



3/11/2022

Statement Regarding Southern Maine Community College Going Mask Optional

On Wednesday, March 9th the Maine Community College System announced that each of the seven colleges of the MCCS will have the ability to establish their own policies for use of facemasks on campus. Each college is to consider local COVID-19 data, including Maine CDC data for the various Maine counties, local conditions, and needs of the campus.

Beginning on Monday, March 14th, masks will be optional at SMCC except for individuals who are recovering from COVID-19.

Consistent with CDC guidance, individuals who have COVID-19 may leave quarantine on day 6 if they have a negative antigen test on day 5 and their symptoms have improved. These individuals should mask at all times in public through day 10.

As has been the case throughout the pandemic, this decision is not one that SMCC came to lightly or easily. Among the things considered in making this decision are the current US and Maine CDC recommendations (the CDC currently lists Cumberland County as having a low risk of community transmission), the overwhelmingly high percentage of on campus employees and students who are fully vaccinated and boosted, guidance from the Governor's office, and the declining infection rates in the community at large and here at SMCC.

SMCC will continue to monitor infection rates closely, especially in the period after return from Spring Break. If regional, local, or SMCC data or information from the CDC changes, then a return to universal masking may occur. Resident students will be tested for COVID-19 upon return from Spring Break. SMCC's has followed and continues to follow the science with the top priority being the health and wellbeing of our campus community, and that will continue to be the case moving forward.

This change does not impact the requirement that all students and employees who are on campus must be vaccinated and boosted.

SMCC encourages all to continue to support a culture of respect for one another and to remember that individuals on campus will be in varying places on this matter. We are confident that all will show the same respect that they have for one another to this point and that all will fully understand that some, due to their personal or family health circumstances, may still continue to wear their mask for the additional health benefits doing so will provide.

