



## FALL 2022 COVID-19 OPERATIONAL PLAN

### INTRODUCTION

Keene State College (KSC) completed the Academic Year '21/'22 managing the Delta variant and the more contagious Omicron variants. While hospitals across the State of NH were overburdened with patients, KSC enacted policies and practices that resulted in the lowest percent positivity of the three residential USNH campuses. These efforts helped minimize the interruption in academic delivery and impact on the local health care system. As Spring Break approached, case rates started to decrease rapidly, and KSC reduced mitigation measures to get back to a more "pre-COVID normal".

### CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

During the fall 2020 semester, KSC averaged around 6-7 cases per week, peaking at 25 the week of 11/23. During the spring 2021 semester, KSC average around 15-16 cases per week, peaking at 52 the week of 5/3. When the Delta variant emerged in early Fall of 2021, KSC averaged 13.6 cases per week, peaking at 34 the week of 11/29 (return from Thanksgiving Break). The more contagious Omicron variant became dominant during the 2021-22 Winter Break causing a significant increase in cases reported to the Covid leadership team over the holiday period. During the Spring 2022 semester, KSC averaged 35 cases per week, peaking at 181 during the week of 1/31. Cases started to decrease rapidly as we approached Spring Break with 20 total cases from 2/21-3/13. With the majority of cases occurring in the first month of the Spring 2022 semester, KSC significantly scaled back risk mitigation measures in March 2022 by making surveillance testing optional for employees, increasing capacities at events, and making masks required in classrooms only.

### LEADERSHIP TEAMS

To minimize the impact on COVID management throughout Campus, the COVID response teams have been reduced to reflect a more integrated approach to covid management. We anticipate the 2022-2023 academic year to be a transition year, where covid management becomes more integrated into college operations, with the Wellness Center taking more of a lead role in managing covid testing.

### INTERNAL COVID TEAMS

#### COVID Leadership Team Members:

- Jeanelle Boyer, Co-Chair
- Barbara Berthiaume, Co-Chair
- Kirk Sanger
- Amy Watson
- Colin Burdick

- Melinda Treadwell

#### **Risk Mitigation and Management Team Members:**

- James Beeby
- Bonnie Blanchard
- Jeanelle Boyer, Chair
- Christopher Buckley
- Sue Castriotta
- Karen Crawford
- Marc Doyon
- Jennifer Ferrell
- Mark Gempler
- Nathalie Houder
- Casey Justice
- Kate Leinster-O'Connor
- MB Lufkin
- Deirdre McPartlin
- Dottie Morris
- Wellness Center Director (TBD)
- Philip Racicot
- Veronica Rosa
- Kirk Sanger
- Tiffany Mathews
- Tanya Sturtz
- Amy Watson
- Travis Wyant

#### **Education Committee:**

- Jeanelle Boyer
- Barbara Berthiaume
- Tiffany Mathews
- Student Leaders- Student GOV, Greek Life, Athletics
- Sarah Kossayda, Director of Marketing

#### **EXTERNAL COVID TEAMS**

The external groups are meeting much less regularly:

- NH Department of Health Updates has moved to as needed. The State is also no longer releasing daily press release updates, just updating the website dashboards periodically. The last meeting with schools (K-12) was early June and are not scheduled to meet on a regular basis for the time being.
- Data Review Teams with Cheshire Medical are on an as-needed basis for summer 2022, but will likely resume on a regular basis during fall 2022. KSC COVID Leadership is still in consultation with representatives at Cheshire Medical Center to review policy and plans as needed.

- City of Keene updates concluded around mid-May and are not scheduled to start again at this time.
- UNH contact tracing and testing team continues to meet on a regular basis as of summer 2022

## FALL 2022 PLANNING OVERVIEW

From the time KSC started planning and responding for the COVID-19 health pandemic, there have been significant changes in regulations. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and New Hampshire State have issued updated regulations and recommendations impacting our planning for the fall semester.

The Omicron variant has given way to many sub-variants, each more transmissible than the next. However, severe illness seems to decrease with each subsequent variant and hospitals have been instructed to report only inpatients who are receiving care for COVID specific reasons.

COVID-19 vaccinations are now more widely available, accessible, and have proven effective against death and severe illness. The State of NH DHHS has stressed that the terminology of “fully vaccinated” is antiquated and are using the term “up to date on vaccination” to include all approved boosters (<https://www.wmur.com/article/covid-19-educators-health-officials-vaccination/40170287>).

The following are guidelines for Fall 2022 operations using revised guiding principles that have proven successful from the original foundation for the Fall 2020 Reopening and Spring 2021 Operational Plans:

1. Behavior, Enforcement and Education
2. Spacing, Cleaning, and Protection
3. Testing and Screening
4. Contact Tracing
  - a. KSC’s internal Rapid Response Team will continue to identify contacts and provide information on what is expected when considered a close contact based on CDC and State of NH guidelines.
5. Isolation and Incident Management
  - a. KSC’s internal Rapid Response Team will continue to reach out to those who test positive and will follow CDC and NH DHHS guidelines for isolation.

## BEHAVIOR, ENFORCEMENT, AND EDUCATION

### BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Faculty, staff, and student behaviors in public, on and off campus will be key to assuring infection rates are maintained at a low level. Keene State College community members will hold each other accountable to the requirements to stop the virus from spreading.

#### WELLNESS AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

The Wellness Ambassador program is a group of 8-10 peer educators led by Tiffany Matthews who apply behavior change strategies to facilitate healthy, lower risk behaviors around covid-19. The goal of the Wellness Ambassador program is to influence behavior change, encourage self-care, and increase access to mental health services. This is an interdisciplinary and collaborative effort between the Wellness Center and Public Health departments to address these challenges facing the KSC Community during the 2022-2023 academic year. Behavioral change approaches include strategies such as peer educators stressing proper mask use, social media campaigns, and educational events.

#### PUBLIC SPACES BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

KSC is fully committed to the health and well-being of all faculty, staff, students, visitors, and the greater Keene community. KSC faculty and staff are encouraged to communicate to their vendors/contractors/visitors to emphasize KSC's commitment to community safety and the requirements of campus. Visitors, contractors, and vendors are encouraged to reach out to their KSC point of contact to understand requirements prior to arrival on campus. Any contractor, vendor, or visitor who refuses to comply with KSC's requirements will be asked to leave immediately.

**IF** an individual experiences any of the following:

- A fever (greater than 100 degrees)
- Respiratory symptoms such as runny nose, sore throat, cough, or shortness of breath
- Flu-like symptoms such as muscle aches, chills, and severe fatigue
- Changes in sense of taste or smell

**THEN** that individual must stay home (residence hall room, apartment) and get tested for covid-19 using an at home antigen test or at a local or on-campus testing site. If the test is negative, individuals are encouraged to remain at home until symptoms resolve and wear a mask when around other people. Individuals who receive a negative test should re-test on day 2 and day 4 of symptoms.

- As applicable: individuals must notify their roommate(s), CA, professors, supervisor by email
- Employee: call their health care provider
- Student: call KSC Health Services

## SPACING, CLEANING, AND PROTECTION

These guidelines are subject to change based on changing guidance from federal and local authorities such as the CDC, NH Department of Health and Human Services, infectious disease experts from Cheshire Medical Center, etc.

### FACE COVERINGS

It is encouraged that everyone has their own personal face covering that is equivalent to a surgical mask or better (such as an N95, KF94 or KN95 mask). For more information about types of masks, please see the following information at the CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/types-of-masks.html>

Importantly, masks should cover the nose, mouth, and fit snugly under the chin. They should fit well and be breathable.

People may choose to wear a mask at any time, but **must mask around others**:

1. If they are experiencing symptoms of any respiratory illness, even if they have tested negative for covid
2. If they have completed isolation for covid-19 and are still within 6-10 days of symptoms or having tested positive
3. If they are within 10 days of having had close contact with someone who has tested positive for covid
4. When visiting the Wellness Center

It is recommended that people wear a mask around others if community risk is high, if immunocompromised or at risk for severe covid, or if visiting someone who is at risk.

Indoor mask requirements for other indoor spaces on campus will be informed by the KSC Covid-19 Risk Matrix and communicated to the campus community by email and on the [KSC Covid-19 Response page](#).

KSC will continue to supply face coverings (surgical masks, KN95's and N95's) and other PPE through the order request form: <http://kscehs.kscopen.org/>

"Mask stations" will be identified in most KSC buildings where surgical masks will be made available for pick up on an as-needed basis.

### VENTILATION

KSC EHS Manager did an extensive study of indoor ventilation rates prior to Spring 2021 to identify spaces where portable HEPA filters should be deployed (<http://kscehs.kscopen.org/category/ventilation-research/>). Permanent installations were installed in select classrooms and will remain in place. All portable HEPA filters will be re-deployed with clean filters to begin the 2022/2023 Academic Year.

## TESTING AND SCREENING

Keene State College will determine testing operations based upon the risk matrix.

In green and yellow operations, KSC will offer symptomatic testing only. In orange or red operations, KSC will consider use of targeted self-swab surveillance testing in high-risk groups (ie athletic teams, dorms with high case rates) or weekly self-swab surveillance testing for all students. Surveillance testing will be mandatory for students and optional for faculty and staff.

### ARRIVAL TESTING

In green and yellow operations, arrival testing is not recommended. Arrival testing may be considered for orange operations and is recommended for red operations. In all conditions, it will be recommended that students, faculty and staff obtain a pre-arrival test (either antigen or PCR) on their own without strict compliance monitoring by the campus.

For Fall 2022, students and their families will be strongly encouraged to receive an antigen or PCR test during the 3 days prior to arrival. There will not be mandatory arrival testing. However, upon arrival, all employees and students will be provided with home antigen tests to be used as needed, if feeling sick or a known contact of a person who has tested positive for covid-19.

Decisions regarding arrival testing for Spring 2023 will be made in December 2022.

## TESTING METHOD AND FREQUENCY

### Symptomatic Testing:

To begin the year, KSC will not be conducting surveillance testing but will instead provide antigen test kits for symptomatic testing.

COVID-19 is still considered a reportable illness to State public health officials and as a result, KSC is required to report the number of positive cases to the State Department of Health and Human Services. Individuals should use our secure “at-home test result” form that can be found [here](#) to report any positive cases.

All students and employees will be provided with a test kit containing two rapid, at-home antigen tests at the start of the semester. On-campus students can pick-up more antigen tests, as-needed, from Community Directors/Community Assistants in their dorms. Employees and off-campus students can pick up more antigen tests (one kit per week for personal use as supplies last), if needed, at 115 Winchester Street when the walk-in testing clinic is open (Monday - Thursday 9AM-1PM/exact hours). In addition, most people can purchase up to 8 covid test kits per month that will be covered by qualifying insurance companies. We encourage all members of our campus community to utilize this resource, if they are covered by insurance.

Employees and students must test in the following situations:

1. If they experience any of the following symptoms:

- 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

\* Those who experience the above symptoms and test negative, should retest on day 2 and day 4 of symptoms. During this time period, one should avoid other people as much as possible and mask when exposure to others is necessary.

2. If they have been identified as a contact of someone who has tested positive for covid-19, then they should test on day 2 and day 5 post exposure.
3. If they are on day 6 of isolation after having tested positive for covid-19 and have been symptom free for 24 hours, then they can upload a negative covid test to end isolation. Students and employees can visit 115 Winchester St. between 9AM and 1PM on Monday-Thursday to receive a covid test or use a rapid antigen test at home to test out of isolation. Negative test results can be uploaded [here](#).

### Surveillance Testing:

In the event that KSC spends sustained time in orange and/or red operations due to a significant increase in risk, the college may shift to weekly mandatory surveillance testing for all students. Each week, students will pick up a self-swab kit at a designated site. After completing the self-swab, kits will be dropped off at a designated site for delivery to the lab for PCR analysis.

### Wastewater Testing:

In June 2022, the city of Keene began participation in the state Wastewater Surveillance Project, as part of a state and national initiative to monitor covid-19 in wastewater. The KSC leadership team will monitor the city of Keene wastewater data during the summer of 2022 to determine the best usage of this data in the KSC risk matrix for fall 2022.

## TESTING EXEMPTIONS

If Keene State College employs surveillance testing, people who have a confirmed positive covid-19 diagnosis will be exempt from testing for 90 days post diagnosis.

## ISOLATION AND INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

KSC's Rapid Response Team will continue to reach out to those who test positive to provide instruction and identify close contacts. An email will be sent that includes test out date, release date and other pertinent info regarding isolation.

Select Owl's Nest buildings will be used for isolation and quarantine space, giving KSC the capacity to house a limited number of isolated and quarantined students. Due to space limitations, on-Campus students must return home to quarantine or isolate if they live within 200 miles from campus and do not have family members at home at high risk for severe covid.

### Isolation Guidelines

- Anyone testing positive for covid-19 will be required to isolate per CDC guidelines.
  - All who test positive must isolate for 10 days per CDC guidance, with the day of positive test or symptoms onset being counted as day 0.
  - Those who are symptom-free on day 5 may opt to test-out of isolation by taking a covid test on day 6 or later. If the test is negative and uploaded using this [online form](#), then they are free to resume normal activities on campus. However, even those who test out of full isolation MUST continue to mask around other people for the entire 10 day period.
- On-Campus facilities in Owl's Nest 7 (25 beds) will be available for students needing to isolate who live more than 200 miles from campus or have family members at risk for severe disease living at home.
- Employees and off-Campus students will be asked to isolate at their homes.

### Quarantine Guidelines:

- Keene State College considers a contact to be someone who is a household member of someone who has tested positive for covid-19 or someone who has had prolonged, close (within 6ft), unmasked exposure to someone who has tested positive for covid-19.
- Contacts no longer have to quarantine per CDC guidance.
- All contacts must mask around other people for a full 10 days after contact with the positive person.
  - The last date of contact is day 0
  - Masking around others is required regardless of vaccination status
- All contacts should monitor for symptoms and test if symptoms appear. If no symptoms appear, they should test on day 2 and day 5 after exposure.
  - If the test is positive, they should move to isolation.
  - If the test is negative, they should continue to wear a mask around others for the full 10 days.



As with other illness, students should notify faculty of absence due to covid-related illness. If further support is necessary, especially for prolonged isolation/illness, students and/or faculty should reach out to the Dean of Student's office for support

### **Rapid Response Workflow-**

The lead contact tracer on duty will monitor the RRT Teams Page for new positive antigen test uploads. Upon receiving a new positive test result:

- RRT member will contact the recent positive via text, phone and/or email
  - RRT will support move to appropriate isolation, contact trace and send an email with detailed instructions
- RRT will notify contacts with a courtesy email notifying of recent exposure. The email will contain detailed instructions for quarantine procedure (see guidelines above)
- If a student has tested positive and is entering isolation, they should reach out to their professors to let them know of their absence. Faculty should support students while they cannot be in the classroom due to covid-19. Students will be instructed to reach out to the Dean of Students if they need more academic support while in isolation.

## **OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT ACTIONS**

The risk matrix below is a product of the data analysis over the past two years and takes into account the initial Omicron surge that occurred in early 2022. KSC monitors local, regional and national data including the CDC County Community Level Data that is updated weekly:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>

## **CAMPUS ACTIONS**

### **RESPONSE ACTIONS**

The KSC COVID Leadership team will monitor trigger points and provide advisement and recommendations to Keene State's leadership administration. Additional COVID working groups will be consulted prior to any recommendation being made to the administration. The trigger points below are not the only data points KSC is monitoring but are the more significant that would induce change to operational responses.

Careful monitoring of key data is one part of Keene State's process for determining if and how the College needs to shift its operations. This matrix includes a wide range of criteria for consideration.

If conditions warrant a shift to a higher level of risk mitigation, the COVID-19 Leadership Team, in consult with the various COVID-19 specific sub committees, will inform and advise the President

as to what operational response should be enacted. **Not all trigger points are equal in the decision-making process and not all trigger points reflect local risk.** Some trigger points are intended to track trends over time and provide predictive measures, whereas some alone have direct impact on Keene State's operations. Keene State continues to track data in addition to that which is included on the risk matrix that may impact decision making.

This matrix will be updated daily with weekly reports to the COVID-19 Leadership Team, the President, and the Risk Mitigation and Management Team. The risk matrix is updated weekly to the COVID-19 data page: <https://www.keene.edu/featured/covid-basecamp/covid-19-dashboard/>