

## Social/Physical Distancing Policy

- I. **Purpose.** The purpose of this policy is to protect the health and welfare of the Converse community through the prevention and control of infectious diseases by following guidance issued by the [Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).
- II. **Definitions.** “Social/Physical distancing” is a public-health protection measure meant to reduce and slow transmission of the disease by limiting face-to-face contact and increase the distance between individuals to reduce the spread of infection.
- III. **Background.** Infections such as COVID-19 spread mainly among people who are in close contact (within about 6 feet) for a prolonged period (10 minutes or more). Spread happens when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, and droplets from their mouth or nose are launched into the air and land in the mouths or noses of people nearby. The droplets can also be inhaled into the lungs. Recent studies indicate that people who are infected but do not have symptoms can also spread infections such as COVID-19.

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes. However, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. COVID-19 can live for hours or days on a surface, depending on factors such as sunlight and humidity. Social distancing helps limit contact with infected people and contaminated surfaces.

- IV. **Policy.** Supervisors and employees should evaluate and adjust seating and/or their proximity to others in workspaces, classrooms, labs, meetings, and activities to maintain proper social distancing (at least 6 feet of space). Faculty and staff have an obligation to ask students to engage in social distancing to help prevent the spread of infection.

- A. **Working in Office Environments Guidance:** Employees that work in an open environment should maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from co-workers. If possible have at least one workspace separating one employee from another. Employees should wear a face-covering at all times while in a shared workspace/room. A face covering is not required if an employee is working alone in a confined office space (does not include partitioned work areas in a large open environment).

Departments should assess open work environments and meeting rooms to institute measures to physically separate and increase the distance between employees, other coworkers, and customers, such as:

- Place signage and visual cues such as floor decals, colored tape, or signs to indicate to faculty, staff, and students where they should stand while waiting in line.
- One-way directional signage should be used for large open workspaces with

multiple through-ways to increase distance between employees moving through the space. Consider designating specific stairways for up or down traffic if building space allows.

- V. **Restrooms:** Use of restrooms should observe 6 feet distance between individuals where possible to avoid close proximity with others in a confined space. Employees should wash their hands thoroughly afterward to reduce the potential transmission of the virus.
- VI. **Elevators:** Use of elevators should be limited where possible to avoid close proximity with others in a confined space. Those using elevators are required to wear a face-covering/disposable mask regardless of traveling alone or with others. Employees should also avoid touching the elevator buttons with exposed hand/fingers, if possible. Employees should Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers with greater than 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol as the preferred form of hand hygiene.
- VII. **Meetings:** Convening in groups increases the risk of viral transmission. Where feasible, meetings should be held in whole or part using the extensive range of available collaboration tools (e.g. Zoom, Google Meets, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, telephone, etc.). In person meetings are limited to the restrictions of local, state and federal orders and should not exceed 50 percent of a room's capacity, assuming individuals can still maintain 6 feet of separation for social distancing requirements.

Departments should remove or rearrange chairs and tables or add visual cue marks in meeting rooms to support social distancing practices between attendees. If a meeting is unavoidable, all attendees should wear a mask or face covering while sharing space in a common room. Employees are encouraged to communicate with their colleagues and supervisors as needed by email, instant message, telephone or other available technology rather than face-to-face.

- VIII. **Meals:** If dining on campus, employees should wear your mask or face covering until you are ready to eat and then replace it afterward. The dining hall must meet requirements to allow at least 6 feet of distance between each patrons, including lines and seating arrangements. Faculty, staff, and students should not sit facing one another. Employees are encouraged to take food back to their office area or eat outside, if this is reasonable for your situation. If an employee is eating in their work environment (break room, office, etc.), must maintain 6 feet distance between others. Employees should not sit facing one another. Only remove your mask or face covering in order to eat, then put it back on.

Departments should remove or rearrange chairs and tables or add signage or visual cue marks in employee break rooms to support social distancing practices between employees. Employees must wipe all surfaces, including table, refrigerator handle, coffee machine, etc. after using in common areas with designated cleaning products provided by the facilities department.

- XI **Laboratory Work:** Employees should consult with their supervisor/department chair to review specific criteria developed for faculty and staff working in laboratory environments.

X. **Valkyrie Bus:** Authorized personnel should institute measures to physically separate or force distance greater than 6 feet between bus operators and passengers. These may include use of physical partitions or visual cues (e.g., floor decals, colored tape, or signs to indicate to passengers where they should not sit or stand near the bus operator).

X. **Staffing** **Options:**  
Once staff members have been instructed to return to work on-site, there are several options departments should consider maintaining the required social distancing measures and reduce population density within buildings and workspaces:

- **Remote Work:** Those who can work remotely to fulfill some or all of their work responsibilities may continue to do so to reduce the number of individuals on campus and the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus. These arrangements, which should be approved by the immediate supervisor, can be done on a full or partial day/week schedule as appropriate.
- **Alternating Days:** In order to limit the number of individuals and interactions among those on campus, departments should schedule partial staffing on alternating days. Such schedules will help enable social distancing, especially in areas with large common workspaces.
- **Staggered Reporting/Departing:** The beginning and end of the workday typically bring many people together at common entry/exit points of buildings. Staggering reporting and departure times by at least 30 minutes will reduce traffic in common areas to meet social distancing requirements.

Although the risk of severe illness may be different for everyone, anyone can get and spread COVID-19. Everyone has a role to play in slowing the spread and protecting themselves, their family, and their community. To ensure compliance of social distancing, please see additional guidance below:

- Employees should maintain a distance of six feet from others and practice social distancing as work duties permit.
- Avoid in-person meetings. Use online conferencing, email, or the phone when possible, even when people are in the same building.
- Unavoidable in-person meetings should be short, in a large meeting room where people can sit at least six feet from each other.
- Employees should avoid shaking hands or other physical contact, except when contact is required to respond to an emergency.
- Eliminate unnecessary travel and cancel or postpone nonessential meetings, gatherings,

workshops, and training sessions.

- Do not congregate in workrooms, pantries, copier rooms, or other areas where people may socialize.
- Limit recreational or other leisure classes, meetings, activities, etc., where close contact with others is likely.
- Be aware and follow any markings or signage for general areas and offices.

***\*\*Admissions and Athletics scheduled campus visits/visitors should follow guidelines established in the Internal Visit Procedures.***

COVID-19 continues to be a fluid situation, and college guidelines/policies may continue to evolve. We will provide further updates to our community. All of this information can be found at <https://www.converse.edu/coronavirus-updates/>.