



**COVID-19
Health and Safety Plan and Reference Guide
2021-2022**

Thiel College adheres to guidelines based on recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA-DOH), National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). The following information is a general reference guide to the College's COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan.

Coordination with Local Public Health Officials:

Thiel is fortunate to be partnered with expert healthcare providers and organizations, including UPMC, Sharon Regional Medical Center, and the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH). The College will work directly with the Pennsylvania Department of Health to mitigate and contain the spread of the coronavirus. Should there be any confirmed cases of COVID-19 on our campus, the College will work with the PA DOH and support their efforts tracing contacts and containing its spread.

Designated Points of Contact for the Department of Health:

Chris Cianci, Director of Campus Health Services (P: 724-589-2356 / E: ccianci@thiel.edu), serves as the primary contact for the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

COVID-19 Vaccines:

The College encourages all students and employees to consult with their medical providers about the safety and efficacy of the vaccines. Vaccines are readily available in this region and the College along with the Pennsylvania departments of Health and Education, the CDC, and the NCAA strongly recommend, that students, faculty, and staff take advantage of the protection provided by the vaccines, both to one's self and to the health of others.

Five Primary Mitigation Strategies:

- 1. Daily Health Screening.** All employees, students and visitors are encouraged to self-monitor for [symptoms of COVID-19](#) before coming to campus or attending practice or class.
 - Employees experiencing symptoms should stay home and contact their healthcare provider, Human Resources (jclark@thiel.edu/X2858), and supervisor.
 - Students experiencing any symptoms, should stay home or in their campus housing and contact the Campus Health Center (health_services@thiel.edu/724-589-2195) for a phone screening or triage.

- 2. Surveillance Testing for Unvaccinated Students.** All unvaccinated students will be required to participate in regular surveillance testing for COVID-19. This will include testing upon arrival to campus for the start of each term, and bi-weekly testing throughout the semester. Testing will be

billed to students' insurance when applicable, and in cases where insurance does not cover the test, the cost will be added to the student's College account.

3. **Masks/Face Coverings.** During the transition of undergraduates back to campus and the start of the fall semester, the following temporary and universal mask/face covering policy will be in effect. The policy will be revisited for possible adjustment beginning September 15 based on the campus vaccination level and local infection rates at that time.
 - **Indoors:** Regardless of vaccination status, face coverings are required when indoors, unless you are in your enclosed residence hall room or apartment or in an enclosed private office.
 - **Outdoors:** Individuals who are not fully vaccinated and/or those who are or reside with someone who is immunocompromised, should wear a face covering when outdoors and unable to maintain physical distancing. All are welcome and encouraged to wear a face covering outdoors based on their own comfort levels and needs.
4. **Physical Distancing.** Physical distancing (maintaining 6-ft. of distance from others) is also strongly encouraged for those who are unvaccinated, at increased risk for severe illness, and/or prefer to have the added protection. The College is not requiring physical distancing at this time, but may need to adjust health and safety protocols should we experience high levels of COVID-19 on-campus or in the surrounding region, and/or if mandated by local, state, or federal authorities.
5. **Good Hygiene and Increased Sanitation.** Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds or apply hand sanitizer. Avoid touching nose, mouth and eyes. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow and immediately wash hands or apply hand sanitizer. Avoid person-to-person contact, including handshaking, when possible. Increase cleaning of high-touch areas.

Containment Strategies to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

If any student or employee is found to have tested positive for COVID-19 or an unvaccinated student or employee has been in contact with someone who has recently tested positive or is believed to be infected with COVID-19, certain actions will be triggered.

- **Isolation** – Isolation will be used to separate people infected with the virus (those who are *sick* with COVID-19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected. People who are in isolation should stay home or in designated campus housing until [it's safe for them to be around others](#). Students with a home address within 300-miles of campus will be expected to isolate at home, and should plan accordingly. Some designated on-campus isolation housing has been prepared for students with a home address beyond 300-miles from campus.
- **Quarantine** - Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been *exposed* to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. People in quarantine should stay home or in designated quarantine housing, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health department. Some designated on-campus quarantine housing has been prepared for students with a home address beyond 300-miles from campus. Students with a home address within 300-miles from campus will be expected to quarantine from home, and should plan accordingly.

- **Laying Low** – Laying Low requirements are used for vaccinated individuals who have come into close contact with someone with COVID-19. Those individuals will be required to get tested 3-5 days after the date of their exposure, wear a mask/face covering and limit in-person campus activities for 14 days after their exposure or until they receive a negative test result. Limitation of in-person campus activities will include, but is not limited to, the following practices.
 - Avoid eating meals in public settings (e.g., students should pick-up to-go meals from campus dining facilities if they are on a meal plan).
 - Limit close contacts to 2-3 individuals.
 - Refrain from indoor physical activities in which you are unable to wear a mask or face covering.
 - Limit time spent outside of your residence.

Thiel will not provide reimbursement for housing or meals for students who need to leave campus for quarantine or isolation. The College will maintain open communication to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and support their efforts to trace contacts and prevent the spread of the virus. The College will assemble and train a group of employees to assist with contact tracing efforts.

In-Person Instruction:

Classes will be offered in-person or face-to-face (with very few exceptions). All classes will be designed to be offered in-person and online to accommodate students placed in quarantine and/or the need to pivot to fully online delivery due to the pandemic. Attendance policies have been adjusted to support students who are asked to quarantine by Campus Health Services. Course contents will be housed on our learning management system Moodle. Instructors are not obligated to provide hybrid instruction for students that are in quarantine. However, instructional content will be provided that ensures students are able to meet the learning objectives of the course. For example, the use of recorded videos, assignments based on readings, and other work that can be completed without direct instructor supervision. All instructors are also expected to offer quarantined students the option of talking with them during office hours or by appointment. These sessions may be via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, phone, or email provided the student has the ability to get help if they choose to do so.

Accurate and Timely Communication throughout the Pandemic

Thiel's Office of Communication and Marketing has established a robust communication plan to keep constituents well informed. The plan involves targeted messaging through email and social media, the use of our Tomcat alert system to send text, voicemail and email messaging, and a [coronavirus updates page](#) housed on the Thiel College website.

Planning for Competitive Athletics

Based on the [NCAA's Resocialization of College Sports](#) guidance, and in collaboration with other member institutions of the Presidents Athletic Conference (PAC), the College is developing a plan to resume intercollegiate athletics. The plan will involve regular surveillance testing of unvaccinated student-athletes, quarantine and isolation policies, and health and safety measures specific to athletics. Spectators will be required to follow current policies for campus guests.

For any questions related to Thiel's COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan, please contact Jennifer Clark, Director of Human Resources (jclark@thiel.edu / 724-589-2858) or Mike McKinney, Vice President for Student Life (mmckinney@thiel.edu / 724-589-2600).

AUGUST 13, 2021