Maine Community College System
Face Covering Protocol

The Maine Community College System has implemented a variety of precautionary measures aimed at reducing the risk of transmission on campus of the virus that causes COVID-19. One significant precautionary measure advocated by public health officials and adopted by MCCS is the requirement to wear a disposable or cloth face covering in certain settings.

This protocol is periodically revised to reflect updated public health guidance. Continued public health guidance in this area is anticipated and the protocol will be revised accordingly. Until further notice, the following terms govern the wearing of face coverings by all persons on Maine Community College System property and at off campus locations while participating in MCCS- sponsored programs and activities.

I. Where a Face Covering is Required

A face covering is required to be worn over the nose, mouth and chin indoors in all indoor public and shared/communal spaces, and outdoors when in a dense crowd, regardless of vaccination status. Face coverings are also required to be worn in vehicles with more than one occupant during MCCS-related travel.

Exceptions to the face covering requirement are:

1. Employees when alone in an office or other personal workspace, with the door closed;
2. Residential students when in their own bedroom in campus housing when only the assigned occupants of that bedroom are present;
3. When eating or drinking in a space where eating and drinking is permitted and only for the duration necessary to consume the food and/or beverage. The colleges may impose additional rules governing eating and drinking in order to meet operational and health and safety needs; and
4. Children under 5 in a daycare setting and all other children under 2 years of age.

II. Type of Face Covering Required

A face covering must be a disposable or cloth mask made of multiple layers of tightly woven fabric that fits snugly around the face, covers the nose, mouth and chin and secures with ear loops or ties behind the head. Face coverings with a clear plastic panel that otherwise meet this definition may be used to facilitate communication with hearing impaired individuals and others who need to see a speaker's mouth or facial expressions to understand speech or sign language.

Homemade and commercially manufactured masks that meet this definition are acceptable forms of face coverings. However, disposable KN95 and surgical masks provide a greater level of protection against highly transmissible COVID-19 variants than cloth face coverings and are strongly recommended for MCCS students and employees.

Examples of face coverings that are not acceptable include:

1. Bandanas;
2. Neck gaiters; and
3. Masks with a valve or vent

III. Additional Terms

Any person not wearing a face covering, or an acceptable face covering, where required will be asked to put one on or leave the location where a face covering is required.

Physical distancing is not a substitute for wearing a face covering in locations where a face covering is required.

MCCS may require physical distancing as needed to address health and safety issues.

IV. Requests for Accommodations

Persons required under this protocol to wear a face covering who have a documented disability and have been determined by a medical professional to be unable to wear a disposable or cloth face covering should contact [the college's Office of Student Disability /Accessibility Services or ADA officer] prior to coming to campus to determine whether a reasonable accommodation is available.

V. Off Campus

Because we truly are in this together, taking these steps will help to minimize the risk of transmission on campus and benefit all students, employees and their families. We also ask that all members of the campus community continue to wear a disposable or cloth face covering during visits to off campus indoor public settings, and in densely crowded outdoor settings, unrelated to MCCS programs and activities.

Effective 1/4/22