



2021 Fall Semester Care for Community Health and Safety Plan September 2021

Western Theological Seminary is committed to reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19. This plan summarizes actions the seminary will follow to maintain a healthy and safe learning and working environment while carrying out its mission to form women and men for faithful Christian ministry and participation in the Triune God's ongoing redemptive work in the world.

The information provided in this plan reflects recommended guidelines from the Ottawa County Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control.

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDELINES

All persons inside the seminary facility are required to wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status

- when gathering indoors for class, chapel, community time, and in shared spaces (Cook Library, hallways and bathrooms)
- in meetings of 2 or more people in a confined indoor space where 6ft distance cannot be maintained between participants.

When food or beverages are served indoors, 6ft distance from others must be maintained while masks are removed to eat or drink.

in addition to masking, all employees and students

- must wash hands and use hand sanitizer regularly
- must monitor their health for COVID-19 symptoms
- are required to stay home and not enter the seminary when experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or any illness

If you are not fully vaccinated, you are encouraged to consider beginning the vaccination process as soon as possible.

The seminary will monitor conditions and respond to guidance from the Ottawa County Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control.

Information will also be posted on the [seminary website](#).

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

The following COVID-19 symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

COVID-19 TESTING

Employees and students must monitor their own health and take responsibility for being tested for COVID if needed. The cost of a prescribed or symptomatic test should be covered by medical insurance or through the CARES Act.

Information about testing centers located in Ottawa County is available [here](#). Please direct any questions about testing to [Rayetta Perez](#), Director of Administration and Human Resources.

RESPONSE TO COVID-19 OR ANY ILLNESS

STUDENTS

If you are experiencing COVID symptoms or have been exposed to a positive case of COVID-19, please consult with your physician and complete a COVID test if it is prescribed. Do not attend class or enter the seminary. You may resume class attendance after you have completed a required isolation or quarantine period.

If you are sick with non-COVID symptoms, do not attend class or enter the seminary. You may resume class attendance after you have fully recovered from your illness.

Please notify your professors to request support during your absence from class.

EMPLOYEES

If you are experiencing COVID symptoms or have been exposed to a positive case of COVID-19, please consult with your physician and complete a COVID test if it is prescribed. You may return to work after you have completed a required isolation or quarantine period. If you are sick with non-COVID symptoms, please work remotely and return to work after you have recovered and are free of symptoms.

COVID-19 EXPOSURE PLAN

If an employee or student receives a positive diagnosis of COVID-19, all responses to that individual will demonstrate the care and support of the seminary community.

- If you are diagnosed with COVID-19 (if you test positive), please contact [Rayetta Perez](#), Director of Administration and Human Resources.
- If you must quarantine because you are a contact of someone diagnosed with COVID-19, please contact [Rayetta Perez](#), Director of Administration and Human Resources.
- All positive diagnoses will be reported to the Ottawa County Department of Public Health (OCDPH). OCDPH will advise the seminary's response and care for the individual.
- The seminary will communicate the appropriate level of information to both protect the privacy of the infected individual and to protect the health of those who may have been exposed.
- Accommodations for missed work or class time will be made to the fullest extent possible.

Isolation and Quarantine

In the case of a positive diagnosis, individuals may be required to isolate or quarantine for a period of time during their recovery. "Isolation" refers to infected individuals while "quarantine" refers to contacts of infected individuals.

The response to each situation will be determined on a case-by-case basis, since there are often numerous variables to evaluate. OCDPH will be in contact with WTS when they become aware of a case involving Western Theological Seminary and will work side-by-side with the appropriate WTS staff.

Current guidance from the Ottawa County Health Department is available [here](#).

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AND COMMUNITY CARE

MASKS

All students, employees, and guests, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a mask when gathering indoors for class, chapel, community time, and in shared spaces (Cook Library, hallways and bathrooms), and in meetings of 2 or more people when 6 ft. distance is not possible.

You may remove your mask when you are working alone in your private office or work area. If you remove your mask to eat or drink in a shared space, you must ensure 6ft. distance from others during the time that you have removed your mask.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), people are considered [fully vaccinated](#) two weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. If you don't meet these requirements, regardless of your age, you are NOT fully vaccinated. Keep taking all [precautions](#) until you are fully vaccinated.

Information and FAQs about Masks

The CDC recommends that you:

- Wash your hands before putting on your mask
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily

Replace or launder masks routinely depending on the frequency of use, especially if your mask is visibly soiled, or you've coughed and sneezed into it.

1. *Do I have to wear a mask when I am in a meeting with others?*

Yes, you must wear a mask if 6ft. distance cannot be maintained between attendees.

2. *Will faculty be required to wear a mask while teaching in a classroom?*

Yes. Faculty will be required to wear a mask regardless of vaccination status, unless they are lecturing from behind a plexiglass shield installed in a classroom.

3. *Will the seminary provide masks?*

Yes, the seminary will provide disposable masks at the reception desk, and at all entrances.

4. *If I see someone without a mask or not maintaining distance, what should I do?*

All faculty, staff, and students are responsible for their actions to keep our community healthy and safe. Please hold each other accountable for acting responsibly, including wearing a mask if not fully vaccinated, social distancing, and cleaning areas after use. If

you are unable or unwilling to confront someone, please report your concern to your manager, or to [Rayetta Perez](#), Director of Administration and Human Resources.

HAND SANITIZER

Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the building. Refills are available through [David Becker](#), Superintendent of Building and Grounds.

BUILDING INFORMATION

BUILDING ACCESS

The seminary is open to the public during business hours: Monday through Thursday, 8am - 5pm; Friday 8am - 4:30pm.

All persons in the building must follow the seminary's health and safety requirements.

Community Kitchen patrons will use the designated door to the 13th Street entrance to the Commons.

COOK LIBRARY

Cook Library hours are posted on the [seminary website](#).

Patrons may retrieve their own materials from the stacks, or may request that library staff retrieve desired materials.

Library rooms may be [reserved online](#) or by scanning the QR codes on the rooms with a mobile device.

Building FAQs:

1. *May I sit in the atrium or other shared spaces and talk with others?*
Yes you may, as long as you wear a mask which is required in all shared spaces.
2. *What is the seminary doing to clean the building?*
The seminary has implemented thorough cleaning and disinfecting practices to meet CDC guidelines. The building will be cleaned thoroughly each evening, and throughout the day as needed.
3. *Will the seminary clean the surfaces of exterior benches, handrails, or play equipment?*
No. Please use and touch those surfaces at your own risk.
4. *What has the seminary done to improve air circulation and ventilation in the building?*
David Becker, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, maintains the ventilation systems on a regular basis. In response to the pandemic, the level of outside air pulled into the building has been increased. In addition, the air flow speed has been increased

so that the air is replaced more often and moves through the ventilation system more quickly.

5. *May I use the drinking fountains in the building?*

Yes, you may use the drinking fountains. Push buttons will be cleaned each evening. The drinking fountain near the interior entrance to Cook Library provides a touchless bottle filler.

ACADEMICS

All core courses are offered in distance-learning and in-residence formats. For the fall semester, all in-residence courses (whether core or elective) will be taught in-person only. A Zoom attendance option will be offered if a student or faculty is required to isolate or quarantine. The seminary's class attendance policy remains in effect.

All class attendees will be required to wear a mask. The seminary will provide distance between attendees to the extent possible in each classroom.

TRAVEL

Please follow guidance from the CDC before and after [domestic](#) and [international travel](#).

COMMUNITY LIFE

Pastoral Care for Students: The Academic and Student Life Office is available to meet with students via phone call, video, or text to discuss mental health, vocational discernment, and general formational concerns. Please email [Wendy Fisher](#), Interim Associate Director of Student Life, or [Jonathan Elgersma](#), Interim Director of Student Life, with any pastoral care concerns.

Chapel & Community Time will be offered on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays for the fall semester. Masks will be required, regardless of vaccination status.

Food and Beverages

- Must be prepared by a licensed caterer or restaurant meal supplier
- Buffet stations may not be self-served, but must be served by a masked catering attendant.
- If you remove your mask to eat or drink in a shared indoor space, you must ensure 6ft. distance from others during the time that your mask is removed.

Employees may eat and drink on campus, preferably in their office or at their desk. Students are encouraged to eat and drink in their private residence if possible.

Kitchen sinks, refrigerators, and microwaves may be used. After use, you are required to clean all surfaces touched during use.

Refrigerators should be reserved for day-use only. You may not store beverages, salad dressings, food, etc. for long-term use.

Disposable dishes and silverware are provided in each kitchen, and must be discarded after use in the designated receptacle. Dishwashers may not be used.

EVENTS AND GATHERINGS

All seminary-sponsored events and gatherings must follow these guidelines:

- All participants must wear a mask regardless of vaccination status.
- Guests will be encouraged to be fully vaccinated to attend.
- If food or beverages are being served, attendees must maintain 6ft distance from others while they remove their mask to eat or drink.

All non-seminary sponsored gatherings should also follow these guidelines (for example, an informal student picnic in the Red Bricks common area).

All gathering spaces on the seminary grounds must be reserved for use with [Cherri Westhouse](#), Administrative Assistant and Event Coordinator. When booking a room request, please communicate what technology you plan to use and if you will need assistance.

FOR EMPLOYEES

Request for Accommodation

Please complete a WTS [Accommodation Request Form](#) (also available in Paycor) if your ability to fulfill your role during the COVID-19 pandemic is limited due to your health or the health or support needs of your family. The Form is intended to be used for cases other than a specific COVID-19 positive diagnosis, which will be accommodated following the COVID-19 Exposure Plan described above.

Insurance Coverage

Employees enrolled in the seminary's Blue Care Network (BCN) medical insurance plan will find updated information about coverage for medical and mental health care during the COVID-19 pandemic [here](#).

Cross-training

Wherever possible, staff members should update their procedure manuals and cross-train others for key tasks so that back-up systems are in place in the event that an employee is not able to work in the seminary building and/or must work remotely for a period of time.

Communication

If a faculty or staff member's ability to function in their job changes as a result of COVID-19, we will communicate the necessary information to faculty, staff and students regarding alternate plans and coverage so that work and learning can continue. This will be done in coordination with the employee, supervisor, Academic Office, and the Director of Administration and Human Resources.

CONCLUSION

The health of the WTS community depends on an active commitment from every student and employee. If you have questions, please contact a member of the COVID Task Force.

Thank you in advance for doing your part!

COVID TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Rayetta Perez (chair), [Director of Administration and Human Resources](#)

David Becker, [Superintendent of Building and Grounds](#)

Anne Chanski, [Director of Marketing and Communications](#)

Jill English, [Director of Admissions](#)

David Komline, [Interim Associate Academic Dean](#)

Jackson Nickolay, [Student Council President](#)

Beth Smith, [Associate Registrar and Administrative Assistant for Student Life](#)

Cherri Westhouse, [Administrative Assistant and Event Coordinator](#)