

NEW MASK POLICY IN RESPONSE TO DELTA COVID VARIANT

In light of the concerning increase in COVID cases due to the delta variant, various authorities are recommending the re-institution of indoor mask mandates even for fully vaccinated individuals. (See, for example, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>.) The basis for this recommendation is that the high infectiousness of the variant increases the threshold for herd immunity to the range of 85 to 95 percent, and wearing masks indoors, because it decreases transmission, helps to lower that threshold. This, in effect, helps reduce the likelihood of a community outbreak.

Considering that guidance, and the fact that our area of Kentucky is now in the Red Zone with cases increasing rapidly, the Administrative Committee is compelled to re-institute a mask mandate for all persons in campus buildings. It is our hope that favorable developments in external circumstances will allow us to set this mandate aside again at some point in the future.

We are putting in place with immediate effect the requirement that masks be worn in all indoor spaces, excluding students in their own rooms in the residence halls, and employees, when they are alone in their workspace.

For questions, consult Steve Lawson in Human Resources at lawsonst@berea.edu