



**SJC Safe at Work Plan
Vaccination Plan
Revised September 2022**

Introduction

The COVID-19 landscape has changed over the course of this pandemic, and we're certainly in a better position with the increase in knowledge and tools to beat it. The College's responses to address these changes, on a state, local, and campus level have been fluid to best serve our students and maintain a safe place to work and live. As a result, the SJC Vaccination Plan continues to be revised as updated information is obtained to ensure the health of the whole SJC community.

Maine's [COVID-19 Vaccination Dashboard](#) offers up-to-date vaccination information demographics that are easy to understand, including a deeper dive into COVID-19 activity across the state.

Saint Joseph College continues to support the COVID-19 vaccination

The College's position on the COVID-19 vaccination has not changed. SJC continues to support the vaccination and considers it a significant means to provide even more safety in our learning, living, and working environments for the students, faculty, and staff. Additionally, this is a public health matter caused by the pandemic, and having our community vaccinated supports the Saint Joseph's College's commitment to public health.

Vaccinations control the spread of the virus, specifically for those who are vaccinated. For vaccinated individuals who contract the virus, symptoms are known to be lessened and the risk of serious illness, including hospitalization or worse, are extremely rare.

The vaccine is a means to a "herd" immunity, allowing the College to resume previous operations while continuing with new ways to work that have proven to be successful during the pandemic.

Where can I receive a COVID-19 vaccination?

For a comprehensive list of vaccination locations, click [here](#). Also check your local news stations, newspapers, and connect with your social network on pop up vaccination sites.

Am I required to have a COVID-19 vaccination as part of my employment?

Yes. Saint Joseph's College is requiring all faculty and staff, as well as students, to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to protect the health and safety of the community and those individuals who are considered high risk.

The COVID-19 vaccination requirement is consistent with the College's duty under the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to provide and maintain a workplace that is free of recognized hazards. It is intended to safeguard the health and well-being of our faculty, staff and students, as well as the community, from infectious conditions that may be mitigated through the College's vaccination program.

How is the SJC Vaccination Plan structured?

This SJC Vaccination Plan is intended to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws. In addition to OSHA, it is informed by guidance provided by the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and public health and licensing authorities, as applicable.

The EEOC provides guidance on mandatory vaccinations. The EEO laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Rehabilitation Act, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, continue to apply during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, but they do not interfere with or prevent the College from following the guidelines and suggestions made by the CDC or state/local public health authorities about steps employers should take regarding COVID-19.

Guidance from public health authorities is likely to change as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves. Therefore, Saint Joseph's College will continue to follow the most current information on maintaining workplace safety and reserves the right to modify this vaccination program at any time in its sole discretion to adapt to changing circumstances and business needs, consistent with its commitment to maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.

Why did the College make this decision to require the COVID-19 vaccination?

The rationale and supporting details of the COVID-19 vaccination are plentiful, and include the following:

- Demonstrating the College's commitment to provide the safest environment for the SJC community including prospective students and their families
- Protecting each other and the general public from a broad healthcare perspective in the United States and globally
- Providing a more safe, secure College campus and allowing for a more normal learning, living, and work experience for all
- Potentially reducing the worry and stress brought on by the pandemic
- COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus that has impacted the lives of many people across the US and globally
- The College community was not immune to COVID-19. Students, faculty, and staff contracted the virus, from both off and on campus sources
- The COVID-19 vaccine is highly effective in reducing the risk of contracting and spreading the virus
- The College is deemed an essential employer and provides congregate living space

What are the benefits of a COVID-19 vaccine?

We already know that mask wearing, social distancing, and frequent handwashing have proven to be successful to minimize the spread of the virus. The benefit of receiving a COVID-19 vaccine is that it bolsters an individual's immune system even more to help prevent the illness, weaken the symptoms if COVID-19 is contracted, and significantly reduce the risk of death.

Here are additional benefits to having a COVID-19 vaccination:

- Decreases the risk of spreading the virus to family members, friends, and coworkers, particularly those most vulnerable
- Reduces the need to take time for doctors' visits
- Decreases the potential financial burden of being ill, i.e., cost of doctors' visits, prescriptions, hospital visits and/or stays
- Reduces absences from work and the need to use paid time off
- Lowers the risk of loneliness if one needs to be isolated due to the illness
- Being sick doesn't interfere with your daily living activities, interests, and hobbies

Similar to other vaccinations, such as the H1N1 Flu vaccine, the COVID-19 vaccines are held to the same safety standards through the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Large case studies have been conducted with thousands of adults of various ages, racial and ethnic groups, and health status. And while further studies need to be conducted over the course of time, each day brings the scientific community closer to understanding this deadly virus and transitioning to a new, safer world in which we live and work.

Will there be any exemptions to the vaccination requirement for faculty & staff?

There will be two permitted exemptions to the College's COVID-19 vaccination requirement based on the following:

1. Medical: SJC provides reasonable accommodations, absent undue hardship, to qualified faculty and staff with disabilities that enable them to perform their job duties. In order to qualify for a medical exemption, faculty and staff must provide medical documentation from their doctor of a valid medical contraindication to COVID-19 vaccination.
2. Religious: SJC provides reasonable accommodations, absent undue hardship, to faculty and staff with sincerely held religious beliefs, observances, or practices that conflict with getting vaccinated. Pursuant to federal law, a religious exemption will be made for faculty and staff only who hold a sincere religious belief that is contrary to the COVID-19 vaccination requirement. Follow-up documentation may be requested from your religious leader after an interactive dialogue with Human Resources.

Faculty and staff who believe an accommodation is needed because of a disability or sincerely held religious belief as noted above, are responsible for initiating the reasonable accommodation request through Human Resources by contacting Heidi Jacques in Human Resources ([hj Jacques@sjcme.edu](mailto:hjacques@sjcme.edu) or 207-893-7756) for an exemption.

What will happen if I do not become vaccinated against COVID-19?

Saint Joseph’s College is requiring all faculty and staff to be *fully* vaccinated against COVID-19 and only those exempted for the above reasons will be excused from this requirement.

What will the College do with my vaccination record?

The Health & Wellness Center will be tracking the percentage of faculty, staff and students who received the COVID-19 vaccination and providing the summary of this information regarding vaccination activity to the Pandemic Response Team.

Will I receive information about the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. The law requires that vaccination clinics participating in the U.S. COVID-19 Vaccination Program provide vaccine recipients with certain information, including a Fact Sheet for Recipients for the specific vaccine they are receiving. This Fact Sheet provides information such as potential side effects, and you will receive a vaccination record card that includes the day, location, and type of vaccine you received, and the date and time of the second vaccination if one is needed.

What should I do if I experience side effects or have an adverse reaction?

No different than the H1N1 Flu vaccine, some individuals have side effects as a result of the COVID-19 vaccine and/or boosters. According to the CDC, side effects are normal signs that your body is adjusting to the vaccine and building protection.

If you experience side effects after receiving the COVID-19 vaccination or booster, please stay home and rest. Information on potential side effects and remedies can be found [here](#).

Time off for this reason should be entered against Maine Earned Paid Leave (MEPL) or Earned Time in ADP.

What if my adverse reaction continues and is extensive?

If an employee experiences extensive adverse reactions to the COVID-19 vaccine and/or boosters, SJC will follow all OSHA requirements and procedures. This includes supporting employees having to take one or more days off from work, receive medical treatment beyond first aid, or the like as per the OSHA 29 CFR 1904.7 standard. OSHA specifically describes the issue of mandating employee vaccination, and states that any adverse reactions that an employee experiences after being required to receive the vaccine will automatically classify as work-related. As a result, SJC will need to be notified by

employees of any extensive adverse reactions in order to follow proper procedures and monitor any further employee reactions to the vaccine.

Any employee who experiences an adverse reaction causing them to take one or more days off of work, receive medical treatment beyond first aid, or the like as per the OSHA standard, should contact Heidi Jacques in Human Resources ([hj Jacques@sjcme.edu](mailto:hjacques@sjcme.edu) or 207-893-7756).

In Closing

Since the onset of COVID-19, Saint Joseph's College has taken a thorough and diligent approach to protect the safety, health, and wellbeing of its faculty, staff, and students, along with the implementation of new safety protocols on campus. OSHA, CDC, federal/state/local mandates and higher education industry practices paved the way to provide a solid framework by which the College has successfully operated during this uncertain time.

The Pandemic Response Team continues to meet to discuss ongoing COVID-19 matters, assess the safety of the College community, and to plan for the future phases of pandemic related operations. Virus surveillance via the ongoing testing of students, faculty and staff who work onsite, helps the College assess the presence of the virus on campus. Information has been regularly obtained to maintain a pulse on the ever-changing conditions of COVID-19 within Cumberland County and the State of Maine.

On behalf of the SJC PRT, Leadership Team, and the College's Board of Trustees, thank you for all of your work in keeping our faculty, staff, and students safe. Getting your COVID-19 vaccination means helping us arrive at "community immunity" - and represents another opportunity to live our core values. We are the community that looks out for each other, and we will move past this public health crisis together.