

SOUTHWESTERN

LAW SCHOOL

Los Angeles, CA

Indoor Masking Policy

Administrative policy approved May 12, 2022. Effective as of May 14, 2022.

Revision history: Revised July 20, 2022 (conform to new Los Angeles County guidance); revised close contact rules on July 26, 2022 to align with L.A. County guidance and added a section regarding unmasking while actively eating or drinking; revised September 14, 2022 (adding reservation of rights); revised March 9, 2023; revised January 16, 2024 to align with L.A. County guidance and add a masking alternative.

Related policies: None at this time.

Review Date: January 2025 (Health & Safety Manager).

1. Overview

Southwestern has adopted a phase-based system to determine when and where individuals will be required to wear masks indoors on the Southwestern campus.

Phase	Mask Rule for In-Person Classes, Exams, and Events Where In-Person Attendance Is Mandatory	Mask Rule for Indoor Common Areas (including Library, Elevators, Hallways, Tea Room, Fitness Center, non-mandatory indoor events)
Low	Not required	Not required
Medium	Required	Not required
High	Required	Required

A more detailed version of this chart appears in [Appendix A](#).

The system is based on several factors, including factors addressed in the Los Angeles County Post-Surge Response Plan and factors specific to Southwestern. The factors that will be considered are listed in [Appendix B](#).

Southwestern acknowledges the sometimes competing concerns and interests regarding indoor masking and has attempted to strike a logical balance to help ensure that we can

continue to offer in-person classes and minimize the transmission of COVID-19 and chances for a cluster outbreak on campus.

2. Application

- a. **Not dependent on vaccine or booster status:** The masking rules are not dependent on an individual's vaccine or booster status.
- b. **Voluntary masking welcome:** Southwestern continues to recommend and encourage individuals to wear masks voluntarily when indoors with others, especially if an individual has not been fully vaccinated or is at higher risk of serious negative outcome if they contract COVID-19. No one should be marginalized or made to feel unwelcome because they choose to wear a mask.
- c. **Type of mask:** When a mask is required, individuals must wear an N95, KN95, or KF94 mask. When a mask is not required, a person choosing to wear a mask may wear any type of mask or face covering they choose, including cloth and surgical masks.
- d. **Personal air purifier in lieu of mask:** Except when an individual is returning to campus following a COVID-19 infection (Section 4(d)), an individual may wear an AirTamer personal air purifier (A310, A315, or A320 model or higher) in lieu of a mask. The purifier should be turned on and worn around the neck or clipped to the collar of a shirt or jacket (or placed in a similar location).
- e. **Outdoors:** While individuals are always welcome to wear a mask outdoors, masks are not required outdoors, and this policy is limited to mask-wearing indoors.
- f. **Residences at 7th:** Individual apartments in the Residences on 7th are not covered under this policy, but common areas within the Residences on 7th are covered by the policy.
- g. **Mandatory group events that individuals must attend in person:** Indoor group events that students or employees must attend in person can be deemed mandatory only by the following individuals: President and Dean; a Vice Dean; Associate Dean for SCALE; Associate Dean, Dean of Students and Diversity Affairs; or Associate Dean for Student Affairs.
 - i. Faculty may designate class-related events, such as a review session, as "mandatory" without administrative approval if a remote option is offered.
 - ii. Student organizations may designate an event as "mandatory" for its members if a remote option is offered.
 - iii. Employee-supervisors may designate in-person department or unit meetings as "mandatory" for their staff members but should be sensitive to the needs of those they supervise.

- iv. Individuals with an approved Southwestern accommodation to attend classes or work remotely will not be required to attend any events in person.

h. London Study-Aboard Program: This policy does not apply to the London Study-Aboard Program.

3. Notification of Phase Changes

The Office of the President and Dean or the Health & Safety Manager will alert the campus community (students, staff, full-time faculty, and adjunct faculty teaching that semester, period, or session) via swlaw.edu email before we enter a different phase.

Southwestern will strive to give at least 24 hours' notice before shifting to a different phase. Notices of the current phase will be posted on the swlaw.edu webpage and outside the entrance to the Bullocks Wilshire building, the Westmoreland building, and the Residences at 7th (pertaining to the common areas of the Residences).

4. Requirement to Carry a Mask or Personal Air Purifier While on Campus and Exceptions When Masks May Be Required Regardless of Phase

a. Always carry a high-quality mask: Each member of the Southwestern community should always carry an N95, KN95, or KF94 mask or AirTamer personal purifier while on campus. In some situations, and in some areas of campus, indoor masking rules may differ from the general rule for a phase. Southwestern will strive to give advance notice of these areas or circumstances.

b. Employee offices and workspaces: Employees may require individuals to wear a high-quality mask or AirTamer personal purifier when entering the employee's office or workspace, even when the campus is in a green or yellow phase. "Workspace" does not include a classroom or other area specifically addressed in this policy (e.g., Fitness Center, non-employee office in the Library).

c. Individuals returning to campus after having been designated as a close contact:

i. When asymptomatic:

- An individual designated as a "close contact" with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 may continue to access campus if they are not experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.
- An individual designated as a close contact must test with Nobility or by using a self-administered rapid test between Days 3 and 5 after the date of last exposure. Day 0 is the day of the last contact or exposure with the infected person, and Day 1 is the first full day after the last exposure. However, a close contact who was infected with

COVID-19 in the last 30 days does not need to test unless symptoms develop, and close contacts who were infected with COVID-19 in the past 31–90 days should use an antigen test to lower the risk of false-positives. From Day 1 through Day 10, the close contact must wear an N95, KN95, or KF94 mask (or AirTamer personal purifier) while indoors on campus in common areas or when around others indoors.

- If a close contact tests positive for COVID, they must follow the protocols in Subsection 4(d).

ii. When symptomatic: A close contact who develops symptoms must not access campus. They must also contact the Health & Safety Manager (health@swlaw.edu) as soon as possible to discuss their situation and follow the Health & Safety Manager’s instructions. If the individual returns to campus before Day 11, they must wear an N95, KN95, or KF94 mask while indoors on campus in common areas or when around others indoors. A personal air purifier is not an option in this situation.

d. Individuals returning to campus after testing positive for COVID-19: An individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 must follow the guidance issued by the [Los Angeles County Department of Public Health](#). The day an individual tests positive is considered Day 0. If the individual either (i) tests negative on or after Day 5 (via a self-administered rapid test or a test administered by Nobility or another health provider) **or** (ii) has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medicines and COVID symptoms are mild or improving on or after Day 5, they may return to campus the next day. If the individual returns to campus before Day 11, the individual must wear an N95, KN95, or KF94 mask indoors while with others through Day 10. A personal air purifier is not an option in this situation.

5. **Individuals Experiencing Symptoms of COVID, Flu, or Other Contagious Illnesses**

Individuals who are experiencing symptoms of COVID, the flu, or other contagious illnesses should not access campus, even if wearing a high-quality mask or personal air purifier. Individuals who have tested positive for COVID should report their status health@swlaw.edu as possible and follow current Los Angeles County Public Health Department rules.

6. **Where to Obtain a High-Quality Mask on Campus**

Southwestern’s Administrative Services Office (first floor of Westmoreland) and the Security desk in Bullocks Wilshire will provide students, staff, faculty, and visitors with individual KN95 masks upon request.

The Administrative Services Office also has a small supply of KN94 masks that employees

may request in lieu of KN95 masks.

The Academic Administration Office has a supply of AirTamer personal purifiers that a faculty member may reserve when teaching a class or engaging in another Southwestern activity.

7. Air Purifiers in the Library

The Library has portable air purifiers that individuals may check out when using a study room or studying with a group elsewhere in the Library.

8. Unmasking Indoors While Actively Eating or Drinking

During any phase, individuals may unmask indoors while actively eating or drinking. During yellow and red phases, individuals should be considerate of others and remain unmasked only for the period needed to eat or drink. Having food or drink nearby is not considered "actively eating or drinking." Southwestern discourages individuals from eating during a class session, especially during a yellow or red phase.

During any phase, a student organization may host an indoor food event in a classroom or other approved indoor space, and guests may unmask while actively eating or drinking. The student organization should coordinate with the Student Affairs Office as early as possible in the planning process.

Departments may also host indoor events with food or beverages during any phase level, but should consider alternatives, especially should we enter a red phase.

9. Policy Revisions

Southwestern expressly reserves the right to change or modify any aspect of this policy at any time, with or without prior notice.

Appendix A: Phases and Detailed Masking Rules

Phase	Mask Rule for In-Person Classes, Exams, and Events Where In-Person Attendance Is Mandatory	Mask Rule for Indoor Common Areas (including Library, Elevators, Hallways, Tea Room, Fitness Center, non-mandatory indoor events)	Mask Rule for Close Contacts Returning to Campus	Mask Rule for Individuals Returning to Campus After Testing Positive for COVID-19
Low	<p>Masks not required but recommended and welcomed.</p> <p>See Section 2(f) of this policy for a description of mandatory events.</p> <p>No requirement for a certain type of mask, so individuals may wear cloth or surgical masks, although Southwestern continues to highly recommend N95, KN95, and KF94 masks.</p>	<p>Masks not required but recommended and welcomed.</p> <p>No requirement for a certain type of mask, so individuals may wear cloth or surgical masks, although Southwestern continues to highly recommend N95, KN95, and KF94 masks.</p>	<p>For 10 days after the last day of exposure, a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID must wear an N95, KN95, or KF94 mask while on campus and in any non-private indoor space. May wear an AirTamer personal purifier if asymptomatic.</p> <p>See Section 4(c) of this policy and the current Southwestern COVID FAQs for more details about close contacts, https://www.swlaw.edu/SWPolicies.</p>	<p>Following a negative COVID test on or after Day 5 after first experiencing symptoms, may return to campus if they test negative, have been fever-free for 24 hours and symptoms are improving but must wear an N95, KN95, or KF94 mask while on campus and in any non-private indoor space through Day 10 (cannot substitute an AirTamer personal purifier for a mask).</p> <p>See Section 4(d) of this policy for details about a return to campus.</p>
Medium	<p>All individuals required to wear an N95, KN95, or KF94 mask. Individuals may wear an AirTamer personal purifier in lieu of a mask.</p>	<p>Masks recommended and welcomed, but not required. No requirement for type of mask, so individuals may wear cloth or surgical masks, although Southwestern continues to highly recommend N95, KN95, and KF94 masks.</p>	<p>Same as above.</p>	<p>Same as above.</p>
High	<p>All individuals required to wear an N95, KN95, or KF94 mask. Individuals may wear an AirTamer personal purifier in lieu of a mask.</p>	<p>All individuals required to wear an N95, KN95, or KF94 mask (or Air Tamer personal purifier). May unmask indoors for a short period while actively eating or drinking.</p>	<p>Same as above.</p>	<p>Same as above.</p>

Appendix B: Factors Balanced to Determine the Phase

Phase	Factors
Low	L.A. County CDC Community Level “Low” (http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/data/post-surge-dashboard.htm)
Medium	<p>L.A. County CDC Community Level “Medium” (http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/data/post-surge-dashboard.htm)</p> <p>L.A. County Department of Public Health strongly recommends that post-secondary institutions require masks in classrooms</p> <p>At least five unrelated cases of COVID-19 reported over a seven-day rolling period regarding individuals who have accessed the Southwestern campus within 48 hours of experiencing symptoms. Southwestern may direct different masking requirements for different cohorts, especially when those cohorts take all or most classes together.</p> <p>Two related cases of on-campus spread traced to a classroom setting or mandatory indoor event</p> <p>Members of the Southwestern community are likely to be returning from travel from a wide array of domestic and international locations, including locations experiencing surges or medium-to-high community levels (e.g., start of a semester, and following Thanksgiving, Winter Break, and Spring Break)</p>
High	<p>L.A. County CDC Community Level “High” (http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/data/post-surge-dashboard.htm)</p> <p>Infection rate in L.A. county reaches 1.7 (https://covidactnow.org/us/california-ca/county/los_angeles_county/?s=33542170)</p> <p>At least seven unrelated positive COVID cases reported over a seven-day rolling period regarding individuals who have accessed the Southwestern campus within 48 hours of experiencing symptoms. Southwestern may direct different masking requirements for different cohorts, especially when those cohorts take all or most classes together.</p> <p>Three or more related cases of on-campus spread</p> <p>Southwestern has announced an upcoming pivot to all remote instruction</p>