



Hennepin Technical College™

March 3, 2022

Dear HTC Campus Community,

This month marks the two-year mark from when the COVID-19 pandemic began. The pandemic has had an effective on us all, both professionally and personally, and we recognize the resilience that you have shown during this time in supporting our students and each other.

Now is the time to look ahead to the next phase. For some, these changes will be welcome news while others may be apprehensive with the changes. We acknowledge all of these thoughts and emotions. As we have done for the past two years, we follow the guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the system office.

On Friday, February 25, 2022, the CDC updated the metrics used to inform their [mitigation recommendations](#) including masking. Their measure now has three levels: low (green), medium (yellow), and high (orange). The levels are based on a mix of case rates, total new COVID-19 admissions over 7 days, and the 7-day average of percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied.

- Masks are not required at the "low" level.
- At "medium," the recommendation on masks is to "talk to your healthcare provider" if you are at high risk for severe illness about whether you need to wear a mask, so it's at the individual level and not a global mask recommendation.
- At "high," the recommendation is to "wear a mask indoors in public."

Hennepin County (home to both the Brooklyn Park and Eden Prairie campuses) is currently listed as a "medium" level.

FACE COVERINGS

In accordance with the mandate from the system office, Hennepin Technical College has required face coverings for all faculty, staff, students, and visitors since August 3, 2021. With the CDC changes announced last Friday, this approach will change as of today, March 3, 2022. **Masks will no longer be required while on our campuses.**

The college approach to masking is an institution-wide determination, and individual faculty or staff cannot deviate from the institution's overall approach.

Regardless of county-level data, **individuals may choose to continue wearing masks, and we should all respect those choices.**

In addition, the updated CDC guidance recommends that individuals who are immunocompromised or at a high risk for severe disease should talk to their healthcare provider about whether masks or other precautions are warranted.

SOCIAL DISTANCING AND REDUCED FOOT TRAFFIC ON CAMPUS

Other mitigation strategies during the pandemic included social distancing and reduced foot traffic on campus. In accordance with the reduction in positive cases within Minnesota and Hennepin County and in changing guidelines, **we no longer are required to have social distancing or reduced foot traffic on campus.** As with wearing a mask, we should **respect individual choice and comfort level with regards to personal space.**

MMB POLICY #1446

For the time being, MMB HR/LR policy #1446 COVID-19 Proof of Vaccination and Testing for employees, contractors, and vendors remains in place. MMB has indicated that they will be reviewing and updating this policy in the coming weeks. We will share any updates once we receive them.

REMINDER: EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

At some point in our lives, each of us needs a little extra help. Counselors are ready to support you and your family. As part of your benefits, you receive free, confidential help through our EAP, LifeMatters, so you can get the support you need when you need it.

LifeMatters is available 24/7:

-  Call: 1-800-657-3719 or 651-259-3840
-  Chat: Text "Hello" to 61295
-  Click: [Browse an online resource library or connect via email](#) [password: stmn1]

As always, your health, safety, and wellbeing continue to be our top priority and are the paramount driver of our decisions. All information shared in this email can always be found on our HTC web page: [HTC COVID-19 web page](#).

Stay Well. Stay Healthy.

COVID Response Team
Hennepin Technical College