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Issued July 19, 2021

**While Illinois is in Phase 5, this guidance replaces all previous guidance issued by the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board under the Restore Illinois plan.**

Illinois entered Phase 5 of the Restore Illinois plan on June 11, 2021. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) released updated [Phase 5 Guidelines for Businesses and Venues](#). Furthermore, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released updated [Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education \(IHEs\)](#) on June 4, 2021. Please refer to those documents for additional detail not covered here.

- COVID-19 Vaccination.** Vaccination against COVID-19 is now widely available, and all persons over the age of 12 are eligible. Vaccination is the leading prevention strategy against COVID-19 and all public and private universities are strongly encouraged to require vaccination (with appropriate exemptions) to protect campus populations and slow COVID-19 transmission in surrounding communities. All IHEs are strongly encouraged to provide information to promote vaccine trust and confidence and address vaccine hesitancy.
- Use of Masks or Face Coverings and Physical Distancing.**
  - Unvaccinated persons and those who might need to take extra precautions should wear a face covering and, where feasible, maintain physical distance while indoors. Institutions should use space wisely to allow for physical distancing to the extent practicable.
  - At outdoor events or venues, unvaccinated persons may choose not to wear a face covering but are recommended to wear a face covering in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with others who are not fully vaccinated.
  - IHEs are strongly encouraged to continue COVID-19 testing of unvaccinated individuals to identify and slow virus transmission consistent with CDC guidance. See [IDPH guidance on testing for COVID-19 in community settings and schools](#) for more information.
  - IHEs should be supportive of individuals who choose to wear a face covering whether they are vaccinated or unvaccinated.
  - All individuals, including those who are fully vaccinated, should continue to wear a mask on public transportation, in congregate facilities, in health care settings, and where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations.
- Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette.** IHEs should continue to promote and facilitate health-promoting behaviors such as [hand hygiene](#) and [respiratory etiquette](#).

4. **Cleaning, Improving Ventilation, and Maintaining Healthy Facilities.** IHEs should continue routine cleaning of high-touch surfaces and shared objects and maintaining improved ventilation in accordance with [CDC recommendations](#).
5. **Contact Tracing, Isolation and Quarantine, and Testing.** IHEs should refer to [CDC Guidance](#) on these topics.
6. **Symptom Screening.** IHEs should continue to encourage students, faculty, and staff to perform daily health screenings for infectious illnesses, including COVID-19. Those with signs or symptoms of infectious illness should stay home and use a [COVID-19 self-checker](#) to determine whether to seek testing or medical care.
7. **Shared Housing and Communal Spaces.** IHEs should consider the [CDC Guidance for Housing and Communal Spaces](#) where feasible for placement in shared housing. Additional considerations can be found in the CDC's [Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education \(IHEs\)](#).
8. **Food Service and Communal Dining.** While there is [no evidence](#) to suggest that COVID-19 is spread by [handling](#) or eating food, IHEs should continue to promote practices that prevent the spread of COVID-19 due to close proximity among unmasked individuals, especially those who are not vaccinated. Refer to [CDC guidelines](#) for more specific information.
9. **Health Equity.** Racial and ethnic minority groups have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 due to [long-standing systemic health and social inequities](#). IHEs should address these inequities and protect people at [increased risk for COVID-19](#) by following CDC guidelines for [promoting health equity](#).
10. **Considerations for Students, Faculty, and Staff with Disabilities.** IHEs should highly encourage members of the campus community with disabilities to get vaccinated. Disability support service providers should follow [CDC guidance](#) when determining individualized approaches and accommodations for [people with disabilities](#). IHEs should make [exceptions](#) to any mask mandates for a person with a disability who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.
11. **Gatherings, Events, Visitors, and Sports.** Individuals who are not fully vaccinated should continue to [avoid large gatherings](#) or use face coverings, maintain physical distancing, and practice good hand hygiene if they choose to attend. Fully vaccinated individuals may participate in sports without wearing a mask or physically distancing, but unvaccinated individuals should follow CDC guidance for [playing sports](#).
12. **Study Abroad and Travel.** IHEs planning study-abroad programs should refer to CDC's destination-specific [Travel Health Notices](#) (THNs), postpone programs in [destination or host countries](#) with very high (Level 4 THN) COVID-19 levels, and be ready to take action if situations in the destination or host countries worsen while students, faculty, or staff are present there.
13. **International Students.** IHEs should strongly encourage international students to be vaccinated if they were not fully vaccinated with a CDC or World Health Organization-approved vaccine prior to arrival. International students vaccinated outside of the United States should refer to [CDC guidance](#) for the need for vaccinations upon arrival in the United States. International students are eligible to be vaccinated in Illinois.
14. **Updates to Guidance.** This guidance remains subject to change pursuant to updated public health guidance and changing public health conditions. Future updates will be posted at [IBHE.org](#) and [ICCB.org](#)