

Dear Northwestern Family,

In June, the University of Northwestern Ohio removed the on-campus face mask requirement following the decision by the Ohio Governor's Office to rescind COVID-19 orders of the Ohio Department of Health. Our entire campus community prepared for a return to normal operation for classes in the fall of 2021.

Unfortunately, over the past month, the country, and our local area, has experienced a surge in COVID-19 cases not seen since the winter and spring of 2021. Because of this surge, Allen County Public Health, Ohio Department of Health (ODH), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are recommending all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, begin wearing face coverings while indoors based on the level of community transmission. More specifically, the CDC guidance applies to counties that have substantial (orange) or high (red) transmission rates. Allen County is currently categorized as a high transmission area ([see county levels here](#)).

At the recommendation of Allen County Public Health, ODH, and CDC, we will join all other regional universities in instituting a **temporary mask requirement for all students, faculty, staff, and guests (regardless of vaccination status) in indoor campus buildings beginning Tuesday, August 17, 2021.**

It is our hope that this temporary return to indoor masking will be just that, temporary, until the county returns to a moderate (yellow) or low (blue) transmission level as long as cases remain low on the UNOH campus. This weekend begins the first of two large student move-in weekends with students traveling in from more than 40 different states to join our campus community. We want to start off these academic terms as safely as possible.

The temporary indoor mask requirement applies to:

- classrooms, shops, and labs.
- any indoor space where people gather (hallways, library, study tables, lounges, etc.).

Masks will **not** be required:

- outside.
- in dorm rooms.
- while eating or drinking.
- while actively exercising in the Indoor Athletic Complex.
- while working alone in an office or classroom.

Contact tracing of positive cases will still occur through both the Human Resources and Student Success offices. **Following guidance from the Ohio Department of Health, with universal masking in place in all classrooms, classmates of a positive case will not need to quarantine. This change to guidance from last year, we hope, will allow uninterrupted learning to continue for as many students as possible.**

University administration will continue to prioritize the safety and well-being of our students, faculty, staff, and overall campus community as we begin the 2021-2022 year. Thank you for all you are doing to keep UNOH healthy and safe, and we look forward to welcoming new students to campus soon.

Sincerely,

University Administration