



Employee Guidance for Responding to Non-Compliance with the Campus Face Covering Requirement

This guidance is provided to help university employees who may interact with fellow employees, students, and campus visitors.

During this extraordinary public health situation, preserving the health of the campus community will be a broadly shared responsibility. Students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors will be asked to adhere to a set of actions that protects their health and, even more importantly, protects the health of others on campus.

In accordance with both the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater COVID-19 Warhawk Returns and the campus public health protocols, all members of the UW-Whitewater community—including visitors to our facilities—must wear a face covering when they are:

- In any area within university-owned and operated buildings unless they are working alone in a private space (e.g., office, lab, mechanical space, etc.)
- In a university vehicle with any other person;
- On campus buses or shuttles; and
- In outdoor spaces when physical distancing is not possible.

We anticipate that most people will be able to comply with this requirement and will voluntarily do so. It is important to note that some members of our community will not be able to wear a face covering due to occupational, religious, or medical reasons. It is not your responsibility to evaluate someone's accommodation needs or ask for proof of an accommodation.

In rare circumstances a coworker, student, or visitor to your building or work area may express an unwillingness or an inability to wear a face covering.

As staff members who will be interacting with the campus community and with visitors to our facilities statewide, you will often be the people who must ask others to comply with public health guidelines and the [Warhawk Return Practices and Policies](#). Our approach to this challenge is based on a "planned persistence" method or repeated requests in a calm tone, for adherence. This approach is simple – we ask you to gently tell people to (for example) put on a face covering. You do not need to provide the reason(s) nor argue the point.

What to do when you see someone who is not wearing a face covering?

1. Remind them about the face covering requirement. Using language such as, "I notice you aren't wearing a mask" is a good place to start. Remember that not everyone is able to wear a face covering, and it is not your responsibility to evaluate their accommodation needs.
2. Offer them a face covering if you have extra and they need one. Campus is providing disposable face coverings and other PPE to all departments and units. Speak with your supervisor if you have questions about where to find extra supplies
3. Respond using your best judgment in the situation. If you are dealing with a visitor to your space who refuses to put on a face covering, you may ask them to leave. If they continue to refuse to comply, do whatever you need to do in order to de-escalate the situation including walking away. You are not expected to jeopardize your personal health and safety to enforce the campus health protocols. You may also provide them with information about requesting an accommodation (see FAQs below for more information on this potential situation). Please note that only supervisors, managers, and HR representatives can direct employees to leave the workplace. Any concerns about a coworker should be directed to one of these resources.

FAQs

What do I do if someone claims that they have a medical exemption (under the Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA) and thus do not need to comply?

It is important to be aware that some members of our community, whether students or guests, will not be able to wear a face covering due to disability. It is important that we strive to be calm, respectful, and inclusive at all times. Here are some tips to follow:

Students who are approved for a reasonable accommodation to the face covering requirement will have their "Faculty Notification Letter" to confidentially communicate their approved accommodation

Employees who are approved for a reasonable accommodation to the face covering requirement may have a letter from the ADA Coordinator in HR.

Visitors and guests:

- Ask them to leave any interior space and engage with them safely outside, or provide them with a phone number to call, to discuss a reasonable accommodation.
- If the individual can suggest a reasonable accommodation you can immediately provide, feel free to do so.
- If the individual requests an accommodation you cannot immediately provide, give them the contact information for your supervisor or manager and ask the individual to discuss the situation with them.
- Some potential reasonable accommodations may include:
 - Access to the interior space but with enforced additional physical distancing;
 - Access to the event or program in an alternate format such as a virtual offering;
 - Moving a meeting or event from inside to outside and asking the individual to stay physically distanced;
 - "Curbside" pick-up for any items the individual wants to purchase or check out (e.g., library materials).

It is very important to avoid the following:

- Ask for any form of medical documentation. If the individual provides you with any medical documentation, return it back to them. This also includes any "ADA Face Covering Exemption" cards which are not valid.
- While you may exclude a guest or visitor from your program, it is extremely important that you give them the contact information for a supervisor/manager with whom the individual can discuss their situation and reasonable accommodations. Only supervisors, managers, and HR representatives can direct employees to leave the workplace. Any concerns about a coworker should be directed to one of these resources.

What happens if a person becomes combative, angry, or aggressive when asked to comply?

Our first (and always best) response is to de-escalate the situation. Do your best to calm them and offer them a disposable mask. Be clear that this is a condition of entering into or remaining in the building.

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Police (UWWPD) should not be contacted to enforce face covering compliance. UWWPD should be contacted when someone's behavior is threatening toward any person (including themselves), if they engage in dangerous behavior, behavior that may be criminal or in violation of UW Administrative Codes, or that creates a significant disruption placing others' safety at risk.

For more information about verbally de-escalating a situation, review [these techniques](#) from the Dean of Students Office.

What happens if a student refuses to comply with this request?

If a UW-Whitewater student refuses to comply with the requirement to wear a face covering and is causing a disruption, you can report incidents of non-compliance to the Dean of Students Office via the [COVID reporting form](#). Reports will require a student's name and (where known) ID number.

The Dean of Students Office will review each situation reported to the office. Consequences will depend on multiple factors such as the intentionality and impact of the behavior, prior conduct history, and willingness to engage in changes to behavior.

De-Escalation Tips for Managing Behaviors

Know what your triggers are. If there are certain behaviors that have a tendency to get under your skin or things that students do to push your buttons, recognize what they are before a situation occurs in or out of the classroom.

Calming Down a Disruption

If a student does become disruptive, some of the following strategies may help to de-escalate the situation.

- Maintain a calm, soft voice. When you use a quieter voice, the disruptive student will need to become quieter in order to hear you. Your "being in control" may defuse the situation.
- Respect others personal space and keep your distance.
- Don't take the bait and get pulled into an argument with a student. Maintain control of your emotions.
- If possible, shift the topic and/or activity. When a student is "worked up" about one topic, moving to another may calm the situation or at least catch the student off guard.
- Only make demands you can follow through on (having the student removed from the class or space, contacting police etc.).
- Do not threaten things you do not control (i.e. getting a student suspended or expelled from UW-Whitewater).
- Do not belittle a student who is being disruptive. It will only escalate the situation.
- Be very careful with the use of humor to de-escalate, it can be perceived as sarcastic or insulting very easily.

When Things Don't Calm Down

If a student will not stop being disruptive, you have a responsibility to maintain the environment for all of the other students. In this case, consider these options:

- You have the right to ask the disruptive student to leave the classroom or space they are in if their behaviors are disruptive to other students.
- If a student will not leave after you have asked, you may call campus police and have the disruptive student removed.
- If a student is making threats of harm to self or others, call 911 immediately.
- Refer disruptive students to the Dean of Student Office or the CARE Team. We are available to help faculty and staff manage behaviors and provide any support and consultation that you may need. The Dean of Students phone number is 262-472-1533 and the CARE team reporting form can be found on the Dean of Student website under "report a concern/incident – CARE team reporting form"

If you have any questions or concerns, contact:

Visitors and Guests to UW-Whitewater campus sites:

Connie Putland, *ADA Coordinator, HR & Diversity*

Telephone: (262) 472-1024

Email: putlandc@uww.edu

UW-Whitewater Students with Disabilities:

Center for Students with Disabilities

Telephone: (262) 472-4711

Email: csd@uww.edu

UW-Whitewater Employees with Disabilities:

Connie Putland, *ADA Coordinator, HR & Diversity*

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