

From: Ian A Waitz iaw@mit.edu
Subject: Fwd: FYI: Responsibilities and expectations for students living on- and off-campus this fall
Date: August 20, 2020 at 7:06 AM
To: 8am_covid 8am_covid@mit.edu
Cc: Ian A Waitz iaw@mit.edu

Hi All,

This message was sent to all undergrads last night. The Parent's Association will be forwarding it to parents too.

Sincerely,

- Ian

From: Cindy Barnhart, Ian Waitz, and Suzy Nelson <chancellorteam@mit.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 9:39 PM
Subject: Responsibilities and expectations for students living on- and off-campus this fall



***TL;DR:** Protecting our communities this fall: safeguards for keeping MIT and our neighbors healthy; rules, restrictions, compliance, and consequences; thank you for working the problem with us!*

Dear students,

As [President Reif wrote yesterday](#), the fall semester is almost here, and it's going to be unlike any other fall in MIT's history. Over the summer, senior leaders, faculty, staff, and students have re-engineered learning, student life, and campus facilities to protect community health and safety while helping students make the most of their MIT experience during the pandemic.

We write to you now to make clear what will be different for all on- and off-campus students during the pandemic, the importance of following the protective rules and guidelines we've put in place, and the consequences of not following them.

ON CAMPUS

In particular, we need to level with the students planning to return to campus next week: MIT this fall is going to bear little resemblance to the MIT you're accustomed to experiencing, and we're not just referring to the required face coverings, hand-washing, and physical distancing that are part of our daily routines now. We want you to know about testing, Quarantine Week (Q-Week), policies, the consequences of non-compliance, and more. If you have accepted an invitation to live on campus this fall and change your mind after reading this message, don't worry--you can cancel your housing assignment without a penalty until August 28.

Academics. The majority of classes and academic experiences will be conducted remotely this fall. We have learned a lot since the spring and have invested in new ways to collaborate and build community virtually. Preserving MIT quality and academic rigor are top priorities, but, admittedly, the remote experience will be different, and yes, often difficult. A significant number of classes will have in-person elements. Others have been scaled back or delayed, and still others might be switched from in-person to remote as the semester progresses. We take these steps to safeguard the health of everyone involved. Visit the [Registrar's Fall 2020 subject listing and schedule](#) for more information on class format.

Move-In: Initial Testing and Check-In. Before checking into your residence hall, you must complete both a Covid-19 test at MIT Medical (at the location marked [on this map](#)) and your [Massachusetts Travel Form](#). On move-in days (August 29 and 30), the testing trailers will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. You will be issued a key

and granted access to your living space only when you can show (using the Covid Pass app in Atlas, for [iOS](#) or [Android](#)) that you completed your [diagnostic test](#). [Watch this video](#) to get a sense of what it will be like to check into your assigned residence (and what to do if you arrive when MIT Medical is closed).

With this first Covid-19 test, you will begin your Q-Week, which we explain in detail below. After five to seven days, you will need to take a second test, and both tests must be negative for you to leave self-quarantine. Further, we implore you not to make any other stops before completing your test and your move-in. During your self-quarantine period, you must limit non-essential activity and remain on MIT's campus at all times.

If you don't own a smartphone for the Covid Pass app, contact IS&T at 617-253-1101 or email covidapps-help@mit.edu for assistance.

Quarantine Week. From August 29 through September 7, all students arriving to live on campus will have to self-quarantine while taking their classes online. That means you cannot have direct contact with anyone else, including prospective podmates, and you must stay in your room except to use your assigned bathroom or to get packages or meals while wearing a face-covering (more on food and pods below). We strongly recommend limiting outdoor exercise to an hour each day, wearing your face covering the entire time. You must keep six feet apart from other people at all times, including people you know. In short, as stated above, we expect you to minimize all non-essential activities and stay on MIT's campus.

Dining and Food. All undergraduates living on campus are automatically enrolled in a special dining plan, and all meals will be served prepackaged, grab-and-go style in their residence halls. During Q-Week, you may not eat your meals with anyone else – please take your meals right back to your room. Starting September 8, you can eat in other designated spaces, outside if the weather is nice, or with your podmates. More [dining details are available](#) in the Campus Guide, including information about meals served in the Student Center and the hours of select retail eateries opening on campus.

Ongoing Testing and Attestation. Students living on campus must attest to their well-being on a daily basis using [Covid Pass online](#) or through the Atlas app and get tested twice a week at MIT Medical. Staying current with testing and daily attestations is a condition of living in on-campus housing. (See "Campus Access" below for information about non-residential buildings.)

Pods. During Q-Week, you can apply to form a pod with up to five other students who live in your residence hall. Within your approved pod, you can relax a little more in each other's private rooms or designated reserved common spaces; you don't have to wear your face covering, and you can be in closer proximity to each other. Please note that only those pods that have registered properly through the in-house process are permitted to gather in this way, and **you can start interacting with your podmates only after you complete Q-Week successfully**. [Read more details about pods and the formation process](#) in the Campus Guide.

Visitors in Residence Halls and Gathering with Students Living Off Campus. Visitors are not permitted in your residence hall. And we strongly discourage students living on campus from visiting with friends living off campus at any time during the fall semester. [Off-campus gatherings have already led to Covid-19 case spikes at other colleges and universities that have started their semesters](#). Some institutions have reversed their reopening plans and depopulated their campuses. No one wants to see that happen here at MIT but, if cases result from student gatherings of any kind, we will have no choice but to take swift action to protect the health and safety of our community.

Recreation and Activities. [DAPER indoor facilities will be open](#) starting September 8 only to faculty, staff, and students living on campus and graduate students living off campus who use Covid Pass to access MIT facilities. [All on-campus events have been canceled, and student groups are not permitted to meet face-to-face](#). In addition to meal plan service for breakfast and lunch on weekdays, the Student Center will offer limited retail food service from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays, and will be closed on weekends.

Campus Access. You may be granted access to a limited number of non-residential campus buildings based on your academic or research needs. There may be only one entrance in use for a particular building, and it may be monitored by security staff. To access a campus building that you are authorized to enter, bring your MIT ID, have a valid Covid Pass for the day (if you need one, go to covidpass.mit.com), and complete your daily attestation on Covid Pass at least 30 minutes before entering the building.

Support for Students Who Test Positive. We must be prepared for community members to test positive for the virus or to get sick. [If you are experiencing potential Covid symptoms](#), call MIT Medical's Covid-19 hotline at 617-253-4865 and follow their instructions precisely. Any resident who tests positive for Covid-19 will have the full support and dedicated resources of the MIT community. Campus partners, including staff from MIT Medical and the CARE Team, have developed a comprehensive approach to assisting residents diagnosed with Covid-19 until they recover fully, which may include a temporary on-campus housing relocation during the self-isolation period, meal delivery, and other assistance. To be fully prepared, we suggest [packing a Ready Kit](#), as described in the Campus Guide.

Monitoring and Compliance. MIT is serious about compliance with all Covid-19 policies, guidelines, and procedures (see "Consequences" below). For example, researchers at MIT's Institute for Data, Systems, and Society suggest the virus cannot be contained once the fraction of [people who are not tested in a population exceeds 15%](#), even when testing the rest of the population twice weekly. Likewise, other forms of non-compliance can similarly break the system, especially not wearing a mask. So, we will strictly enforce the testing and health attestation rules, and additional staff will be visible in the residence halls to help educate and remind residents about Covid-19 policies and assist house teams with compliance. These community partners will also identify instances of non-compliance in common areas and along pre-set routes through the building, and help distribute items like face coverings and hand sanitizer.

OFF CAMPUS

To students living off campus: it is just as crucial for you to fulfill your responsibilities during this period as it is for students living on campus. You must adhere to the safety and health protocols required by the city and state where you live. Don't throw parties or organize gatherings. Dissuade friends from visiting your homes or apartments. Hold off on that reunion with your former roommate. Keep in touch with each other virtually.

The news is replete with stories about outbreaks following close-contact gatherings. We cannot let that happen, whether you are living on or off campus: We follow the science. We believe the researchers. We understand that the virus spreads through close contact with other people. We know that no one is immune from Covid-19 –*including you.*

Most of all, at MIT, we don't put other community members at risk – not our friends, not our podmates, not our faculty or instructors, not the staff who support us all, not our neighbors. So please be part of the solution and adhere to these important policies.

Consequences. Given that we are in the midst of an unprecedented global health emergency, we believe that we're doing what is necessary and that not following these mandatory rules must have consequences. **Infractions may result in a student being restricted from campus facilities, removed from MIT housing, or referred to the Committee on Discipline, possibly leading to a suspension or loss of access to campus in future semesters.**

These individual consequences may seem harsh. But the community consequences of a well-intended gathering that gives rise to a serious outbreak of the virus could be catastrophic. Students, faculty, and staff may be hospitalized with acute illness. Our campus may be depopulated, and students sent home again. Depending on conditions, our plans to welcome more students back to campus this spring may have to change. And it could all start with what might seem like a harmless party, gaming session, study group, or coffee date. Do not allow yourself or people you care about to take these risks. Your community is relying on you.

MIT's decision to stick with our reopening plan, even in light of current conditions and what is happening at other universities, is grounded in our trust that MIT students will rise to the challenge. This experience has been painful for everyone, particularly for students. Covid has forced you to sacrifice precious time and experiences during your college careers, and we empathize with you. If everyone focuses on working the problem, we can help our on- and off-campus communities stay healthy and safe this fall and beyond.

If you read this message and decide that this restrictive environment is not for you, we understand completely. As

we stated earlier, **Jan 2020 undergraduate residents have until August 28 to cancel their on-campus housing assignment without penalty through the [MyHousing portal](#)**. If you decide to return, we will welcome you warmly and be very glad to see you, even if we're standing six feet away with our faces covered!

Please contact us if you have any questions. Thank you for taking your role in protecting yourself and MIT seriously, and for being thoughtful partners as we navigate these challenging times together.

Best,

Cynthia Barnhart
Chancellor

Ian Waitz
Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate and Graduate Education

Suzy Nelson
Vice President and Dean for Student Life

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