, upon request, to any individual requesting an exemption from this policy. Employees should contact Human Resources and students should contact the Office of Accessibility Services to request an accommodation to this policy.

Additional Information

Why Face Coverings?

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.

Widespread use of face coverings among the Wittenberg community, in conjunction with other protective measures, lessens the risk of community transmission of COVID-19. The CDC recommends the widespread use of face coverings due to the possibility of transmission by asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic carriers of COVID-19: The use of face coverings may help prevent a carrier from spreading the virus to others, specifically when utilized in conjunction with other protective measures. Face coverings are not a replacement for physical distancing and increased hygiene measures, however. Even if you are not concerned about community transmission, widespread use of face coverings may help alleviate the anxiety of others in the Wittenberg community.

Face coverings should cover the nose and mouth, and may include cloth face coverings or clear face shields. Thanks to the generosity of Board member Dr. Alan Stewart '69 and wife Pamela '69 along with Student Senate, Wittenberg University is able to provide two cloth face coverings for every member of the community. Community members may need to supplement with additional face coverings if they cannot wash the coverings regularly as recommended by the CDC.

For information on cleaning face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wash-cloth-face-coverings.html>. Wittenberg has also secured additional personal protective equipment for members of the community whose work requires such items. For example, Wittenberg will provide one face shield to each employee.

The CDC recommends washing hands before putting on a face covering, ensuring that it fits properly, removing the face covering without touching the face, and washing hands after removal. The CDC's detailed guide for proper use of face coverings is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html>.

Masks Versus Face Shields

The Ohio Department of Health is following federal guidance and prohibiting the schoolwide use of face shields as a substitute for facial coverings/masks. View full recommendation here: <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/media-center/odh-news-releases/face-shields-not-appropriate-substitute-for-masks>

Bystander Intervention

Bystander Intervention is our best strategy to help our community be mindful about wearing face coverings. We encourage community members to suggest calmly a face covering be worn if someone is not wearing one in a public shared space (always assess your own safety first). You could start by asking the person if they have a face covering with them. If they do not, remind them that they can obtain a face covering from the university. With face coverings, it helps to point out that you wear a face covering to protect other people and that COVID-19 potentially spreads when someone is not demonstrating any symptoms of infection.

You can report concerns about community members not wearing face coverings to: covid@wittenberg.edu or our online [COVID-19 Report a Concern Form](#).

While disciplinary action may be a possibility for the refusal to wear a face covering, our primary focus is on promoting awareness of the reasons for face coverings in order to encourage personal responsibility and voluntary compliance with our face covering policy.

Last Updated: Aug. 26, 2020