

Aspire COVID-19 Policy – Effective Tuesday, August 10, 2021

The CDC has updated their COVID-19 guidance based on rapidly rising infections with the COVID-19 Delta variant among unvaccinated people. Evidence is also emerging that vaccinated people may spread the virus, even though the vaccine protects them from serious illness. This new surge has been swift and is expected to continue at least for the next few weeks. **Every person getting vaccinated remains our best defense against the pandemic.**

Here is the CDC's latest guidance regarding masking in your personal life (see [When You've Been Fully Vaccinated | CDC](#)).

"To maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission.

Wearing a mask is most important if you have a weakened immune system or if, because of your age or an underlying medical condition, you are at increased risk for severe disease, or if someone in your household has a weakened immune system, is at increased risk for severe disease, or is unvaccinated. If this applies to you or your household, you might choose to wear a mask regardless of the level of transmission in your area...

These recommendations can help you make decisions about daily activities after you are fully vaccinated. They are not intended for healthcare settings."

The CDC guidance for health care settings, which informs our long-term care services, **requires** rather than recommends mask use. Transmission is substantial in most of the areas where we work. Aspire supports individuals with developmental disabilities, who are three times more likely to die from COVID-19. We are issuing revised COVID policies at Aspire Living & Learning to protect those we support, Aspire employees and providers. Each state has additional requirements that are outlined at the end of this document.

1. **Any employee who is unvaccinated must remain masked at work, regardless of setting** (office, group home, shared living, foster care, school, family home, outside, in the community). There is no relaxation of restrictions at this time. You must practice social distancing of at least 6 feet unless your immediate task requires you to be closer to others. If you had COVID-19 previously but have not been vaccinated, you must continue to wear a mask.
2. **Any employee who is vaccinated does not need to wear a mask while working alone in an Aspire non-program office or when outside in uncrowded areas.** When unmasked and outside social distance of 6 ft must be maintained. Vaccinated employees can choose to continue wearing masks at all times.

3. **When vaccinated employees are inside with other people or outside in crowded areas shoulder-to-shoulder with others, masks must be worn.**
4. **Screening before entry:** All Aspire employees, individuals receiving support, and visitors are expected to self-monitor and screen before entering an office or program. Anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or exposed to someone with known COVID-19, or waiting for the results of a COVID test given because of symptoms or possible exposure, may not enter an Aspire office or program.
5. **Group meetings:** If possible, meetings will continue virtually. If you must meet in person, follow all masking and mitigation procedures.
6. **ALL Academy and School Consultation:** Employees remain within the district's expectations, which currently state that all employees in school settings must remain masked at all times.
7. **At external job sites:** Aspire employees and supported people must follow Aspire policies. If the employer has additional requirements, those must be followed as well.
8. **Unvaccinated individuals or immune compromised individuals:** ALL employees must remain masked at all times in the presence of a supported individual who is unvaccinated or immune-compromised, regardless of setting.
9. **Visitors to homes and programs:** All visitors must be screened before visiting a residential setting. Visitors must wear masks and social distance while present in the home or program. See specific expectations under "State Specific Guidelines."
10. **Permanency/foster care/in-home behavioral supports: (children)** Employees will follow guidance as indicated above. Providers/families can require employees to wear masks anywhere in their home or outside with their child.
11. **Shared Living Residences: (adults)** Employees will follow guidance as indicate above.
12. **Universal strategies:** All members of the Aspire community will continue to practice good hand hygiene, social distance, avoid crowds, and increase ventilation as much as possible.



State Specific Guidelines

Connecticut

All staff, regardless of vaccination status, working in group homes, ICFs, day programs, and in schools must continue to wear masks at all times.

All visitors and staff must be screened on site, prior to entering.

Maryland

In addition to policies above, all employees will wear masks at all times at the Laurel Bush location.

Massachusetts

Masks must be worn indoors at all times at any congregate site where services are delivered.

All visitors and staff must be screened on site, prior to entering.

New Hampshire

Masks must be worn indoors at all times at any congregate site where services are delivered.

All visitors and staff must be screened on site, prior to entering.

Vermont

See Aspire guidance above.

