Dear Members of the North Park campus community:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) -- and the Illinois and Chicago Departments of Public Health -- have recently updated their public health guidance and now recommend that everyone wear a face covering indoors, regardless of vaccination status, in areas of “substantial or high transmission” of Covid-19. This change is due to an increase in Covid-19 transmission, nationally and in Chicago and Cook County.

Accordingly, all members of the North Park campus community, regardless of vaccination status, must wear their face mask inside campus buildings, except in their own private residence or office, beginning Monday, August 9.

Masks remain optional for everyone in outdoor settings.

Vaccinations still provide the best protection against becoming ill with Covid-19 -- and the university strongly encourages everyone to get vaccinated.

WHY ARE THE GUIDELINES CHANGING?

Throughout our summer planning for the fall semester we have identified that vaccinated members of the campus community would be freed from many of the restrictions we have experienced during the pandemic, including wearing masks indoors.

The recently emerging “Delta variant” of the virus has changed the risks -- and the guidance from public health authorities has changed to meet these new circumstances.

The CDC is monitoring cases by geographic areas. Everyone in areas of “Substantial or High Transmission,” the CDC advises, should wear masks indoors, regardless of vaccination status. Chicago’s Cook County is currently in the Substantial Transmission category.

Cook County needs to have fewer than 50 new cases per 100,000 and a test positivity rate below 8% over a seven-day period to move to the moderate category and lift the mask mandate.
North Park University’s Pandemic Response Team will always remain alert to changing circumstances and guidance, and we will relax our safety protocols when conditions warrant – so please check your e-mail frequently. Our hope is that the positivity rate will decrease in the coming weeks, and we will approach the start of the semester with fewer restrictions.

THANK YOU

North Parkers have done an excellent job of keeping Covid-19 cases to a minimum in our community, by faithfully observing our health and safety protocols and by remaining wise and resilient through changing circumstances. We are very grateful for everyone’s cooperation and contributions to the health and wellness of our campus community, and we pray for God’s continued provision and protection.

Please address any questions or concerns to feedback@northpark.edu.

Thank you!

The North Park University Pandemic Response Team

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