

Vaccination policy and mask requirements

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TO: All students

FROM: David Agnew, President

RE: Vaccination policy and mask requirements

With many governments and workplaces changing their vaccination policies and mask mandates, I want to update you on Seneca's approach.

We are proud of our leadership in creating safe teaching and learning environments on campus.

However, we also recognize that the pandemic landscape has changed significantly in the past few months. While Ontario had a high first and second dose vaccination rate, the uptake on the booster shot was not nearly as strong. And then the Omicron variant swept through the province, sending infections spiking again.

Sadly, the lesson some drew from that wave was that vaccinations don't work. The opposite is true. Widespread vaccinations have meant that the last wave of COVID-19 was much less serious and less fatal, except among the unvaccinated.

Vaccination policy

As the health and safety of our community remains our top priority, Seneca will maintain its vaccination policy through the fall. We will continue to monitor how the pandemic evolves, the nature of vaccines available and public health advice, and adjust as necessary.

In the fall term, as now, all students and visitors who come on campus must be fully vaccinated, as defined by government. As well, all employees must be **fully vaccinated**.

Some elements of the vaccination policy will change effective the beginning of fall term on Sept. 6, 2022:

- Students in placements or other Work Integrated Learning opportunities will be able to follow their employer's vaccination policy. When coming on campus, you must follow ours.

- Varsity teams will be able to play against teams with different vaccination approaches as long as those activities are limited to recreation areas on campus or off-site.

Public health authorities are predicting new waves of infection in the fall as the weather cools and we move inside. New variants are appearing. Thankfully, so are new vaccines that show signs of being more effective against the new variants.

With evidence that the effectiveness of vaccines wanes over time, we strongly encourage everyone eligible to get the booster or, for some, their fourth jab. The province is planning a fifth round of vaccinations for the fall.

The pandemic is not over, and COVID-19 continues to be a threat, particularly for the vulnerable and immunocompromised.

Mask requirements

On masks, because only vaccinated individuals are on campus, we will amend our mask mandate effective July 4, 2022.

As of July 4, masks will continue to be required in all instructional spaces such classrooms, labs, IT labs, the dispatch area at Peterborough and studios. In those spaces, faculty who are teaching and students who are presenting may remove their mask when speaking if they are physically distanced.

Masks will also be required in enclosed spaces such as small meeting or consultation rooms where physical distancing is not possible.

Wearing masks in other areas such as corridors, libraries, computing commons, cafeterias and other more open areas will be your choice according to your comfort level or personal situation.

Because many courses will continue to be delivered online or in flexible format in the fall, we anticipate that campus populations will continue to be lower than they were pre-pandemic.

High-quality KN95 masks will be available at Seneca's entrances.

We will continue to monitor conditions to evaluate whether changes are necessary for the fall term.

A reminder that anyone feeling ill or with symptoms of COVID-19 infection must not come to campus.

Let me repeat the key dates in this memo:

- On July 4, the updated mask mandate takes effect
- On Sept. 6, updates to the vaccination policy take effect

Stay well.

Visit our [COVID-19 site](#) for more information.

Please direct questions to health@senecacollege.ca.

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