

Richard Bland College of William and Mary
Safe and Secure Plan
Academic Year 2021-2022

Effective Date

August 16, 2021

Reviewed and updated

December 10, 2021

January 3, 2022

The goal for the Spring Semester 2022 is to continue to provide the RBC community with a safe learning experience using proven mitigation strategies to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus and its variants. The College will continue to provide opportunities for in-person interactions, participation in unique traditions, and involvement in myriad activities, clubs and athletic events. To achieve that end, the Safe and Secure Task Force has worked with Crater Health District, as well as reviewed and applied local, state and federal health guidelines for the development of the Safe and Secure Plan for the Spring Semester 2022.

Vaccinations

The Richard Bland College of William and Mary continues to strongly encourage 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 Spring 2022 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 continue with an in-person academic and social environment in the spring of 2022.

The College will continue to adhere to the Governor’s Executive Directive Number Eighteen that requires all state employees who are in the work place or have public facing work duties to disclose their vaccine status to the College’s Office of Human Resources. Those 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. In the event that the Governor rescinds the Directive, the Safe and Secure Task Force will develop recommendations to submit for the COVID Emergency Management Team to consider.

First Week of Classes

All classes on Tuesday, January 18 through Friday, January 21, will take place virtually. This will allow time for those who traveled and were with family over winter break to recover from any potential exposure risks (limit risk to the community). It will provide the Safe and Secure Task Force with additional time to assess campus conditions as residential students return to the housing complex.

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 and Omicron variants 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 “high transmissibility” category. As such, 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. Limited exemptions to this indoor requirement for certain academic, co-curricular, and physical activities are currently in place. RBC 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. Academic building monitors will continue to serve to monitor the face covering policy and will provide masks and related health care information to ensure compliance.

Physical Distancing

All classrooms, dining facilities, public gathering places, and event spaces will continue to be established at normal occupancy limits for spring 2022. Event planners, building managers, and program sponsors should continue to 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 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

With the exception of the first week of classes, the College has committed to returning to in-person instruction and co-curricular activities for students. However, 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. An individual's vaccination status is not available to the Residence Life and Housing staff and is 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.

Move in will begin on January 14 for all new students. Returning students may move in any time between January 15 through January 23, providing for greater dedensification. Returning students should schedule an arrival time with the Office of Residence Life through the housing portal. Please arrive before 5 pm to ensure that your ID is working.

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 staff members are committed to in-person dining in Parson's Café. RBC requires the use of face coverings in all dining locations 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 will be spaced out to reduce contact.

Students will continue to be able to get take-away food if they are uncomfortable eating in the dining hall and outdoor eating locations will be maintained.

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. RBC's case managers 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

CDC released [new guidance](#) that affects the amount of time an individual must isolate or quarantine and expands quarantine to include exposed individuals who are eligible to receive a booster, but haven't yet done so.

Consistent with CDC and VDH guidelines, 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 five days and if they are asymptomatic or their symptoms are resolving (without fever for 24 hours), follow that by 5 days of wearing a mask when around others to minimize the risk of infecting people they encounter. The change is motivated by science demonstrating that the majority of SARS-CoV-2 transmission occurs early in the course of illness, generally in the 1-2 days prior to onset of symptoms and the 2-3 days after.

For any member of the College community who are unvaccinated or are more than six months out from their second mRNA dose (or more than 2 months after the J&J vaccine) and not yet boosted, must quarantine for 5 days followed by strict mask use for an additional 5 days. Alternatively, if a 5-day quarantine is not feasible, it is imperative that an exposed person [wear a well-fitting mask](#) at all times when around others for 10 days after exposure. Individuals who

have received their booster shot do not need to quarantine following an exposure, but should wear a mask for 10 days after the exposure. For all those exposed, best practice would also include a test for SARS-CoV-2 at day 5 after exposure. If symptoms occur, individuals should immediately quarantine until a negative test confirms symptoms are not attributable to COVID-19.

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 Genetworx partnership for testing certain employees and students will remain in place through the Spring semester, 2022. Testing days, locations and times and related testing notifications will be issued by the Office of Human Resources.

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 and Motor Pool Vehicles

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.

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.

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 Mitigation Plan for Spring 2022 semester and monitor any 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

The College's Safe and Secure Plan for Fall Semester 2021 proved to be very successful, and, with continuing threats from the Delta and Omicron variants, the plan will be continued through the Spring Semester 2022, with modification, as necessary.

Conditions at the time this plan is published have meant that the College is requiring some increased precautions, such as a virtual opening and face coverings indoors for all, but as conditions improve we will revisit these strategies. 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 semester, 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. We look forward to partnering with you once again in keeping rates of COVID-19 infections low at RBC.