

VALPARAISO  UNIVERSITY

# Looking Forward:

## Valparaiso University's Recommendations for a Safe Return to Campus

JUNE 9, 2020



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“The health and safety of all students, faculty, and staff — as well as our ability to remain on campus in the fall — depends on a mutual commitment to keeping ourselves and each other as healthy as possible.”

— **Mark A. Heckler**

President, Valparaiso University

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# Valparaiso University Incident Command Team

The Valparaiso University Incident Command Team is a cross-functional, campus-wide task force that focuses on the health and safety of University constituents through preventing the spread of COVID-19. The Incident Command Team provides guidelines for campus operations and crisis response based on the recommendations of the federal, state, and local government, as well as national and state health organizations.



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# Committee Members and Focus Areas

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# Introduction

The 2019 novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, is a member of a large family of viruses that causes a variety of illnesses in humans and animals. The virus primarily spreads from person to person via respiratory droplets or contact through contaminated surfaces.<sup>1</sup> Valparaiso University, as a residential learning community, will continue to follow guidance from federal, state, and local government, as well as national and state health organizations, to ensure a safe return to campus. Resuming campus operations before data indicates it is safe to do so could risk exposure of students, faculty, and staff to COVID-19.

The Incident Command Team consulted a wide variety of resources in developing its guidelines for a safe return to campus. These include recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH), the World Health Organization, the American College Health Association (ACHA), the Indiana Governor's Office,

the Porter County Health Department, and other government agencies and health care organizations.

While vaccine development is underway and clinical trials have begun, no vaccine or drug treatment has been proven to be effective and safe. As such, Valparaiso University is operating under the presumption that COVID-19 will remain prevalent through the fall 2020 semester and beyond.

As Valparaiso University plans to reopen, there is no guarantee that COVID-19 will be kept away from campus. However, in this report the Incident Command Team presents evidence-based guidelines to limit the spread of COVID-19 to campus constituents and ensure the return of students, faculty, and staff can proceed in a safe and responsible manner.



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# Guiding Principles

The Incident Command Team has aligned its guidelines with the phased reopening of Governor Eric Holcomb's Back on Track Indiana plan.<sup>2</sup> The Governor's plan, which is subject to change, includes four guiding principles that will continue to inform any decision to move forward through each stage of reopening. These principles are:

1. The number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients statewide has decreased for 14 days;
2. The state retains its surge capacity for critical care beds and ventilators;
3. The state retains the ability to test all Indiana residents who are COVID-19 symptomatic, as well as health care workers, essential workers, first responders, and others as delineated on the ISDH website;
4. Health officials have systems in place to contact all individuals who test positive for COVID-19 and complete contact tracing.

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# Incident Command Team Guidelines

To safely return to campus, the Incident Command Team has outlined four criteria that must be met before University operations can commence in-person. The four criteria are:

1. Availability of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for all University stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors;
2. Environmental measures such as enhanced cleaning and disinfection;
3. Ability to implement physical distancing, testing, and contact tracing;
4. Readiness of the campus and local health care systems to address any outbreaks.

In addition, adherence to public health practices including proper hand hygiene, physical distancing, cough/sneeze etiquette, disinfection of common and high-traffic areas, symptom assessment, temperature checks, and face covering in public will be expected to ensure the safety of all students, faculty, and staff.

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# Recommendations for Risk Mitigation

These guidelines and recommendations provide considerations to minimize the risk of spread of the COVID-19 infection and a recurrent surge of infections as we plan for the physical return of students, faculty, and staff. We anticipate restrictions and limitations on activities could be in place for the foreseeable future, as at this time the only tools available are through non-pharmacologic interventions, sound public health practices, and supportive therapy. A return to an active on-campus environment will depend upon widespread testing, Indiana Department of Health contact tracing, and isolation/quarantine of exposed and suspected or confirmed COVID-19 positive individuals both on campus and in the community.

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## Campus Screening

As recommended by the CDC and to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the potential risk of exposure within our campus community, all Valpo students, faculty, and staff must complete a Return to Campus Screening Questionnaire before returning to campus.<sup>3</sup> The questionnaire ensures campus constituents are informed of pertinent COVID-19 information and may provide information for contact tracing in case of campus exposure.

- [Return to Campus Student Screening Questionnaire](#)
- [Return to Campus Faculty & Staff Screening Questionnaire](#)

Once campus activity resumes, all University constituents — students, faculty, staff, guests, visitors, speakers, and vendors — shall self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before they report to a campus building to begin their work, research, or any other campus-based activity. Each student and employee is expected to complete a daily COVID-19 Health Screening Survey before reporting to campus. Visitors must check in and answer the screening questions at the Duesenberg Welcome Center or other specified locations on campus.

- [Valpo Daily Student Self-Check Screening](#)
- [Valpo Daily Faculty & Staff Self-Check Screening](#)

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## Physical Distancing

Physical distancing will be necessary to deter the spread of COVID-19. The CDC recommends maintaining a distance of at least six feet between individuals.<sup>4</sup> This strategy will be incorporated at Valparaiso University in a variety of functional areas and workplace settings throughout the progression of reopening the campus.

To further accommodate physical distancing guidelines, the use of barriers may be necessary for venues, gatherings, moving in or out of residence halls, or restricting access to a building via a single entrance. In addition to floor barriers, we are evaluating the need for plexiglass barriers at desks and countertops where direct exchange of physical objects are likely to occur between individuals. The plexiglass barrier will serve as protection in place of six feet of separation. Examples of areas where these barriers may be needed include:

- Library Circulation Desk
- Dining Services
- Registrar/Financial Aid Offices
- Health Center
- Fitness Center Front Desk
- ARC Equipment Room
- OneCard and Parking Office
- Union Welcome Desk/ Student Organization
- Suite/Games Area
- IT Help Desk
- Student Affairs Desk
- Student Mail Services
- Welcome Center

Floor markings will also be necessary in areas where standing crowds may occur. Examples of this include the check-in line at Founders Table or the bookstore purchasing line. In these cases, lines will be taped on the floor marking six-foot increments so that individuals can maintain appropriate distances between themselves and others.

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## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain.<sup>5</sup> As such, face coverings must be worn by every individual on campus — including students, faculty, staff, guests, and vendors — in all indoor public spaces and spaces frequently used by multiple people. Face coverings are required to be worn by every individual on campus while in outdoor spaces when six feet of separation is unfeasible, such as walking to/from class.

All campus constituents should possess a minimum of two face coverings that are comfortable and cover an individual's nose and mouth. Certain designated employees are required to wear appropriately rated PPE while performing work functions that may directly expose the employee to COVID-19.

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## Public Hygiene and Cleaning Procedures

Hand sanitizer stations will be placed strategically in high-traffic areas such as building entrances and main corridors equipped with signage highlighting COVID-19 safety tips. Students, faculty, and staff are all encouraged to procure and stock their own supplies of hand sanitizer and anti-bacterial wipes as well.

Proper hand washing signage will be distributed in public bathrooms on campus and in residence hall bathrooms to encourage personal hygiene best practices.

High-touch surfaces will be cleaned and sanitized throughout the day, and campus constituents will be encouraged to disinfect personal workspaces and frequently touched surfaces regularly.

## Residential Life and Housing Guidance

Residential Life is altering their normal operations to better adhere to recommendations for physical distancing and limiting student exposure in the residence halls. Residential Life will:

- Offer more single room options for students as inventory allows;
- Limit (as much as occupancy allows) the number of students per bathroom;
- Require face coverings in common areas and lounges;
- Frequently remind residents of proper hand hygiene and provide hand sanitizing stations in common areas;
- Enhance the cleaning of common areas and high-touch surfaces;
- Widely share updated information about COVID-19 prevention;
- Train staff (professional and student) on public health measures and signs/symptoms of COVID-19;
- Restrict events and social activities to adhere to physical distancing guidance;
- Reconfigure seating in common areas to ensure proper physical distancing;
- Establish allowable occupancy in common areas;
- Develop plans to monitor and enforce restrictions on building access to non-residents, including outside guests and non-residential staff (this does not apply to others such as personal care attendants for students with disabilities);



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## Isolation and Quarantine

It is possible that a residential student may contract or be exposed to COVID-19 and may require isolation or quarantine. Therefore, Residential Life will reserve quarantine and isolation rooms that will be physically separated from other residential student rooms.

Each quarantine or isolation room will have isolated bathroom facilities and be stocked with a thermometer, sanitizing wipes, tissues, soap, hand sanitizer, and toiletries. These spaces will be labeled externally with appropriate signage that states restricted access (e.g., “Private Quarters” or “Authorized Personnel Only”) but does not state the reason for the restricted access due to concerns about potential for stigma and FERPA/HIPAA violations. A select group of individuals within Residential Life, campus safety, and facilities will be aware of the rooms used for isolation.

Health Center staff will remotely monitor students on a daily basis including temperature checks and symptom screenings. For students on the campus meal plan, dining services will arrange food delivery

in collaboration with Residential Life staff. Student Affairs, in collaboration with Residential Life staff, may arrange for the purchase of a campus meal plan or coordinate meal delivery for those students who have not purchased the campus meal plan. Counseling Services and staff from the Chapel of the Resurrection will be available remotely to students in isolation or quarantine as needed. To the degree possible, isolated or quarantined students should continue academic activities remotely.

Designated Student Affairs staff will be appropriately trained and on call to assist students with their personal needs (medication pickup, delivery of hygiene supplies, etc.). Transportation protocol has been developed and is available to and from the location if medical care is needed. Custodial and maintenance staff and live-in professionals are provided with and required to wear appropriately rated PPE when cleaning or entering isolation and quarantine spaces.

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## Dining Services

Dining Services will require all staff members to wear face coverings and gloves at all times while working and interacting with the public. Employees will follow infection prevention guidelines including staying home when feeling ill, undergoing temperature checks prior to each shift, following proper hand hygiene procedures, practicing physical distancing, and cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces throughout the day.

All diners must wear face coverings while moving throughout the facilities and can only remove face coverings when eating or drinking. Upon conclusion of any food or beverage item, the face covering should be returned to covering the individual's nose and mouth. The number of diners at any given time will be limited to ensure proper physical distancing. Processes to limit the number of diners may include:

- Access Control — once the maximum number of diners is reached, patrons are only allowed to enter when another leaves.
- Cohort Dining — established dining times that admit a specific group of diners.
- Physical Spacing — spaced (six-foot) floor markers for waiting lines outside and inside the facility. Appropriately spaced and limited numbers of tables and chairs per table.
- Staff Service — eliminate buffet-style, self-serve food or beverage stations and replace them with staff-served meal stations.
- Take-Out — provide a bagged, take-out meal option at every meal. Kosher, vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free options will be available as requested or appropriate to the customer base.
- Delivery — arrange food delivery to students in isolation or quarantine.

## Classes

Many classes will implement a hybrid of in-person and remote instruction. Fully remote options will be planned in the event of a resurgence of COVID-19 and available to vulnerable students and students in quarantine or isolation.

The prioritization of in-person instruction will be for courses that include academic outcomes that cannot be measured or achieved virtually, such as performance, laboratory, and clinical experiences. Specialized plans for courses and instruction that do not permit physical distancing and/or involve activities of higher risk will be developed to limit potential exposure.

Each in-person course/section will be limited to decrease the likelihood of exposure among students and faculty. In most cases, in-person courses/sections class sizes should be limited to enable physical distancing measures.

Faculty will implement close monitoring and tracking of in-person attendance, which may include seating arrangements to facilitate contact tracing in the event of an exposure. Attendance and excuse policies will acknowledge and support students who become ill without creating barriers and without requiring unnecessary visits to health facilities for documentation of illness. Faculty–student communications regarding health status and the ability to complete coursework and academic responsibilities will be encouraged.

A plan will be developed to minimize congestion and crowding within facility hallways and common areas.

Resources will be identified and shared for students with disabilities or those who experience difficulties regarding remote delivery of courses.



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## Workplace Guidelines

As campus begins to reopen, a phased return of employees is encouraged. No more than 30% of the workforce should return at a time and each return phase should be conducted in appropriate time intervals. The number of returning employees will be dependent on the availability of PPE, increased cleaning, and employee health care.

Training will be provided to employees including a general overview of COVID-19 — infection prevention, control measures, signs and symptoms, testing, transmission, and resources — and campus-specific policies and practices regarding campus resources, use of PPE, and actions to take if ill.

Employees should avoid office gatherings, break rooms, and unnecessary visitors and vendors in the workplace. All employees are required to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms (including daily temperature checks), stay home and notify their supervisor if symptoms develop, and wear face coverings in all public spaces.

Reusable and high-touch items should be removed or replaced with single use or no-touch options. Some of these items may include:

- Kitchen Items
  - Flatware
  - Dishes
  - Mugs
- Cleaning Tools
  - Sponges
  - Towels
  - Brushes
- Coffee Makers
- Water Dispensers

Whenever possible, meetings should be conducted electronically, shifts should be staggered to reduce the number of employees in the office at a time, workspaces should adhere to physical distancing guidelines, and workspaces should be regularly disinfected and cleaned.

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## Travel

At this time, only essential, domestic travel will be supported by Valparaiso University. The University will not sponsor international travel.

Students, faculty, or staff who have been traveling internationally and are planning to re-enter the campus environment must:

- Communicate their intentions with the University to receive updated and relevant information well in advance of their anticipated return.
- Follow state and local health department recommendations and requirements.
- Self-quarantine at home for 14 days before returning to campus.
- Check their temperature twice a day.
- Monitor for symptoms of COVID-19.
- Maintain contact with the appropriate health department as directed.

It is important to inform our international students and colleagues of relevant, reliable, and current travel health and safety resources and to encourage the serious consideration of current recommendations prior to travel. Each international student, faculty, and staff member is in a unique situation, which warrants individually tailored recommendations.

All new or returning international travelers should refer to returning travelers guidelines and review current travel bans and restrictions. International students, faculty, and staff who are currently on campus and are considering travel to their home countries should review global travel restrictions as noted by the U.S. State Department and the CDC.<sup>6,7</sup>

Faculty and staff contemplating travel with subsequent return to the U.S. to continue university studies or work must seriously consider the:

- Current COVID-19 travel health risks and the possibility of significant unexpected changes in risks during their travels.
- Potential for abrupt disruption, cancellation, or other serious complications of planned return to the U.S. due to the COVID-19 pandemic or other circumstances.
- Rapidly changeable re-entry restrictions (including at any intermediate points in itinerary).

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## Vulnerable Populations

Everyone of all ages should take precautions; however, certain individuals might be at higher risk for severe complications from contracting COVID-19.

They are defined as:

*People in nursing homes or long-term care facilities, older adults (generally individuals aged 65 years and older), and people of any age who are immunocompromised and/or have serious underlying medical conditions such as: asthma, chronic lung disease, diabetes, liver disease, serious heart conditions, chronic kidney disease being treated with dialysis, and severe obesity.<sup>8</sup>*

Employees and students who are at a higher risk for severe complications, or are living with an individual of higher risk, may be encouraged to continue working or learning remotely and avoid gatherings of more than 10 people and situations that pose potential exposure, including travel, until further notice.<sup>8</sup>

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## Temperature Readings

All employees and students of Valparaiso University must conduct a daily self-temperature check. The goal of these required checks is early identification of a fever when an individual may not recognize the symptoms.

Students will be sent a branded 3M Tempa Dot thermometer in a letter during late summer with an explanation of expectations for when they arrive on campus. Further details will be provided if they have a fever. The 3M Tempa Dot units have been utilized by the Health Center in the past and can be used multiple times as long as they are cleaned properly.

Employees will take their temperature at home immediately prior to leaving to report to their shift. If their temperature is 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, the employee will call their supervisor to report that they will not be working due to illness and the employee will stay home and contact their primary care provider. Before an employee is able to return to work, they must have either medical clearance from their primary care provider or a negative COVID-19 test.

Residential students will take their temperature prior to leaving their residence hall room each day. If their temperature is 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, the student will call the Health Center to schedule an appointment and stay in their room. Before a student is able to return to class or leave their room (other than to seek medical attention) they must have medical clearance from the Health Center (or a primary care provider) or a negative COVID-19 test.

Off-campus and commuter students will take their temperature prior to arriving on campus for classes or activities. If their temperature is 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, the student will call the Health Center to schedule an appointment and stay off-campus. Before a student is able to return to class or leave their room (other than to seek medical attention) they must have medical clearance from the Health Center (or a primary care provider) or a negative COVID-19 test.

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## Athletics and Recreational Sports

At this time, no decision has been made on whether or not the fall athletic season will begin as scheduled. At the beginning of fall, no spectators will be allowed if games do proceed. Restricted access procedures will be developed should it be determined by the University that limited spectators can be safely accommodated.

Recently, the Athletics COVID-19 Planning Team devised the Athletics and Sports Medicine Action Plan that outlined recommendations for the return of athletics activities when it is safe to do so.

These recommendations include:

- Safe transmission and acclimation to athletic activity per NCAA guidelines;
- Assessment of likelihood of COVID-19 transmission within each sport; (e.g., individual vs. team sports; high intensity workouts with possible enhanced risk for aerosolization). Consider a phased return of Athletics programs based upon potential risk of transmission in a given activity, within NCAA and conference guidelines;
- Pre-participation screening and evaluation of each student-athlete;
- Non-touch temperature checks prior to practice, training, and competition;
- Physical distancing principles within Athletics including training rooms, meeting rooms, locker rooms, strength and conditioning rooms, academic areas, and high-volume areas including spectator areas (stands);
- Virtual team activities when possible;
- Recommendations for transport, assessment, and testing of student athletes or staff with potential COVID-19;
- Contingency plan for onset of illness or exposure during Athletics related travel and competition;
- Travel considerations pertaining to each individual competition site;
- Providing COVID-1 and infectious disease training and education for all Athletics staff;
- Implementation of an Athletics shared responsibility infection prevention plan including signage, education, hand sanitizer stations, and guidelines for staff;
- Providing guidelines for appropriate techniques and PPE for cleaning and disinfecting common areas and equipment.

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## *Athletics and Recreational Sports cont.*

In addition, Recreational Sports will operate under modified recommendations that include:

- Aligning Recreational Sports guidelines, procedures, policies, and communication with institutional, CDC, state, and local public health guidelines;
- Assessment of COVID-19 transmission within each recreation and sports program (e.g., individual vs. team sports; high intensity workouts with possible enhanced risk for aerosolization). Consider a phased return of sports and recreation programs based upon potential risk of transmission in a given activity;
- Physical distancing practices within the locker rooms, Fitness Center, group fitness classes, Esports lab, and Athletics-Recreation Center;
- Considering options to limit the maximum number of people in a facility with access control, use-by appointment, or other measures;
- Continuing to offer virtual group fitness classes;
- Providing COVID-19 and infectious disease training and education to all Recreational Sports staff members, including student employees;
- Widely featuring signage on COVID-19 prevention techniques including proper sanitation of high-touch surfaces and personal hygiene;
- Providing custodial services, athletic trainers, personal trainers and fitness instructors with guidelines for appropriate techniques and PPE for cleaning and disinfecting common, non-clinical spaces, including recreation venues and equipment;
- Requiring the use of personal face masks by instructors, recreation staff, and participants.

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## COVID-19 Testing

Persons who are feeling ill and may be manifesting symptoms of COVID-19, which include a fever of 100 degrees or higher, cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain, new loss of taste or smell, vomiting or diarrhea, headache, congestion or runny nose, and/or sore throat, will be required to contact their primary care provider and/or be tested for the COVID-19 virus. Other considerations for COVID-19 testing include known exposure to an individual who has tested positive or who has been diagnosed with having presumptive COVID-19.

All COVID-19 positive tests must be reported. This action will initiate the Incident Command Team's Response Unit.

- To report that a student has tested positive, contact the Health Center at 219.464.5352.
- To report that a faculty or staff member has tested positive, contact Human Resources at 219.464.5214.
- If you are unable to contact either one of the above, call VUPD at 219.464.5430.

The Incident Command Team's Response Unit consists of the University's Incident Commander and Section Chiefs. The team functions as an emergency response to initiate the processes of isolation, quarantining, and coordinating with the Indiana Department of Health for contact tracing of infected individuals.

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## In Closing

The health, safety, and well-being of all Valparaiso University students, faculty, staff, alumni, and visitors remain the top priorities and are the key principles guiding these recommendations. As the spread of COVID-19 continues off campus, it remains likely that campus will be exposed to the virus. Ensuring the health of all campus community members will require a shared commitment and adherence to safety and health precautions. Returning to campus will require all to adapt to new expectations in the classrooms, in our residence halls, and around campus. It is by adhering to these principles that we can fulfill Valparaiso University's educational mission, keep our campus community safe and healthy, and reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.



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