



Enforcing Mask Compliance in Instructional Spaces: Guidance for Instructors

Penn State’s health and safety policies require masking in all public indoor spaces. Creating and sustaining a safe classroom environment for all students is part of an instructor’s responsibility. Nonenforcement of the masking policy puts you and your students at risk. Based on guidance from across the University, the chart below offers recommendations for instructors to respond to incidences of noncompliance.

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| Student not properly masked: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General reminder to class: “I notice that not everyone has their mask on; let me remind you that masks are required in classrooms/labs.” Or: “I’m seeing a number of you without your masks adjusted properly. For everyone’s health and safety and so we can continue to meet face-to-face, please make sure you are masked with your nose and mouth completely covered.” <p>Resources: Penn State Policy AD 101</p> |
| Student does not react to general reminder: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making eye contact with the student, use a physical cue such as tapping your nose. • Remind the student in a firm, yet kind, manner of the policy: “NAME, you need to mask properly so we can continue with this class session. Penn State’s health and safety policies require that everyone is properly masked indoors.” • If the student does not have a mask, either offer a University-provided mask to the student, if available, or ask the student to leave the room to get a mask. |
| Student does not comply with requests: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the student that their non-compliance is a violation of Penn State Health and Safety Policies and of the Student Code of Conduct and ask that the student comply. • Ask the student to leave: “NAME, if you aren’t willing to mask properly, under Penn State’s policies, you need to leave this class for today, and I will have to refer your name to the Office of Student Conduct.” <p>Note: Instructors should avoid arguing with students over the merit of the relevant policies.</p> |
| Student refuses to leave class: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End the class session for the day: "In order to protect everyone's health and safety and to follow Penn State's policies requiring masking, I have no choice but to dismiss class today. Please check Canvas for further information about today’s lesson topic.” |
| Afterwards/How to Report: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If student complies after intervention, follow-up (via email or Canvas) to remind student of the reason for the masking policies and thank them for their cooperation. • If student is dismissed from class session, file a report with the Office of Student Conduct. (OSC Reporting Form) and communicate dismissal with your academic unit leader. • In the event of a class dismissal, create a written record detailing what happened and communicate with your academic unit leader (e.g., department head, graduate coordinator). <p>Resources: COVID-19 Conduct Information from Student Affairs</p> |



In the Event of a Class Dismissal:

- After dismissed class session:
 - Upload class resources, such as PowerPoint slides or worksheets, to Canvas. Ask students to review/complete materials.
 - Consider adding a discussion to Canvas so that students can ask questions about the material or respond to prompts to earn participation points.
 - Make sure students know that you are accessible (email, Zoom, or during office hours) to discuss questions about the course material.
 - Consider collecting feedback from students: What helps you learn in this course? What material are you struggling with? What resources might you need?
- At the beginning of the next class:
 - Consider making space for student questions about class content and reviewing core concepts from materials not covered.
 - Review health and safety policies and reiterate that masks are required in all public indoor spaces at Penn State.

Steps to Promote Compliance:

- Consistency: Ensure that you apply the policy at all times and with all students.
- Verbal Reminder: Appeal to community/class norms, university policy, and the Student Code of Conduct. Consider a verbal reminder at the beginning of each class when you have students' fullest attention.
 - "As we begin class, I want to remind you that wearing a mask that covers your mouth and nose is required in all public indoor spaces. This requirement is in place to promote the safety of our entire community."
- Daily PowerPoint Slide Reminder: This can be done with or without a verbal reminder, but it gives students another cue to find/adjust masks as needed.
- Mid-Class Reminders: Masks may drift throughout class and regular reminders might be helpful. (This may include a reminder slide.)
 - "As we move to (next activity/topic), let's take a moment to readjust our masks, stretch, and refocus."

Additional Resource: [Penn State Health and Safety Guidelines and FAQ](#)

Schreyer Institute consultants are available for individual or group conversations to discuss specific questions related to class size/type or to other aspects that might impact classroom interactions.

Resource Links:

- Penn State COVID-19 policies: <https://policy.psu.edu/policies/ad101>
- Office of Student Conduct reporting form: <https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?PennState>
- COVID-19 conduct information from Student Affairs: <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/support-safety-conduct/student-conduct/covid-19-conduct-information/covid-19-classroom-guidance>
- Penn State health and safety guidelines: <https://keepteaching.psu.edu/teaching-and-testing/health-and-safety/>