

Effective Immediately (July 21, 2020)

Face masks, or face coverings, will be required within all Sterling College campus buildings when appropriate physical distancing of 6' is not possible, **OR** at the request of a Sterling College employee when entering their workspace, office, or classroom.

Sterling College Guidelines on Masks and Face Coverings

<https://www.sterling.edu/student-life/sterling-together-return-campus-plan>

Reason for Guideline

Sterling College is committed to promoting the health and safety of all students, staff, and faculty, as well as guests and visitors to our campus. Our ability to successfully provide a residential, in-person educational experience depends upon each member of the College community adhering to guidelines adopted for our collective health and safety. Each person has a responsibility to know and act in accordance with all applicable College guidelines and policies.

Guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) provides that COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. While people who are sick or know that they have COVID-19 should isolate at home, it is possible that COVID-19 may be spread by people who do not have symptoms and do not know that they are infected. In addition to appropriate physical distancing, wearing a face mask or face covering may provide additional protection to help prevent the respiratory droplets from traveling in the air and onto other people. Ongoing scientific studies demonstrate that consistent wearing of face coverings when in public spaces is an effective strategy for mitigating the spread of COVID-19. For more information, see the [CDC guidance](#) on face coverings.

Definition of Terms

A **face mask, or face covering**, is believed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 by reducing the transmission of the virus from the wearer to other members of the community.

Face masks may be of different types, including cloth face coverings, disposable medical/surgical masks, and respirators. All face masks/face coverings must, at a minimum, meet each of the following criteria:

- Fit snugly and securely over the mouth and nose and against the side of the face;
- Allow for unrestricted breathing; and
- In the case of cloth face coverings, be able to be laundered and dried without damage or change to shape.

Physical distancing (also referred to as “**social distancing**”) means keeping a safe space between yourself and other people who are not from your household. To practice physical distancing, stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people who are not from your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces. Physical distancing should be practiced in combination with other everyday preventative actions to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including wearing face masks or face coverings, avoiding touching your face with unwashed hands, and frequently washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. (Source: <https://www.cdc.gov>)

Guideline Statement

- Face masks or face coverings that meet the minimum criteria listed above must be worn by all students, staff, faculty and visitors while inside a campus building when appropriate physical distancing of 6’ is not possible, **OR** at the request of a Sterling College employee when entering their workspace, office, or classroom. This includes all classroom settings, public or communal work areas, the library, dining settings and residence hall common areas.
 - Students living in on-campus residence halls are not required to wear a face mask/face covering while in their assigned residence hall room with the door closed. On-campus residents must wear a face mask/face covering while in residence hall lobbies and other common areas.
 - College employees are not required to wear a mask while working alone in a private workspace.
- Face masks must be worn by all students, staff, faculty, and visitors while using College vehicles or vehicles leased for use by the College, unless appropriate physical distancing can be maintained.
- All students, staff, and faculty should familiarize themselves with the [appropriate handling, cleaning and disposal of their face coverings](#). Following the handling of any face mask (including placing on and removal from one’s face), the wearer should immediately wash or sterilize their hands. After use, reusable masks should be stored in an appropriate container (e.g., a paper bag). Disposable masks should be thrown away immediately in an appropriate trash receptacle.

Guideline Clarifications and Exceptions:

A face mask or face covering is not required in the following limited circumstances:

- While eating or drinking in the campus cafeteria. Compliance with appropriate physical distancing must still be observed.
- An individual who has a health condition that prevents them from safely wearing a face covering. In such instances, individuals are encouraged to adopt additional physical distancing measures and/or seek alternative accommodations through the Office of Student Life.

- An individual who needs medical attention or services requiring temporary removal of the face covering.
- When exercising in a College recreation facility and observing appropriate physical distancing and complying with all facility-specific requirements.
- Face mask/face covering use during college athletic practices/contests will be governed by NAIA guidelines and requirements.
- Such other limited exceptions as may be expressly approved by College officials in consultation with public health experts or as may be required by law.
- Other exemptions must have a doctor's note. Employees submit doctor's notes to Human Resource. Students submit doctor's notes to the Campus Nurse.

Relation to Governmental Policies

All students, faculty, and staff are expected to know and comply with all related recommendations and requirements of the State of Kansas, Rice County, and the City of Sterling.

Duration of Guidelines

These guidelines are effective when published and will remain in effect until withdrawn or modified by the College.

Compliance and Enforcement

Compliance with these guidelines, and other measures adopted in furtherance of campus health and safety, is integral to the College's ability to promote a safe and healthy environment for all members of the Sterling College community, including an effective in-person educational experience. As such, except as otherwise provided herein, all provisions of these guidelines are mandatory.

To assist in achieving universal compliance, the College will provide ongoing communication and education regarding these guidelines.

For students, compliance with these guidelines are a condition of continued in-person enrollment. Failure to comply with this policy may result in administrative action, including, but not limited to: restriction of access to or use of College facilities, removal from College housing, disenrollment from one or more in-person courses, transition to remote-only instruction and/or other interventions necessary to effect compliance and protect the well-being of the campus community. In the case of apparent willful failure to comply with the provisions of this policy and/or repeated violations, the College may pursue additional disciplinary actions in accordance with relevant College policies. For employees of Sterling College, compliance with these guidelines is expected as a condition of employment.