



CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY



LIVING, LEARNING AND WORKING AT CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT FALL, 2021

Key elements of the Opening Plan have been updated since it was published in early August. Please refer to the [COVID-19 Information page](#), the [Latest Updates section](#) and [Official Communications page](#) for current policies and guidance.



Introduction

Christopher Newport University will reopen our campus to the public on July 6, 2021. Faculty and staff will return to full in-person, on-campus work on August 2 and students will begin to move into the residence halls starting with freshman, on August 13. Getting Started and Welcome Week begin August 16. Fall 2021 semester classes begin on August 23.

In the fall, all of our students will attend their classes in person, to learn from faculty who will all teach in person. We are able to do this by employing the most effective tool available for limiting the spread of COVID-19: vaccination.

In May, Christopher Newport's Board of Visitors required all students to be vaccinated in order to enroll for the fall semester. In addition, thanks to a successful partnership with the Peninsula Health District, the city of Newport News and York County, we were able to offer vaccinations to our employees through a clinic hosted on our campus. As a result, we are confident that more than 90% of our faculty and staff have been vaccinated. Based on the information and recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control and American College Health Association, and on Governor Northam's decision to lift the many mandatory restrictions that were necessary last year and to allow the state of emergency to expire, it is reasonable to conclude that these two measures make our campus a low risk environment for the spread of the virus. This condition allows us to eliminate many, if not all, of the limitations that constrained life on campus in the 2020-21 academic year.

Mandatory measures for unvaccinated students, faculty, staff and visitors - including face coverings and physical distancing as appropriate – are in place. In the absence of mandates and guidelines from the Governor, we will conform to the regulations of the Department of Labor and Industry and apply the recommendations of the Virginia Department of Health, the CDC's guidance for higher education and the experience, and expertise of colleges and universities across the commonwealth and the nation, to our campus circumstances to guide adjustments to classrooms, teaching and learning, to residence life, dining, recreation, athletics and other extracurricular activity, as well as the work environment of our faculty and staff.

While our plan is optimistic it continues to embrace protective measures that supported our success in the 2020-21 academic year. We will employ testing, symptom tracking, community contact tracing, quarantine and isolation, as needed, to detect and limit exposure to the virus. Cleaning and hygiene will remain central to our efforts.

Finally, we have embraced the value of purposeful transparency, outreach and effective communication with the campus community. Faculty, staff and students will be kept abreast of developments and decisions with continued regular outreach regarding the status of the virus on campus and any need for changes in our operations that might arise. The experience of the last

16 months will inform our monitoring of and response to any change in public health conditions on or off campus.

The Plan

Christopher Newport University expects that life on campus in the fall of 2021 will, in large part, mirror life on campus in the fall of 2019. However, it will continue to reflect insights gained and lessons learned through our experience educating, working and living in a largely in-person environment, on a residential campus, through what we hope was the worst of the pandemic. We will employ new or revised strategies for monitoring health conditions and to detect infection. We will maintain our containment measures to prevent the spread of disease if it is detected, and we remain prepared to shut down or pivot to remote operations should public health conditions require it.

Section I: Christopher Newport's COVID position as we begin Academic Year 2021-22

One year ago, we constructed and implemented a plan of action for the fall of 2020 that enabled the University to provide in-person instruction to a full complement of residential students while protecting the health of faculty, staff and students. Seventy percent of our classes were conducted in-person, thanks to the creative use of every space available that could be transformed into a classroom that allowed for physical distancing. With the commitment of our Information Technology Services team and resolve of our faculty we offered virtual instruction for students in quarantine and isolation. As a result of these and other mandatory measures, the level of COVID cases among all campus community groups remained low, and there was no known classroom transmission. Although we experienced a surge of cases in the student body each semester, they were quickly and effectively contained by rigorous community contact tracing and strict quarantine and isolation practices. Much credit goes to our students for their care for one another and their perseverance through difficult and demanding circumstances.

Effective vaccines that limit transmission and illness now make it possible to protect our University community in a new way, without much of the burden and sacrifice required of our students, faculty and staff last year. In order to make the most of this new tool, consistent with the recommendations of the Governor and the CDC, and together with most of Virginia's public institutions of higher education, the University has taken the following actions:

The Board of Visitors adopted a vaccination requirement for new and returning students. Students must confirm their vaccination by August 1. Assistance is available to students who need help obtaining the vaccine. Students who, for medical or religious reasons, cannot be vaccinated are exempt from the requirement. This means that while most students on campus this

fall will be protected from the virus by vaccination, we will still be home to some students for whom other protections are necessary.

We have been able to conclude that at least 90% of our faculty and staff have received the vaccine, most through the clinic conducted on our campus from February through April by the Peninsula Health District in partnership with surrounding localities. This important and profoundly successful effort has made our entire community safer.

Based on the Governor's and the CDC's guidance, rules have been changed to provide that vaccinated individuals are no longer required to wear masks indoors or outdoors on campus, or to remain physically distanced. Based on the CDC's recommendations, we will re-open the campus to the public on July 6 with a requirement that unvaccinated individuals continue to wear face coverings indoors, and in crowds where it is not possible to maintain distance. Our facilities management teams will "re-densify" our classrooms and restore spaces adapted for classroom use to their original purposes when summer term classes conclude.

Section II: Repopulation of Campus

Christopher Newport's COVID-19 Strike Force has been and will continue to be the leadership team responsible for guiding Christopher Newport through the challenges of the pandemic. The Strike Force includes a faculty representative and senior leaders with cumulative responsibility for all aspects of University operations. The Strike Force meets often, inviting information and recommendations from faculty leaders, department directors and others in planning and operational management. The team also consults regularly with the Peninsula Health District of the Virginia Department of Health and with Riverside Health System, a neighbor and strong partner which operates a large, full-service hospital across the street from campus.

How students will return to campus

- Students will be briefed on health protocols before move-in. When arriving to move in, residential students and their helpers will be required to self-screen by answering standard health questions prior to entering the residence halls.
- Returning residential students with 12-month leases may begin move-in July 24.
- With the exception of student athletes and band members who must return early for practice, all other returning students will begin move-in August 21.
- First year students will move in Friday, August 13 through Sunday, August 15. In order to avoid crowding among visitors during this short move in period, first year students will have the option to receive assistance from move-in volunteers or can choose to move in without assistance.
- Also, to avoid crowding, all students, both new and returning, will be required to register for a date and time to move-in, in order to limit potential exposure to the virus.

- All students may have help moving in but are limited to two assistants.
- Students and helpers must self-screen before arrival. No one with COVID-19 symptoms is permitted to enter the residence halls. Signage in the residence halls will reinforce this message.
- Wheeled carts will be available to assist with move-in; sanitizing wipes will be available to clean carts and for personal use. Hand sanitizing stations will remain available in the main campus residence hall lobbies and other strategic locations in residence halls.
- Every person entering a residence hall who has not been vaccinated must wear a face covering.
- First year and transfer students will be briefed on pandemic protocols during Welcome Week and Changing Tides.

How faculty and staff will return to campus

Newly hired faculty and staff will participate in mandatory training so that they may fully understand their individual responsibilities and the University's expectations and requirements related to protecting the community from COVID-19. The training will also be available on an optional basis for continuing employees.

Offices and other work locations will return to fully in-person operations effective August 2. All existing remote work (telework) agreements and temporary work modifications, originally scheduled to end on June 30, 2021, are extended to July 31, 2021.

Work spaces and common areas will no longer be “de-densified” and all employees will return to regular work week schedules. Remote work may be considered from time to time, on a case by case basis, with written recommendation by a direct supervisor or director, with the documented approval of the appropriate vice president, vice provost or dean.

How the University will protect our community as the campus is repopulated

Face coverings

For vaccinated individuals, face coverings are optional at all times. We encourage anyone who is more comfortable with this added protection to continue to wear them, and we expect everyone to respect and support those individuals in their decision.

Unvaccinated students, faculty, staff and visitors must wear face coverings inside any university building except when alone within private workspaces and residence hall rooms. Outside, they must wear them in crowds when distance cannot be maintained.

Cleaning and other environmental measures

In addition to cleaning performed by housekeeping, faculty and staff are strongly encouraged to continue to routinely wipe down their own workspace. Special attention should be given to the most used surfaces such as keyboards, monitors, chair arm rests, desks, mouse, and phones. The University will provide cleaning products for employees, but employees may also bring their own supplies if [they are EPA compliant](#).

High touch surfaces such as door handles, handrails, and elevator buttons will be cleaned and disinfected by housekeeping regularly. Building hours will be returned to traditional hours. Hand sanitizer and temperature check stations will remain in various locations throughout buildings. Plexiglas shields will remain at administrative and transactional locations. The university's HVAC systems will be monitored and filters changed often. All monetary transactions are now expected to be cashless.

In almost all cases, manual restroom faucets, towel and soap dispensers, flush valves and lights have been converted to touchless devices. Water fountains, though not touchless, will again be available.

Personal hygiene

Hand sanitizer stations will remain at entrances to all campus buildings and other strategic locations. Sanitizing wipes will be provided in classrooms and common spaces.

Education, training and communication

Signs explaining face covering requirements will be posted at building entrances.

The Christopher Newport [website](#) will host a detailed description of requirements with special sections for faculty/staff and students. Social media posts on the University's highest-traffic channels will relay key messages and links to videos and other forms of instruction. Emails summarizing this document and linking to it will go to faculty, staff and students.

The student newspaper, the Captain's Log, will be encouraged to publish stories and editorials on the University's plan and the continued importance of individual responsibility.

The University's plans will be made available to the Peninsula Health District and our local government partners and shared with the Newport News community through news releases and advisories sent to media, and social media posts.

How classes, labs, and academic spaces will operate

Classrooms will be returned to their original density, and non-classroom spaces will be returned to their original, non-classroom uses. There will no longer be physical distancing requirements in classrooms or labs.

Disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizer will be available for individual use.

At the Tribble Library and in other study areas, seating will return to full capacity. Plexiglas shields will remain at administrative and transactional locations and certain areas of the study space will continue to use Plexiglas for those that are more comfortable with this level of protection.

How students, faculty and staff considered at higher risk of severe illness under CDC guidelines (see Definitions below) will learn, teach and work

Public health authorities tell us that the University's efforts related to vaccinations create a low risk of transmission of the virus on our campus. This allows us to return to the in-person, relationship-based education and operation that is at the core of what it means to be a Captain. Therefore, remote work agreements and temporary work modifications will expire on July 31st. The expectation is that beyond that date, students, faculty and staff will return to in person learning, teaching and other work.

A student or employee who has a health condition that puts them at high risk of severe illness should they contract COVID 19 may request accommodation pursuant to the process in place for the accommodation of disabilities. This process requires documentation from a treating health care provider and involves an interactive process to determine the most appropriate arrangements to accommodate the stated medical need.

Faculty are no longer expected to be prepared to offer remote instruction or live stream classes unless no alternative accommodation can be identified.

How offices, non-academic areas and fitness facilities will function *(see below for housing and dining)*

Consistent with the Governor's lifting of capacity restrictions and mandatory measures, office and non-academic areas will be restored to their intended density and full use, without capacity restrictions. Unvaccinated individuals are required to wear face coverings indoors, unless in their private personal office or residential space. Plexiglas will remain at administrative and transactional spaces. Hand sanitizer stations will remain located throughout the buildings. Disinfecting and cleaning will continue to occur regularly.

The fitness center will return to its original configuration. However, there will be a section of equipment that will remain distanced for use by unvaccinated individuals and those who are more comfortable with this additional protection. Housekeeping will clean and disinfect high contact and common areas regularly. Cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer will be provided by the University and students, faculty and staff are expected to sanitize equipment after use. Work-out appointments will no longer be required and fitness classes and programs will return to full capacity. Showers and lockers will be available.

How dining services will function

With the exception of those who are not vaccinated, Dining Services staff will no longer be required to wear face coverings. Staff will continue to clean and disinfect surfaces and high touch areas regularly. Seating will return to full capacity in all dining venues. Plexiglas partitions will remain at transactional locations. Regular plates, glassware and stainless-steel utensils will be returned and plastic and Styrofoam eliminated.

Take-out options will continue in all Dining Services venues and use of reusable take-out containers will resume in Regattas and the Commons. The use of Dining Dollars will continue to be authorized at on-campus and off-campus locations that also accept Captains Cash.

“Cook to order” foods and self-service food stations will return. The additional outdoor dining seating provided to facilitate distancing last year will remain. The order/prepay mobile apps launched in the spring of 2021 will continue and will expand to include additional venues.

Arrangements for food deliveries will continue to be available for residential students who must quarantine or isolate.

All dining services transactions will continue to be cashless.

How residence halls will function

Common spaces such as hall lounges, laundry rooms, and hall kitchens will return to full capacity. These areas will be cleaned regularly. Additionally, some residential units have unique features such as kitchens and lounges in Special Interest (Greek) houses occupied by 25 people per house and the three Theme Unit apartments, each occupied by 15 students. Students in these facilities are responsible for cleaning their personal spaces and shared restrooms but the University will provide primary cleaning and sanitizing of the common spaces.

Unvaccinated students and staff must wear face coverings in indoor common areas but will not be expected to wear them within their suite.

A suite or apartment may be designated as a family unit for purposes of quarantine.

These protocols will be communicated in advance through multiple platforms, including email, policy updates, and town hall-style virtual meetings. Resident Assistants will be trained so that they can explain the protocols and respond to questions and potential issues.

How Athletics and university events will take place

Athletics will follow the University's rules, recommendations of the CDC concerning COVID mitigation strategies for social events and athletics, and the requirements and recommendations of NCAA Division III and our member athletics conferences, as applicable.

The Athletics Department remains committed to allowing our student-athletes, coaches and staff to train, practice and compete, to every degree possible while protecting them from exposure. Pursuant to CDC recommendations, the NCAA's current guidelines allow fully vaccinated athletes and fully vaccinated athletics personnel to engage in athletics activities without wearing a mask or physical distancing. Unvaccinated athletes and athletics personnel may be required to wear masks, test, maintain physical distance or employ other protective measures as directed by the University, the NCAA or public health authorities.

Special consideration and review will be given to all events which involve crowds in attendance, and which invite visitors to our campus and athletic events occurring at off-site locations, especially where we do not know attendees' vaccination status. Increased protective measures will be enforced as deemed necessary based on attendee density, location and regulations of off-site venues and may include:

- Noticing all attendees of protocols and procedures in place for specific events
- Limiting capacity and/or providing areas of de-densified seating or standing for the unvaccinated and others who are more comfortable exercising this level of caution
- Implementing physical distancing
- Requiring masks of everyone in attendance,
- Providing an increased number of sanitation stations
- Altering food service style and food offering type
- Limiting transactions which require physical touch

The Ferguson Center for the Performing Arts and the Mary M. Torggler Fine Arts Center will take up their work presenting world class art and entertainment to the campus and local community.

Both venues will follow the guidance set forth by the University regarding COVID-19 mitigation strategies and, as highly public venues, may implement additional measures as necessary including the wearing of face coverings by front of house staff, distancing, altered service of concessions, and reduced capacities as deemed necessary by their senior leadership and

recommended as best practices by and for their peer art institutions. Detailed information concerning measures currently in place will be available on their websites.

Section III: Monitoring Health Conditions to Detect Infection

All students, faculty, and staff are expected to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 on a daily basis, are required to stay home/not leave their residence hall room if they have symptoms and are required to report symptoms. They must get tested if directed to do so, and report any positive test.

Unvaccinated students, faculty and staff will be required to complete a symptom tracker which provides direction and a case manager to monitor any possible case.

Residential or commuter students in need of medical care will be able to access the University Health & Wellness Services (UHWS) clinic via telephone (757) 594-7661 and, if needed, by appointment ([myHealth eLink](#)) during normal business hours. All community members can access the UHWS website for additional information related to screening.

Testing

Testing plans are evolving and may continue to do so up to the beginning of classes and beyond. As of July 1, 2021, unvaccinated students will be required to be tested periodically. Testing may consist of a random sampling survey format or regular individual assessment(s) depending upon public health conditions on and off campus.

COVID-19 tests will be conducted through the University's Health & Wellness Center during normal business hours. Students who test positive will be required to isolate. Residential students may return home for isolation or remain on campus in a designated isolation space.

Any symptomatic student or student directed to be tested by a medical professional will be required to isolate.

In accordance with VDH guidance, diagnostic testing will be available to any student presenting with symptoms. Depending upon public health conditions and conditions on campus, unvaccinated students who have been exposed to the virus may be directed to be tested at the appropriate interval, as determined by the health professionals at the University Health & Wellness center.

Any student or employee seeking a diagnostic test because of symptoms that are determined by a doctor to require additional evaluation, and any student or employee identified as exposed to the virus, will be required to take the following steps.

Students

- Notify the Office of Student Affairs
- Isolate while waiting for COVID-19 test results. Students may isolate at home or the University will provide isolation housing if they are a residential student and returning home is not an option. During this time, isolated students will not be permitted to have visitors and must stay in their room. Food will be delivered.
- Unvaccinated students must quarantine if contacted about a potential exposure and required to have a test. Students may quarantine at home. If the student is a resident in on-campus housing and chooses to remain on campus, the student will be subject to the same limitations as a symptomatic student in isolation.

Employee

- Must notify their dean or immediate supervisor
- Must stay at home and follow protocols for quarantine and isolation.

Section IV: Containment to prevent spread of the virus when detected.

When receiving reports of positive cases, the Virginia Department of Health will decide whether to conduct comprehensive contact tracing to identify those at risk. Student Affairs and University Health & Wellness Services (UHWS) staff will monitor and assist students during isolation or quarantine and conduct community tracing, if needed. Riverside Health System will be ready to assist should there be a surge in cases.

Student monitoring

The University will continue to provide a case manager from Student Affairs for any student that contracts the virus or needs to be quarantined or isolated. The case manager will contact the student to discuss academic access, residential living and support, physical and mental health resources, and student involvement and employment (if applicable). The case manager will remain in contact with isolated/quarantined students throughout this period and assist with the transition out of isolation/quarantine once the student has been cleared by the University to return to class.

Unless necessitated by changing health conditions on campus, the faculty will no longer be asked to live stream classes. Students must contact their professors if they must isolate or quarantine and faculty are expected to work with these students who must be absent from class as they would with any student absent from class due to illness.

The University will continue to provide isolation spaces on campus for residential students that are unable to return home. During the isolation/quarantine period, any student who has accessed University Health & Wellness Services will be monitored by that clinical staff.

When a student is about to be cleared to return to campus by their case manager, they will have a re-entry meeting to discuss continued monitoring of health, preparation for potential conversations with roommates/classmates/friends, reentry into the classroom and strategies for completing missed assignments, and management of student employment responsibilities relative to academic obligations. The case manager can assist the student in engaging with other residents, faculty members, and employers to alert them to the student's return to campus life at a student's request. The student may use the case manager as a resource to help them navigate the remainder of the semester and any academic, social, employment or personal challenges that arise.

Employee Monitoring

In order to return to work, faculty or staff in isolation will be required to meet health requirements based on the guidelines of the Virginia Department of Health.

Healthcare partnerships and information sharing

Christopher Newport University's on-campus health clinic is a contracted service through Riverside Health System, a partnership spanning two decades. It provides unique benefits to students that can expedite their care, including hospital-admitting privileges for clinicians in the health clinic and the use of electronic medical records that can be shared with the Riverside Regional Medical Center adjacent to the campus. Riverside is prepared to assist the University should the need for testing exceed what can be provided by the on-campus Health & Wellness Center.

An operating protocol for a potential surge in cases includes the use of Riverside Health System's five acute care facilities within the region based on need and capacity, and transferring patients between locations based on medical guidance and triage protocols.

While Riverside Health System serves as the primary entity for health services, in the event of an increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases, Christopher Newport students, faculty and staff can also utilize two other hospitals nearby.

Test confirmation and contact tracing will be through the VDH's Peninsula Health District office:

Peninsula Health District
416 J. Clyde Morris Blvd.
Newport News, VA 23602
(757) 594-7305 (757) 594-7714 (FAX)

Dr. Natasha Dwamena, MD, MPH, FACOG, Director natasha.dwamena@vdh.virginia.gov

Cynthia Reiken, MPH, Epidemiologist cynthia.reiken@vdh.virginia.gov

Kevin Pearce, MPH, Emergency Coordinator kevin.pearce@vdh.virginia.gov

Section V: Shutdown considerations if necessitated by severe conditions and/or public health guidance

A decision to suspend operations and shut down, if necessary, may be made by the Virginia Department of Health, Peninsula Health District in consultation with the University, or by the Governor. The University has discussed with health officials the potential shutdown of a portion of a building, an entire facility, or the University itself. The University has identified factors that may shape these decisions:

The growing spread of COVID-positive students in a specific residential location.

- Multiple COVID-positive students on the same residence hall floor or wing may necessitate the need to quarantine the floor/wing,
- Multiple COVID-positive students on multiple floors/wings within the same residence hall may require the quarantining of the entire building.

The growing spread of COVID-positive students in multiple residential locations.

- Multiple COVID-positive students in different residence halls may require the University to consider dismissal and conversion to a remote learning platform.

The growing spread of COVID-positive employees in a department.

- Multiple employees in a department (e.g. Grounds, Theater, Dining, Financial Aid, etc.) may require transitioning to telework, if possible, and providing alternative service delivery methods.

The tracing of the virus to a specific location as the initial source.

- If a specific location (academic space, gym, administrative unit, etc.) is identified as a source area, that space may be taken offline and alternative locations for a necessary activity identified

The rapidity with which the COVID-positive results are occurring

- Multiple results over a short time frame (e.g. ten days) may result in different decisions than the same number of results over an extended period of time (e.g. two months).

Communications

Information about dismissals/shutdowns will be shared across the University's channels, including: emails to faculty, staff, students and parents; a CNU Alert post by text message to subscribers; advisories and news releases sent to local media; and/or social media posts on the University's primary channels.