



## COVID-19 Guidelines for Returning to Campus Fall 2022

As we return to campus for the fall 2022 semester, Albright's Pandemic Planning Task Force has been closely monitoring COVID-19 news and guidelines for institutions of higher education. Below are guidelines and information on preventing the spread of COVID-19 on campus.

### Vaccines and Boosters

Faculty, students and staff are strongly encouraged to get the COVID-19 vaccine/booster and report vaccination status to the Gable Health Center by uploading a copy of your vaccination card to the [health portal](#). ([Click here for a video tutorial](#)).

Considering the high transmissibility of the COVID virus, including the omicron BA.5 sub-variant, Albright College continues to take precautions to prevent the spread of the virus, through various uses of testing, masking and other protocols per public health guidelines. But the best way to protect everyone is through vaccination. Therefore, because we want everyone to have a rich, engaging and safe experience on campus this year, Albright College strongly encourages vaccination and booster shots for all faculty, staff and students. Free [vaccination and boosters are available](#) near any location.

Vaccines have been proven to be safe and effective and vaccination decreases the risk of severe illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19 infection. However, waning antibody levels have been observed over time, making boosters valuable in ensuring continued protection. Please follow the [CDC's guidance](#) for vaccine and booster dosing.

According to the American College Health Association's 2022 guidelines, "Persons who have completed their COVID-19 vaccinations with brands approved or listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization are considered to be fully vaccinated, even if those brands are not authorized for use in the U.S. While mixing of brands is not recommended by CDC for the primary vaccine series, it is allowed, and persons who are due for a booster should receive a booster dose using an authorized or approved mRNA vaccine."

### Masking

Masking indoors is currently optional for all Albrightians and guests to the campus. With care for those who have continued health concerns, all Albrightians and visitors are asked to respect the following guidelines:

- Faculty may require that students wear masks in their classrooms. Faculty should communicate their masking requirements directly to their students and should apply their requirements consistently.
- Employees and students may require masking from meeting organizers when attending in-person campus meetings.
- Event organizers may require masking at their scheduled events.
- Individual departments may require masking in their respective areas.
- Albright may require events that are open to the public to require masking.

In general, individuals who feel more comfortable wearing a mask should feel free to do so. A KN95 mask is recommended when available. A limited supply of KN95 masks is available through the office of Environmental Health and Safety by emailing [kwierzbicki@albright.edu](mailto:kwierzbicki@albright.edu).

The Pandemic Planning Task Force continues to monitor COVID-19 conditions on campus, in Berks County and on the state level, and may put forth new masking recommendations if transmission levels change and COVID-19 cases rise.

## Testing and Surveillance

According to the American College Health Association's latest guidelines, "Approaches to testing for SARS-CoV-2 are dependent on many factors including, but not limited to, local community case numbers and hospitalizations, and local and state guidance or mandates. **Testing remains a crucial tool** to identify SARS-CoV-2 infection so that treatment, isolation, and contact notification may begin as soon as possible." In addition, "All individuals -- those who are unvaccinated as well those who are fully vaccinated and those who are up to date on vaccination -- should be tested if experiencing symptoms. Close contacts of infected individuals should be tested on or after day five (day five = five days post-exposure) or if symptoms develop. Home antigen tests (rapid tests) are readily available. Free antigen tests for personal use can be obtained from the federal government at <http://covidtests.gov>." **Therefore:**

- If you are a residential student who is currently on campus and you are feeling unwell, please isolate in your room until you call the Gable Health Center for an appointment. If you are feeling unwell on the weekend, please contact Public Safety at 610-921-7670 for further guidance. Testing individuals who are feeling unwell is extremely important.
- If you are feeling unwell, or have been notified that you have been exposed to COVID-19 -- and are away from campus, please refrain from coming to campus. Contact the Gable Health Center for guidance by calling 610-921-7532.
- If you get tested for COVID-19 off campus or at home, please report your results to the Gable Health Center by calling 610-921-7532.

Home tests are available through the Gable Health Center while supplies last. Questions about self-quarantine or individualized re-entry testing requirements should be directed to the Gable Health Center at 610-921-7532.

## Mental Health

Although the acute crisis of the pandemic is behind us, the pandemic's toll on mental health continues to reverberate and grow. It is not unusual to feel collateral damage from fatigue, mental exhaustion, burnout, stress, depression, and anxiety. If you have feelings of anxiety, depression, sleep difficulties, and stress – help is available.

Students in need of assistance should contact the Gable Health and Counseling Center at 610-921-7532 or email Albright Chaplains, Mel Sensenig, M.Div., Ph.D. ([msensenig@albright.edu](mailto:msensenig@albright.edu)) or Ibrahim Bangura, M.Div. ([ibangura@albright.edu](mailto:ibangura@albright.edu)).

Faculty and staff may consult the Employee Assistance Program -- Inroads Family Guidance Center at 610-374-4963, Opt. 7, or contact Human Resources for additional guidance.

## Indoor Air Quality

Good indoor air quality continues to be a critical component of decreasing transmission of COVID-19 and has the added benefit of reducing the public health impact of other respiratory illnesses, including influenza.

COVID-19 is primarily transmitted through airborne particles and droplets released when infected individuals exhale. Infectious particles and droplets accumulate in indoor spaces, especially during activities such as speaking loudly, singing or exercising.

Because each building on Albright's campus contains different units that condition the air, solutions for maximizing safety are varied based on each building's capabilities, air flow exchanges, and the ability to successfully condition all air at reasonable temperatures.

Where applicable, Albright's facilities team has opened dampers to allow more fresh air intake into building systems to assist with airflow exchanges and increased fresh air. To assist with energy savings, Albright reduces air exchange rates and conditioning of air overnight. However, all HVAC units are continuously running at high levels to ensure the highest amount of airflow in buildings, even when not in use. This will help continue to circulate air throughout non-operating hours.

Albright has replaced all filters in HVAC units per each unit's recommendations with a cost-efficient filter, and has switched to the highest allowed MERV-rated filter in each HVAC unit, where applicable. The rating on each filter varies with each individual unit.

In areas where fresh airflow is inadequate, Albright's facilities team is installing portable air purifiers with HEPA filters to assist in cleaning the air and to reduce risk.

In certain instances, such as inside the Health Center and Public Safety vehicles, rooms or areas require cleaning via aerosol disinfectants. The facilities team oversees the use of all disinfection equipment.

## **Travel**

Currently, travel is not restricted. However, the coronavirus and information pertaining to travel are constantly evolving. The college's Pandemic Planning Task Force strongly encourages individuals who are traveling, either domestically and internationally, to review current CDC recommendations [for travel](#) and follow the most current guidance.

If you are returning to campus after having visited (for personal or college-related travel) an area in or outside of the United States in which a confirmed case of COVID-19 has occurred or where you have had potential exposure, please contact the Gable Health and Counseling Center at 610-921-7532 for further guidance.

If you have health-related questions or need additional information, please reach out to the Gable Health Center at 610-921-7532.

### **Additional Resources:**

*Updated Covid-19 Considerations for Institutions of Higher Education - ACHA*. ACHA Guidelines, 8 July 2022, [https://www.acha.org/documents/resources/guidelines/ACHA\\_COVID\\_Considerations\\_for\\_IHEs\\_for\\_Spring\\_2022.pdf](https://www.acha.org/documents/resources/guidelines/ACHA_COVID_Considerations_for_IHEs_for_Spring_2022.pdf).