

IMPORTANT: Remote Instruction, New Dining and Event Protocols

December 9, 2021 | by [Mark Peluso](#), [Jeff Cason](#), and [Smita Ruzicka](#)

Dear Middlebury Community,

In this email we will address:

- COVID-19 on Campus and Move to Remote Instruction
- Early Departure from Campus
- New Protocols Effective Friday, December 10
- Testing Information

COVID-19 on Campus and Move to Remote Instruction

As of 5:30 p.m. today, we received confirmation of 34 new cases of COVID-19 on campus, for a total of 49 active student cases and one active employee case. Contact tracing is underway, and anyone who is determined to be a [close contact](#) will be informed. Please note that we are still receiving results from tests taken earlier this week, and we will keep you informed about any further changes as they become necessary. We will update the [COVID-19 reporting dashboard](#) with this new information on Friday.

While many of the new cases we have identified appear to be connected, occurring in clusters among people who socialize together, an increase in the prevalence of COVID-19 increases the likelihood of broader community transmission. Given the timing of this increase, coinciding with the end of the fall semester and imminent student departures, *we have decided to move immediately to remote instruction and postpone in-person events*. This includes classes that meet on Friday, December 10, final exams, and all formal and informal events, including athletics competitions and performing arts.

With more than 99 percent of students fully vaccinated and many already receiving booster doses, the risk of adverse health outcomes from the Delta variant is low. Rising student cases that require isolation, ongoing transmission, and the few days remaining in the semester warrant the change to remote instruction.

Early Departure from Campus

Students who are able to leave campus and travel to their break destination early should do so. Students who must remain on campus for travel reasons (such as if a flight is already booked) may stay and will need to follow the mitigation measures below. Students approved to remain on campus through the break will receive additional information about break expectations.

Regional travel for students in isolation or quarantine may be possible, but will need to be approved by Health Services to ensure that public safety procedures are understood and followed.

New Protocols Effective Friday, December 10

In accordance with our COVID-19 management and mitigation plan, and to support community health, the following protocols are effective Friday, December 10, starting at 5 a.m. and will continue until further notice:

- **Classes:** Classes will continue remotely for the last day of the semester.
- **Final exams:** Finals will be held remotely.
- **Departing from campus:** Students who are able to depart for break or change plans without unreasonable complication or expense, should do so. Those who must stay with their original travel plans may do so. Students already approved to remain on campus for break may do so as planned.
- **Testing:** Testing will be available on Friday, December 10, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Saturday, December 11, from noon to 3 p.m. at Virtue Field House.
 - Asymptomatic students do not need to wait for their results to depart campus. Negative results will be emailed to them as usual. Students who receive a positive test result will be contacted by Health Services.
 - Symptomatic students awaiting test results should delay campus departure until they have a negative test result, unless they can drive directly to a safe location and isolate until they get a negative test result. Students who test positive and can safely isolate themselves at home or another location are allowed to drive directly to that location in most cases, with approval from Health Services.
- **Dining:** All dining halls will offer grab-and-go meals only, and face coverings must be worn in those spaces at all times.
- **Events:** Indoor events are canceled or postponed. Some may be rescheduled or moved to remote formats if possible.
- **Gatherings:** Any informal indoor gatherings—whether on or off-campus, previously scheduled or impromptu—should not exceed six people. Outdoor gatherings are preferred and should be kept to smaller groups. Anyone with symptoms should not gather.
- **Face coverings:** Our current [face covering policy](#) remains in effect, and strict adherence to this policy is absolutely essential.
- **Athletics and the arts:** All athletics and performing arts events are either canceled or postponed, including competition and practices.
- **In-person work:** In-person work for employees will continue with current protocols for face coverings and other health and safety measures in place.
- **Visitors and guests:** Visitors and guests will not be permitted to attend campus events except in virtual formats. Approved vendors, contractors, or other service providers are allowed with permission from the appropriate vice president and adherence to all COVID-19-related protocols.

Testing Information

We continue to expand COVID-19 testing opportunities for students, and appointments for both symptomatic and asymptomatic students are available on campus. Students who are experiencing symptoms should self-isolate, wear a well-fitting face covering at all times, and immediately contact Health Services at 802-443-3290, healthservices@middlebury.edu, or self-schedule on the [student health portal](#) to arrange for testing.

Students who are not experiencing symptoms may make appointments via the [Bookings link for testing](#) at Virtue Field House. These students do not need to wait for test results prior to leaving campus but should continue to use standard mitigation precautions.

[Testing appointments](#) for employees are available through healthcare providers, at state-run sites, pharmacies, and other locations, and employees are encouraged to schedule ahead of time to ensure availability.

Information Line

We will be setting up an information line for students and their families and will provide details as soon as this is available. Employees should confer with their supervisors or Human Resources with any questions.

We will continue to provide you with updates and necessary information. As we experience this rise in cases, both on campus, in Vermont, and in the surrounding regions, we are making these adjustments to keep our community as healthy as possible. We have greatly appreciated your patience and support throughout a successful semester and look forward to continuing that work together in the final week.

Sincerely,

Mark Peluso
Chief Health Officer and College Physician

Smita Ruzicka
Vice President for Student Affairs

Jeff Cason
Provost