



## Living With COVID-19



**This plan is subject  
to change as more is  
learned about COVID-19**

**COVID-19 Safety &  
Cleanliness Protocols**

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# INTRODUCTION

## Our Pledge

The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC) is committed to providing students, staff, instructors and partners with a clean and safe learning and working environment. We pledge to do everything in our power to keep SVHEC buildings, classrooms, labs and spaces clean and safe from COVID-19.

This document has been developed to provide you with information about COVID-19: what it is, how it is spread, how its spread can be mitigated, what the SVHEC is doing to prevent it from entering our environment and what will happen if it does.

To be successful, however, we must work together. So, this document also discusses what each of us must do as individuals to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

## SVHEC COVID-19 Coordinator

Mrs. Amy Cole, SVHEC Director of Student & Partner Advancement

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Mrs. Amy Cole has been appointed SVHEC COVID-19 Coordinator to help manage and coordinate the SVHEC's COVID-19 response. Mrs. Cole will serve as a resource for SVHEC staff, students and instructors and Partner staff, students and instructors. She will provide current COVID-19 information and procedures and serve as a sounding board for your COVID-19 questions and concerns. In addition, she will:

- Work closely with the Virginia Department of Health's local office and other Commonwealth of Virginia agencies to relay pertinent and timely information about COVID-19.

- Stay abreast of CDC guidelines and recommendations pertaining to COVID-19.
- Work with the Virginia Department of Health for guidance and procedural recommendations on identified cases in the area.
- Alert partner organizations if partner staff, students or instructors are diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Immediately confer with the Chief Finance and Operations Officer if a report of COVID-19 is received. She will work with the Chief Finance and Operations Officer to formulate a plan of action if there is a confirmed exposure on the SVHEC campus.
- Coordinate communication of the action plan to all staff, students and instructors.
- Be available to SVHEC staff and instructors who consider themselves at high-risk for COVID-19 to discuss options for telework.
- Provide resources for guidance to SVHEC staff who feel they are at risk because of personal health concerns.
- Meet with anyone who may be encountering issues or have concerns related to SVHEC's COVID-19 policy or procedures.

## What is COVID-19?

- COVID-19 (Coronavirus) is an illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person.
- The virus that causes COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has spread throughout the world.
- COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild (or no symptoms) to severe illness and death.

## How COVID-19 is spread

- You can become infected by coming into close contact (about 6 feet or two arm lengths) with a person who has COVID-19. COVID-19 is primarily spread from person to person.
- You can become infected from respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- You may also be able to get it by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and then by touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

## How to protect yourself and others from COVID-19

- Several COVID-19 vaccines were approved by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) in December 2020. You can obtain your vaccine through your local pharmacy, and from clinics that may offer the vaccine occasionally. You can also go to this website, [www.vaccines.gov](http://www.vaccines.gov) to find a location close to you. If you are unable to receive the vaccine because of health reasons, or choose not to get the vaccine the best way to protect yourself is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19 by following CDC recommendations:
  - Wear a cloth face covering that covers your nose and mouth in public settings.
  - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

## Practice social distancing

- Buy groceries and medicine, go to the doctor, and complete banking activities online when possible.
- If you must go in person, stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- Get deliveries and takeout, and limit in-person contact as much as possible.
- Avoid poorly ventilated indoor spaces.

## Prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick

- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Avoid public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.
- Separate yourself from other people and pets in your home.
- There is no specific treatment for COVID-19, but you can seek medical care to help relieve your symptoms.
- If you need medical attention, call ahead.

## Know your risk for severe illness

- Everyone is at risk of getting COVID-19.
- Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at higher risk for more severe illness.

# COVID-19 BASICS

## Know the symptoms

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- **Fever or chills**
- **Cough**
- **Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing**
- **Fatigue**
- **Muscle or body aches**
- **Headache**
- **New loss of taste or smell**
- **Sore throat**
- **Congestion or runny nose**
- **Nausea or vomiting**
- **Diarrhea**

## CDC Symptom Self-Checker

Use this URL to find the CDC's symptom self-checker:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html#>

The CDC symptom self-checker is also embedded on the SVHEC's website at

[www.svhec.org/livingwithcovid](http://www.svhec.org/livingwithcovid)

Resource: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

## **We are all in this together.**

Each of us has a personal responsibility to promote a healthy environment.

Therefore, staff, students, instructors and guests of the SVHEC, have the responsibility to self-monitor and self-screen before entering the premises and maintain safe practices once on campus. SVHEC also encourages everyone to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine unless religious beliefs or specific medical conditions prevent you from receiving it.

## **COVID-19 Screening Self-Check**

In accordance with the Virginia Department of Health, before entering the SVHEC campus, staff, students, instructors and guests are asked to take a simple COVID-19 Screening Self Check.

Ask yourself: “YES or NO, since I was last on campus, have I had any of the following:”

- A new fever (100.4°F or higher) or a sense of having a fever?
- A new cough that cannot be attributed to another health condition?
- New shortness of breath that cannot be attributed to another health condition?
- New chills that cannot be attributed to another health condition?
- A new sore throat that cannot be attributed to another health condition?
- New muscle aches (myalgia) that cannot be attributed to another health condition or specific activity (such as physical exercise)?

**If you answer “Yes” to any of the above questions, you should stay home, not enter campus and seek medical attention and advice.**

You may take the CDC’s online COVID-19 Screening Self Check on the SVHEC’s website at [www.svhec.org/livingwithcovid](http://www.svhec.org/livingwithcovid).

## Maintaining Safe Practices

- Staff, students, instructors and guests should not attend class, meetings or work when sick, whether COVID-19 is suspected or not.
- Any person who arrives on campus showing symptoms of COVID-19 without having been tested for COVID-19 should separate themselves from others immediately, and return home or seek medical attention.
- Maintain appropriate social distancing.
- Wear a face covering when entering the SVHEC. All individuals must wear a face covering regardless vaccination status.
- Frequent handwashing of at least 20 seconds.
- Refrain from touching nose, mouth and face area.
- Cover coughs, and use tissues or elbow if tissues are not available. Dispose of tissues promptly and wash hands immediately.
- Stay out of crowded areas and avoid mass gatherings.
- Only one person is allowed in the elevator at a time, unless the person with you is there for your physical assistance.
- After use of the kitchen or student lounge it is the responsibility of students, staff, instructors and guests to wipe down the areas used. Kitchen condiments and other communally used objects will be eliminated during this time to reduce contamination.

# MASKING REQUIREMENT

## Masking

Masks are required for all individuals regardless of vaccination status. **No exceptions for students and visitors will be made to the SVHEC universal indoor mask policy.** If a student or visitor has a health condition that makes it impossible to wear a mask or if they simply refuse to wear a mask, he/she must opt to take the class or visit at a time when masking is not required. Students also may elect to take any available online options. NOTE: Under certain circumstances, instructors may be permitted to not wear masks when instructing students from a safe distance or from behind a plexiglass barrier. Instructors may only exercise this option after prior approval from their supervisor.

**Individuals who are unable or unwilling to wear a mask should speak with the COVID-19 Coordinator (434-572-5441) for more information.**

### Why Masking?

The indoor masking policy is being reinstated to *protect* students, staff, instructors, partners, and visitors from COVID-19, including the Delta variant, which is reported to be 1-2 times more transmissible than the original virus and the next most transmissible variant, Alpha. Delta is estimated to be the source of 83% of all COVID-19 cases.

While vaccines are very effective in protecting against COVID-19, including the Delta variant, most in our area are not vaccinated. As of August 1, 2021, only 37% of Halifax County citizens are fully vaccinated, and levels of community transmission in Halifax and surrounding counties currently are at the highest level (<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>). In some rare cases, Delta has infected even the vaccinated, though these infections are usually less serious, sometimes asymptomatic. In these cases, even vaccinated people can spread the virus, which is why it is important for vaccinated people to mask in certain settings.

*To prevent the spread of communicable/contagious diseases, the SVHEC will focus on safety, prevention and education and seek to provide continuity of education in the event of a contagious disease outbreak. Therefore, we are taking a page from our community college partners and adopting the [VCCS policy 6.0.8.1 Contagious Diseases Policy](#).*

*This policy provides guidance for those who know or have reason to believe they are infected with a contagious disease.*

## Contagious Diseases Policy

Persons who know or who have reason to believe that they are infected with or exposed to a contagious disease of public health significance/threat have an ethical and legal obligation to conduct themselves in accordance with such knowledge in order to protect themselves and others and must follow these guidelines:

- Persons who are infected with a contagious disease must seek expert medical advice and are encouraged to advise local health authorities of a possible public health threat. They must follow the directions of local health authorities in order to prevent the spread of infection and to protect their own health.
- Persons who know they are infected with a contagious disease are urged to immediately share that information with an appropriate SVHEC or Partner administrator so that the SVHEC may respond appropriately to their needs and assess the health risks to the college community.
  - **SVHEC Students** should contact their instructor or Workforce Services Director who will then contact HR Liaison Mrs. Brenda Terry.
  - **SVHEC Staff & Instructors** should contact their immediate supervisor or go directly to HR Liaison Mrs. Brenda Terry.
  - **Partner Staff, Instructors & Students** should contact their COVID-19 Coordinator who should then contact HR Liaison Mrs. Brenda Terry.

- Medical information relating to contagious diseases of persons within the SVHEC community will only be disclosed to responsible SVHEC administrators and local health officials on a need-to-know basis.
- Persons testing positive for COVID-19, or who they suspect might have COVID-19 based on fever, cough, or other symptoms are required to isolate themselves from the SVHEC community until the danger of infection is no longer present, as determined by expert medical advice. The CDC recommends self-quarantine for 14 days.
- Any person who becomes sick on campus with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should separate themselves from others immediately, return to their place of residence, and seek medical attention.
  - **Bruce Street Quarantine Room:** Small conference room across from the Community College office
  - **Innovation Center Quarantine Room:** Small sound room across from the photo studio
  - **ProductWorks Quarantine Room:** Small conference room
- Any person who arrives on campus showing symptoms of COVID-19 without having been tested for COVID-19 should separate themselves from others immediately, return to their place of residence, and seek medical attention.
- Students, staff, and instructors should not attend class or work when sick, whether COVID-19 is suspected or not.
- The SVHEC will practice as much flexibility as reasonably possible for any member of the SVHEC community during this time of pandemic.

## Confirmed Cases/Exposures: What Happens?

If the SVHEC learns that a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19 has been on campus or that a person exposed to someone confirmed to have COVID-19 has been on campus, the SVHEC will do the following:

- 1. Notify local health department:** Immediately inform the local health department of the case/exposure and seek guidance on what closing protocols are required to protect students, staff, instructors, partners and clients:
  - a. Campus-wide short-term closure:* It may be necessary to close all campus buildings and facilities for 2-5 days.
  - b. Targeted campus closure:* It may be determined that only closing buildings and facilities that had been entered by the individual(s) with or exposed to COVID-19 is necessary.
- 2. Notify SVHEC publics:** Inform SVHEC students, staff, instructors and partners of the case/exposure, required closures and other related mitigation actions.
- 3. Conduct deep cleaning:** Arrange for deep cleaning and sanitizing of all affected buildings and facilities.
- 4. Assist with Contact Tracing:** Assist the local health department to help identify individuals who may have been in direct prolonged contact with individual(s) confirmed with COVID-19. (Note: individuals may be contacted by local health department representatives and/or SVHEC representatives, including HR Liaison Brenda Terry and HR Client Manager Derek Mountford.)
- 5. Follow up Communications:** Dr. Adams will provide follow-up email communications on any cases/exposures and related actions.

## Reducing the risk of COVID-19 exposure

Reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by cleaning and disinfection is an important aspect of our cleaning protocol. The virus that causes COVID-19 can be killed if you use the right products. EPA has compiled a list of disinfectant products that can be used against COVID-19, including ready-to-use sprays, concentrates, and wipes. In addition to rigorous cleaning processes, SVHEC will provide disinfectant wipes in classrooms and high-touch areas so that individuals may disinfect surfaces before and after individual use.

**iWave Air Purifiers:** iWave Air Purifiers, which are proven to kill 99.4% of the COVID-19 virus within 30minutes, have been installed on SVHEC's HVAC system. These purifiers enhance indoor air quality and are an important tool in keeping the campus COVID free.

## CDC Definitions

- **Cleaning** refers to the removal of dirt and impurities, including germs, from surfaces. Cleaning alone does not kill germs. But by removing the germs, it decreases their number and therefore any risk of spreading infection.
- **Disinfecting** works by using chemicals, for example EPA-registered disinfectants, to kill germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs. But killing germs remaining on a surface after cleaning further reduces any risk of spreading infection.

## Continuous Cleaning and Disinfection

In order to maintain a clean and disinfected campus environment, during business hours the following procedures should be followed once we have transitioned any or all of SVHEC's & its partner organization's operations back to campus.

- SVHEC staff will take on some additional cleaning duties as assigned.
- All classrooms and offices where students/trainees meet with faculty or staff will be supplied with disinfectant wipes. Everyone is encouraged to utilize the disinfectant wipes to clean their area before and after class or a meeting.
- The SVHEC Ops Team will continue to deep clean and disinfect our campus meeting or exceeding VDH and CDC guidelines.

Students, staff, instructors, partners and guests must maintain a safe distance between themselves and other people whether the floor is marked or not.

## SVHEC & Partner Spaces: Student Services & Administrative Offices

- Workstations and desks have been reconfigured so that staff are seated a safe distance apart.
- Front-facing service counters or desks have been provided with portable, clear sneeze guards to be used at staff's discretion.
- In staff offices, chairs should be repositioned so that there is a safe distance between the employee and the student or guest.
- It is recommended that students schedule appointments and that staff conduct appointments via telephone or Zoom when appropriate to reduce face-to-face contact.
- For administrative offices in which students and guests typically do not enter for services, chairs should be repositioned so that there is a safe distance.

## **SVHEC Classrooms: computer labs, large lecture halls & conference rooms**

- All student seating at desks or tables and instructor lecterns have been arranged with a safe distance at each seat. This means that some desks or tables have been moved or removed in order to reconfigure the classroom to meet agency directives, VDH and CDC guidelines
- In cases where ADA accommodations need to be made for students, accommodations will be made by SVHEC partner organization support.

## **VACCINATIONS**

If you need to locate a vaccine for yourself or someone in your family, please visit <https://vaccinate.virginia.gov/>