



# Whitman College Safe Start Plan

Spring 2021

This document details the health and safety practices of Whitman College in effect for the Spring 2021 semester. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues and our understanding of the virus and its impact upon our community evolves, this document also will continue to be revised. The most recent version will be posted on Whitman's online COVID-19 dashboard.

In crafting these practices and policies, we are guided by the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Washington State Gov. Jay Inslee, the Washington State Department of Health and the Walla Walla County Department of Health. We have also consulted with epidemiologists, the leadership of other colleges and a variety of individuals with expertise applicable to specific points of this plan.

# Table of Contents

## [Table of Contents](#)

### [Community Guidelines](#)

- [Safe Start Plan](#)
- [Community Pledge](#)
- [Threshold Document](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Compliance](#)

### [Employee Campus Access](#)

### [Student Campus Access](#)

### [Non-Residence Halls Building Safety Plan](#)

- [Indoor Spaces](#)
  - [COVID Captains](#)
  - [Traffic Flow](#)
  - [Physical Distancing Practices](#)
  - [Sanitization Practices](#)
  - [Ventilation and Air Flow in Rooms](#)
  - [Specialized Use Facilities](#)
- [Penrose Library](#)
- [Outdoor Spaces](#)
- [Visitors](#)

### [Housing/Residence Halls Building Safety Plan](#)

- [On-campus Housing General Information](#)
  - [Residence Hall Cleaning Process](#)
  - [Ventilation and Air Flow in Residence Halls](#)
- [Fraternities](#)
- [Pods](#)
  - [Living and Learning Pods](#)
  - [Athletic Teams Living Plans](#)
- [Move-in Procedures](#)
  - [On-campus Move-in](#)
  - [Off-campus Move-in](#)
  - [Initial Quarantine](#)
  - [Baseline COVID-19 Testing](#)

### [COVID-19 Specific Health Measures](#)

- [Face Coverings](#)
- [Physical Distancing](#)
- [Handwashing](#)

[Shared Equipment](#)

[Daily Wellness Check](#)

[Contact Tracing](#)

[Testing](#)

[Quarantine](#)

[Isolation](#)

[Travel Restrictions](#)

**[Academic Instruction](#)**

# Community Guidelines

## Safe Start Plan

Reopening to in-person living, learning and working will be guided by the Whitman Safe Start Plan, which includes exposure control, mitigation and recovery information. This plan will be posted in each campus building. An electronic version with live links will be provided in [Whitman's online COVID-19 Dashboard](#). Whitman will post additional required COVID-19 safety information and requirements (including proper hygiene & sanitization, physical distancing/PPE guidance and information for reporting concerns, staying home if feeling sick) at entry points and throughout the campus.

## Community Pledge

[The Spring 2021 Community Pledge](#) sets forth expectations for all members of the Whitman community (faculty, staff and students) as to how we will work together to keep our campus healthy and safe. All members of the Whitman community must read, sign and abide by the practices detailed in this pledge.

## Threshold Document

[The Threshold Document](#) is a rubric developed by Whitman's epidemiologist consultant, categorizing a variety of COVID-19 related data into four action levels: low, medium, high and critical. This document will be utilized by the President's Cabinet in consultation with faculty leadership and our epidemiologist to consider appropriate guidance on the level of activity on Whitman's campus. It is not intended to be a binding document that dictates specific action but to function as an evaluation tool supporting informed decision-making processes.

## Training

All faculty, staff and students must complete the college's COVID-19 Safety Training through Everfi.

## Compliance

Every member of our community is responsible for helping to keep our community safe and make sure that we are working together to follow guidelines. In the residence halls, there are RAs and RDs to whom students can address potential concerns or violations. In academic and office buildings there are faculty and staff who can help. We expect that through education and discussion our community members will willingly follow the guidelines, but violations will be adjudicated through Whitman College's established disciplinary processes, as prescribed by the [student handbook](#), [staff handbook](#), and [faculty code](#).

# Employee Campus Access

The return of employees to on-campus work will be determined by Human Resources in consultation with department supervisors based on college needs and government guidelines. Employees will be contacted by Human Resources when they are cleared to begin the return to work process. As local conditions evolve, employee authorization to work on-campus may change, including a return to remote working when necessary.

Whitman College will provide all contractors and service providers notice of the college's COVID-19 requirements.

# Student Campus Access

Our expectation is that all students in the local region (within approximately 75 miles of Walla Walla) are part of our testing protocol and will therefore have access to campus for classes, employment, recreation and support services. Any student not participating in the testing protocol will not be cleared to access any campus buildings.

# Non-Residence Halls Building Safety Plan

## Indoor Spaces

### COVID Captains

Whitman College has identified a COVID-19 Captain for each campus building that has reopened to authorized employees in Phase II. A full list is available in the [Employee section](#) of the online [COVID-19 Dashboard](#). Students, staff and faculty are asked to respect the authority of the COVID-19 Captains when asked to comply with COVID-related campus safety policies and procedures.

### Traffic Flow

Each building has one or more entrances designated as authorized entrances, to help control card swipe access. Priority will be given to accessible entrances. Building entrances are designated as Entrance Only or Exit Only to aid in traffic management.

Any pinch points are marked with appropriate signage instructing faculty, staff, and students to pass through one at a time. Offices/departments have evaluated high-risk

areas and either identified alternate locations or temporarily suspended services in these areas.

### **Physical Distancing Practices**

All campus offices and rooms are marked with maximum occupancy signs identifying the maximum number of people allowed in each space in accordance with physical distancing guidelines.

Building and office furniture is arranged to ensure proper physical distancing and should not be moved in order to maintain appropriate distancing. In some cases, furniture may need to be placed in storage or marked for no use. Where strict physical distancing is not possible, the college identified and implemented ways to limit interaction through the use of physical barriers, physical cues (i.e. floor markings) and limitation of people allowed in small and enclosed areas. Facilities will provide plexiglass or other protective barriers as necessary based on the potential for multiple contacts and to reduce exposure to airborne droplets.

### **Sanitization Practices**

The facilities department will regularly clean classrooms, auditoriums, offices, public areas, restrooms, and disinfect high touch areas (e.g. door hardware, handrails, ADA and elevator push buttons, publicly used counter surfaces). The facilities department has implemented enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched areas across campus and common spaces. With shifts starting at 4:00 a.m., the primary focus in the morning is on the high touch surfaces. In addition to high-touch surfaces, the academic custodial team will focus on classrooms, restrooms, and other shared areas twice daily Monday through Friday.

Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes are available at strategic locations throughout all Whitman sites, including near entrances to classrooms.

Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to disinfect their personal space within classrooms, teaching laboratories and offices before and after use. Disinfection includes wiping down commonly touched surfaces with a disinfectant wipe. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to wash their hands before and after every class or teaching laboratory. Whitman provides adequate hygiene and sanitation supplies throughout all facilities.

Buildings that have been unoccupied will have the water systems flushed prior to reopening to remove potential contaminants.

Drinking fountains will temporarily be turned off and not in use where appropriate, while water bottle filling stations will continue to be accessible.

## **Ventilation and Air Flow in Rooms**

This past summer Facilities reviewed the building mechanical (heating, ventilation, air-conditioning – HVAC) systems to best protect occupant health and provide a safe learning environment to the greatest extent possible. With the varied building systems, Facilities also consulted with a mechanical engineer to ensure that the proposed HVAC modifications will maximize the systems operations and meet current science and best practice.

The adjustments implemented where feasible in accordance with current guidelines and industry standards include:

- Replacing air filters to a higher-level Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV 13);
- Monitoring the system's operation and maintenance, including replacement of the filters every 3 months;
- Adjusting the system to provide maximum outside air diluting possible contaminants, while still providing reasonable occupant comfort;
- A minimum of two hours HVAC operations before and after hours/occupancy that helps increase the amount of fresh air into the buildings. During holidays and breaks when buildings are empty, the HVAC will be scheduled to run for a selected period of time to circulate air and allow fresh air inside.

## **Specialized Use Facilities**

Specialized use facilities at Whitman will each follow COVID safety standards as set out by their relevant professional association. These facilities include the bookstore, OP shop, library, athletics and fitness facilities, performance spaces, labs, galleries, etc. Plans and use of facilities are contingent upon the evaluation of safety and the campus health climate. Individual plans will be made available and linked in this document as specific facilities open for use.

## **Penrose Library**

Penrose Library will be open to students under limited circumstances. Library operations will count students through the top-of-head camera system to ensure that the building does not exceed its occupancy capacity.

The main floor will be open to students for study space; the stacks will not be open and will be cordoned off to prevent access. If there is a demand for study space that exceeds main floor capacity, a second floor may be opened for study space.

The archives will be accessible to individuals and classes through an appointment system. There will be no physical reserves available. More [details about library usage](#) are on the Penrose Library website.

## **Outdoor Spaces**

Facilities will erect four small tents to serve as gathering spaces for student clubs and organizations and classroom space. If the spaces are not in use, students may use the tents for informal gatherings in accordance with social distancing guidelines. These spaces will not include electricity or technology.

## **Visitors**

No visitors are allowed in campus buildings, including public meeting areas, classrooms, bathrooms and private offices. This includes the family members of students, staff and faculty. Buildings may only be accessed by using a Whitman ID on the card swipe access, and Whitman ID cards should not be shared or used to open doors for visitors. Visitors wearing face coverings and following social distancing protocols are welcome to walk through outdoor areas of campus.

The Admission Office is hosting limited outdoor campus visits. In case of inclement weather, these visits may move inside Penrose House, which has been equipped with additional air filtering equipment to maximize safety. These visits follow all face covering and physical distancing requirements.

# **Housing/Residence Halls Building Safety Plan**

## **On-campus Housing General Information**

Students living in on-campus residence halls and interest houses will be housed according to their preference in single rooms or double rooms with roommates. Students who had originally requested a roommate were allowed to change to a single room if desired. There will be no triple occupancy rooms permitted this semester.

The residency requirement for first and second year students may be waived for the spring semester if a student petitions Residence Life. Any student who starts the semester living off campus may be permitted to move on campus after the start of the term if space is available.

Social distancing measures will be followed throughout all on-campus housing. Students must wear face coverings and maintain at least six feet of distance between themselves and others any time they are outside their room or if they are in their room with anyone other than their assigned roommate. Maximum occupancy limits for all rooms within residence halls are designated by posted signage. Per Gov. Inslee's proclamation 20-12.2 on higher education, there is a maximum gathering size of five (5) people in residence halls, regardless of the space's maximum occupancy limit.



No visitors are allowed in any residence hall spaces, including public living areas, bathrooms and private rooms. Students should not visit other residence halls. A student may have one visitor who lives in the same residence hall in the student's room at any time.

Each particular wing of a residence hall will use an assigned restroom and students will schedule their times for showering. Custodians will be cleaning restrooms frequently, and there will also be supplies in the bathroom for students to sanitize before and after their use. We will have a specific bathroom in each residence hall designated for use by any student in quarantine.

### **Residence Hall Cleaning Process**

Facilities Services has implemented enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched areas across campus and common spaces. This includes entrances, handrails, restroom fixtures, elevator buttons, countertops, etc. With shifts starting at 8:00 a.m., the primary focus in the morning is on the high-touch surfaces.

In addition to high-touch surfaces, the Residence Life custodial team will focus on shared spaces, such as bathrooms, kitchens, lounges, and laundry rooms twice daily Monday-Friday. In addition, weekend cleaning and disinfecting in the residence halls will be supported by student workers who will go through all the halls at least once each day focusing on high touch surfaces and shared spaces.

Buildings that have been unoccupied will have the water systems flushed prior to reopening to remove potential contaminants.

Drinking fountains will temporarily be turned off and not in use where appropriate, while water bottle filling stations will continue to be accessible.

### **Ventilation and Air Flow in Residence Halls**

This past summer Facilities reviewed the building mechanical (heating, ventilation, air-conditioning – HVAC) systems to best protect occupant health and provide a safe learning environment to the greatest extent possible. With the varied building systems, Facilities also consulted with a mechanical engineer to ensure that the proposed HVAC modifications will maximize the systems operations and meet current science and best practice.

The adjustments implemented where feasible in accordance with current guidelines and industry standards include:

- Replacing air filters to a higher-level Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV 13);
- Monitoring the system's operation and maintenance, including replacement of the filters every three months;

- Adjusting the system to provide maximum outside air diluting possible contaminants, while still providing reasonable occupant comfort;
- A minimum of two hours HVAC operations before and after hours/occupancy that helps increase the amount of fresh air into the buildings. During holidays and breaks when buildings are empty, the HVAC will be scheduled to run for a selected period of time to circulate air and allow fresh air inside.

## **Fraternities**

The four fraternity houses will be open for student housing. In coordination with their national organizations and Whitman's Dean of Students Office, each house has determined the number of members who can be housed in accordance with social distancing guidelines and developed a health and safety plan that includes clear visitor limitations. These plans are available for review and linked in this document as they are finalized.

- [Beta Theta Pi COVID-19 Protocols](#)
- [Sigma Chi COVID-19 Protocols](#)
- [Phi Delta Theta COVID-19 Protocols](#)
- [Tau Kappa Epsilon COVID-19 Protocols](#)

## **Pods**

### **Living and Learning Pods**

Living and Learning Pods are small groups of students (up to 15 students per pod) that live together on-campus and have up to three specific in-person classes together with the remainder of their classes chosen from the general course catalog.

The purpose of the pods is to create a shared experience of learning and activity that builds community. Pod members will hold to the same social distancing expectations as the rest of the campus population, including the move-in quarantine and testing procedures.

### **Athletic Teams Living Plans**

Student-athletes living on campus are required to reside in accordance with the Athletic Teams Living Plans in order to limit the possible spread of the virus to other campus communities who may not be involved in the activities student-athletes are and keeping the student-athletes safe from other students who may not be as observant of social distancing practices. The two things that trigger the need for the student-athlete living arrangements are travel for competition and competition itself, which will increase the exposure of our student-athletes to other student-athletes, coaches, officials and staff at/from other institutions. The Northwest Conference will resume conference competition and championships after January 1, 2021 when federal, state, local and NCAA health

directives permit. Our current plans reflect the expectation that Whitman College athletic teams will participate in conference competition.

Student-athletes living on campus will be housed in residence hall sections with their teammates. Student-athletes living off-campus are strongly encouraged to live with other members of their teams. All student-athletes will follow campus-wide social distancing protocols, including the wearing of face coverings and maintaining six feet of distance between individuals. In the event of a COVID-19 exposure on the team, the athletic team members will quarantine as a group.

Student-athletes will arrive on campus on dates assigned by their team and will quarantine for 14 days. The first seven days student-athletes will quarantine in their rooms, leaving only to get food, pick up mail or medication, and be tested for COVID-19. The second seven days of quarantine the teams may gather for socially distanced training.

Student-athletes will take all their classes online.

## **Move-in Procedures**

### **On-campus Move-in**

Move-in for students living on-campus will be Jan. 16 and 17. Students will sign up for a specific move-in date and time assignment. Students will be allowed only one family member or other person to help them move in.

### **Off-campus Move-in**

Students living off campus must be back in their off-campus houses by Jan. 17. Students who are not back in Walla Walla and who have not been tested for COVID-19 on or by Jan. 17 will not be allowed to start in-person classes with the rest of the college and may face other disciplinary action.

### **Initial Quarantine**

Students living both on campus and off campus will be expected to return by Monday, Jan. 17 to begin quarantine. Students will be expected to quarantine in their residences for the full two week period of Jan. 18-31. The first day of classes is Jan. 25, and all classes will start remotely during the second week of quarantine (Jan. 25-29). Classes that will meet in-person will begin to do so the week of Feb. 1.

During this two week period, no campus buildings will be open for general student access. Students will be expected to remain in their residences and will be able to leave their rooms in order to:

- Pick up food. On-campus students will get meals from Bon Appetit, which students will take back to their rooms to eat; students will have scheduled pick-up times in order to manage physical distancing. Off-campus students should use grocery delivery or curbside pick-up services.
- Pick up books, mail, and print requests at Reid Campus Center; this will be a scheduled process to manage physical distancing.
- Participate in outdoor individual exercise.
- Participate in physically distanced outdoor activities for the purpose of physical fitness.

Students working remotely can continue to work during the initial quarantine and students who have been approved to work on campus during the semester can, with approval of their supervisor, work remotely during the initial quarantine.

During the initial quarantine, a small number of employees and students for whom a 14-day quarantine would be disruptive to essential functioning of the college or create an unnecessary hardship may quarantine for 7 days as long as they have a negative test after day 5 of quarantine.

### **Baseline COVID-19 Testing**

Students will be tested the day they arrive on campus and then again on the seventh day of quarantine. Any student testing positive for COVID-19 will enter a period of isolation, which is detailed further on in this document.

A negative COVID-19 test during the initial quarantine period will not end the quarantine period. All students will quarantine for the full two weeks, as it can take up to 14 days following exposure to the coronavirus for testing to register as positive.

## **COVID-19 Specific Health Measures**

### **Face Coverings**

All faculty, staff, students and visitors must wear cloth face coverings (or equivalent) at all times on campus unless alone in a private workspace or in their residence hall room with their roommate. Whitman will provide face coverings to all faculty, students and staff, but individuals may also choose to wear their own cloth face coverings instead as long as they meet state and CDC requirements.

Face shields are not an adequate replacement for cloth face coverings.

Students who are not able to wear a cloth face covering for a long period of time should reach out to Disability Support Services to discuss possible accommodations. Staff and faculty who require accommodations should reach out to Human Resources. These requests should be made before arrival on campus for the start of the semester.

## **Physical Distancing**

All faculty, staff, students and others on campus must maintain a minimum six-foot separation from others at all times and follow the guidelines on traffic flow, room occupancy and furniture layout that help create appropriate physical distance.

## **Handwashing**

All students, faculty and staff are required to follow personal hygienic practices as posted on signage in all campus buildings. All students, faculty and staff should wash their hands frequently and thoroughly.

Hand sanitizer is widely available throughout campus buildings and should be used regularly.

Appropriate supplies and signs describing the best procedures for personal hygiene will be posted in all campus buildings.

## **Shared Equipment**

Avoid using shared equipment when possible. Those using shared equipment should use single-use gloves and discard them after each use when possible or disinfect surfaces before and after use. Appropriate supplies and signs describing the best procedure will be posted near all shared-use equipment.

## **Daily Wellness Check**

All members of the Whitman community will complete a daily wellness check before leaving their residence, which includes the requirement to take one's temperature. This wellness check will ask if the individual is experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 or has had any possible exposure to determine if the individual should be approved to be on campus that day. If a person is approved, they will receive an approval badge demonstrating that they are cleared to be on campus. If a person is not approved to be on campus due to possible COVID-19 exposure or symptoms, they will receive follow-up health information and be contacted by the COVID Wellness Team.

## **Contact Tracing**

In the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the Whitman community, contact tracing will be the primary responsibility of the Walla Walla County Department of Community

Health. Where appropriate, information collected by Whitman through the contact tracing mobile app and [paper building logs](#) will be released to community health contact tracers.

In the Whitman community, we will supplement the county contact tracing through a campus-specific process utilizing a contact tracing app and paper contact logs. All members of our campus community who have a smartphone should download the contact tracing app. Instructions to set-up and use the app are available for [iOS](#) and [Android](#) devices. This app uses Bluetooth technology to determine when people have come into "close contact" (following the guidelines set by the CDC). The contact tracing app does not collect location information. Anyone not using the smartphone app will complete a [paper log](#) detailing the names, dates and times of anyone with whom they interact.

In the event that someone reports a positive case of COVID-19 (to the campus health center, Human Resources, a supervisor, in the daily wellness check, or through the contact tracing app), a notification will be sent to the COVID Wellness Team to begin the contact tracing process. They will be able to run a report showing who the app has identified as a close contact or review the paper contact log, and these people will be notified that they have possibly been exposed and should begin quarantine. We will have follow-up conversations with the person who has COVID to identify any campus locations they have been in which should be closed and sanitized as well as any contacts who may not have been recorded in the app or paper log. Additionally, Whitman will follow up with any of our community members who are identified as close contacts of the patient and will thoroughly disinfect any spaces associated with the ill person following CDC guidelines.

## Testing

During the initial quarantine period, students (both those living on-campus and off-campus) will be tested on Day 0 (move-in day) and Day 7 using PCR testing. This will be done on campus and the specimens sent to a lab for testing.

We will follow a surveillance testing strategy, which will use PCR testing on students (both those living on-campus and off-campus), faculty and staff randomly selected each week. The sample size will be adjusted weekly depending on the community case rates. These tests will be processed by an off-site lab.

We will also use our onsite testing machine to provide rapid result tests for any student with COVID-19 symptoms.

Testing results will be provided to both the tested individual and to the college and also provided to county health in the event of a positive result.

Compliance with the testing strategy and schedule is required to be on campus.

Any member of the Whitman community who is tested by a local health care provider or clinic should notify the health center (for students) or Human Resources (for employees) of a positive test result and submit a positive case self-report through the Everbridge app.

## **Quarantine**

Quarantine is a period during which a person who is symptomatic and awaiting test results or who has been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 remains in their residence apart from others in order to prevent the spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms.

In the event of possible exposure, quarantine will last for 7 days if the individual has a negative PCR test taken after day 5 of quarantine or 14 days with no PCR test, unless the individual tests positive and therefore moves into isolation. Following travel, quarantine will last for 14 days regardless of test results. During quarantine, the affected person will remain in their on-campus residence or their off-campus house, and any roommates will quarantine as well. Staff from the Welty Student Health Center will provide health supervision and support.

Students in on-campus quarantine will have food delivered to them and will receive other support services from Residence Life. Residence halls will have designated bathroom facilities for quarantined individuals to use.

Students in quarantine off-campus should use food and grocery delivery or curbside pick-up services and remain in their house/apartment.

Faculty teaching in-person or hybrid classes are prepared to provide online learning to accommodate students who are temporarily unable to attend classes in-person due to quarantine.

## **Isolation**

Isolation is used to keep sick people away from people who are not infected. Whitman will provide isolation spaces for all students regardless of whether they live on- or off-campus. During isolation, a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a campus isolation space will be delivered food, use designated bathroom facilities, and be provided with health monitoring and other support services.

Any on-campus student who is confirmed to have COVID-19 will move into a campus isolation room. Students living off-campus will have the choice to isolate in their residence

or in campus isolation space; other students living in the same residence not having confirmed COVID-19 will quarantine in the residence as well. The date of release from isolation will be determined following the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines](#).

Faculty teaching in-person or hybrid classes are prepared to provide online learning to accommodate students who are temporarily unable to attend classes in-person due to isolation.

With a goal of having adequate isolation space capacity for our population, Whitman has designated the following as isolation spaces:

- North Hall (60 beds)
- Off-campus rentals (21 beds)
- Marcus House (19 beds)

## **Travel Restrictions**

In accordance with Washington State guidance, all members of the Whitman community should restrict non-essential travel outside of the county.

College-sponsored travel outside of Walla Walla County must be approved by a cabinet officer (for employees) or the Dean of Students (for students).

Students should not travel outside of Washington state for personal reasons during the semester.

Employees should strictly limit personal travel that may increase the possibility of exposure to COVID-19. Any employee who travels outside of Washington state will self-quarantine for 14 days prior to being permitted to return to campus. During post-travel quarantine, employees able to work remotely should do so; those unable to work remotely will be expected to use vacation and/or sick leave.

## **Academic Instruction**

The [2020-21 Academic Calendar](#) has been updated to reflect the Jan. 25 spring semester start date. In order to cut down on the likelihood of travel that could increase transmission of COVID-19, it was decided to place individual days off throughout the semester rather than have a week-long spring break.

Classes for the spring semester will take place in-person, online or in a hybrid model that includes some in-person and some online instruction. Regardless of the class modality, all



faculty will be prepared to accommodate online instruction in the event of special accommodations necessary due to quarantine or isolation situations.