

Subject: A different kind of welcome: Fall 2020 Covid policies

DATE: September 7, 2020



Suzy M. Nelson, Vice President & Dean for Student Life

YOU NEED TO KNOW: *off-campus event prohibition; wear your MIT ID; indoor and outdoor space use; floor kitchens and food update; recreation hours; success depends on all of us!*

Dear undergraduate students,

This is an unusual fall semester as MIT manages a pandemic, and the United States and countries around the world deal with the mounting toll of Covid cases. Against this backdrop, there is continued unrest in cities across the country in the wake of police violence, systemic inequity, and the deaths of too many Black Americans. Further exacerbating these situations are natural disasters in the country's southern and western regions and a contentious national election.

These are difficult times that test our spirit and resolve. If you need support or just want to talk, please reach out because [MIT is here for you](#).

MIT's plan for moving forward during the pandemic is [guided by science and common sense](#). Life on campus is different, but if we work together and adhere to and have patience with newly developed policies, we can meet the challenges ahead.

As we approach the end of Quarantine Week (Q-Week), please remember you must **remain in quarantine until Tuesday, September 8, at 6 am. Students in quarantine may not have visitors**. Take this time to watch videos [on life during and after Q-Week](#) and [what happens if someone tests positive for Covid](#) so you are better prepared for the semester.

PLEASE READ! POLICY UPDATES

Don't organize or attend off-campus events, parties, or gatherings until further notice--they are a leading cause of Covid hotspots on college campuses. Small on-campus gatherings are permitted under specific circumstances (See the "Spaces and Food" section below).

MIT will take swift disciplinary action in response to noncompliance with the [Student and Resident Campus Agreement](#) through [an expedited COD process for COVID-19 policy violations](#). **Students who attend or host off-campus parties, events, or gatherings may face disciplinary action including potential suspension, loss of housing, or loss of campus access.**

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Wear Your MIT ID. All students, faculty, and staff who are granted access to campus **must have their MIT IDs visible when in classrooms, labs, and on other Institute property.** You do not have to wear your ID in your residence hall.

Spaces and Food

Indoor Residential Spaces and Pods. Residents may work with their house team to reserve spaces in their residence hall for group use. **The number of people in a designated space must not exceed its occupancy limit, and everyone in the space must wear face coverings and keep six feet apart.** Approved pods of up to six residents may have a dedicated lounge. Pod members can relax face-covering and physical distancing requirements in each other's rooms and their lounge. However, they cannot visit other pod lounges or other pod members' rooms. **Keep in mind that everyone in your pod will have to quarantine if one of your podmates tests positive for Covid 19.**

Residence Hall Outdoor Spaces. After Q-Week, students living on campus may access their residence hall's courtyards, roof decks, and other outdoor spaces. **Posted occupancy limits must be observed. If residents follow physical distancing requirements, keeping at least six feet of separation from others, face coverings may be removed when outdoors.**

Reservable West Campus Spaces. On-campus residents may also reserve several spaces on West campus--the Student Center Garden ([between the Student Center and DuPont Gym](#)), [barbecue pits near Kresge Auditorium](#), and an [area near the DuPont Tennis Courts](#) ([See Campus Activities Complex webpage](#)).

Other Non-Residential Outdoor Common Areas. On-campus residents and faculty, staff, and students with a valid Covid Pass may use designated spaces in outdoor common areas (e.g., Killian Court, Hockfield Court) marked by fencing or circles painted on the ground. **Spaces will have a posted occupancy limit (Max 50, groups of up to ten people).**

Massachusetts or Cambridge may have less restrictive guidelines on face-coverings and physical distancing when outdoors, particularly for construction workers who mostly work outside. **Whatever the state or city may say, MIT reminds you to wear a face-covering if you cannot remain six feet apart from others at all times when outdoors.**

Floor Kitchens. Stoves and ovens will not be available for everyday cooking. However, houses may allow students to use sinks, refrigerators, food waste receptacles, and microwaves in a limited number of floor kitchens. Residents must observe posted occupancy limits and cleaning protocols. Check with your house team if you have questions.

Food Update. After completing your Q-Week at 6 am on September 8, residents may access Dunkin', Cambridge Grill, and TechMart in the Student Center, which will be open from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays and will be closed on weekends. Visit the [retail dining section of the](#)

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[Student Life website](#) for more details on what's open and when. **Please note that only students, staff, and faculty living on campus in MIT Housing are permitted to use the Student Center.** [This chart may help clarify who has access to campus facilities.](#)

Recreation and Student Activities. [DAPER indoor facilities will open on September 8](#) only to students, faculty, staff, and families living in residence halls, and graduate students living off campus who have permission to access campus via Covid Pass. [Campus events and in-person student organization activities have been canceled.](#)

The success of the semester depends on every one of us!

As Chancellor Barnhart, Vice Chancellor Waitz, and I [emphasized in our August 19 email](#), **we will monitor our progress and be flexible in approach. If conditions worsen on campus, in the area, or across the state, we will adjust course to protect the public health.** As there are updates, we will write and post changes [to the Covid policy page](#).

Additional Policies and Updates

Please review [The Mind and Hand Book](#), and other important policy information.

- MIT's community standards such as the [Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act statement](#);
- [Discrimination, harassment, and Title IX resources](#) that help make our campus safe; and
- [MIT's policy against hazing](#) to support a safe and welcoming environment for all.

Thank you for your help in making this semester a success,
Suzy