



Minnesota State

Community and Technical College



MINNESOTA STATE



COVID-19 Campus Plan and Related Protocols

Fall 2021

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PLAN OVERVIEW

This plan is designed to outline the coordinated planning and protocols that the college will use to ensure that employees and students have a safe environment to work and visit and learn. Protocols are rooted in safety for staff, faculty, students, invited guests (e.g., contractors) and for the public we interact with using guidance from the Minnesota State system office, Minnesota Department of Health, The Office of Higher Education, and the Centers for Disease Control.

As restrictions are increased for the COVID-19 pandemic it is important to remember that COVID is still active in Minnesota and we still need to use precautions to help avoid the spread as much as possible. As we move forward, flexibility will continue to be critical. M State will continue careful evaluation of data, models and public health recommendations. M State will be ready to adapt if situations change.

M State will be guided by the following criteria:

- The very intentional effort by all faculty, staff and students in exercising both personal and campus responsibility. The combined efforts by all members of the M State community will create a culture that sustains a healthy and safe on-campus environment.
- Any current or future government restrictions (e.g., masking requirements, physical distancing, gatherings, etc.).
- Public health status: recommendations from the federal government, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Minnesota Department of Health.
- M State's strategic plan to ensure decisions support primary mission objectives of the college.

M State will also consider local orders and ordinances of the cities and counties in which our campuses are located, as well as the State of Minnesota.

The M State plan acknowledges the triggers and phases for the cities and counties in which M State is located and identifies which activities ramp up or dial back on campus and when. If metrics of COVID-19 transmission and health system capacity change significantly and the State of Minnesota return to a prior phase, M State may also return to a prior phase and re-impose restrictions on activities.

M State also may need to scale back in-person operations if transmission increases, by reducing or cancelling campus events; suspending in-person classes; or moving to remote-only operations as a result of a significant outbreak on campus or in the surrounding community, or if directed by public health authorities.

CAMPUS AND INSTRUCTION

Because COVID is still active in Minnesota there continues to be a need for diligence to ensure the health and safety of employees, students, visitor and contractors.

Face Coverings

M State's face covering protocols will follow the CDC recommendations and System Office requirements for masking.

If a county moves to substantial or high transmission rates based on the CDC formula for two consecutive days, masking will be required on the associated campus. A masking mandate email will be sent to the campus once this level is reached and masks will be required the following day. All employees, students and visitors will be required to wear masks until such time that the county has a transmission rate of moderate or low for 14 consecutive days.

Each campus will be evaluated independently as our four campuses are in four different counties, which means that masks requirement may be different on different campuses.

When we are not under a mask mandate, people who have not been vaccinated are encouraged to wear a face covering in accordance with MDH and CDC guidelines. Fully vaccinated people might choose to mask regardless of the level of transmission, particularly if they or someone in their household is immunocompromised or at increased risk for severe disease, or if someone in their household is unvaccinated.

While under a masking mandate the following apply

A "face covering" must be worn to cover the nose and mouth completely, and can include a paper or disposable face mask, a cloth face mask, a scarf, a bandanna, a neck gaiter, or a religious face covering. Masks that incorporate a valve designed to facilitate easy exhaling, mesh masks, or masks with openings, holes, visible gaps in the design or material, or vents are **not** sufficient face coverings because they allow exhaled droplets to be released into the air.

- Face masks/coverings **must** be worn by all **employees** at all times on campus in public settings (e.g., reception/receiving area, common workspaces, public spaces, hallways, stairwells, elevators, meeting rooms, classrooms, break rooms, in restrooms, etc.).
- Face masks/coverings **must** be worn by all **students, contractors, and members of the public** at all times on campus in public settings (e.g., reception/receiving area, common workspaces, public spaces, hallways, stairwells, elevators, meeting rooms, classrooms, break rooms, in restrooms, etc.).
- Face masks/coverings are NOT required to be worn when an individual is alone, including when alone in an office, a room, a cubicle with walls that are higher than face level when social distancing is maintained, a vehicle, or the cab of heavy equipment or machinery, or an enclosed work area. In these situations, a face covering should be available and used when another person enters your work area.

- Children under the age of 2 are entirely exempt from the face covering requirement. Children under age 5, but at least 2 are strongly encouraged, but not required to wear face coverings.
- An employee who cannot wear a face mask/covering due to medical or disability reasons should contact Dacia Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer for possible accommodation measures.
- Students who cannot wear a face mask/covering due to medical or disability reasons should contact their campus Accessibility Resource Officer for possible accommodation measures. Those individuals are:
 - Mark Nelson
 - Jon Kragness
 - Jaime Jensen
- Face Shields are permitted as alternative to a face mask/face covering in the following situations:
 - When faculty are teaching a class or giving a lecture, or when students are participating in classroom activities, where it is important for the face to be seen (for example, certain activities in language or communications classes).
 - Where a face covering may pose a hazard due to the nature of the class or activity (for example, in a laboratory component of a class).
 - When staff or faculty are providing direct support student services and a face covering impedes the service being provided.
 - For individuals who cannot wear a mask for a mental health condition, or disability.

Use of College Space

M State will continue to offer programs, courses, and services on campus so as to ensure students are receiving a quality educational experience. Social distancing is encouraged wherever possible to assist in preventing the spread of COVID-19. The college will continue to monitor transmission levels and will be prepared to change delivery methods should the Minnesota Department of Health or system office require us to do so.

The college will continue to allow the use of facilities by external parties. External parties will be required to follow all college protocols that are in place at the time of their reservation.

Preventing the Spread of COVID-19

To continue to prevent the spread of COVID-19, some strategies, though not required include:

- More space is better,
- Social distance when you can,
- Outdoor space is better,
- Masking (when not mandated) can add additional layer of protection.

Vaccination

M State continues to strongly encourage all members of our community to get vaccinated. The vaccine is safe, prevents serious illness and death, and ensures we are all safe as a college community. For more information on vaccination visit COVID-19 Vaccine (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/index.html).

COVID-19 MONITORING, TESTING AND REPORTING

Symptom Monitoring

It is important to continue to self-monitor for COVID related symptoms and stay home if sick. According to the CDC, symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. These symptoms or combinations of symptoms include:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- *Fever
- *Chills
- *Muscle pain
- *New GI symptoms

COVID-19 Testing and Notifying

Faculty and staff who have symptoms related to COVID-19 or determine that they need to be tested based on potential exposure are encouraged to contact their primary care provider, who may instruct the individual to go to a designated assessment site to be tested. Students who have symptoms related to COVID-19 or determine that they need to be tested based on potential exposure are also encouraged to contact their primary care provider.

Individuals who have symptoms or may have been exposed and are off campus should contact their primary care physician for COVID-19 testing locations in their area.

Below is a list of local facilities that are conducting COVID testing:

- Detroit Lakes
 - Essentia
 - Sanford
- Fergus Falls
 - Lake Region Healthcare
- Moorhead
 - Essentia, (Fargo)
 - Sanford (Fargo)
 - Family HealthCare (Fargo)
- Wadena
 - Tri County Healthcare

Other COVID testing locations in Minnesota <https://mn.gov/covid19/get-tested/testing-locations/index.jsp>

Quarantine and Isolation Protocols

M State will continue following the guidance of the Minnesota Department of Health relative to how we handle positive test results and quarantine expectations for employees and students. The current requirements as set forth by the Minnesota Department of Health are:

Quarantine – or separating oneself from others – is recommended for people who have been close to a person with COVID-19 (an exposure). Since people with COVID-19 become contagious before symptoms start or may have no symptoms at all, quarantine is an important way to keep COVID-19 from spreading. To protect family, other close contacts, and the community, a person who has been exposed to a person with COVID-19 must stay home and away from others (quarantine), get tested, and watch themselves for symptoms, such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell.

Who needs to quarantine?

- People who were within 6 feet of someone contagious with COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more over the course of a day (24 hours).
- People who live in the same household as someone with COVID-19.
- People who had direct physical or intimate contact (e.g., kissing, hugging, other types of physical contact) with a person who is sick with COVID-19.
- People who provide care for a person who is sick with COVID-19 at home.
- People with direct exposure to respiratory droplets from a person contagious with COVID-19.
- For more information, see Protect Yourself and Others: Traveling (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html#travel).

Who does not need to quarantine?

If someone has recovered from COVID-19 in the past 90 days and is exposed again, they do not need to quarantine if ALL of the following are true:

- Their illness was laboratory confirmed in the past 90 days.
- They have fully recovered.
- They do not currently have any symptoms of COVID-19.

If someone has completed COVID-19 vaccination (two doses in a two-dose series or one dose in a one-dose series) and is exposed, they do not need to quarantine if ALL of the following are true:

- The COVID-19 exposure was at least 14 days after their vaccination series was fully completed.
- They do not currently have any symptoms of COVID-19.

However, fully vaccinated people should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure, even they don't have symptoms and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.

The MDH recommends 14 days as the safest option for individuals who need to quarantine.

However, you may quarantine for 10 days rather than 14 days if you have not tested positive and you continue to monitor yourself for symptoms during days 11-14. This is an option as long as you do not live with anyone that has a current positive test. If you do, you must continue to quarantine for the full 14 days.

A third, even shorter option is also available for quarantining. You may consider returning from quarantine after 7 days but to do this you must have a negative test which was administered at least 5 days after your initial exposure. You must also continue to monitor your health through day 14 and get tested if you develop symptoms. Again, this does not apply if someone in your household has a current positive test and remains in isolation at the same residence as you.

Based on the Minnesota Department of Health guidelines, employees or students that are not identified as "close contact" or "exposed contact" of a positive case but are within the same classroom or work area do not need to quarantine but should continue to monitor themselves for symptoms. If they develop symptoms they should immediately quarantine and contact their medical provider for further guidance.

MDH and Center for Disease Control (CDC) have defined a close contact or exposed contact as being within 6 feet of a positive case for 15 cumulative minutes within a 24-hour time period.

Who needs to isolate?

If a student or employee has a confirmed positive test result, regardless of vaccination status, they must isolate until all three of the below indicators have been met:

- Isolate for 10 days since they first became ill, or were notified of a positive test
- Symptoms have disappeared
- Not had a fever for the last 24 hours, without fever-reducing medications

Contact and Communications Protocols

The Minnesota Department of Health continues to communicate positive test results and complete contact tracing. They have the responsibility in the case and contact tracing and are assisted by the County Public Health.

When an individual's test result comes back positive, the contact team will interview the individual to determine who needs to be considered a close contact. The individual will also be asked if they attend a college or university and if their name can be shared to assist with the contact tracing. If the case load becomes very high, the college may also be asked to assist with contact tracing.

The goal of the Minnesota Department of Health is to contact the positive individual, any close contacts, and the college all with 24 hours of the test result being determined.

Each institution is required to have an MDH liaison and an alternate. The liaison will be the contact that will receive a notification when a positive case or close contact identifies that they attend M State. Pat Nordick will serve as the MDH liaison and Dacia Johnson as the alternate.

When we are notified by MDH or the County Public Health of a positive case, we will set off our internal processes for notifying employees and other students that may have been in close proximity of the positive case. We will be in contact with the employee or student to learn more about when and where they have been on campus and take appropriate action to notify those individuals that are affected.

If you as an employee either test positive or are contacted by either the Minnesota Department of Health or the County Public Health that you have been identified as a close contact to a positive case we ask that you notify Dacia Johnson as well as your supervisor. In addition, if you are advised by your healthcare provider to isolate or quarantine please follow their professional advice. Dacia will contact you to get more information to assist us with any internal notifications we will need to make to other employees and/or students. With that information, we will work through our process of notifications.

If you get contacted by a student that they have tested positive or have been identified as a close contact and need to quarantine by the Minnesota Department of Health or the County Health Department, please forward that information immediately to Pat Nordick which will start the internal process of communication.

We will not receive notifications for employees or students living in North Dakota so we will be relying on the individuals themselves to let us know if they tested positive or need to quarantine. Again, if you receive notice from an employee or student please notify Pat Nordick or Dacia Johnson so that we can start our internal process.

If a faculty, staff member or student believes they have contracted COVID-19 after exposure to a known positive case or are feeling symptoms, you must immediately remove yourself from campus, even if you are not showing symptoms. While you await test results, you must remain at home in self-isolation and keep your supervisor/dean informed of your return-to-campus status.

COMMUNICATION

This Plan, protocol, recommendations, training and communication will be updated as necessary. Communication to the campus community will be ongoing in the form of signage, College website and instructional emails.

Attachment A

Personal Health and Safety Guidance

Personal Safety Practices

Vaccination is one of the best things anyone can do to prevent getting or spreading COVID-19. Visit COVID-19 Vaccine (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/index.html).

To continue to prevent the spread of COVID-19 some strategies, though not required include:

- More space is better,
- Outdoors is better,
- Masking can add additional layer of protection.

Hand Washing

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, using the restroom, blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing or before and after eating. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

Coughing/Sneezing Hygiene

Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

M State is committed to supporting your overall health and well-being as we move forward. Contact Human Resources for more information and resources to offer support, manage stress and enhance your resilience. For information on the Employee Assistance program follow the link <https://mn.gov/mmb/segip/health-and-wellbeing/eap/>

United Healthcare is offering an emotional support help line for all students through its Optum subsidiary at no cost to students. Their toll-free help line number is 86.342.6892 and is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Students have access to specially trained mental health specialists to support them if they feel they are experiencing anxiety or stress related to developments around COVID-19.