COVID-19 DISCLAIMER

COVID-19, the virus responsible for the current global pandemic, is a highly contagious and potentially lethal virus. Current research suggests that the virus primarily spreads through respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze. However, the full extent of how the virus transmits is unknown.

Community spread of COVID-19 is occurring nationally, including in Erie County, Pennsylvania, meaning the virus is spreading through the community in a way that cannot be attributed to travel to a specific location or exposure to a person known to be infected. In addition, many people who contract the virus may be asymptomatic and unknowingly spreading the virus. While vaccines are currently being made available, it is anticipated that it will be several months before the general population is vaccinated. Additionally, it is not clear how long the vaccine will protect an individual. Therefore, vaccination is not a substitute for compliance with the university’s COVID-19 prevention, mitigation, or testing policies. There is no known treatment for all of the adverse effects attributed to COVID-19.

The University is engaged in numerous efforts to prevent, mitigate, and respond to the spread of COVID-19 on our campuses. Efforts include increased cleaning, implementation of mask-wearing protocols, social distancing measures, and other recommended mitigation strategies.

Despite the University’s best efforts, it is impossible to eliminate the risk of positive cases or an outbreak on our campuses. We cannot guarantee that people present on our campuses will not be exposed to and become infected with COVID-19. The risk of exposure and possible infection is real and present in any community environment where large numbers of people are regularly interacting, including college campuses.

Data related to COVID-19 case management is considered an educational record under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). By enrolling at the university, students understand that that information may be shared with school officials, including contact tracers, member of the COVID-19 response team, Health Center personnel, etc. In addition, the university coordinates with the Erie County Department of Health and other public health departments to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. This includes disclosure of individuals diagnosed or suspected to be COVID-19 positive to the relevant public health authorities.

Members of the Mercyhurst community are required to comply with all COVID-19 prevention and mitigation guidelines. Given the gravity of the pandemic, all violations are treated seriously. However, some warrant more serious consequences: Providing false information; failure to disclose a potential COVID-19 diagnosis or exposure; providing inaccurate information in the Daily Screening or contract tracing efforts; or failing to promptly comply with quarantine or isolation requirements will typically result in immediate suspension or expulsion.

Up-to-date information on Mercyhurst’s COVID-19 response can be found at www.mercyhurst.edu/covid19.
PLANNING FOR A SAFE AND HEALTHY ACADEMIC YEAR

Every member of the Mercyhurst community is responsible for demonstrating mindfulness, good citizenship, and promoting the safety and wellness of the campus community. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students comply with regulations, guidance, and best practices for preventing and responding to COVID-19. The University implements and follows COVID-19 prevention and response orders, regulations, and recommendations issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Erie County Department of Health, as well as the Center for Disease Control, www.cdc.gov.

**Health and Safety**
We expect that all members of the Mercyhurst community (residents, staff and guests) to act in a manner that demonstrates respect and consideration for those around them, including respect and consideration for the health and safety of all community members. Residential students are required to comply with health and safety regulations adopted by the University as it relates to public health crises, including COVID-19. This guidance will evolve as the public health crisis evolves and may include, but is not limited to, social distancing, limitations on mass gatherings, wearing a face covering, contact tracing, disinfection protocols, limitations on guests into residence halls, and quarantine/isolation requirements (including before or upon arrival to campus). Adherence to health and safety requirements applies to all residents, staff and visitors and extends to all aspects of student life, including bedrooms, bathrooms, community kitchens, lounges, hallways, computer labs, and other common spaces.

**Quarantine/Isolation**
At any time, the University may request or require a residential student to leave Mercyhurst when that resident’s continued presence in the housing community poses a health or safety risk for community members. Residential students are required to comply with requests from Mercyhurst staff to leave their assigned space due to COVID or other public health emergency and failure to do so is a violation of the code of conduct and may subject a student to removal from their assigned space. In those situations where a student is recommended to self-quarantine or self-isolate, students may not be permitted to continue residing in their residential space and will be provided alternative housing arrangements as needed. Removal from Mercyhurst to isolate or quarantine does not constitute a termination of a residential student’s housing contract. If a student violates the quarantine terms, the student will be subject to severe and immediate sanctions including suspension or expulsion (in these circumstances, there will be no refund of your tuition, fees, room or board).

**Cleaning**
Mercyhurst will continue to implement and modify its cleaning protocols to address COVID or other public health emergency in the interest of minimizing the spread of disease. Students will be responsible for upholding cleanliness standards and regular health and safety checks will be completed by staff members. All high-touch areas will be cleaned and disinfected routinely in accordance with guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in spaces that are accessible to employees, students, and other individuals. All pre-existing cleaning protocols established by the university for all other areas and buildings will be maintained. All common areas will be cleaned on a regular basis.

**Student Expectations**
Additional information regarding COVID-19 and changes to University policy are noted in this handbook. Students should carefully review the COVID-19 Student Conduct expectations highlighted later in this Handbook.
COVID-19: EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

Every member of the Mercyhurst community is responsible for demonstrating mindfulness, good citizenship, and promoting the safety and wellness of the campus community. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students comply with regulations, guidance, and best practices for preventing and responding to COVID-19.

The following policies are in effect for the 2020-2021 academic year in an effort to keep students and our community safe:

- Students must comply with pre- and post-arrival COVID-19 PCR testing for the spring semester. In addition, if selected for random or strategic surveillance testing, students are expected to fully comply with request in a timely manner.
- Students must practice social distancing whenever possible, maintaining a minimum of six feet between yourself and others.
- Students must always wear masks (including while outdoors), unless in your private residence hall room with you and your roommate/suitemates or while eating in a designate eating area.
- Students must wash hands often and well. When handwashing is not available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol.
- Students must complete the Daily Screening form each morning before leaving their room or apartment or arriving on campus. Students must comply with the results of the Daily Screening (e.g., contact the Health Center, stay at home, etc. in the event of a positive screening result). The form is available online at mercyhurst.edu/daily.
- No outside guests are permitted in residential areas. This includes commuter students, off-campus students, family members, visitors, and guests. Students are permitted to have assistance moving in during a designated move-in appointment.
- All visitors coming to campus (parents, siblings, etc.) must be registered and approved to visit. They must complete the online Mercyhurst Visitor Screening Form. All guests to campus must wear a mask or facial covering, practice social distancing by remaining six fee from others, and follow all other university policies related to COVID-19 prevention and mitigation.
- Residential students may have no more than one on-campus student guest from the same residence hall/apartment building/townhouse cluster in their room at any time. Social distancing and masks wearing should be practiced. However, it is strongly recommended that all non-roommate interactions take place in a lobby or outdoor area where social distancing can be more easily practiced. Overnight guests are not permitted.
- Congregating in residential areas in groups larger than six is not permitted. This includes, but is not limited to, Residence Hall lounges, kitchens, lobbies, study rooms/spaces, etc. All students who are congregating in the communal space must wear a mask and practice social distancing.
- Residence Life staff will coordinate roommate agreements. Residents will be expected to review and discuss concerns related to COVID-19 and establish expectations for shared living.
- Residence Life staff will conduct Health and Safety inspections on a monthly basis or as needed based on cleanliness concerns.
- Students are expected to report concerns related to COVID-19 to Mercyhurst University staff and to cooperate with contact tracing and mitigation efforts. This includes reporting a suspected case of COVID-19 for self or others, reporting possible exposure to a person suspected or diagnosed with COVID-19, returning phone calls or other communications from University personnel, and providing complete and accurate responses to university officials.
• Students will abide by the quarantine or isolation, when required the University. If a student violates their quarantine or isolation period or violates the quarantine or isolation terms, students will be subject to severe and immediate sanctions, including suspension or expulsion. In such circumstances, there will be no refund of tuition, fees, room or board.

The guidance and regulations surrounding COVID-19 is fluid and can change at any time. The Office of Residence Life & Student Conduct, as well as the Cohen Student Health Center, will notify students of updates and changes to policy the expectations listed.

Because one person’s misconduct can pose a broad and invisible threat to the broader community, the presumptive sanction for violations related to disclosure of symptoms, diagnosis, or exposure; compliance with testing requirements; prompt and full cooperation with contact tracing efforts; and compliance with isolation or quarantine requires is suspension or expulsion. Generally, suspension is issued for two full semesters (excluding summer). Expulsion results in a permanent separation from the university.

Students are subject to the following Code of Conduct policies if found in violation of the expectations listed, but not limited to:

1. Students shall promptly report concerns related to COVID-19 to Mercyhurst University and cooperate with contact tracing and mitigation efforts. This includes reporting a suspected case of COVID-19 for self or others, reporting possible exposure to a person suspected or diagnosed with COVID-19, returning phone calls or other communications from University personnel, and providing complete and accurate responses to university officials. If required, students must immediately comply with quarantine or isolation requirements.

**Failure to Comply with COVID-19 Testing, Disclosure, Contact Tracing, or Quarantine/Isolation Policies**
- Immediate Suspension
- Possible Expulsion

**Failure to Comply**
- $50.00 Fine
- Social Probation
- Possible Disciplinary Probation

**Reckless Endangerment**
- Possible Suspension
- Possible Expulsion

**Disruption of University Activity**
- $50.00 Fine
- Social Probation
- Removal from Activity
- Disciplinary Probation
- Possible Suspension
2. Students must wear a mask at all times on campus, including while outdoors. The only exceptions to the mask-wearing requirement are when a student is in their designated room, apartment, or townhouse with only their roommates present, or while eating. Masks must fully cover the mouth and nose.

Failure to Comply with Masking Requirements

First Offense
$50.00 Fine
Social Probation
Possible Disciplinary Probation

Second Offense
$100.00 Fine
Disciplinary Probation
Possible Suspension

Reckless Endangerment
$100.00 Fine
Disciplinary Probation
Possible Suspension
Possible Expulsion

3. Residential students may have no more than one on-campus student guest from the same residence hall/apartment building/townhouse cluster in their room at any time. Social distancing and masks wearing should be practiced. Students must comply with occupancy limits specified in the Guest Policy (for upperclassmen) or the Freshman Area Visitation Policy section of this Handbook.

Failure to Comply with Guest or Visitation Policies involving On-Campus Guests

First Offense
Warning
Educational Sanction

Second Offense
$50.00 Fine
Written Reprimand
Guest Privileges Revoked for One Month
Possible Social Probation

Third Offense
$100.00 Fine
Social Probation
No Guests for the Remainder of the Semester
Possible Disciplinary Probation
Possible Suspension
Failure to Comply with Guest or Visitation Policies involving Off-Campus Guests

First Offense
$100.00 Fine
Social Probation
Educational Sanction
No Guests for the Remainder of the Semester
Possible Disciplinary Probation
Possible Suspension

Second Offense
Suspension

Exceeding Occupancy Limits (assess to all residents present at the time of the incident)
$25.00 Fine Per Person Over the Occupancy Limit
Possible Disciplinary Probation
Possible Suspension

Reckless Endangerment
$100.00 Fine
Disciplinary Probation
Possible Suspension
Possible Expulsion

4. Students should maintain six feet of distance from others, when possible.

Failure to Comply with Social Distancing Guidelines

First Offense
Warning
Educational Sanction
Possible Disciplinary Probation

Second Offense
$50.00 Fine
Written Reprimand
Possible Social Probation

Third Offense
$100.00 Fine
Social Probation
Possible Disciplinary Probation
Possible Suspension

Reckless Endangerment
$100.00 Fine
Disciplinary Probation
Possible Suspension
Possible Expulsion
5. Students shall not gather in groups greater than six in any residential area, including lobbies, communal kitchens, laundry rooms, etc.

**Failure to Comply with Congregation Limits in Residential Areas** (assessed to all participants)
$50.00 Fine
Written Reprimand
Possible Social Probation

**Disruption of University Activity**
$50.00 Fine
Social Probation
Removal from Activity
Possible Disciplinary Probation
Possible Suspension

6. Students shall abide by the terms of their roommate agreements.

**Failure to Comply with Roommate Agreements**
$50.00 Fine
Social Probation
Possible Disciplinary Probation

7. Students shall abide by any other health or safety policy issued by the university.

**Failure to Comply with Reasonable Directives of a University Official**

*First Offense*
$50.00 Fine
Social Probation
Possible Disciplinary Probation
Possible Immediate Suspension
Possible Suspension
Possible Expulsion

*Second Offense*
$100.00 Fine
Disciplinary Probation
Possible Immediate Suspension
Possible Suspension
Possible Expulsion

**Reckless Endangerment**
$100.00 Fine
Disciplinary Probation
Possible Suspension
Possible Expulsion
Failure to Comply
$50.00 Fine
Social Probation
Possible Disciplinary Probation

Reckless Endangerment
Suspension
Possible Expulsion