GENERAL VACCINATION FAQS

1. **Is Messiah University requiring its students and/or employees to be vaccinated for COVID-19 for the fall 2021 semester?**

   Messiah University sees the COVID vaccines approved by the FDA for emergency use in the United States as its institutional path back to normal life, and strongly encourages all students and employees to be vaccinated. That said, given that full FDA approval has not yet been granted, at this time Messiah University is **not planning to mandate COVID-19 vaccination for students or employees for the fall 2021 semester**. It is important to note that changes in the pandemic or vaccine approval status could trigger a re-evaluation of this policy. However, should a COVID-19 vaccine mandate be put into place at some point in the future, it would be similar to our current student vaccine policy, which includes options for both religious and medical exemptions.

   While not mandated, it is extremely important that the majority of our student and employee populations be vaccinated prior to the start of the fall 2021 semester to assure a safe and undisturbed in-person educational experience, particularly for populations in congregate living settings, such as in residence halls, where spread of COVID-19 can be rapid and difficult to contain. We greatly appreciate our students and employees who have already been vaccinated for COVID-19, and we continue to encourage as many as possible to continue to do so. Widespread vaccination of our campus community provides the best opportunity for us to return Messiah to normal, pre-pandemic operations and to make university life feel much more like it is supposed to be for everyone.

2. **Is Messiah University providing students and employees access to the COVID-19 vaccine on campus?**

   Messiah University students and employees, and their family members (age 16 or older), are now able to be vaccinated for free on campus at the Engle Center (with the Moderna vaccine). Email LJWeaver@messiah.edu to schedule an appointment.

   Messiah also hosted an on-campus clinic in April 2021 that provided free access to the COVID-19 vaccine for all students, employees and their families, in addition to the general public. The University is also open to hosting additional vaccination clinics for campus and community populations in the future as needed.

3. **Should I inform Messiah University if I have been vaccinated?**

   Yes, it is important for Messiah to know from a public health standpoint how much of its population has been vaccinated. Current students and employees who have been fully vaccinated should submit proof of vaccination to the Engle Center:

   - Go to the Online Health Portal (https://messiah.studenthealthportal.com);
   - Go to MY FORMS, then COVID IMMUNIZATION HISTORY FORM
   - Follow the instructions.
4. **What does Messiah consider to be “fully vaccinated”?**
   Following the CDC’s guidelines, Messiah considers an individual fully vaccinated two weeks after the receipt of the second dose in a two-dose vaccine series, or two weeks after receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine).

5. **If I’m a student who’s been fully vaccinated for COVID-19 will I still need to test, quarantine or follow campus mitigation measures during the fall 2021 semester?**

   Below is a summary of key points of impact for students who have provided proof of full vaccination to the Engle Center:

   **Fully vaccinated students:**
   - Do not have to participate in pre-arrival or ongoing surveillance COVID-19 testing.
   - Are significantly less likely to get sick and be required to isolate.
   - Do not have to quarantine (unless symptomatic) if identified as a close contact.
   - Encounter fewer challenges to participation in certain off-campus activities.
     - While Messiah is not requiring students to have the COVID-19 vaccination to enroll this fall, some enhancement programs, such as cross-cultural experiences and other international travel, may require students to be vaccinated. Additionally, some off-campus program partners, such as school districts for student teaching or healthcare clinical sites, may require students to be vaccinated to participate.
   - And most importantly … are personally protected from infection and from spreading COVID-19 to others.

   **However, fully vaccinated individuals may still be required to test and undergo quarantine if:**
   - they become symptomatic with COVID-like symptoms at any time and as advised by Engle Center medical personnel.
   - they become symptomatic after exposure to a COVID-positive person and as advised by Engle Center medical personnel.

   **Note:** Individuals who are partially vaccinated (i.e., someone who is two weeks from the first dose of vaccine in a two-dose series) may be eligible for a lesser quarantine or enhanced health and safety measures in the event of an exposure and as determined by Engle Center Health professionals.

6. **Aren’t college-aged people some of the least likely people to be severely affected by COVID? Why the need for vaccination?**

   The data shows that individuals in all age groups can be severely affected by COVID-19. The data also shows that the largest group of unvaccinated individuals is comprised of 18–30-year-olds. With numerous variants circulating worldwide, most currently the highly contagious Delta Variant, a large population of unvaccinated individuals—especially in congregate settings—can be detrimental to not only the physical health of Messiah’s community, but in our ability to remain open throughout the academic year.

   Additionally, Messiah’s campus has students and employees who are themselves, or live with individuals, in high-risk categories. Encouraging vaccination is just one of the many ways we can be good neighbors and friends and help protect those we encounter both on and off campus.
7. **If I am an out-of-state student, may I be vaccinated in Pennsylvania?**

   According to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, you may be vaccinated outside of your home state. However, other states have been making changes to their related protocols, so it is important to follow/confirm this on your state’s department of health website.

**“MESSIAH’S BEST SHOT” CAMPAIGN**

8. **What is “Messiah’s Best Shot campaign”?**

   “Messiah’s Best Shot” is a social media campaign, created in partnership with the University’s leadership team and Messiah’s Student Government Association (SGA) leadership. The campaign is designed to:

   - Share the University’s position that it is important that the majority of Messiah’s student and employee populations be vaccinated prior to the start of the fall 2021 semester to assure a safe and undisturbed in-person educational experience;
   - Help students understand the benefits of vaccination for individuals and the campus community;
   - To incentivize students to update their vaccination status with the Engle Center through a weekly prize drawing.

   More details about the campaign are available at [www.messiah.edu](http://www.messiah.edu).

9. **Doesn’t the “Best Shot” campaign pressure students into vaccination and sharing personal vaccination information?**

   The University wants to be clear that getting the vaccine and/or uploading a vaccine card are optional and we certainly do not want anyone to feel coerced. Messiah respects individual’s rights to make decisions related to their individual healthcare. Rather, the campaign is a way for the University to incentive students who are willing to share their vaccination status—so that we can have an accurate understanding of what percentage of our campus population is vaccinated for the purposes of our fall planning. We are doing all we can to balance the importance of personal choice with the need to keep our students and employees healthy and thriving this fall.

10. **Where did the campaign’s 70% vaccination rate goal come from?**

    According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, more than 550 colleges and universities in the U.S. are mandating the vaccine, and that number continues to grow. While Messiah has chosen *not* to mandate the COVID-19 vaccine for our students, according to reliable public health resources (i.e., Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, CDC, Mayo Clinic), 70 percent is the minimum number needed to provide protection to individuals in a congregate setting such as Messiah University.

11. **How are the “Best Shot” weekly prize drawings being funded?**

    The campaign drawing prizes are being funded through a mix of donated prizes and Messiah’s operational budget. This campaign funding is significantly offset with substantial cost savings that the University realizes by reducing the amount of students who will be required to participate in ongoing COVID-19 testing throughout the fall semester (because vaccinated students are exempt from testing).
12. Why is Messiah only posting information sources on its “Best Shot” that support COVID-19 vaccination?

The vaccination information and research that Messiah has provided on its website represent the medical and scientific data that the University is using to drive and support its institutional decision making. We respect everyone’s right to make their own medical decisions and are not requiring students to be vaccinated against COVID-19 to enroll this fall. The University, however, also seeks to be clear about its own expectations, information sources, and its position that encouraging as many students and employees to be vaccinated as possible is the best way to ensure a safe and healthy campus community for everyone.

You may learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine at the national level on the CDC website, or at the statewide level on the Pennsylvania Department of Health website. Visit this link to find a COVID-19 vaccination site near you.