

# RICHARD BLAND COLLEGE SAFE AND SECURE PLAN 2021-2022

EFFECTIVE DATE: AUGUST 18, 2021



Richard Bland College  
of WILLIAM & MARY

The goal for fall 2021 is to return to the time-honored RBC experience: in-person interactions with classmates and professors, participation in unique traditions, and involvement in myriad activities, clubs and athletic events. To achieve that end, we have worked with Crater Health District, as well as local, state and federal health guidelines for fall 2021.



## VACCINATIONS

The Richard Bland College of William and Mary strongly encourages all students, faculty and staff, who are physically accessing campus services and classes to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 before returning to campus for the Fall 2021 term. Research continues to support the safety and efficacy – along with extreme effectiveness – of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) and World Health Organization (WHO). Widespread vaccination is the best tool we have to ensure that RBC can return to a full in-person academic and social environment in the fall of 2021.

Consistent with the Governor's Executive Directive Number Eighteen, all state employees who are in the work place or have public facing work duties must disclose their vaccine status to the College's Office of Human Resources. In addition, state employees who are not fully vaccinated or refuse to disclose their vaccine status must undergo COVID-19 testing on a weekly basis and disclose the test results to the College's Office of Human Resources. Student workers will be required to comply with Executive Directive Number Eighteen.



## DAILY ATTESTATION

All students, faculty and staff are required to attest daily to their health through the daily attestation process. This process will serve as a reminder to those that plan to be on campus to check for symptoms and to remain at home if symptomatic.



## FACE COVERINGS

In keeping with CDC guidance, all employees, students and visitors are required to wear face coverings inside any College building and are strongly encouraged to do so when outside in group settings. The latest guidance from CDC also raises concern about the high transmissibility rate of the Delta variant and recommends that anyone in substantial or high transmission rate regions wear face coverings while in public indoor spaces. At this posting, Petersburg, Dinwiddie County, Prince George County all fall under the "substantial or high transmissibility" category. As such, at least through the first few weeks of the return to campus, RBC is requiring that all employees, students, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status, wear face coverings indoors in public spaces, which includes all classrooms, laboratories, meeting spaces, foyers and hallways, and auditoriums. Face coverings are not required in one's own residence hall room, private offices, other spaces where you are alone, and when eating and drinking. RBC is developing a process for limited exemptions to this indoor requirement for certain academic, co-curricular, and physical activities. RBC strongly recommends wearing a face covering when outdoors in large groups. RBC will continue to monitor this guidance and local conditions and will announce modifications as appropriate.



## PHYSICAL DISTANCING

All classrooms, dining facilities, public gathering places, and event spaces will return to normal occupancy limits for fall 2021. Event planners, building managers, and program sponsors should provide opportunities for social distancing by individuals who are unvaccinated or feel more comfortable maintaining their distance from others. In certain cases, this may require decreasing occupancy limits of the event or program space. Specific classroom considerations may also be necessary and should be accommodated to the furthest extent possible. Care must be taken by all members of the College community not to make assumptions or judgments about a person's vaccination status based on whether or not they choose to maintain physical distance from others. For the first few weeks of the year, however, even with vaccines and face coverings, at a time when our region is one where there is substantial or high transmission of the virus, we should be sensible about large indoor gatherings until we know more about the transmissibility of the new and emerging variants. This means holding large gatherings outdoors where possible. It also means promoting social distancing by utilizing larger indoor spaces or utilizing streaming options for events that would typically involve congregating in auditoriums at maximum capacity.



## MEETINGS

While there is a commitment to returning to in-person instruction and co-curricular activities for students and everyone is eager to resume face-to-face interactions, meeting organizers should weigh the benefits and risks of holding meetings in-person or virtually. Meeting organizers should take into consideration meeting room size and available distancing, length of meetings, preferences of the attendees, and the potential ramifications of an infection on the unit's daily operations when choosing between in-person or virtual options. RBC will maintain its Zoom license, making virtual meetings available to all faculty, staff, and students who choose to exercise this option. At least initially, an approach which places a premium on in-person experiences (e.g. classes, office hours, and many other activities where being in the same space is uniquely valuable) that is balanced with virtual convenings where possible is strongly encouraged.



## HOUSING

The on-campus experience continues to complement the academic mission of the College by providing students an opportunity to connect to peers, staff mentors, and the institution. When students experience these connections, they are more likely to succeed academically. RBC's Residence Life and Housing program has always been grounded in the acceptance and celebration of differences and believes healthy communication is the key to a positive and vibrant community. To that end, students are encouraged to speak openly and honestly with roommates about expectations to maintain a healthy living environment. Vaccination status is not available to the Residence Life and Housing staff and was not considered in the room assignment process. Room change requests based on vaccination statuses will be handled through the established room change process and will not be prioritized over other roommate concerns or room change requests.

During move-in, students will be able to have two guests accompany them into the residence hall to assist with belongings and setting up their space. All guests will be required to wear face coverings while inside the residence halls regardless of vaccination status. After move-in weekend, residential students will be allowed to have visitors, however overnight stays will not be permitted initially. Regional and campus COVID-19 data will be reviewed frequently to determine when the guest policy can return to pre-pandemic parameters. Residential students will be responsible for ensuring their guests are following RBC expectations around face covering and distancing.

Large gatherings in small spaces should be avoided, especially in situations when residents do not know their guests and where mitigation strategies cannot be controlled or enforced.



## DINING

Dining locations continue to pose increased risk for transmission of COVID-19 due to the need for unmasking while eating. RBC Dining is committed to resuming in-person dining in Parson's Café. RBC requires the use of face coverings in all dining facilities when not actively eating. This includes wearing face coverings while in cashier lines, food lines, and when socializing. Consider eating with the same individuals at each meal and avoiding large tables of people. Tables should be spaced out as well.

Occupancy is to be determined closer to opening based on local health conditions and VDH recommendations. Outdoor dining is still the best option, where possible. Students will continue to be able to get take-away food if they are uncomfortable eating in the dining hall.

As long as there is an indoor face covering requirement, College dining staff members will also be required to comply. College Dining staff members have been encouraged to get the COVID-19 vaccine and will be required to comply with Executive Directive Eighteen.



## HYGIENE ETIQUETTE

Protocols set in place during the COVID-19 pandemic for cleaning and sanitizing will continue. Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette Protecting self and others from exposure to respiratory secretions is essential to public health. All individuals must be diligent in practicing good respiratory etiquette by coughing and sneezing into a tissue or your elbow and thoroughly washing hands frequently, especially after known contact with respiratory droplets. RBC will continue to provide signage throughout its properties, especially in bathrooms, reminding the community to practice these mitigation strategies. Members are also reminded to stay home and away from others if experiencing illness and seek medical care and testing if exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status.

RBC will maintain supplies of sanitizing wipes and hand sanitizer in classroom and other public spaces for members of the College community to continue to clean their spaces before and after use. Additional supplies can be requested by placing a work order with Facilities.



## CASE INVESTIGATIONS AND CONTACT TRACING

RBC will continue to designate trained staff to conduct case investigations and contact tracing within the College community. Those staff members will maintain confidentiality to the fullest extent possible and only share what is necessary to ensure potential exposures are notified. All case investigations are reported to the Crater Area Health District through secured communication. It is the College's expectation that all members of the College are forthcoming and honest with information when speaking to the designated case investigators/contact tracers and comply with any instructions given.

With anticipated vaccine rates as well as the lifting of distancing restrictions, RBC anticipates that positive cases will decrease from 2020-2021 but the number of close contacts per case will increase. RBC's contact tracers will use a combination of interviews with the COVID-19 positive individual as well as pull class and organizational rosters to obtain a comprehensive account of potential exposures.



## QUARANTINE AND ISOLATION PROCEDURES

COVID-19 is still in the community and has the potential of finding its way to RBC's campus. If someone is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, they should seek medical care, get tested as soon as possible, and stay away from others until they receive the result. Any member of the College community who tests positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, must report it to RBC and isolate for a period of ten days. The individual must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, and see an improvement in other symptoms before leaving isolation.

Unvaccinated individuals who are identified as a close contact of an individual who tested positive for COVID-19 will need to quarantine for a period of fourteen days. Vaccinated individuals who are identified as a close contact do not need to quarantine unless they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. In that case, the individuals should get tested immediately and quarantine until they receive a negative result.

The newest guidance from the CDC also indicates that vaccinated individuals exposed to a confirmed case should get tested 3-5 days after exposure and should wear a face covering around others until a negative test is achieved. RBC will maintain quarantine and isolation space in Patriot and Freedom Hall as well as Commerce Hall.

If a residential student must isolate or quarantine, they will be connected with a case manager, who will make arrangements for meals and regular check-ins. Students, unless otherwise directed by a health official, may also choose to go home for their isolation or quarantine period.



## PARTNERSHIPS

The partnership established with VCUHealth last academic year has been extended through the 2021-2022 academic year. The partnership will enable students, residential and commuter, who develop COVID symptoms, to be seen by a VCUHealth physician virtually. Students should alert the Director of Student Success for additional information.

The College has partnered with Walgreens to provide COVID-19 vaccinations for students, faculty and staff. The vaccinations will be administered on a published schedule, commencing on August 26, with student move-in. In addition, Walgreens will provide flu, pneumonia and shingles vaccines, upon request.

Walgreens will also provide the weekly COVID-19 testing for employees of the state who are unvaccinated or who choose not to disclose their vaccination status, as required by Executive Directive Eighteen. Employees will establish a portal to receive test results and will be required to notify the College's Office of Human Resources. Specific date, time and location details will be release when developed.



## GUIDANCE FOR UNVACCINATED AND IMMUNOCOMPROMISED INDIVIDUALS

The CDC and VDH continue to make clear that vaccinations are the most effective mitigation strategy in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. For individuals who are unvaccinated or are vaccinated but immunocompromised, additional care must be taken to protect yourself and each other from potential exposure. A commitment to wearing a face covering in all indoor and group settings, distancing--and for those unvaccinated, daily attestation, and testing-- are essential. In addition, individuals in these two categories may need to make decisions about their participation in certain co-curricular activities based on the level of mitigation that is possible in those settings. RBC will also continue to provide disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer in most indoor, public areas of campus. Making use of these items as well as frequent hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette will lower your risk of exposure. Finally, we encourage unvaccinated and immunocompromised individuals to remain in contact with their health provider and follow additional guidance issued by them.



## USE OF COLLEGE VANS

Shared use of College-operated vehicles presents potential risk for the spread of COVID-19. The following parameters are designed to mitigate threats to personal health. Work vehicles (pick-ups, cargo vans, etc.) are limited to single-person occupancy. Passenger vans will not have an occupancy restriction; however, avoiding filling them to capacity is encouraged where possible. Occupants should sit as far apart from one another as possible and wear face coverings at all times, regardless of vaccination status. When possible, keep windows open to promote air replacement/circulation.

These same rules apply for personal cars being used for College business, but note that the Commonwealth's Risk Management Plan will not cover employees or students traveling in personal vehicles. Risk Management strongly recommends that a pooled or leased vehicle be used when transporting students or traveling for College business.



## TRAINING

All new faculty and staff to the College will receive COVID-19 training through the course of their onboarding process to ensure familiarity with policies and procedures they will be expected to follow and, in some cases, provide direction and accountability to other faculty, staff, or students. Current faculty, staff, and students will be expected to read the 2021-2022 COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, complete any available training, and monitor updates sent out by College officials.



## COVID-19 DASHBOARD

RBC will maintain the COVID dashboard to document new cases, active cases, and quarantine/isolation status. The dashboard will also provide COVID related data from the Crater Health District and surrounding communities.



## A DYNAMIC SEMESTER

Unlike last year, because of the widespread vaccinations among the College community, our hope and belief are that we will be able to return to something much more like the typical RBC in-person experience. Initial conditions at the time this plan is published have meant that we are requiring some increased precautions, such as face coverings indoors for all, but as conditions improve we will revisit those. In general, we all need to be flexible and adjust as conditions change, and the Safe and Secure Task Force and the COVID-19 Emergency Management Team will keep a close eye on many of the metrics we measure on our dashboard and the local COVID conditions. These include case counts, weekly testing numbers, quarantine/isolation space availability, local hospital capacity, local positivity rates and transmission numbers, among others. And as necessary we will take additional temporary steps to further protect the RBC community, including limiting gathering sizes, changing modality of courses and limiting visitors.



## A WORD OF THANKS

Last year, RBC was one of the most effective Virginia public colleges/universities in preventing the spread of COVID-19 through a comprehensive and layered mitigation strategy. Your commitment to this community by adhering to established policies, following protocols, and having a genuine care for the health and well-being of others ensured our success. The RBC Safe and Secure Task Force and the COVID-19 Emergency Management Team are grateful to all those who sacrificed self-interests and worked together to maintain a healthy campus community. While we work to return to a sense of normalcy, we look forward to partnering with you once again in keeping rates of COVID-19 infections low at RBC.