

Off-Campus Group Travel Policy

VassarTogether - Spring 2021

Overview of Policy/Application Process

Off campus group travel is an important aspect of the student educational experience, contributes to positive mental health, and can build a student's feeling of connection to the local community and the Hudson Valley.

To facilitate the possibility of off campus group travel, an [application](#) for off campus group travel has been developed with specific health and safety guidelines and restrictions in place. The highest priority for off campus group travel will be placed on course-related, low risk, minimal public interaction, group activities that provide opportunities that are not otherwise available on campus. Faculty will make reasonable accommodations for students unable to participate in course-related trips. Activities that are within walking or biking distance that do not require transportation may also be given priority consideration.

Examples of activities that may be considered in priority order could include:

- Field research in Earth Science & Geography, Anthropology, Biology, etc.
- Faculty conducted visits to local cultural sites such as Storm King and Opus 40
- Historic walking tours of Poughkeepsie or other nearby cities and sites
- Participation in efforts such as stream clean-ups, pollinator garden maintenance, mapping exercises, and so on
- Athletic competition
- Club Sport competition and VSA Organization Activities
- Trips to local parks and natural areas such as Mohonk Preserve, Walkway over the Hudson, Franny Reese Park for recreation and fitness

Students traveling off-campus must be accompanied by a Vassar community member (e.g., coach/faculty member, college administrator/staff, house fellow spouse) who will have primary oversight for trip planning and ensuring adherence to safety protocols. As we begin rollout of this policy, the number of students permitted to travel off-campus will be capped at 50 per week (excluding walking and biking trips and athletic competitions) with the goal of growing those numbers as conditions permit. Overnight travel is not permitted. Social distancing and the wearing of masks, except for when one is eating and drinking, are required at all times. Indoor dining, including during travel in a van/bus, is not allowed.

All individuals taking part in these activities (including employees) will be required to take a PCR test three days prior to the trip (i.e. test on Wednesday for a Saturday trip); if the PCR test result is not returned prior to travel a rapid antigen test will be required within 24 hours of departing campus. Students and travel party members who live on campus will also be required to take an additional PCR test four to seven days following the trip. College representatives and other college employees who do not live on campus are not required to take a post-travel test, but are encouraged to do so. Varsity student-athletes participating in sports categorized as high risk by the NCAA will require additional testing. If approved for travel, participants will be provided with

instructions on how to schedule a pre-travel/post-travel test appointment as well as instructions on appropriate covid precaution measures upon return.

Trips that do not require transportation of any kind, i.e. the group will walk or bike to their destination, will not require pre-travel testing. Post-travel testing for these groups may be required based on the activity and/or amount of public interaction during the trip.

Students participating in these activities will also be required to reserve transportation through Safety and Security (vans) or Purchasing (buses). The college will only contract with bus companies that have appropriate Covid safety protocols in place. Trips will be restricted to a maximum of 60 miles round trip; trips beyond that radius will require special permission. Please note that all van drivers must pass or have passed a certification process/driver test with Safety and Security. For more information about driver certification, please email vehicles@vassar.edu.

It is the responsibility of the Vassar College Representative (coach/faculty member, college administrator/staff, house fellow spouse) to submit the application for the Off-Campus Group Travel [here](#). Student organization trips must first be registered in the SARC and approved by the VSA. It is further the responsibility of all participants in all traveling groups to abide by all the guidelines in the Off-Campus Group Travel Policy. All participants will also be required to attest to their adherence to the policy prior to travel.

All applications will be considered by the Off-Campus Group Travel Review Committee. Applications must be submitted at least 10 days before the proposed travel date. Applications will be reviewed every Monday at 9am. Any applications submitted after 9am on any Monday will not be considered until the following week.

College representatives will receive email notification of approval/denial for all applications on the day that their applications are reviewed. Successful applicants will receive a checklist of tasks to be completed prior to and following the trip to assist in trip planning and ensuring adherence to safety protocols. The checklist will include mandatory viewing of a safety policies/protocols training video.

Questions about the Off-Campus Group Travel Policy and the application process can be sent to: offcampustravel@vassar.edu.

Off-Campus Group Travel Review Committee Members

Colleen Cohen, Professor of Anthropology, Faculty Director of Affirmative Action
Karen Gallagher, Buyer
Sal Incorvaia, Lieutenant, Safety and Security
Lisa Kaul, Director of Community-Engaged Learning
Jim Kelly, Director of Environmental, Health and Safety

Lori Newman, Assistant Professor of Psychological Science, House Fellow (Strong House)
Will Rush, Associate Director of Campus Activities
Arlene Sabo, Director of Safety and Security
Alistair Tollar, VSA Chair for Organizations
Michelle Walsh, Director of Athletics and Physical Education

Selection Process

Prior to evaluating requests each week, the committee will confer with the Dean of the College and the Director of Health Services or her designee to confirm that conditions on campus and in the surrounding areas support continued off-campus group travel. The committee will prioritize applications that feature course-related, low risk, minimal public interaction, group activities that provide opportunities that are not otherwise available on campus. Activities that are within walking or biking distance that do not require transportation may also be given priority consideration.

Guidelines/Resources for COVID Safety Protocols

- Center for Disease Control (CDC)
- NCAA Sports Science Institute
- New York State Governor's Office
- Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (CICU)
- Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health
- American College Health Association (ACHA)

Testing Protocols for Travel Party Members

All individuals taking part in these activities (including employees) will be required to take a PCR test three days prior to the trip (i.e. test on Wednesday for a Saturday trip); if the PCR test result is not returned prior to travel a rapid antigen test will be required within 24 hours of departing campus. Students and travel party members who live on campus will also be required to take an additional PCR test four to seven days following the trip. College representatives and other college employees who do not live on campus are not required to take a post-travel test, but are encouraged to do so. Varsity student-athletes participating in sports categorized as high risk by the NCAA will require additional testing. If approved for travel, participants will be provided with instructions on how to schedule a pre-travel/post-travel test appointment as well as instructions on appropriate covid precaution measures upon return.

Trips that do not require transportation of any kind, i.e. the group will walk or bike to their destination, will not require pre-travel testing. Post-travel testing for these groups may be required based on the activity and/or amount of public interaction during the trip.

Trip Cancellations/Shutdown Criteria

All positive tests will be contact traced by Vassar Health Services in cooperation with Dutchess County and may result in a decrease or pause in off-campus group travel. Any positive result on a pre-travel PCR or antigen test will result in an automatic cancellation of the trip for all members of the pod with the positive case that are traveling, and in the case of athletics, the competition will be cancelled. The epidemiology of a positive test will determine whether or not a more comprehensive review and/or further action is warranted; this review will consider reducing or pausing off-campus travel.

Other conditions that will result in the cancellation of a trip include:

- A travel party member becomes symptomatic during travel at any time

For non-athletic activities, other conditions that may result in the cancellation of a trip include:

- A travel party member receives a positive PCR test result during travel
- A travel party member becomes symptomatic during travel
- A travel party member is notified that they are a close contact of a positive case during travel. In these instances, decisions to cancel or proceed will be made in consultation with the College Representative and the Director of Health Services or her designee.

For athletic competitions, conditions that may result in the cancellation of a contest include:

- A travel party member receives a positive PCR test result on the day of travel
- A travel party member becomes symptomatic within 24 hours prior to travel
- A travel party member is notified that they are a close contact of a positive case on the day of travel. In these instances, decisions to cancel or proceed will be made in consultation with the College Representative and the Director of Health Services or her designee.

General conditions on campus and/or within the local community may also cause the college to reduce or pause off-campus travel. Campus conditions that bear consideration include but are not limited to the number of active cases on campus, the availability/occupancy of quarantine and isolation rooms, and the ability of the college to stay well within prescribed guidelines from the state of New York for closure.

Day of Travel Requirements

On the day of travel, students will attest that they have completed their daily self-health checks via Co-Verified (not less than three hours prior to departure). The College Representative and any additional college employees on the trip will attest to their wellness through their daily health check via Human Resources. The College Representative will ensure that all trip participants show a "Cleared" status on Co-Verified immediately prior to boarding transportation.

Quarantine Policy for Travel

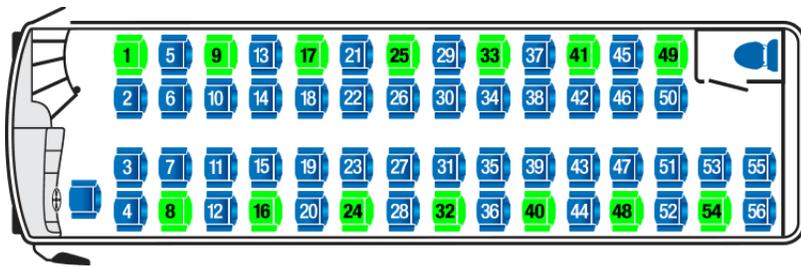
Members of a travel party should understand that any positive case, symptomatic individual, or close contact of a positive case that is identified as such during the course of travel could result in a quarantine of all individuals traveling in the same vehicle. Quarantine would not be necessary for individuals who a) have had a lab confirmed case of Covid within 90 days of the

exposure; or b) individuals who have completed the required doses of Covid vaccine and it has been more than two weeks but less than 90 days from the last dose of the vaccine.

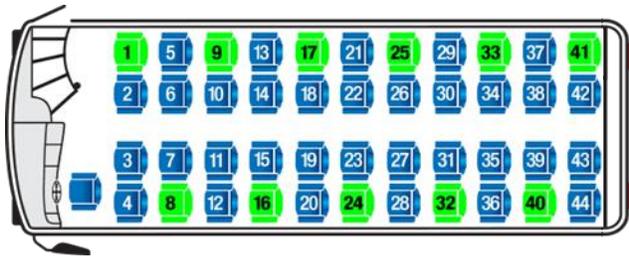
Seating Assignments/Capacities

Transportation for off-campus group travel must be provided by a private bus leased for the purpose or college van(s). The College Representative should create seating assignments and individuals should maintain their assignment through the course of the trip. A record of the seating assignments should be submitted to the Off-Campus Group Travel Review Committee following trip approval and prior to travel. Seats shown in green in the diagrams below are available for seating; seats shown in blue should be left vacant for distancing purposes.

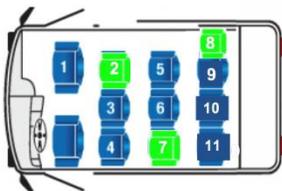
55/56 Passenger Bus - 14 Person Capacity (in addition to bus driver)



44 Passenger Bus - 11 Person Capacity (in addition to bus driver)



12 Passenger Van - 4 Person Capacity (inclusive of van driver)



Masking/Hand Sanitizer

Double masking (one cloth, surgical) is required at all times in buses and vans. Bandanas, buffs, and gaiters are not acceptable face coverings for college travel. The college will provide surgical masks for off-campus group travel.

For all other indoor activities that are part of the trip, it is strongly recommended but not required that students and other travel party members wear double masks. For all outdoor activities affiliated with the trip, students and other travel party members may wear a single mask.

Travel party members are also strongly encouraged to travel with personal hand sanitizer and practice good hand hygiene during travel.

Meals/Drinks

To avoid un-masking in buses or vans, no meals will be permitted in the bus/van. Use water bottles with straws to avoid removing the mask while drinking.

- Before and after eating, wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- All meals are grab and go; no indoor dining is permitted
- Use grab and go meals that are individually packaged when possible.
- Travel parties may stop at rest stops or other similar areas that allow for socially-distanced outdoor dining with grab and go meals; travel party members may not go indoors and/or use restroom facilities at these locations.*
- Travel parties **cannot** eat with others outside of the travel party, including family, friends and alumni/ae.

*An exception will be made for groups that travel exclusively with vans/school buses and do not have restrooms as part of their transportation.

Positive Test in Travel Party

- If a member of the travel party receives a positive test result at any time during travel, the College Representative should immediately contact Health Services at 845-437-5800.
- The trip will be cancelled and the group will be instructed to return to campus immediately.
 - If the group is less than one hour away from campus, the positive individual will be provided a KN-95 mask and will remain in their assigned seat for the duration of the trip back to campus.
 - If the group is more than one hour away from campus, the College Representative should contact Safety and Security to send a vehicle to transport the positive individual back to campus.
- Isolation and quarantine protocols will be initiated upon return to campus.

Symptomatic Member in Travel Party

- If a member of the travel party develops possible covid-related symptoms during the trip, an immediate assessment of those symptoms must be conducted.
 - The College Representative should contact Health Services at 845-437-5800 for assessment of symptoms.
- If the symptoms are determined to be covid-related or at risk of being covid-related, the trip will be cancelled.

- If symptoms do not require immediate attention by a physician, the group will be instructed to return to campus immediately:
 - If the group is less than one hour away from campus, the symptomatic individual will be provided a KN-95 mask and will remain in their assigned seat for the duration of the trip back to campus.
 - If the group is more than one hour away from campus, the College Representative should contact Safety and Security to send a vehicle to transport the positive individual back to campus.
- If symptoms require immediate attention, the group bus/van will transport the person to the nearest urgent care or hospital and consultation with the rendering provider will provide guidance for next steps. Consider calling 911 if appropriate.
- Isolation and quarantine protocols will be initiated upon return to campus.

Close Contact in Travel Party

- If one or more members of the travel party are notified that they are a close contact of a positive case during the trip, the individual will not be permitted to continue with the trip.
 - The College Representative will contact Health Services at 845-437-5800 to determine if the trip can continue or should be cancelled.
- If it is determined that the trip may proceed, the College Representative should contact Safety and Security to send a vehicle to transport the close contact(s) back to campus.
- If it is determined that the trip must be cancelled, and:
 - The group is one hour away from campus, the close contact will be provided a KN-95 mask and will remain in their assigned seat for the duration of the trip back to campus.
 - If the group is more than one hour away from campus, the College Representative should contact Safety and Security to send a vehicle to transport the close contact(s) back to campus.
- Isolation and quarantine protocols will be initiated upon return to campus.

Trip Funding

The college and/or VSA will make every effort to provide funding to support trips. If requested, funding will primarily be provided to support transportation costs.

Reasonable Accommodations

The Off-Campus Group Travel Review Committee will make every effort to support reasonable accommodations for high-risk or immunocompromised participants who wish to participate in off-campus group travel. To support this effort, faculty will consult with the Accessibility and Educational Opportunity Office as required.