University of St. Thomas COVID-19 Response Plan

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II. **Background on Plan and Principles**
This COVID-19 Response Plan replaces the University of St. Thomas Preparedness Plan, which was originally published on June 23, 2020, and was regularly updated during the course of the 2020-21 academic year. While the availability of vaccines makes it possible to return to campus life in most ways, St. Thomas recognizes that COVID-19 continues to persist in our community. In responding to COVID-19, we will continue to be guided by and find inspiration in Catholic intellectual tradition and Catholic social thought as we strategize and make decisions.

Specifically:

- The University of St. Thomas is committed to providing a safe and healthy campus for all students, faculty, staff and visitors.
- University decisions will be guided by standards and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the American College Health Association (ACHA). St. Thomas will follow the law, including all public health directives.
- We will actively encourage each other to adopt a culture of care for others. We will practice health and safety measures to protect ourselves, our families and the wider community.
- We will promote a culture of respect and sensitivity. We recognize that this pandemic impacts community members differently based on socioeconomic status, health, geography, race, age and culture. We will be sensitive to and support all members of our community.
- We will prioritize providing a personalized and holistic student learning experience and caring for the whole person. We will support community members from diverse backgrounds in these policies and practices.
- We will seek to reasonably accommodate students, faculty and staff who need accommodations for medical reasons.
- We will communicate openly, compassionately and in a timely manner to the community and break down communication barriers that have existed. We will seek to make messages simple, clear and easy to follow.
- We recognize the mental health toll that the pandemic has on our community members and will respond to these needs.
- We will seek input from members of our community as we develop and improve our policies and procedures.
- Campus leaders will follow all best practices and participate fully in our campus initiatives that promote health and safety. All students, faculty and staff will be expected to participate in our culture of care and practices that help us maintain healthy conditions.

III. **Applicability**
This response plan applies to all members of the St. Thomas community: students, faculty, staff and any campus visitors and licensees. The plan will be reviewed regularly and updated based on current conditions and public health guidance.
IV. Staffing Considerations and Remote Work
The university is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment for all employees. In summer 2021, St. Thomas rolled out its new Working Remotely Program to allow employees to work with their supervisors on remote work arrangements that meet their needs, and the needs of the University. Between July 1 - August 1, 2021, all employees are expected to return to on-campus work unless their supervisor and the employee have agreed to a working remotely arrangement.

Employees who need an accommodation related to COVID-19 should contact the Benefits Office to discuss a request for reasonable accommodation.

V. Health and Safety Protocols
The university needs all community members to adhere to best practices for protecting their own health and the health of others. As such, all faculty, staff and students on campus will be expected to follow health and safety protocols.

A. Social Distancing: Individuals who are not vaccinated should strive to maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others and should avoid crowded spaces and mass gatherings. When 6 feet of distance is not possible, unvaccinated individuals should strive to maintain as much distance as possible.

B. Masks and Other Face Coverings:
- Individuals who are not fully vaccinated are required to wear a mask or other face covering indoors on campus and outdoors when physical distancing is not possible. Face coverings may be removed if the individual is in a private office, workspace, study room or dorm room and others are not present.
- Fully vaccinated individuals are not required to wear masks or face coverings in most campus areas but may choose to do so.
- Masks or other face coverings are required for everyone on the campus shuttle and when entering the Center for Well-Being and in the Health Services Clinic.
- Absent credible complaints or in rare cases where precise documentation is needed to provide appropriate accommodations, the university generally will not ask whether individuals not wearing masks on campus or in the workplace are vaccinated. However, the university retains the right to undertake compliance review as needed to protect the community, and any individual found to be falsely claiming to be vaccinated, or failing to properly mask, may be subject to discipline.

C. Hand-washing and Respiratory Etiquette: All community members are asked to continue to practice good hand-washing and respiratory etiquette, which reduces the spread of germs and viruses.

VI. Vaccination
St. Thomas strongly encourages all community members (who are medically able) to get vaccinated. Our goal is to return to near normal, pre-pandemic operations this fall. Vaccines are available at the Center for Well-Being and at a variety of local sites.
To effectively plan for the fall, St. Thomas needs an accurate count of vaccinated community members. All St. Thomas students, faculty and staff must confidentially report their vaccination status by Aug. 1, 2021.

At this time, St. Thomas has chosen to not require COVID-19 vaccines in order to learn or work on campus. This decision was made after months of lengthy discussions with various university stakeholders, consultations with leading health care experts (including our Morrison Family College of Health advisory board), and input from organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). We are not ruling out a possible future university-wide mandate, and certain activities such as study abroad, university-sponsored travel and field and clinical placements may require participants to be vaccinated. See travel requirements below.

VII. Screening for Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19 and Reporting Concerns

A. Stay Home When Sick
Individuals who are feeling sick should not come to campus. Individuals who become ill while they are on campus must go home. If a manager observes that an employee is working on campus while sick, the manager must send the employee home. Students who are ill should be directed to return to their home or residence hall room and to contact the Center for Well-Being to speak with a triage nurse for further direction.

B. Reporting and Responding to Confirmed Cases
In order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 on campus, St. Thomas has implemented a protocol for responding to confirmed cases of COVID-19.

1. All Community Members Must Report If They Have a Confirmed Case
All members of the St. Thomas community who are working, living, learning or otherwise spending time on campus are required to notify the Center for Well-Being if they are diagnosed with COVID-19 by submitting the Student Self-Report Form or Faculty/Staff Self-Report Form, which are available on OneStThomas. Faculty and staff should also notify their supervisor/department chair of their inability to come to campus using normal call-in procedures for the department. Students who are tested at the Center for Well-Being and who consent to the sharing of their positive test results are not required to complete the self-report form.

2. St. Thomas Response to Confirmed Cases
St. Thomas will work with MDH, which will conduct contact tracing. In addition, St. Thomas will monitor for potential outbreaks.

3. Privacy and Confidentiality
The Center for Well-Being will treat reported information as confidential and will share information only as needed to ensure compliance with public health guidelines, directives and this plan. Names of impacted individuals will never be shared in public communications.
All community members are expected to help maintain the privacy and anonymity of individuals who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are quarantining due to COVID-19 exposure. Individuals who are able to identify the individual based on the circumstances are expected to be discreet. For example, it is OK to share you are quarantining due to a direct contact with an individual with COVID-19, but do not share the individual’s name. We want to be respectful and supportive of all community members.

4. Coordination with State and Local Health Officials
The confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis will be reported to local and/or state health authorities by the health care provider that conducted the test, including the Center for Well-Being if it conducted the test. St. Thomas may also share the information provided by students and employees directly with MDH. St. Thomas will work closely with state and local health officials on any recommended measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19. St. Thomas community members who have been in direct contact with a person with a confirmed diagnosis may be contacted by state or local health officials as part of contact tracing efforts.

5. Community Alerts
In accordance with the Clery Act, St. Thomas will inform the community if there is a confirmed outbreak of COVID-19 on campus that could pose an immediate threat to the health or safety of the campus community. The determination of whether cases are linked and constitute an outbreak will be made in accordance with Clery Act and public health guidance.

C. Isolation and Quarantine
Any member of the St. Thomas community who is diagnosed with COVID-19 is expected to follow the CDC isolation guidelines to help protect the health of the greater community and prevent disease transmission. They should work under the care and direction of their medical provider and collaborate with campus contact tracers to determine when they are able to return to campus or to the classroom. In general, individuals are expected to stay home until they have been fever-free for 24 hours (without use of medicine that reduces fever) and at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared and other symptoms have improved.

All members of the St. Thomas community should comply with recommendations to stay home and quarantine if feeling sick.

Individuals who are close contacts with a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 are expected to follow quarantine guidelines communicated to them by public health authorities or a medical provider. According to the CDC, individuals who are fully vaccinated and who are not exhibiting any symptoms are not required to quarantine.

VIII. Testing
The Center for Well-Being is currently prioritizing testing of symptomatic patients for COVID-19 using molecular (PCR) tests; asymptomatic testing may be available at the Center for Well-Being as space permits. Expanded testing of asymptomatic individuals may be utilized in specific situations, such as localized clusters of COVID-19 cases on campus and other appropriate situations. St. Thomas will continue to work with MDH to provide options for mass-testing events and targeted testing of areas of concern.
The Center for Well-Being has partnered with University of Minnesota/Mayo Lab System as well as Quest Diagnostics to ensure that there is adequate access to testing supplies and services in the event that recommendations change and expanded testing is recommended.

Faculty and staff who are sick should contact their primary health care provider for testing. See the MDH website for additional information about testing.

Important: All individuals who are notified of a positive test result must notify St. Thomas using the self-reporting form on OneStThomas.

IX. Travel
The University relaxed restrictions on some university travel. New guidelines for faculty, staff and student groups are listed below:

- Restrictions on domestic travel have been lifted. Approval for domestic travel will revert to the process followed pre-pandemic.
- All international travel will require provost approval. International travel requests must be submitted to Tim Lewis, chair of the Travel Risk Advisory Committee. That committee will make a recommendation to the provost.
- Community members who participate in University-sponsored international travel, including study abroad, must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.
  - Individuals seeking a medical accommodation may contact Disability Resources (students) or the Benefits Office (faculty, staff and volunteers). Individuals seeking a religious accommodation may contact Study Abroad (students) or their HR Partner (faculty, staff and volunteers). Requests for accommodations will be determined on a case-by-case basis following a review of relevant information, including country and local conditions at the travel destination(s), availability and quality of medical facilities, CDC and State Department guidance, operational considerations, and applicable travel requirements. Travel sites and program partners may have separate vaccine requirements over which the University does not have control.
- All travelers are expected to follow CDC travel guidance on vaccinations and testing.
- Further information is available on the Travel Risk Management OneStThomas page.

X. Planning for Potential Surge in Cases or Closing
The university has developed plans to respond to a possible surge in cases on campus or in the community. Such plans are consistent with public health guidance and directives. A surge in cases or other external factors may impact campus operations, including changes to dining hall or residence hall operations, re-institution of a mask mandate, changes to service levels or building hours, changes to course modalities, or a possible need to place additional or all classes online and closure of some residence hall(s). Factors that will be considered include government directives, the level of transmission, options for reducing transmission risks, community
compliance with protocols, and the ability of the university to effectively manage on-campus cases. A list of ‘‘Key Considerations’’ for changes in operation is on OneStThomas.

In the event that a surge in cases locally or nationally causes St. Thomas to put some or all classes online, tuition and fees will not be refunded.