

## The Return Of COVID-19 Protocols & Mask Mandates

Despite the low severity of symptoms in the return of COVID-19 this year, Universities are requiring students to have COVID vaccinations and follow indoor mask guidelines against the popular view of most Americans.

### Did you know...?

Public health officials said that the latest increase in Covid hospitalizations is still relatively small and that the **vast majority of the sick are experiencing mild symptoms** comparable to a cold or the flu.

[Read more at New York Times →](#)

According to No College Mandates, a website that tracks COVID-related mandates on college campuses, **over 60 universities require a COVID-19 vaccine to attend**, including Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Johns Hopkins University.

[Read more at Reason →](#)

**“The evidence suggests that broad mask mandates have not done much** to reduce Covid caseloads over the past two years. Today, mask rules may do even less than in the past, given the contagiousness of current versions of the virus.”

[Read more at New York Times →](#)



In April 2022, the Committee to Unleash Prosperity released a study that graded U.S. states on COVID-19 outcomes based on the number of deaths, the economy and impact on education. **Florida was among the best-performing states in the country while New York, New Jersey and California scored poorly.**

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# Return Of COVID-19 Protocols & Mask Mandates

## COVID-19 Cases Are Rising

**According To The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19 Hospitalizations Have Increased 24 Percent In A Two-Week Period Ending August 12, 2023.** “A late-summer wave of coronavirus infections has touched schools, workplaces and local government, as experts warn the public to brace for even more Covid-19 spread this fall and winter. Hospitalizations have increased 24 percent in a two-week period ending Aug. 12, according to the most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Wastewater monitoring suggests a recent rise in Covid infections in the West and Northeast. In communities across the United States, outbreaks have occurred in recent weeks at preschools, summer camps and office buildings.” (Julie Bosman, “Not Over Yet: Late-Summer Covid Wave Brings Warning of More to Come,” [The New York Times](#), 8/28/23)

- **Public Health Officials Said That The Latest Increase In Covid Hospitalizations Is Still Relatively Small And That The Vast Majority Of The Sick Are Experiencing Mild Symptoms Comparable To A Cold Or The Flu.** “Public health officials said that the latest increase in Covid hospitalizations is still relatively small and that the vast majority of the sick are experiencing mild symptoms comparable to a cold or the flu. And most Americans, more than three months after the Biden administration allowed the 2020 declaration calling the coronavirus a public health emergency to expire, have shown little willingness to return to the days of frequent testing, mask wearing and isolation.” (Julie Bosman, “Not Over Yet: Late-Summer Covid Wave Brings Warning of More to Come,” [The New York Times](#), 8/28/23)

## LA County Health Department Ordered A Movie Studio To Enforce A Mask Mandate

**Lionsgate Recently Sent A Memo To Staff Members Informing Them That Because Of A Covid Outbreak Among Employees, They Would Be Required To Wear Masks In The Office Again. [The Requirement Was Lifted By The LA County Health Department After No New Cases Were Reported].** “In keeping with an order from the health department in Los Angeles County, the movie studio Lionsgate recently sent a memo to staff members informing them that because of a Covid outbreak among employees, they would be required to wear masks in the office again. (The health department notified the studio on Friday that because it had reported no new cases, the requirement was lifted.)” (Julie Bosman, “Not Over Yet: Late-Summer Covid Wave Brings Warning of More to Come,” [The New York Times](#), 8/28/23)

## Elementary Schools Aren't Planning On Strict COVID-19 Era Rules

**Most Administrators Have Signaled That They Are Not Planning To Return To Stricter Rules Surrounding Masks And Testing, Typically Only Asking Parents To Keep Their Children Home When They Are Sick.** “As students have returned to school in recent days, most administrators have signaled that they are not planning to return to stricter rules surrounding masks and testing, typically only asking parents to keep their children home when they are sick. In Chicago, where Covid-related hospitalizations are still extremely low but have crept up in recent weeks, the public school district promised to provide free rapid Covid tests to students and staff but did not intend to resume testing in schools.” (Julie Bosman, “Not Over Yet: Late-Summer Covid Wave Brings Warning of More to Come,” [The New York Times](#), 8/28/23)

## ***Mask Mandates At Colleges***

### **Morris Brown College Mask Mandates**

**On August 20, 2023, Morris Brown College, A Private Atlanta College, Announced A Mask Mandate Along With Other COVID-19 Safety Protocols Would Be In Place For At Least Two Weeks For Students, Faculty, And Staff.** “A week after classes began, Morris Brown College is once again requiring students and employees to wear face masks on campus. The small, private Atlanta college announced the mask mandate Sunday in a letter to faculty, staff and students, saying the requirement and other COVID-19 safety protocols will be in place for two weeks. The college cited ‘reports of positive cases among students in the Atlanta University Center’ as the reason for the decision.” (Vanessa McCray, “Morris Brown College revives mask mandate,” [The Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#), 8/21/23)

- **The College’s President Said They Had Received No Reports Of Actual Cases On Its Campus, But Were Taking “Precautionary Measures.”** “Morris Brown President Kevin James told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution in an email Monday that the college has received no reports of cases on its own campus yet. He described the steps as ‘precautionary measures.’” (Vanessa McCray, “Morris Brown College revives mask mandate,” [The Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#), 8/21/23)

### **Dillard University**

**On August 25, 2023, Dillard University, A Private Historically Black University Located In New Orleans, Required Students And Employees To Wear Masks Indoors For The Next Two Weeks As COVID-19 Cases Rise.** “Dillard University, a private historically Black university located in New Orleans, will require students and employees to wear masks indoors for the next two weeks as COVID-19 cases rise, NOLA.com reported. The mandate began Friday, two weeks into the university’s semester. Loyola University, also in New Orleans, sent out a message on the same day noting an uptick in cases, but it did not ask students to mask. NOLA.com noted that adherence to the mandate on Dillard’s campus was ‘spotty,’ with only some students donning masks inside the library.” (Johanna Alonso, “Another College Mandates Masks,” [Inside Higher Ed](#), 8/28/23)

### **Unclear How Many Colleges Have A Mask Mandate**

**Many Colleges Affiliated With Hospital Systems Have Mask Mandates Related To Students And Staff Working In Health Care Settings, But It’s Unclear If Those Mandates Apply To Non-Health-Care-Related Student Events.** “Just how many colleges still mandate masks remains much less clear. While many colleges affiliated with hospital systems have mask mandates related to students and staff working in health care settings, it’s not obvious how many schools still mandate masks in classrooms or other non-health-care-related student events.” (Emma Camp, “Dozens of Colleges Still Require COVID Vaccines For Students,” [Reason](#), 8/22/23)

## ***Other COVID-19 Restrictions At Colleges***

### **COVID-19 Vaccine Requirements**

**As Of August 2023, According To No College Mandates, A Website That Tracks COVID-Related Mandates On College Campuses, Over 60 Universities Require A COVID-19 Vaccine To Attend, Including Harvard University, Rutgers University, And Johns Hopkins University.** “However, while state governments have stopped attempts to mandate masking and vaccines in schools, a handful of individual colleges are still holding onto restrictive pandemic-era policies. According to No College Mandates, a website that tracks COVID-related mandates on college campuses, over 60 universities require a COVID-19 vaccine to attend, including Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Johns Hopkins University. ‘Harvard requires all students who will be on campus to have primary vaccination for COVID-19,’ reads Harvard’s website. ‘As we work to continue the high levels of vaccination needed to protect our community, Harvard highly recommends being up-to-date per the CDC definition for all Harvard community members.’” (Emma Camp, “Dozens of Colleges Still Require COVID Vaccines For Students,” [Reason](#), 8/22/23)

## ***Mask Mandates Didn't Work***

### **In May 2022, *The New York Times* Reported That Evidence Suggests That Broad Mask Mandates Have Not Done Much To Reduce Covid Caseloads Over The Past Two Years.**

“Covid cases and hospitalizations are rising again in the U.S., and deaths are starting to rise, too. In response, many people are understandably asking what the country can do to minimize the virus’s toll in the weeks ahead. So far, a lot of discussion has focused on mask mandates. Schools in Philadelphia; Providence, R.I.; Berkeley, Calif.; and Brookline, Mass., have reimposed theirs, as have several colleges. Elsewhere, some people are frustrated that officials, like New York City’s mayor, Eric Adams, have not done so. Critics have accused these leaders of a lack of political courage, saying that they are yielding to Covid fatigue rather than imposing necessary public health measures. But I think that the criticism misreads both the history of public health and the recent scientific evidence about mask mandates. The evidence suggests that broad mask mandates have not done much to reduce Covid caseloads over the past two years. Today, mask rules may do even less than in the past, given the contagiousness of current versions of the virus. And successful public health campaigns rarely involve a divisive fight over a measure unlikely to make a big difference.” (David Leonhardt, “Why Masks Work, but Mandates Haven’t,” [The New York Times](#), 5/31/22)

### **COVID-19 Has Spread In Similar Rates Across The U.S., Regardless If The Place Has Higher Or Lower Mask Usage. Mask Mandates In Schools Also Seem To Have Done Little To Reduce The Spread.**

“To start with the first half of the paradox: Masks reduce the spread of the Covid virus by preventing virus particles from traveling from one person’s nose or mouth into the air and infecting another person. Laboratory studies have repeatedly demonstrated the effect. Given this, you would think that communities where mask-wearing has been more common would have had many fewer Covid infections. But that hasn’t been the case. In U.S. cities where mask use has been more common, Covid has spread at a similar rate as in mask-resistant cities. Mask mandates in schools also seem to have done little to reduce the spread. Hong Kong, despite almost universal mask-wearing, recently endured one of the world’s worst Covid outbreaks.” (David Leonhardt, “Why Masks Work, but Mandates Haven’t,” [The New York Times](#), 5/31/22)

- **The Data On Mask-Wearing, Before And After Vaccines Were Available, Fails To Reveal Any Clear Patterns.** “Yet when you look at the data on mask-wearing — both before vaccines were available and after, as well as both in the U.S. and abroad — you struggle to see any patterns.” (David Leonhardt, “Why Masks Work, but Mandates Haven’t,” [The New York Times](#), 5/31/22)

### **In April 2022, The Committee To Unleash Prosperity Released A Study That Graded U.S. States On COVID-19 Outcomes Based On The Number Of Deaths, The Economy And Impact On Education. Florida Was Among The Best-Performing States In The Country While New York, New Jersey and California Scored Poorly.**

“New York, New Jersey and California failed in their handling of the COVID-19 pandemic because of stringent lockdowns and policies, while Florida was among the best-performing states in the country, a new study has found. The study, published by the Committee To Unleash Prosperity, graded states by comparing COVID-19 outcomes based on the number of deaths, the economy and impact on education.” (Emily Crane, “NY, Calif. Failed In Handling Of COVID — But Florida Was Among Best: Study,” [New York Post](#), 4/11/22)

### **New Jersey, California, And Illinois Were Among The Worst Performing States And Utah, Nebraska, Vermont, And Florida Had The Best Scores.**

“New Jersey was the worst-performing state, the study found. Other places that also received an F grade included California, Illinois and Washington, DC. ‘They had high age-adjusted death rates, they had high unemployment and significant GDP losses, and they kept their schools shut down much longer than almost all other states,’ the study said. Utah, Nebraska, Vermont and Florida — all governed by Republicans — topped the list.” (Emily Crane, “NY, Calif. Failed In Handling Of COVID — But Florida Was Among Best: Study,” [New York Post](#), 4/11/22)

The study found that the states that locked down businesses, churches, schools and restaurants for lengthy periods did not have lower death rates than those that largely remained open.

- **Stephen Moore (Study Author): “Shutting Down Their Economies And Schools Was By Far The Biggest Mistake Governors And State Officials Made During COVID, Particularly In Blue States.”** “Overall, the bottom 10 on the study’s ‘report card’ were dominated by states that had the most severe pandemic lockdowns and were among the last to finally reopen schools. ‘Shutting down their economies and schools was by far the biggest mistake governors and state officials made during COVID, particularly in blue states,’ Stephen Moore, one of the study’s authors and co-founder of the Committee To Unleash Prosperity, said Monday.” (Emily Crane, “NY, Calif. Failed In Handling Of COVID — But Florida Was Among Best: Study,” [New York Post](#), 4/11/22)