

## **E-111: Mask Use Policy**

### **MASKS ARE MANDATORY**

The COVID-19, also known as the COVID or Coronavirus, is a highly contagious virus that has impacted the communities in our college district and the Gateway community. In the interest of the health and wellbeing of our community, Gateway Technical College, following the recommendation of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has implemented a mandatory mask policy, effective immediately and until further notice.

### **MASKS MUST BE WORN IN ALL GATEWAY BUILDINGS**

Anyone within a building on a Gateway Technical College campus must wear a mask covering their nose and mouth at all times. Masks must be worn in the same manner while outdoors on Gateway property when social distancing of six feet is not possible. We ask that students and visitors not bring their children or nonessential individuals with them in order to further reduce the risk of spreading COVID. Employees working alone in their enclosed office room are not required to wear a mask but must put a mask on if another person is present.

### **MASKS DEFINED**

Cloth face coverings, cloth face masks (scarves, bandanas, etc.), and surgical masks (collectively referred to as "face masks") can limit the spread of germs and viruses. According to the CDC, masks with exhalation valves or vents do not help prevent the person wearing the mask from spreading COVID-19 to others and are not acceptable. Face shields are not acceptable substitutes for face masks.

The purpose of wearing a mask is to contain coughs and sneezes and prevent the spreading of germs to other people and nearby surfaces, all of which helps to protect other people. Masks can also help people avoid touching their nose or mouth accidentally.

Masks may provide some protection to the wearer from the virus, but the primary purpose of a mask is to prevent transmission to others. Wearing a mask or face covering is a complementary measure, not a replacement for established preventive measures, which include physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, meticulous hand hygiene, and avoiding touching the face, nose, eyes and mouth.

Masks, to be effective, should fit snugly against the side of the face, be secured with ties or ear loops, include multiple layers of fabric, and allow breathing without restriction. N95 masks and other respirators are not required, but certain health programs may require them in clinical settings.

### **OBTAINING A MASK**

Individuals may use their personally-owned face coverings on campus.

The college will provide employees with a face mask through their supervisor. The security office will have masks available for students and visitors, if needed. Employees can also use the security office when the main contact is unavailable. Employees at the centers can also obtain a mask from the facilities staff.

## **PEOPLE WHO SHOULD NOT WEAR MASKS**

According to the CDC, masks should NOT be worn by children under the age of 2 or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. Those who fall into any of these categories are not automatically exempted from this mask policy because a person with a disability or condition that makes it difficult to wear a mask might infect others with a potentially deadly disease, just like anyone else.

## **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS RELATING TO MASK WEARING**

Public health mandates do not suspend the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirement to accommodate individuals with disabilities that make wearing a mask difficult or impossible. Accommodations are based on a disability that impacts an individual's ability to wear a mask, as noted in CDC guidance and verified by an individual's medical provider. (This provision only applies to employees and current students.) Those with disabilities may be entitled to accommodations or modifications that allow them to benefit equally from employment, education, activities, and services of the college. Accommodations are made on an individual basis through the interactive dialogue to determine the best safe alternative.

### ***Students with disabilities***

Students who need a disability-related accommodation relating to the mask process should [contact Disability Support Services using their online schedule](#).

### ***Employees with disabilities***

Employees who need a disability-related accommodation relating to the mask process should contact the Office for Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights at 262-564-3062 or email [vollendorff@gtc.edu](mailto:vollendorff@gtc.edu).

### ***Visitors with disabilities***

Visitors who cannot wear masks due to a disability are asked to access college services, such as student services, advisor appointments, document submission, etc. in an alternative manner. The college provides nearly all of its services virtually and accepts documents electronically. Visitors should contact the respective contact person or contact our Student Contact Center for assistance Toll Free: 1-800-247-7122, Wisconsin Relay System: 711, or by email [sscontactcenter@gtc.edu](mailto:sscontactcenter@gtc.edu).

Visitors may not be asked to provide documentation of a medical condition for not wearing a mask.

## **DIRECT THREAT**

Gateway is not required to permit an individual to participate in programs and activities when that individual poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others AND the risk cannot be eliminated by:

- A modification of policies, practices, or procedures, or
- The provision of auxiliary aids or services

An example of a direct threat that includes individuals who are known to be COVID positive or who display active COVID symptoms.

A direct threat applies to the individual, not a specific health condition in general or a declared health emergency. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission notes that a direct threat is present when "a significant risk of substantial harm would be posed by having someone with COVID-19, or symptoms of

it, present in the workplace at the current time.” Such an assessment typically requires an individualized assessment by a trained professional. At Gateway, that individual is the ADA Coordinator (Josh Vollendorf, Director of Compliance).

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

- Can someone show a card that says they are exempted from wearing a mask?  
*No, cards such as those that contain the US Department of Justice or other agency logo are not legitimate. There is no blanket exemption from wearing a mask for anyone who does not have a disability.*
  
- What should I say or do if someone comes to the college without wearing a face covering?  
*Politely ask if they are able to wear a mask (though you cannot inquire about their disability)*
  - *IF YES: Direct them to where they can obtain a face mask or ask them to please come back with a face covering or suggest they access the service virtually.*
  - *IF NO: Ask if they meet any exceptions indicated by the CDC, offer to provide the service virtually or outside (such as a discussion or to drop off a document), and then contact the appropriate office as noted in the policy.*
  
- What should I do if someone is wearing a different type of face covering that is not approved in the policy?
  - Individuals may have special permission to wear different types of face coverings. Supervisors will monitor staff compliance and instructors will monitor student compliance.
  - Individuals approved to wear alternative face coverings will be provided a letter from DSS and the Office for Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights.
  - Campus greeters may ask for this documentation upon entry to the building but once an individual enters campus and passes the checkpoint, he/she should not be stopped and questioned as long as he/she has a face covering or face shield.