

Harper Joy Theatre COVID-19

Policy Guide

Updated: September 8, 2021

General COVID-19 Information

COVID-19 is an extremely contagious disease that can lead to severe illness and death.

TRANSMISSION METHODS

- **COVID-19 spreads very easily from person to person, most commonly spreads during close contact**
 - Highest risk is direct contact or being physically near (within 6 feet)
 - Respiratory droplets from an infected person (with or without symptoms) are shared through breathing, talking, coughing, sneezing, and singing
- **COVID-19 is spread by airborne transmission**
 - Small droplets and particles can linger in the air for minutes to hours
 - CDC data indicate that it is much more common for the virus to spread through close contact than through airborne transmission
- **COVID-19 spreads less commonly through contact with contaminated surfaces**
 - Respiratory droplets can land on surfaces and objects, and it is possible transfer the virus by touching your mouth, nose, or eyes after touching a contaminated surface
 - Touching surfaces is not thought to be a common way for COVID-19 to spread, but routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces is advised
- **Individuals of any age are at risk of contracting COVID-19**, although those at a higher risk may need to take additional precautions when performing certain tasks and should contact the HJT COVID Captain or Production Stage Manager

RISKS

The nature of this infectious disease means that there is still an inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 in any public place where people are present, and by entering a Department of Theatre and Dance facility, individuals voluntarily assume that risk.

Risk of severe illness and death increase with age, with older adults at the highest risk.

Individuals with pre-existing conditions **may be at increased risk** of severe illness from the virus.

Conditions include (but not limited to): diabetes, cancer, heart conditions, chronic lung disease or COPD, liver, or kidney disease, hypertension

PRECAUTIONS TO STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

- Wear a mask that *covers your nose and mouth* to help protect yourself and others
- Stay 6 feet apart from others who do not live with you
- Avoid crowds
- Avoid poorly ventilated indoor spaces
- Wash your hands often for 20+ seconds with soap and water, OR use hand sanitizer

General Expectations

Whitman College's Department of Theatre and Dance is committed to the safety of our staff and all those that visit our theatres, and continues to monitor the current local, state, and federal recommendations, guidelines, and restrictions. There are certain policies in place that will exist throughout the process.

- Management will maintain documentation of all rehearsal and production meeting attendees for contact tracing purposes.
- Department of Theatre and Dance Rehearsals will not be open to *any* visitors (faculty and staff excepted).
- Masks are required to be worn at all times on-site throughout rehearsals by all participants, regardless of vaccination status. (*See performance section for information regarding masks in performances*)
- Theatre management will perform rigorous cleaning, per CDC guidelines (detailed below).

CLEANING & SANITIZATION

- Disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizer are provided throughout work areas for personal use and to sanitize workstations, equipment, and limit sharing when possible. Frequent hand washing is encouraged in addition to hand sanitizer.
- All participants will be asked to assist in frequently sanitizing high touch surfaces including light switches, door handles, elevator buttons, and desks/workstations.
- Sanitization of common touch points will happen before, during, and after rehearsals.

Masks

Until further notice, MASKS are required in any Department of Theater and Dance managed facilities.

- A well-fitting mask must be on BEFORE entering the building and will be worn in areas at all times.
- [Per Whitman Guidelines](#) - A mask should completely cover your nose and mouth and fit snugly against your cheeks, chin and the sides of your face. A nose bridge and adjustable ear loops can help significantly in improving mask fit. Three or more layers of fabric are strongly recommended for cloth masks like the logo masks issued by Whitman College; N95 and KN95 provide even higher levels of protection than cloth masks. Masks should be free from holes, rips or other signs of wear, and should be washed according to the manufacturer's instructions after each use. Face shields *may not* be substituted for a mask.
- The Department of Theater and Dance will have masks available on request.
- Individuals should observe CDC recommendations for mask care and cleaning. Cloth masks should be replaced after approximately 30 washes. Surgical masks are intended to be disposable and are designated for *single use only*.
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/ClothFacemasks.pdf>

1. ACTORS

Audition protocols:

Those auditioning for a show at Harper Joy Theatre must show their Whitman ID illustrating proof of eligibility to enter campus buildings per Whitman College COVID guidelines when they arrive for their audition. Failure to do this means you cannot audition.

Any actor who is not vaccinated and has an exemption must remain masked at all times, even when actively performing. Actors who have a building access sticker on the front of their Whitman ID may remove their mask while onstage in order to perform their audition material. If your building access sticker is on the back of your Whitman ID, you must wear a mask for your audition. If you do not have an access sticker on your ID, you will not be permitted to audition.

Actors must put their mask back on as soon as they have finished performing their audition, or if they are offstage for any length of time.

Anyone who is not vaccinated and has an exemption must wear a mask at all times.

During tech and performances:

Vaccinated actors may perform without a mask (*see vaccination status section below*), but must wear a mask at all times when they are not specifically rehearsing and performing.

Tech:

Actors will be required to mask during all technical rehearsals unless running a section of the show, at least 5 minutes long, full-out (to performance standards). Actors will be provided disposable masks during tech for quick removal, and will be provided new masks when running stops.

Performances:

Actors offstage for longer than 2 minutes will be required to wear a mask while offstage. Actors are responsible for removing their masks when entering and re-masking when exiting. All off-stage activities must be masked.

The above is subject to change based on Washington State or Whitman College requirements.

2. DIRECTORS

Directors and production crew must be masked at all times during rehearsals and performances. Directors should **NOT** have actors kissing onstage due to the highly transmissible nature of the Delta Variant. Food, drinking and eating/drinking utensils may not be shared by actors, even in performance. Directors are asked to keep close contact and touch between actors to a minimum when blocking the play.

3. CREW & PRODUCTION TEAMS

Production Teams and Crew will be required to wear a mask throughout the rehearsal process and performance process and provide their Whitman ID card to prove they are eligible to access Whitman campus buildings.

During tech and performances: Backstage crew (stage management, run crew, dressers, sound, lights, and anyone else not present onstage) will be required to wear a department-provided KN95 mask (black) for the duration of their call. Backstage crew masks must be solid black with no patterns or words.

Vaccines & Isolation

1. VACCINATIONS

Like Whitman College, the Department of Theater and Dance is requiring *vaccinations to access the Harper Joy Theatre*. Proof of your eligibility to access, through displaying your Whitman ID may be requested at any time. If offered a vaccine exemption by the college, a participant must remain masked at all times and may not remove their masks to rehearse or perform.

At the moment, the Department of Theater and Dance will allow actors to perform without masks; however, this decision will ultimately be made by Whitman's administration or Washington State requirements.

2. VACCINATIONS & MASKS

Per CDC guidelines, people are considered fully vaccinated:

- Two weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, like the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or
- Two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, like Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine.

If it has been less than 2 weeks since your final dose, or if you still need to get your second dose, ***you are NOT fully protected***. Keep taking all prevention measures until you are fully vaccinated.

Per the Mask section (above), the Department of Theater and Dance will continue to require masks for all patrons and participants with the possible exception of actors during parts of tech and potentially performances.

3. EXPOSURE, ILLNESS & ISOLATION

If an individual has symptoms of COVID, regardless of vaccination status, they should quarantine at home, be tested for COVID, and notify the appropriate individuals listed below. If their COVID test result is negative and the symptoms are determined not to be caused by a contagious disease, they may end quarantine.

If an individual tests positive for COVID, regardless of vaccination status, they should notify the individuals listed below and isolate for 10 days from the day of the test (if they are asymptomatic) or, if they have symptoms, until they meet all the following conditions: 10 days since symptoms first appeared, 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving

If a fully vaccinated person is a close contact (within 6 ft. for 15 minutes or more) to someone found to have COVID-19, they do not have to enter quarantine. However, they should monitor themselves for symptoms for 10 days after their exposure and should be tested for COVID 3-5 days after the exposure. They should also continue to wear masks, practice social distancing, and keep their social circles small.

If a person who is not fully vaccinated is a close contact (within 6 ft. for 15 minutes or more) to someone found to have COVID-19, they must quarantine at home, monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days following the exposure, and be tested for COVID on the fifth day following exposure. If the test is negative, their quarantine may end on the seventh day following exposure.

Who to Contact:

- Notify your ***Stage Manager, Director, and COVID Captain (Barb DeLauter)*** of your suspected or confirmed illness, and date symptoms began if applicable.
- Confirm all personnel (students, staff, interns, etc.,) you had close contact with (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more)
- Students must contact the ***Welty Student Health Center*** about additional testing recommendations, isolation options and other campus support. Faculty, Staff, and Guest Designers and Artists should contact the ***Director of Theater (Dr. Laura Hope)*** and ***Human Resources***.

Additional Rehearsal Expectations

- Sharing food or drinks is prohibited in all Department of Theater and Dance spaces.
- Partner dancing and close blocking is permitted. Kissing is prohibited.
- While learning music and singing in initial rehearsals, all performers should maintain six feet of physical distance from others.
 - **For Singers:** Masks may be removed for solo vocal work in early rehearsals but singers must maintain at least 15 feet of physical distance from the pianist/accompanist and others.
- Blocking will be adapted to reflect current best practices with respect to COVID.

Offsite Behavioral Expectations

- Due to the physically collaborative nature of live theatre, students participating in all Department of Theater and Dance events are expected to avoid risky behaviors outside the Theatre that could result in disease transmission or impact personal health and safety.
- **Risky Behavior** is defined as any or all of the following:
 - Attending indoor events with unvaccinated individuals unmasked and/or not socially distanced (excepting dining on campus or at local restaurants).
 - Regular attendance of non-academic events with more than 10 people living outside your household (each Whitman College dorm building qualifies as one household).
 - Failure to observe sanitation or masking guidelines. Failure to report a confirmed COVID-19 test or COVID-19 exposure (if known).
 - Arriving to rehearsal or performance intoxicated or hungover. This behavior may result in immediate dismissal from the production.
- **Department of Theater and Dance Artists, Staff, and Faculty reserve the right to replace any student engaging in risky behavior.**
- In addition to the above, theater students are strongly encouraged to practice the following healthy habits:
 - Drink plenty of water
 - Eat regular healthy meals
 - Consistently get a full night's sleep
 - Exercise regularly
 - Wash hands regularly
 - Bodily & Oral Hygiene

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Students are expected to budget their time appropriately, make time in their schedules for meals, breaks, and rest, and avoid working overlapping shows, per Department of Theater and Dance policy.
- Students are responsible for clearing their schedules in advance of rehearsals and **communicating any and all conflicts prior to beginning work**. Actors must report all schedule conflicts **at the audition**. Department of Theater and Dance Artists, Staff, and Faculty reserve the right to replace any student who fails to list additional conflicts in advance.
- **SMS, ASMs, & Student Designers** are expected to communicate with Department of Theater and Dance Artists, Staff, and Faculty about **feasible and reasonable** workloads for production.

- Department of Theatre and Dance Artists, Staff, and Faculty are expected to *work collaboratively* to devise appropriate solutions for any *SM, ASM, or Student Designer* unable to maintain healthy habits due to theatre work.

Venue Considerations

All Department of Theater and Dance audience members are required *to be fully vaccinated and masked*. A vaccination card and a government issued photo ID must be presented at the door of the building. Official caps of audience numbers will be determined by Whitman's administration.

- All ticket purchases will take place online (with the exception of 90 minutes prior to shows).
- All individuals in attendance must wear a face covering at all times.
- There will be no concessions sold prior to or during performances.
- The lobby will open 90 minutes before show time to allow patrons plenty of time to arrive. The house will open 20 minutes prior to start of show.
- Intermissions have been extended to 20 minutes.

More Information

If you have questions or would like more details about Department of Theater and Dance's Health and Safety policies, please feel free to reach out to our *COVID Captain*, Barb DeLauter, at delautba@whitman.edu or the *Director of Theater*, Dr. Laura Hope, at hopell@whitman.edu.

Information from this document is compiled from a variety of sources. Many of these guidelines have been adapted from the **Village Theatre KIDSTAGE Summer Independent Program**, which ran a case-free summer season from May-August, 2021. An abridged list of guidelines can be found here: <https://villagetheatre.org/youtheducation/plan-your-visit/summerindependent/> Additional sources include:

- **WA State Department of Health: Coronavirus**
 - <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>
- **WA State DOH: Isolation & Quarantine for COVID-19**
 - <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/CaseInvestigationsandContactTracing/IsolationandQuarantineforCOVID19>
- **Cloth Face Coverings Guidance During COVID-19** (*updated May 21, 2021*)
 - <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/ClothFacemasks.pdf>

**This entire policy is subject to change pending updates from Whitman's administration and/or Washington State.*