

# Health and Safety Plan for Valley Forge Military College

Fall 2020



**July 27, 2020**

*This document is a working document and may be updated due to evolving guidance from federal, state and local authorities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

## Mission

Valley Forge Military College is a unique educational institution that houses 100% of its cadets on campus during the academic year. Our goal is to create a safe environment for students by implementing the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) relative to COVID-19 protections.

CDC Guidance is available at

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/index.html>

PDE Guidance is available at

<https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/HigherEd/Pages/default.aspx>

VFMC and VFMA have distinct student populations facing distinct governmental guidance. However, because we share certain facilities, staff resources, and faculty resources many of our protocols overlap in order to maintain the health and safety of all cadets on campus not just those of VFMC. Therefore, VFMC has worked closely with Valley Forge Military Academy to prepare our safety protocols because we share a campus location.

All readers should be mindful that as long as there are cases of COVID-19 in the community, there are no strategies that can completely eliminate transmission risk within a school population. Our goal, however, is to keep transmission as low as possible to safely continue school activities and to minimize risk to our cadets, staff, faculty and their parents/guardians, children and/or significant others. Although all school activities must be minimally informed by Governor Wolf's Process to Reopen Pennsylvania (<https://www.governor.pa.gov/process-to-reopen-pennsylvania/>), additional authorities and/or guidelines will also dictate VFMA's final directions. For example, depending upon the public health conditions in any county within the Commonwealth, there could be additional actions, orders, or guidance provided by the PDE and/or the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) that will dictate a modified response. It is important to note, however, that any such modifications will always take into account the health and well-being of our cadets, staff, faculty and their families.

Therefore, VFMC will consider this Health and Safety Plan a living document (under strict version control), in part, to ensure a fluid transition from more restrictive conditions to less restrictive conditions in each of the phase requirements categorized by the Governor's administration. Moreover, this document should be considered in light of the Health and Safety Protocols issued by VFMA. Because while different restrictions exist for secondary and post-secondary institutions in the commonwealth, VFMC is operating with an eye on how it's operations impact VFMA and may make updates to this plan to benefit the overall community making use of our Wayne campus.

The PA Governor's administration has categorized reopening into three broad phases: red, yellow, or green. These designations signal how counties and/or regions may begin easing some restrictions on school, work, congregate settings, and social interactions:

The Red Phase: Schools remain closed for in-person instruction and all instruction must be provided via remote learning, whether using digital or non-digital platforms. Provisions for student services such as school meal programs should continue. Large gatherings are prohibited.

The Yellow Phase and Green Phase: Post-secondary schools may provide in-person instruction after developing a written Health and Safety Plan based on PDE guidance.

### Four Pillars of Campus Practice

Everyone on campus will be expected to adhere to four important pillars of public health: use of face coverings, frequent hand washing, physical distancing, and personal health monitoring.

1. Face coverings: Everyone must wear a face covering in buildings, where physical distancing cannot be guaranteed, and in public settings. Masks will be issued to each cadet upon arrival.
2. Frequent hand washing and etiquette: In addition to encouraging our community members to wash their hands frequently, hand sanitizer stations are located throughout campus, along with reminders of good hygiene practices and social distancing. Simple hygiene techniques make a big difference. Sneeze in the elbow; DO NOT touch the face, eyes or nose.
3. Social distancing: Reminders will be affixed on floors and walls of campus buildings to ensure that everyone remains at a safe distance from others when on-campus operations resume. Classrooms and other common spaces will have similar distancing requirements. We are taking appropriate steps now to rearrange spaces to create appropriate distance between cadets and staff.
4. Personal health monitoring: Cadets and employees will have daily checks (am and pm) for fever as well as other COVID-19 symptoms, and, if warranted, seek medical care through their primary care physician or the Health Center.

### Re-opening and Cadet Return

VFMAC historically uses a phased approach to bring students and staff back to the campus for the school year. This includes both 12 month and 10 month faculty as well as all students who are usually divided up into various groups. We will continue to use our phased reentry with a few modifications. Figure 1A and B shows the timeline for how we plan to re-populate our campus for the 2020-2021 school year. For the cadet numbers (1A, it is important to note that the total of all bodies is NOT reflective of the total population numbers. The numbers represent the number of bodies of the total that would report that day (subtracting out those that already reported at an earlier day. For example, returning cadets that report for leadership detail are already accounted

for and should be subtracted from the number of returners posted here). For the faculty numbers (1B) the space is left intentionally blank as we have not yet sent out 2020-2021 reporting letters to the faculty and therefore do not know exactly which faculty and staff plan on returning.

VFMAC is an international private boarding school. To address the risks of bringing cadets back to campus we will use the phased approach identified in Figure 1A, but will also include isolation into single rooms for five days at which time each and every cadet will be given a swab test to determine if they are negative for the virus. The five-day period came at the advice of VFMAC's Director of the Health Center, Ms. Deb Hammer, RN and is supported by our physician on call, Dr. Walker who is also member of this team. Post swab, we will have the results within 24 hours at which time we will begin moving all cadets that are negative into their permanent locations on campus. From this point forward, it will be assumed (low risk) that the cadets that are negative will be ok to move together, similar to a normal family situation. From this point forward all students will be monitored on a daily basis by their adult TAC officer and/or the health center or the guidance department.

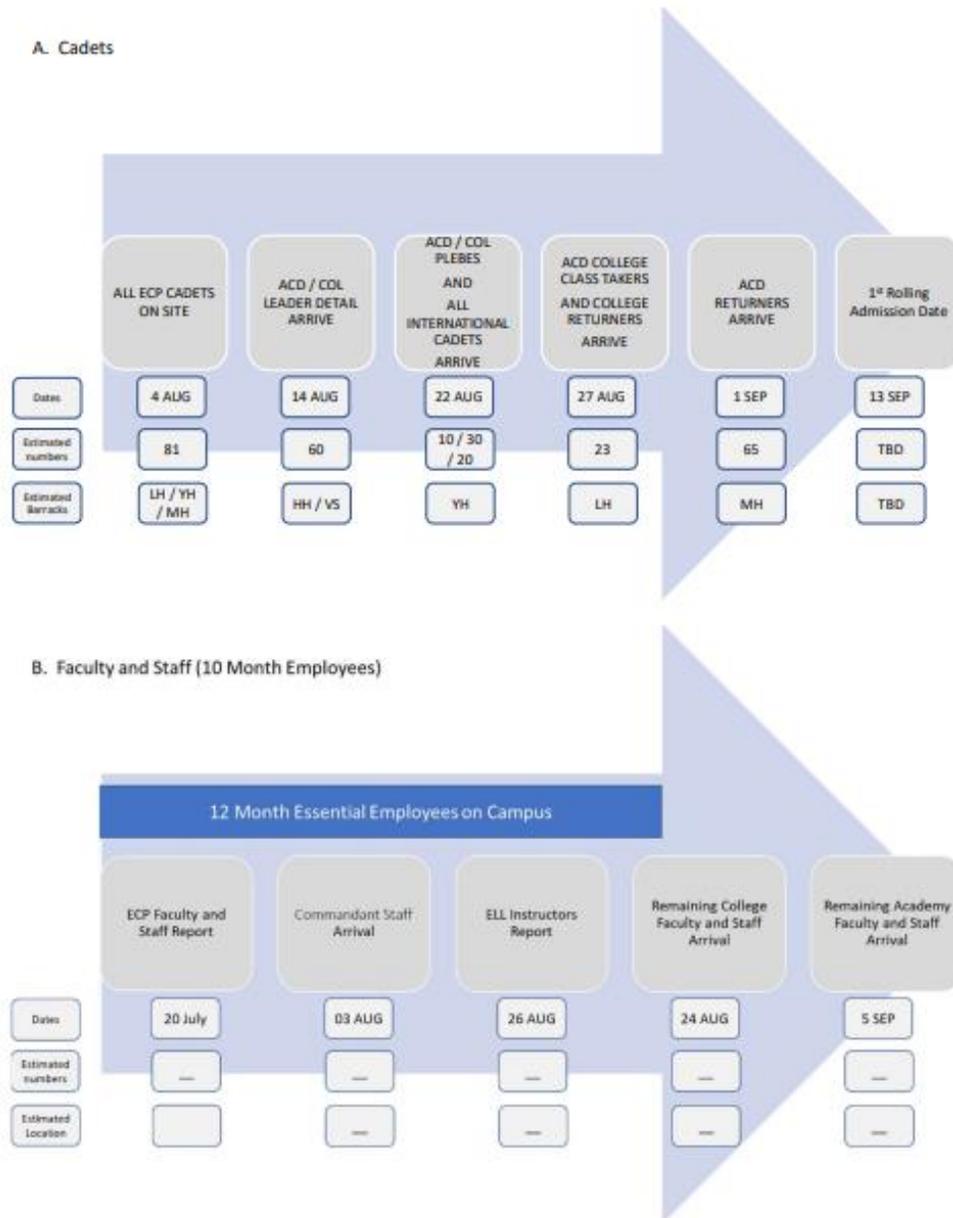
Cadets will be maintained in small groups (4 to 15 members) to minimize contact. Intergroup (college and academy) separation: With our college isolated to one side of campus and the academy to another, including living and academic space, we can minimize contact between the two groups. In the mess hall (dining facility) there is enough square footage, tables and chairs to practice social distancing. If necessary, we will coordinate a rotating schedule for our population to eat in the mess hall. At the lines, markers can be laid to indicate the 6 ft. separation. Intragroup (academy) separation: Social distancing and physical barriers (egs. plastic shields or dividers) will be used in classrooms, bathrooms and other group gathering spaces.

**NO PARENTS OR ALUMNI WILL BE ALLOWED ON THE MAIN CAMPUS GROUNDS WITHOUT CLEARANCE BY OUR HEALTH CENTER. IF CLEARED, VISITORS MUST WEAR A FACEMASK AT ALL TIMES AND WILL BE ESCORTED TO AVOID CONTAMINATION ON THE MAIN CAMPUS.** All faculty and staff will be checked at access points on the periphery of the campus and will be told to NOT report to campus if exposed or if symptomatic.

Phased Reentry- There will be several arrival dates for cadets and staff throughout the summer with the first day of student attendance no earlier than 1 August (Figure 1). This will allow individuals to arrive to campus in a regulated fashion. The following re-entry procedure is currently under consideration:

- 1) 14-day self-quarantine at home prior to reporting to campus.
- 2) Drop off of all cadets will take place at the General Parking Lot near the Upper Field House. At no time will any cadets, parents/guardians, etc. enter the main campus as the main campus.
  - a. Signage will be posted to help minimize contamination of the main campus.

- 3) All in-processing is expected to occur at the Upper Field House. All paperwork is to be submitted ahead of time through DocuSign (link and instructions will be sent out to parents).
- 4) Coordinated movement of cadets into holding (quarantine) locations (barracks; one cadet per room) for five days. During this five day period, VFMAC will follow strict enforcement of all mask wearing, temperature taking, hygiene, cleaning and social distancing procedures around the campus and by all personnel.
- 5) On day five, ALL cadets will be tested with a nasal swab test.
- 6) Upon receiving test results all students designated as negative will then be moved to their permanent residence locations on campus.
- 7) Steps 1 through 4 will continue for each reporting date listed in Figure 1.
- 8) Any cadets designated as positive will result in VFMAC's implementation of remediation steps identified below.



**Figure 1. VFMAC 2020-2021 School Year Re-population Diagram.** VFMAC is a unique independent school with regards to how it normally schedules the return of its school population back to the campus for the school year. Figure 1A and B shows the timeline for how we plan to re-populate our campus for the 2020-2021 school year. For the cadet numbers (1A), it is important to note that the total of all bodies is NOT reflective of the total population numbers. The numbers represent the number of bodies of the total that would report that day (subtracting out those that already reported at an earlier day. For example, returning cadets that report for leadership detail are already accounted for and should be subtracted from the number of returners posted here). For the faculty numbers (1B) the space is left intentionally blank as we have not yet sent out 2020-2021 reporting letters to the faculty and therefore do not know exactly which faculty will be returning.

### Faculty, Staff, Vendors, and Authorized Visitors to Campus

The College will:

- Coordinate with the Academy to ensure that the campus remain locked until further notice. Visitors must call to gain entry from general parking and the CSO office, where they will be assessed/triaged prior to entry.
- Require all faculty and staff to enter campus through Gate E5 or by way of the CSO office in the morning to start the workday by having their temperature taken and any symptoms monitored.
- Require that staff of contracted vendors be trained in cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting protocols by their own staff PRIOR to starting at VFMC. Training records will be kept on file in the maintenance office.
- Train all employees during annual orientation sessions prior to the beginning of the academic year.

### Hygiene and Sanitation Protocols

The College will:

- Provide training to all cadets during leadership detail, plebe training, and returning cadet orientation.
- Provide students with hygiene information and clearly post hygiene and sanitation protocol information in places that have high student traffic on campus- Library, McMaster Center, Mess Hall, Medenbach Hall, and Barracks.
- Place signs in key areas and reminders in restroom facilities to encourage handwashing.
- Supply appropriate hand sanitizer, hand wipes, and hand soap for students, staff, and visitors in all buildings, restrooms, and classrooms as necessary.
- Conduct regular cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and objects that are frequently touched. This includes cleaning objects or surfaces not ordinarily cleaned regularly (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, etc.)- Staff and Faculty Checklists for reminding them to clean, weekly email reminders to faculty and staff.
- Work with Main Line Janitorial to ensure the cleanliness of College spaces.
- Ask faculty, staff, and students to assist with the maintenance of sanitized facilities as noted below.

### Face Coverings and Personal Protective Equipment

The College:

- Mandates that face coverings be worn by all students, faculty, and staff in all classrooms, public shared spaces on campus, or in areas where social distancing cannot be observed.
- Will provide masks for students, faculty, and staff.
- Will ensure that individuals unable to wear face coverings due to a health condition or

disability will be encouraged to be extra cautious about maintaining proper social distance and observing all other hygiene protocols.

- Will communicate face covering and hygiene practices to individuals on campus through weekly email reminders, signage in all buildings
- Will support specific programs and co-curricular activities with personal protective materials, such as masks, face shields, or gloves required.

### Social Distancing

The College will:

- Mandate that students, faculty, and staff maintain a safe social distance of at least 6 feet apart when feasible. This mandate will include activities in offices, classrooms, laboratories, hallways, restrooms, common areas, and outdoor spaces.
- Provide guidance such as tape on floors or sidewalks to enforce social distancing and remove seating and tables/desks from common areas, the mess hall, and classrooms.
- Limit appointments with student service offices (e.g., financial aid, registrar, etc.) to scheduled appointments for non-emergency issues. All appointments will be scheduled via email.
- Encourage and use alternative methods of contact such as email, chat, and telephone calls.
- Use other social distancing strategies including grouping students into cohorts that live on campus, use shared facilities, and attend courses together to minimize the frequency of contact with other cohorts. This is part of the phased re-opening plan.

### Instructional Gatherings or Congregation in Communal Spaces

The College will:

- Not exceed more than 50% capacity in any space used for instruction or co-curricular activities, seminars, and meetings.
- Reduce common seating areas on campus, in classroom buildings (including the library) and in the mess hall.
- Limit community usage of the campus and the invitation of guest speakers to campus, making use of digital platforms and web resources to host seminars and virtual gatherings.
- Advise student and faculty groups to host remote group events, gatherings, or meetings, to the extent possible.
- Stagger the use of gyms and recreational areas, and restrict the number of people allowed in those areas at one time to ensure safe social distancing.
- Ask faculty, staff, and students to clean and disinfect between spaces they use after their activities have concluded.

### Limit Number of Students in the Classroom

The College will:

- Limit class size to 50% of room capacity to reduce the risk of transmission between students in the classroom.
- Remove seating and desks/tables from classrooms to ensure social distancing.
- Provide multiple white board stations in classrooms to allow distanced group work.
- Repurpose spaces such as gyms and large ballrooms as classrooms or labs to facilitate social distancing.
- Hold classes outside when possible.
- Move large enrollment courses online or divide sections into multiple meetings to stagger student attendance in a course. These options will be implemented at the discretion of the professor as they see fit to merge safety with pedagogy.

### Control Entrance and Exits to Buildings

The College will:

- Provide touchless entry to buildings where possible by opening doors prior to class, and keeping building entrances open during the academic day.
- Designate limited entrance points without prohibiting access for students and staff with disabilities.
- Post and communicate changes to building entrance procedures.

### Space Accommodations

The College will:

- Not exceed more than 3 classes at one time per building.
- Ensure that strategies and interventions implemented do not prohibit access for students with disabilities, including physical locations/spaces, instruction, student services, and activities if they are limited.
- Ensure all space accommodations follow ADA laws and regulations.

### Residence Halls

The College will:

- Require minimum contact by students with anyone outside their rooms for the first five days on campus unless they practice the four pillars for public health, noted above. Once the cadets are tested and cleared, we will begin to migrate the cadets into their designated long-term living arrangements which may include a roommate. Once that is complete, we will run the barracks life, in part, similar to normal “home” operations. In other words, follow the same precautions your family would follow while in the house.
- Check temperatures and review symptoms twice daily (morning formation and study hall) within barracks for cadets

### Ventilation

The College will:

- Maintain the working order of all ventilation systems on campus and ensure their prompt repair when necessary.
- Remove classes from areas in which ventilation may be in need of repair.
- Utilize open windows to facilitate ventilation in classrooms.

### Bathroom Facilities

The College will:

- Work out a rotational use of the bathrooms for personal hygiene and use alternating sinks to create social distancing. Bathrooms will be cleaned by designated cadets and/or staff, using PPE and cleaning agents under the supervision of the adults monitoring the barracks. The number of cadets in the bathroom will be monitored by cadet leadership and adults on-duty in the barracks.

### Clinical Health Services

The College will:

- Have a mental health professional available on an as-needed basis for students to contact for discussions about COVID procedures and COVID related issues as they impact cadets.
- Maintain a Health Center for the care of cadets.

### Counter Stigma

The College will:

- Maintain the privacy and confidentiality of those seeking healthcare and those who may be part of any contact investigation.

### Vulnerable Populations

The College will:

- Provide flexible options for telework and video conferencing for those staff concerned about returning to campus and as their job responsibilities will allow.
- Work with those individuals with concerns about their vulnerability to provide work solutions that best meet their needs.

Teleworking

The College will:

- Continue telework whenever possible, even when in-person instruction, operations, services activities continue.
- Consider rotating schedules of employees on campus to limit the number of personnel on campus at one time.
- Consider implementing flexible attendance and leave policies.
- Avoid non-essential travel for students and employees.

Course Modifications and Adaptations

The College will:

- Operate most courses on a hybrid model with those classes containing 2.5 hours of weekly classroom instruction and 1 hour of online instruction each week for 12 weeks.
- Run classes as online or with multi-section meetings as desired by the discretion of the instructor.
- Use large spaces as classrooms to ensure social distancing as mentioned in that section.

Accommodations to the Academic Calendar

The College will be adjusting its academic calendar from two fifteen week semesters to two 12 week semesters that will provide the same contact hours for students, but at an accelerated pace using a hybrid model. This adjustment will allow cadets to avoid close contact during the majority of the flu season.

Event	Date
First Day of Fall Semester	August 31
Labor Day: No Classes	September 7
Fall Semester Ends (Students Dismissed from Campus)	November 23
Thanksgiving Break	November 24 – 29
Fall Final Exams (Online)	November 30 – December 3
First Day of Spring Semester	February 15
Spring Semester Ends (Students may be Dismissed from Campus)	May 7
Spring Final Exams (Online if necessary)	May 11 – 14
Graduation and Commissioning Ceremonies (Online if necessary)	May 20

### Monitoring, Surveillance and Voluntary Reporting

The College will:

- Require faculty to monitor student use of PPE in class and on campus and correct students not following college protocol.
- Require cadet leadership (outside of class) to monitor student usage of PPE.
- Cite students for not using PPE as a uniform infraction and will ask students to leave class to secure their PPE before returning to class.
- Inform cadets, faculty, and staff that they will not be penalized for sickness related absences.
- Encourage students, faculty, and staff to report illness as a means of protecting the community at large.

### Protocol for a Confirmed Case on Campus

The College will:

- Direct ill staff to go home immediately and seek medical attention.
- Direct cadets to be masked and sent to the Health Center for assessment. If anyone is exposed to Positive COVID, they must follow CDC guidelines to quarantine home 14 days of self-monitoring. If a cadet is unable to go home, they will isolate on campus (not in their own barracks). All positive cases of COVID are to return home for isolation within 250+ miles (non-plane or train).
- Require medical clearance prior to returning to campus; including a letter from the individual's primary care physician stating their health.
- Track the health of COVID positive cadets through the Health Center and staff through HR.
- Require international students who test COVID positive to remain in quarantine in the Health Center until they are determined safe to return to class. Their classes will be provided online.
- Track those exposed to COVID positive cases through the Health Center and require them to remain in their barracks per CDC guidelines, which require 14 days without symptoms prior to returning to class. Classes will be provided for these students online.
- Sanitize compromised areas with CDC approved chemicals and close the area for 24 to 48 hours and initiate ozone air cleaning and/or steam spraying.