

How can UVA make students follow safety measures off Grounds? Here's the contract they will sign
written by Newspark Team | August 14, 2020



Before arriving on Grounds, University of Virginia students will sign a two-page contract agreeing to follow the university's public health measures and all local COVID-related laws.

The contract gives the university the right to discipline students caught breaking COVID-related rules.

"And this is enforceable not just on Grounds, but in the Charlottesville-Albemarle community as well," Tim Heaphy, the counsel for UVA, said during a virtual town hall meeting this week on the university's reopening. "It isn't as if students, when they walk off the grounds of the university can take off their mask or have large gatherings. Those rules continue to apply to them when they are in the community."

Heaphy's statement came after multiple community members expressed concern over how the university intends to make students comply with safety measures while they're off Grounds.

The rules are fairly simple — students will wear masks on Grounds and in indoor public places in the community, maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance from others where contact lasts more than 10 minutes, and refrain from attending gatherings larger than permitted by state and local law.

The contract also requires students to complete a daily health check using the

HOOS Health Check app, and to quarantine and take COVID-19 tests when necessary, among other measures. *A full copy of the contract — obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request — is attached at the bottom of this story.* However, the university's plan to enforce those rules is a bit more

nebulous. The contract falls under the umbrella of the standards of student conduct, which is enforced by the university's judiciary committee.

That committee has no standards for the type of sanctions they impose for different violations. And the university does not intend to create them for dealing with COVID-related infractions, Heaphy said.

"Our approach essentially ratchets up the seriousness of our response with the seriousness of the violation," he said.

"If someone isn't wearing a mask and it is a potentially inadvertent or forgetful matter, our hope is that they will be reminded [then adhere] to the rules," he said. "However, when there is persistent violations or refusal to comply or a one-time very serious violation, that could potentially result in a suspension for the university immediately or a longer adjudicative process with sanctions."

The students' contract reads:*I understand that my failure to adhere to University policies or public health measures and participating in activities or behaviors that intentionally or recklessly threaten the health and safety of our community may result in disciplinary proceedings and sanctions including barring my physical presence and participation in any classes, programs, or related activities, using any or all University facilities, suspension and/or dismissal from the University.* These rules also apply to university sanctioned groups, including fraternities, Heaphy added.

Community members may report students or university groups who violate the rules using this website.

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