



Guidelines for Use of Face Coverings/Masks

Background

Suffolk County Community College's policies and procedures for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic have been and will continue to be governed by the principle that the safety of our students and employees is paramount, while continuing the College's mission of education. The College's return-to-campus plans are aligned and consistent with guidance from SUNY, local and state Departments of Health, PESH, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Wearing a face covering/mask in public settings and when around people who do not live in your household is one of the protective measures recommended by the CDC and the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Required Use of Face Coverings/Masks while on Campus

As outlined in the College's SUNY-approved [Reopening Plan](#), [COVID-19 Return to Campus Student Guidelines](#), and [COVID-19 Return-to-Work Guidelines for Employees](#), face coverings/masks must be worn by students, faculty, and staff while on campus any time there is a potential for people to be less than six (6) feet apart from one another. This applies at all times while on campus but is especially important in instances where it is not possible to maintain physical distancing, such as when entering and traveling within buildings, in bathrooms, elevators, stairwells, hallways, classrooms, etc. This also applies outdoors when physical distancing is not possible. Therefore, all individuals must have an acceptable face covering/mask readily available on their person at all times while on campus.

It is a requirement that individuals coming to campus arrive wearing an acceptable face covering/mask and that they wear it every day as indicated in the applicable guidelines (ensuring the mouth and nose are fully covered). Everyone is responsible for the daily maintenance of their face covering/mask, and face coverings/masks must be replaced when damaged or soiled, may not be shared, and should be properly stored and discarded. Please refer to the student and employee guidelines referenced above for additional information on use and care of face coverings/masks.

Face coverings/masks are not a substitute for social/physical distancing, health/symptom monitoring, and other infection prevention measures. Adherence to all required infection prevention measures is expected while you are on campus.

Acceptable Face Coverings/Masks

A face covering/mask is acceptable if it is a cloth/fabric material of multiple layers that snugly covers a person's nose and mouth. Other masks, such as surgical-style masks, are also acceptable face coverings.

Face coverings should not create additional hazards to the user, such as restrictions to breathing or entanglement hazards.

Where the nature of work or an activity requires Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), that PPE should be used.

Unacceptable Face Coverings/Masks

Masks/Respirators with Exhalation Valves/Vents

Face masks with exhalation valves or vents are not permitted. The purpose of face coverings is to keep respiratory droplets from reaching others. Exhalation valves/vents allow unfiltered exhaled air to escape and are not effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19. (Examples of masks with valves, which are not permitted, can be found here: [example 1](#); [example 2](#).)

Face Shields

Face shields or other coverings that do not fit snugly against the face are not acceptable face coverings/masks for purposes of these guidelines, unless an exemption has been granted as outlined below. Face shields are not currently recommended by the CDC as a substitute for masks due to lack of enough evidence to support their effectiveness.

Requests to use a face shield instead of an acceptable face covering/mask due to a medical or other health condition should be made to the appropriate office outlined below.

Limited Exemptions

Limited exemptions for wearing a face/covering mask may be made for the following reasons, in accordance with the procedures outlined below:

Medical Reasons

Employees who are unable to wear a face covering/mask due to a medical or other health condition should contact the Office of Human Resources at avphr@sunysuffolk.edu.

Students who are unable to wear a face covering/mask due to a medical or other health condition should contact the Office of Disability Services at:

- Ammerman Campus: disabilityserv-ammr@sunysuffolk.edu
- Eastern Campus: disabilityserv-east@sunysuffolk.edu
- Grant Campus: disabilityserv-west@sunysuffolk.edu

Requests for exemption from the requirement to wear an acceptable face covering/mask, including requests to use a face shield or other modified face covering/mask that does not meet the definition of an acceptable face covering/mask, should be supported by sufficient information and documentation from an appropriate, qualified healthcare provider which indicates a medical or health condition that prevents wearing a face covering/mask and necessity for modification to the requirement to use a face covering/mask.

Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis with an understanding of what other mitigating factors, such as strict adherence to physical distancing, or other accommodations or modifications, may be implemented while supporting the health and safety of the College and campus community.

Eating/Drinking

Individuals do not have to wear a face covering when actively eating or drinking with appropriate physical distancing. Face coverings/masks should be put back on after eating/drinking.

Individual Spaces

Face coverings/masks may be removed when alone in an office, cubicle, or other designated area with appropriate physical distancing.

Compliance

All employees and students are expected to comply with these guidelines and to adhere to the requirement to use a face covering/mask while on campus. Failure to comply will result in appropriate action, including but not limited to disciplinary action.

Reports about students who are not in compliance may be made to the Campus Associate Deans of Student Affairs:

- Ammerman Campus: Dr. Edward Martinez: martineze@sunysuffolk.edu
- Eastern Campus: Dr. Mary Reese: reesem@sunysuffolk.edu
- Michael J. Grant Campus: Dr. Meryl Rogers: rogersm@sunysuffolk.edu

Reports about employees who are not in compliance should be made to the Office of Human Resources at avphr@sunysuffolk.edu so that the appropriate supervisor can be identified and notified.

Where the identity of the individual is not known, please contact the Office of Public Safety at (631) 451-4242 (or x4242 from a campus phone).

If You Feel You Must Speak to Someone Who is Not Using a Face Covering/Mask

At times, a kind reminder to a fellow employee or student may be necessary and sufficient to address a lack of compliance with these requirements, as this is a new on-campus experience for most. Remember to use an appropriate, professional tone of

voice. Anger in your voice or body language could result in an unpleasant confrontation and raise defensiveness. Below are suggested ways to assist the College community with doing so in a respectful manner:

1. Please put on your face covering. Please be sure your face covering covers both your nose and mouth. Using a face covering properly is one of the best things we can all do to keep ourselves and others safe, and it is College policy. I would like to ask that we mutually care for one another by wearing a mask/face covering.
2. I see that you are not wearing a face covering. If there is a medical reason that you cannot wear one, and if you believe that you are in need of an exemption, please contact Human Resources (for employees) or the Office of Disability Services (for students). I will provide you with their contact information. I would like to ask that we mutually care for one another by wearing your face covering and it is College Policy. If you forgot, damaged, or lost your face covering, you can obtain another one from Public Safety. We can call and confirm that they are available and you can pick one up now. I am happy to assist you in keeping us all safe.
3. This is a requirement for everyone's safety, and you must use a face covering in order to enter and remain in this space. If you choose not to wear a face covering, I will need to ask you to leave the building. I can assist you with obtaining remote assistance, if available, or scheduling a time to return once your concern about using a face covering has been addressed by the appropriate office.

If you feel unsafe, please contact the Office of Public Safety at (631) 451-4242 (x4242 from any campus phone). This number is answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Internal References and Resources:

Coronavirus Microsite: www.sunysuffolk.edu/coronavirus

[COVID-19 Return-to-Work Guidelines for Employees](#)

[COVID-19 Return to Campus Student Guidelines](#)

External References and Resources:

[CDC: Considerations for Wearing Masks](#)

[NYSDOH: Masks & Face Coverings Guidance](#)