Auburn University
Usage of Face Coverings to Counter COVID-19 Policy

I. POLICY STATEMENT

Auburn University requires individuals to wear face coverings while in certain areas on the Auburn University campus or other property controlled by Auburn University.

II. POLICY PRINCIPLES

A. Face coverings must be worn by all individuals, regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status, in the following areas:
   - Inside buildings owned or otherwise controlled by Auburn University, even when alone
   - Other areas marked by official university signage or otherwise clearly communicated by the university

B. Face coverings are not required in the following areas:
   - When alone in an office with floor to ceiling walls and a closed door
   - Note that masks must be worn in any common areas or shared workspaces (including open floorplan office space, cubicle embankments, and conference rooms)
   - When actively eating or drinking
   - Residence hall rooms, when alone or with roommates only
   - The Auburn University Campus Recreation and Wellness Center, when actively exercising
   - Outdoor areas

C. Regardless whether the university’s generally-applicable policy requires face coverings, faculty members may require all individuals to continue wearing face coverings during their classes if the faculty member has a face coverings requirement in the course syllabus.

D. When required, face coverings must be worn consistently and correctly (over mouth and nose).

E. To the extent practicable, individuals who are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 should maintain a distance of at least six feet from others at all times, including in offices, conference rooms, and all other communal and work spaces.

F. Auburn University recommends that all individuals on campus have at least three face coverings available to use throughout a week in order to begin each day with a new or cleaned face covering. Those face coverings should follow the current CDC recommendations. If using cloth face coverings, they should, at a minimum, be made of multiple layers of tightly woven cotton fabric. Some cotton household materials may block particles more effectively than cotton. Adding a layer of filter material within a cloth face covering is recommended. Additionally, FDA approved surgical masks may also be used as a face covering.
G. Most face coverings are not respiratory protection and must not be substituted for the proper respiratory protection that may be required as part of your research duties as identified in your respiratory protection program. Respirators with exhalation valves do not impede the spread of virus from the wearer, unless they contain an internal filter, so their use should be evaluated based upon the needs of the situation. Additionally, most cloth face coverings will not have the flame resistance found within FDA approved surgical masks or FDA/NIOSH approved filtering face piece respirators. In research situations involving heat or open flame an FDA approved surgical mask or filtering face piece respirator, as appropriate for the task, should be utilized.

H. Where appropriate, exceptions to mask requirements will be granted to individuals who are:

   i. engaged in high intensity activities;
   ii. working in a setting where masks may increase the risk of heat-related illnesses; or
   iii. working in a setting where safety concerns exist due to introduction of a hazard (e.g., where straps could get caught in machinery).

For more information regarding these risks, please visit: https://cws.auburn.edu/rms/pm/facecovering

I. Other exceptions to this policy for both areas and individuals will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Requests to require masks in areas where they are not otherwise required by this policy should be routed to the Executive Vice President. Students seeking an accommodation due to a disability should contact the Office of Accessibility. Employees seeking accommodations based on a disability should contract the AA/EEO Office. Requests for exemptions based on a religious concern should be directed to the AA/EEO Office.

J. Areas where face-covering requirements are modified should be clearly marked with signs. In some cases, face shields may be approved for use instead of face coverings.

K. For proper use and care of face-coverings see here: https://cws.auburn.edu/rms/pm/facemask

L. Auburn University is consistently monitoring CDC and medical recommendation, local conditions, and federal requirements and will modify this policy as appropriate in response to changing circumstances.

III. EFFECTIVE DATE
January 3, 2021

IV. APPLICABILITY
The requirement to wear face coverings applies to all individuals, including Auburn University faculty, staff, and students as well as visitors, vendors, contractors, and any other third parties.

V. POLICY MANAGEMENT
   Responsible Office: Human Resources, Office of Student Affairs, and Office of the Provost
   Responsible Executive: Executive Vice President
   Responsible Officer: Vice President, Business & Finance, CFO

VI. DEFINITIONS
N/A
VII. POLICY PROCEDURES
None

VIII. SANCTIONS

A. Employee violations of this policy will be considered Group 2 violations. Supervisors will address policy violations through the normal employee disciplinary process, working in conjunction with Human Resources.

B. Student violations of this policy in the classroom will be addressed through the Policy on Classroom Behavior. Violations of this policy occurring outside of the classroom will be addressed through the university’s Code of Student Conduct.

IX. EXCLUSIONS
None

X. INTERPRETATION
Executive Vice President

Revised: November 15, 2021
Revised: August 3, 2021
Revised: June 1, 2021
Revised: April 9, 2021
Revised: December 14, 2020
Revised: September 28, 2020
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