

NEW PALTZ *FORWARD*

FACULTY RESOURCE - Maintaining Public Health Compliance in the Classroom



Prepared by the Subgroup on Student Behavior Enforcement

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Syllabus Statement (Maintaining Public Health)

Insert the following in your syllabus (Note: non-teaching departments can adapt this wording accordingly):

"To protect the health of everyone in this class, all students are required to wear a mask or other face covering while inside campus buildings. Your mask must adequately cover both your nose and mouth. This is in keeping with the College's fall 2021 policy of an on-campus, indoor mask requirement for everyone, including those who have been fully vaccinated. A student who comes to class without a mask will be required to obtain one before returning to class. A limited number of masks may be available at designated locations on campus. Any student who refuses to wear a mask or face covering may not enter the classroom nor participate in the class. There will be no exemptions or waivers of the 100% compliance mask policy. Continued refusal to wear a mask or face covering will be reported to the Student Conduct Office based on Student Conduct Code's 'Non-Compliance with Official Requests' (which includes public health policy). Masks are for both your own and for others' safety and wellbeing – please remember our campus commitment to the 'We Not Me' approach, and take this simple step to protect yourself and others.

Students with temporary illnesses must work with professors and make arrangements to make up coursework."

(See footnote #1 at bottom of page)

NOTE: This message has been sent to students by the Division of Student Affairs. We include it here for faculty members' reference.

Email blast being sent to all students in seated and hybrid classes

Dear (Student's Preferred Name),

Thank you for making the choice to attend classes this fall! We're excited to have students back on campus for a more normal flow of in-person classes, events and interaction.

We've made great progress against the COVID-19 pandemic, but it is still a fact of life on our campus. We continue to promote a "We Not Me" mentality and must all do our part by acting safely in our shared responsibility to keeping one another safe.

As signers of the "Protect New Paltz Pledge," you are already aware that masks are required indoors for all students, faculty and staff in fall 2021, whether or not you have been vaccinated. This policy will be re-enforced on signs around campus and in texts, emails and social media posts reminding SUNY New Paltz community members of the basic public health standards that each one of us here must uphold.

The Student Handbook's code of conduct cites that students who fail to comply with legitimate, reasonable and lawful requests by faculty and administrative staff (including public health law) can be charged through the conduct process and face various sanctions. Any referrals for not complying with public health law will be sent to the Director of Student Conduct.

Here are the key practices we expect of each other each day we meet:

- 1) Remember to wear your mask or other face covering with complete coverage of your nose and mouth, protecting both yourself and others, before you enter any building or inside spaces. Resident students do not need to wear masks in their rooms or suites, but do need to wear masks in all other areas of their residence halls. There are no exemptions or waivers of the 100% inside mask compliance policy for anyone on campus.
- 2) Anyone who is not fully vaccinated must complete the Daily COVID-19 Screening at my.newpaltz.edu every day they are on campus, and be tested every week they are on campus.
- 3) Wash your hands with soap often throughout the day and use hand sanitizer.
- 4) Any student with a temporary illness must make arrangements with the professor regarding making up coursework.

Remember to read all notices emailed to your New Paltz email account, as you are responsible for their content. We will also keep you apprised of policies and updates through 'NPForward' text messages. Thank you for your cooperation during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

Robin Cohen-La Valle

Robin Cohen-La Valle

#1. For more information about The Pledge and expectations, go to: "Protect New Paltz: A Pledge to Stop the Spread of COVID-19" <https://www.newpaltz.edu/media/corona-virus/ProtectNPpledge21-22.pdf>

Info Sheet: Preventing and Managing Non-compliance in the Classroom and on-campus

Faculty are asked to please read this “Faculty announcement on the first day of class” during their first in-person meeting of the semester. In addition, ask everyone to nod that they agree with your statement.

Faculty announcement on the first day of class (to be read aloud)

“I am looking forward to teaching this class and know you are all here to learn this semester as well. This is an unprecedented time, but we are here, as a community of learners, engaging in person to have the best academic interaction possible. It is everybody’s responsibility to keep this community safe. The College has sent multiple messages to make sure all students, faculty and staff are aware of the requirement to wear masks indoors this fall, including during seated classes, in order to maintain a safe and healthy environment for everyone. We’ve all agreed to follow the “Protect New Paltz Pledge.” Please keep in mind that our community’s “We Not Me” attitude helped keep COVID numbers low on campus last year, and that commitment to looking out for others is our best chance to have a successful semester this fall. If we each do our part to protect the college community of which we are all members, we will have a productive experience.

Please remember to wear your mask or other face covering with complete coverage over your nose and mouth, for yourself and for others, before you enter the building.

DO YOU ALL AGREE THAT WE WILL FOLLOW THIS PRACTICE?”

What ifs:

Should you come into contact with a SUNY New Paltz student who is not following the ‘Protect New Paltz Pledge’, the following steps are suggestions on how to address this situation.

Step 1: Informal Resolution/Use of persuasive language

A. Remind the student about the class’s agreement to follow public health guidelines made on the first day of class. Ask the person to please follow the Pledge and correct their behavior in a firm, polite and caring/compassionate manner.

Examples of ways to address this include:

“The Pledge requires that all community members wear a full coverage face covering appropriately to keep our community safe and healthy. Will you please wear your mask before continuing to be in this space?”

“The Pledge asks that we take responsibility for our own health and help keep our campus community and the greater New Paltz area safe by following these expectations. I am asking you to do this to keep you and our community safe. Will you please wear your mask or face covering?”

“I understand that you do not want to miss this class/event/meeting, but for the safety of our community, I cannot let you continue attending this class/event/meeting until you follow the appropriate expectations set out by the Pledge. How can I help you attend this class/event/meeting safely?”

“Can you please wear your mask or face covering? The Pledge is asking all of us to follow the expectations so we can remain on campus and not have to pivot to remote instruction. Will you please help keep our community safe and contribute to us being able to stay on campus?”

B. If necessary and possible, offer a mask or face covering to the student, or refer them to designated locations to pick up a mask.

Step 2: Verbal warning

If repeated informal resolution attempts fail, and the student still refuses to wear an appropriate mask or full face covering, a verbal warning and follow up email is justified. You could state:

“Public health law that addresses health risk is unlike any other college rule. Everyone has to understand that being reluctant or refusing to comply with these expectations is not a matter of choice. I spoke to you about this once, and I am asking that you ‘help me help you’... I do not want to

be in the position of having to refer you to the Director of Student Conduct. I will email you one reminder and am urging you to keep the Pledge and follow the expectations we discussed.”

Step 3: Refer to the appropriate resource for further action

If after educating and asking a student to follow the expectations outlined and they refuse to do so, please let them know they will be referred to the Director of Student Conduct for potential disciplinary action, which could include removal from in-person instruction, among other consequences.

How do I submit an official report?

If a student has **refused** to comply with being asked to wear a mask, you can use Starfish to “Raise a Flag” about the behavior. This will automatically send the student an email from you reminding them to bring and wear a mask to all future classes, and will also send a notification to the Office of Student Conduct. The student’s behavior will be addressed directly, documented in the conduct system and possible sanctions for non-compliance will be imposed (A student with repeat offenses in classes, offices or residence halls will face more severe sanctions).

Faculty can follow these steps to “Raise a Flag” about students’ failure to follow masking policies:

1. Log into Blackboard, or my.newpaltz.edu, and click the “Starfish” link to access the platform
2. Search for the student using their name, Banner ID or your class list
3. Raise the “Mask Compliance Flag” and connect a note about what specifically occurred, including the date of incident, a few words detailing your interaction, and whether this was repeat behavior

Faculty who do not have access to Starfish can fill out an [Incident Reporting Form at this link](#).

Q&A

Q1. A student in my class/meeting/activity is refusing to wear a mask or face covering. What should I do?

1. **Talk with the student (preferably outside of the classroom).** Have a persuasive conversation in a firm, polite, compassionate manner, apprising them of their available options to comply with the face covering directive. (Be aware that there are NO EXEMPTIONS to the policy, even for those requesting accommodations for disability-related or religious-affiliation). If the student refuses, ask the student to leave that class session and inform them that they are still responsible for the class material.
2. Following the class session, **the instructor is encouraged to follow up with an email to the student reiterating expectations** (including a copy of the Protect New Paltz Pledge and a copy of the Student Handbook under Administrative Regulations, Part III, Section C. *(See footnote #2 at bottom of page)*) The instructor will reiterate that, in order for the student to participate in class, they need to wear a mask or face covering. The instructor will also let the student know that if this happens again, the student will be asked to leave class and the instructor will submit a report to the Director of Student Conduct via Starfish. There may be instances in which a student forgets to wear their face covering more than one time. It is up to the instructor’s discretion to determine if the student is unwilling to comply or simply forgot and needs a subsequent reminder. At any point the instructor is encouraged to have an educational conversation if the student repeatedly forgets but willfully complies when reminded.
 - a. If a second offense occurs, the instructor will ask the student to leave class and the instructor may submit an official report via Starfish. These reports go directly to the Director of Student Conduct. The student will be sent a policy reminder letter for the second offense stating that if they do not comply with the directive to wear a mask or face covering, they may be charged with a violation of the Student Conduct Code.
 - b. If subsequent offenses occur, the faculty member will continue to report the behavior to the Director of Student Conduct via Starfish. If the information in the report suggests a possible violation of the Student Conduct Code, the office will continue with the disciplinary process.

#2. <https://www.newpaltz.edu/studentaffairs/regulations.html>

Q2. A student in my class is wearing something over their face, but it does not appear to be sufficient (i.e., doesn't cover their nose, overly porous material). What should I do?

See the answer in the previous question.

Q3. A student not wearing a mask or face covering says that they have a religious reason, disability, or medical condition that precludes wearing any sort of face covering. What should I do to accommodate them?

There are NO EXEMPTIONS to the masking policy for fall 2021. Again, if the student refuses to comply, the professor can offer a mask or face covering, refer them to the location where they can get one, or ask the student to kindly leave that class session. If it continues, submit a report to the Director of Student Conduct via Starfish.

Q4. Can I set the policy in my lab or research space for face coverings?

Yes, but it must be consistent with the guidelines outlined here (i.e., indoor mask or face covering usage is required unless the space is clearly occupied by only a single individual).

Q5. Someone in my class is wearing a mask or face covering that contains a message or symbol that is offensive or threatening. What can I do?

You have a few options. One is to engage your student -- ask them about the message and let them know that you find it offensive. If you feel uncomfortable having a conversation yourself, you can get help by filing a campus climate complaint. (See footnote #3 at bottom of page) Your complaint will be reviewed for any relevant policy violations and if there are none, the person you reported will still be notified of your concern and invited to discuss it.

Q6. Are masks or face coverings required when I'm working in my office/lab/workspace alone?

No, as long as you are confident that the space will not be occupied by others while you are there or very shortly after your departure. If someone approaches your office, please put on a mask or face covering.

Q7. What do I do if I have concerns about someone I see on campus who is not following appropriate guidelines?

If you are comfortable, try to engage them in a conversation about the behavior in question, doing so in a calm, firm, polite and compassionate manner. If a student does not comply with your request, you are permitted to ask to see their New Paltz College ID, or at least ask for their name, so that you may report the behavior to the Director of Student Conduct via Starfish. A report without a student's name is not useful. Reports about a faculty member or staff member should be sent to HRDI@newpaltz.edu.

Q8. What might be an appropriate situation for involving University Police?

Most situations related to masking do not warrant calling University Police. University Police is not charged with responding to complaints about non-compliance with mask/face covering use. Examples of appropriate police requests may include: an act of a criminal nature, threat of a physical altercation, etc. If the behavior rises to a direct immediate threat, you should call 845.257.2222.

Q9. What if a student asks EXACTLY where in the Student Handbook & Code of Conduct does it say they have to comply?

The Student Handbook can be found at the link at the bottom of this page. (See footnote #4 at bottom of page) The relevant policy is called "Administrative Regulation 2.00 - Compliance with Official Requests." The policy states: "No person shall fail to comply with a legitimate, reasonable, and lawful request or direction by members of the faculty and administrative staff, other employees of the College, or officially recognized volunteers acting in accordance with their official duties or violate public health law."

Useful Links and Materials

SUNY New Paltz Fall 2021 COVID-19 Guidance:

<https://sites.newpaltz.edu/news/2021/07/overview-of-fall-2021-covid-19-policies/>

New Paltz Forward: (hub for pandemic-related resources):

<https://www.newpaltz.edu/newpaltzforward/>

Protect New Paltz Pledge:

<https://www.newpaltz.edu/media/corona-virus/ProtectNPpledge21-22.pdf>

Coronavirus Testing Schedule:

<https://www.newpaltz.edu/healthcenter/covid-19-information/testing-schedule/>

Coronavirus Dashboard:

<https://www.newpaltz.edu/coronavirus-info/>

SUNY New Paltz COVID FAQs:

<https://newpaltz.edu/newpaltzforward/frequently-asked-questions/>

#3. <https://www.newpaltz.edu/ccs/>

#4. <https://www.newpaltz.edu/studentaffairs/regulations.html>