

# Face Coverings in Response to COVID-19

Policy 302.8

## 1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide instruction and direction to the Appalachian State University (“Appalachian”) community on wearing face coverings to assist in preventing the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19”).

## 2 Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all university faculty, staff, students and visitors while on University property, including but not limited to academic buildings, administrative buildings, support buildings, entertainment venues, and other University grounds.

2.2 This policy does not apply to private living spaces within residential halls, but does apply to common areas such as lobbies.

## 3 Definitions

### 3.1 Face Covering

A surgical mask or other non-reusable mask approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, as well as any other cloth face coverings or other reusable University-approved substitute that covers the nose and mouth of an individual wearing the covering. The purpose of a face covering is to reduce the spread of the user’s germs and may not offer protection to the user from exposure to environmental hazards, including but not limited to COVID-19.

### 3.2 Social Distancing

Maintaining a physical distance of six (6) feet or greater from another individual and avoiding direct contact with others during the COVID-19 pandemic to minimize exposure and reduce transmission of the disease.

### 3.3 Employee

For the purposes of this policy, the term employee includes all employment positions, including but not limited to faculty, staff, part-time, and temporary positions, that are receiving financial compensation from Appalachian.

## 4 Policy and Procedure Statements

### 4.1 Face Covering Requirements

4.1.1 Face Coverings shall be worn over the mouth and nose at all times that Social Distancing cannot be maintained and guaranteed, subject to Section 4.1.2. Face Coverings are not a replacement for Social Distancing. Social Distancing must be practiced whenever possible.

4.1.2 Regardless of whether Social Distancing can be maintained and guaranteed, Face Coverings shall be worn over the mouth and nose at all times in all indoor spaces, classrooms, conference rooms, meeting rooms, elevators, research laboratory spaces, as well as any other instructional areas. For exceptions to this requirement, please see Section 4.2 – Face Covering Exceptions.

4.1.3 All individuals subject to this policy may wear self-supplied Face Coverings. In instances where an individual does not have a self-supplied Face Covering the University will supply the individual with a Face Covering.

4.1.4 Face Coverings that cover the entire face, including the eyes, shall not be worn, unless otherwise permitted in Section 4.2.3.

### 4.2 Face Covering Exceptions

4.2.1 Employees requesting a modification under this policy because of a high-risk health factor or other related circumstance must complete the [High-Risk Consideration form](#).

4.2.2 Students requesting a modification under this policy because of a high-risk health factor or other related circumstance

should contact the Office of Disability Resources for assistance.

4.2.3 Face Coverings are not required to be worn in situations where the Face Covering presents a safety hazard or other specialized personal protective equipment that covers the nose and mouth is required. Furthermore, Face Coverings are not a substitute for respiratory protection. In situations where a respiratory device is required, then personal protective equipment must be worn as determined by the Office of Environmental Health, Safety, and Emergency Management (“EHS&EM”) in collaboration with a supervisor and other University officials.

4.2.4 Face Coverings are not required to be worn in instances: (a) where a student-athlete is engaging in practice or competition for their designated sport, or (b) where any individual is engaging in other recreational indoor or outdoor activities (e.g., running, jogging, rock climbing, or other related physical activities) on University property.

Notwithstanding, upon the completion of participation in the sport or other recreational activity, all individuals covered under this policy must as promptly as possible adhere to the requirements of Section 4.1 – Face Covering Requirements. Furthermore, Social Distancing should be practiced whenever feasible while engaging in these activities.

4.2.5 Face Coverings are not required to be worn by a speaker in a large group gathering (e.g., speaker at convocation or the Chancellor speaking at an engagement), if there is a barrier between the speaker and the group of individuals they are addressing (i.e., a transparent shield or other transparent partition designed to prevent the transmission of respiratory droplets between a speaker and the audience).

4.2.6 All faculty, students, or speakers requesting modifications for exceptions to the face covering policy in a classroom setting that do not meet another exception expressed under this policy must submit the request to the appropriate dean for the college that governs the class in which the exception is being requested. The dean shall evaluate each request for consideration in consultation with EHS&EM. Exceptions should only be granted for necessary pedagogical reasons and where adherence to health and safety standards can be ensured.

4.2.7 Face Coverings are not required to be worn by students in their assigned residence hall rooms when the student is alone or with a roommate.

4.2.8 Face Coverings are not required to be worn by any individual while actively eating at a dining room table in a University dining room facility or other area designated for dining by EHS&EM.

4.2.9 Face Coverings are not required to be worn by faculty, staff or students when alone in an enclosed indoor space, such as offices or study rooms, as long as: (a) the faculty, staff, or student remains alone in the indoor space, and (b) the faculty, staff, or student is not located in an enclosed indoor space that is frequently entered by other individuals.

## **4.3 Administration**

4.3.1 The Director of EHS&EM is responsible for the creation and implementation of guidelines and minimal requirements for this policy. Questions pertaining to this policy may be directed to EHS&EM.

## **4.4 Enforcement**

4.4.1 Appalachian will enforce violations of this policy in accordance with applicable federal and state law, UNC System policies, and institutional policies. Violations of this policy, including but not limited to not adhering to Social Distancing Practices or Face Covering requirements, may result in grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination or expulsion.

## **5 Additional References**

[\[Appalachian’s Returning to Work Safely Guidelines\]](#)

[\[CDC Guidance: How to Wear Cloth Face Coverings\]](#)

[\[CDC Guidance: How to Wash Cloth Face Coverings\]](#)

## **6 Authority**

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-12.8

UNC System Policy 300.2.15

## **7 Contact Information**

Environmental Health, Safety and Emergency Management [\[1\]](#) (828.262.4008)

Office of Disability Resources [\[2\]](#) (828-262-3056)

## **8 Original Effective Date**

June 19, 2020

## **9 Revision Dates**

September 9, 2020

September 22, 2020

October 20, 2020