

Housing Policy and Procedures

COVID-19 Addendum

2020-2021

Massachusetts is fighting the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, a highly infectious, life-threatening disease declared to be a global pandemic. There currently is no known treatment, cure or vaccine for COVID-19. The disease may be contracted through contact with infected persons who may be asymptomatic, or from contact with the virus left on surfaces. In accordance with the recommendations and guidance of the Centers for Disease Control (“CDC”) and the Massachusetts Department of Health, as well as the guidance provided in Massachusetts’s Safe on Campus Guide, the University has taken steps to limit the spread of COVID-19, but the health and safety of the community depend upon all its members accepting the shared risk associated with the disease.

On-campus living presents an opportunity to enhance your collegiate experience, and in an effort to continue to offer on-campus living, the University is issuing this Addendum, as well as additional policies and procedures as referenced herein, consistent with the best practices prescribed by the Centers for Disease Control, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and Massachusetts COVID-19 response.

Purpose:

This Addendum explains the additional expectations that the University and Housing & Residential Services will have for residential students. These expectations may or may not have been communicated in your previous review and correspondence of the housing program at Fitchburg State. They are subject to change as guidance from local, state, and federal authorities changes

Residential students are required to comply with all policies and procedures relative to the residential facilities on campus, including reduced occupancy necessitated in response to COVID-19. Consistent with these efforts, there may be instances in which relocation of all or some residential students to alternative housing arrangements may be necessary. Relocation does not constitute a termination of a residential student’s housing contract. Moreover, there may be circumstances that require a residential student to self-isolate away from campus for a specified period of time, precluding the residential student from access to their assigned residence on campus, as well as circumstances in which the University precludes the entire campus from continued residence.

Health Impacted/Exposure to COVID-19:

Off-campus

As a residential student you shall not return to the university/residence hall if you have tested positive for COVID-19, show any cold and/or flu-like symptoms (consistent with COVID_19), have come in contact with an individual(s) with presumptive COVID-19 within the last 14 days,

or traveled to states recommended by Massachusetts Public Health for quarantine after travel. If these conditions apply to you, **DO NOT COME TO CAMPUS**. Please call your primary care provider and follow their recommendations. If your primary care provider indicates that you are presumptive positive for COVID-19, please advise us at housing@fitchburgstate.edu.

On-campus

As a residential student you shall immediately call the Office of Student Affairs (978.665.3130) between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm, or University Police (978-665-3111) after hours, if you show any cold and/or flu-like symptoms or have been notified that you have come into contact with an individual(s) with presumptive COVID-19. Once you are connected to on- or off-campus health services, you must adhere to their directions on next steps.

Adherence to Policies and Procedures:

Students are expected to adhere to all University and Housing and Residential Services policies and procedures communicated via methods including but not limited to, all verbal, electronic and hardcopy. Students are also expected to adhere to current and future administrative directives. Students in violation will be referred for student conduct action. The health and safety of the community is among the very highest priorities of the University. Students who put the community at risk by failing to adhere to all policies and procedures may be asked to leave immediately.

Residential Living:

Adherence to health and safety policies, procedures and directives relative to the residential facilities on campus shall apply to all residents, staff and visitors, and extends to all aspects of residential life, including bedrooms, bathrooms, community kitchens, lounges, laundry rooms, courtyards and other common residential spaces.

All residents are required to adhere to the University's social distancing guidelines as structured at any given time. Social distancing of at least 6 feet is designed to minimize face-to-face engagement. In addition, face coverings must be worn when outside of your assigned bedroom space:

- Residents in an apartment/suite must wear a face covering for the first two weeks of residency.
 - Continuing to wear face coverings after the first 2 weeks of residency is recommended.

Residents in apartments/suites are recommended to not share utensils, dishes, etc.

The residence hall communal spaces, including laundry rooms, elevators, bathrooms, kitchens and seating areas may have additional guidelines to support social distancing and best-practices including, but not limited to:

- Face covering when in the space.
- Scheduling for use of space(s).
- Limitations on use of the space(s), including occupancy limitations.

- Limitations on access, including closures of space(s).

COVID-19 Testing

Testing and contact tracing plans are being finalized as of this writing. Residents are expected to comply with all requirements and guidelines once provided.

Bathrooms (Floor/Suite/Apartments)

Shared Bathrooms

- Personal belongings should not be kept in shared bathrooms at any time, in order to prevent obstruction of required cleanings.
- Cleaning supplies by the University's Capital Planning & Maintenance will be accessible to supplement the required cleanings .
- The Residence Life Staff will communicate with residents the specific expectations in terms of scheduled use and/or assignment of sinks as part of the move-in process.

Cleaning/Maintenance:

Cleaning and maintenance protocols will be updated continually to address COVID-19 or other public health emergencies in the interest of minimizing the spread of disease. Residential students will be informed of the appropriate cleaning protocols within their assigned spaces to reduce the spread of COVID-19 within residence halls.

Dining:

Dining Services may limit the occupancy of dining halls, the amount of time students may reside within dining halls, or expand dining sites and increase the opportunity to take out meals under the University's meal plan program. The University reserves the right to make additional operational adjustments as needed to address ongoing health and safety concerns relative to reducing the spread of COVID-19.

Building/Floor/Suite Meetings

The building staff will hold periodic meetings applicable for the building style that residential students live in. These meetings may be conducted through in person or virtual format. Residential students are required to attend any and all community or 1-1 meetings scheduled by the University's staff.

Residential students are required to obtain approval to be absent from mandatory meetings scheduled by the University's staff. Procedures for requesting such absences will be provided to residential students. Residents who miss mandatory meetings (whether or not the absence is approved) shall be held accountable for all information discussed and disseminated during the meeting. Unexcused absence(s) will be addressed through the student conduct process.

Roommate/Suitemate/Apartment Mate Agreements

Each residential student will be issued a Building Agreement relative to the particular building style residence the student is assigned to. Residential students are required to sign and submit within 72 hours of checking into the residence an acknowledgement indicating that they have read the terms, understand the terms and will comply with the terms of the Building Agreement. .

Strict adherence to the terms of the Building Agreement is necessary to minimize the potential spread of COVID-19.. The Building Agreement will be updated whenever there is a change in the residency requirements for the community, or if the protocols for a particular building style have been modified in any way. The Building Agreement may include information related to, among other things: cleaning bedroom space, cleaning communal seating and kitchen areas, and a bathroom assignment schedule.

Guest, Overnight Guest and Visitors within Assigned Room/Suite/Apartment:

Guests

Guests are not allowed in any residential buildings until further notice. Residents are only permitted to be in the building to which they are assigned.

Overnight Guests

No overnight guests are permitted in any residential buildings until further notice.

Visitors

Visitors are residential students who are assigned to the building in which you live, but are not members of a defined family unit for residential living purposes. **Members of a family unit are permitted into each other's rooms.**

- Family units are defined as follows:
 - In traditional residential buildings (residential hall) a family unit is defined as all residential students assigned to a room on the same floor, and tower, if applicable. Students who are on the same floor but not in the same tower are not in the same family unit.
 - In suite style living buildings, a family unit is defined as all residential students assigned to the same suite.
 - In apartment building, living arrangement, a family unit is defined as all residential students assigned to the same apartment unit.

To comply with social distancing guidelines, all bedrooms will be limited to an occupancy of 2 people.

- Assigned student resident and visitor or two student residents, where applicable.

Self-Isolation or Quarantine

Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who may have been exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.

Self-isolation separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.

For tips about quarantining or self-isolating, see this document from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: [10 Tips for At-Home Quarantine or Self-Monitoring](#)

A resident must transition to self-isolation for the following reasons::

- If the resident presents with symptoms consistent with COVID-19;

- If the resident was exposed to COVID-19 through contact with a person who has or is presumed to have COVID-19.

If a residential student is instructed to self-isolate, that student will be expected to transition to an off-campus home/address. If an off-campus option is not viable, the residential student will then be considered for relocation to a space on campus where they can self-isolate.

Technology

Each resident is expected to be able to connect with Building Staff through such communications technology as a smart phone, tablet or laptop computer. If a resident does not possess such technology, the resident shall notify the Area Coordinator/Resident Director within 72 hours of assuming residency.

General Termination of the Housing Agreement

The housing occupancy agreement may be terminated with limited notice, due to public health emergency needs, including COVID-19.