

How is Fork Union Dealing with COVID-19 Concerns?



While there will be much that may be different about this fall due to the concerns of COVID-19, we are working to keep our mission, values, and methodologies as consistent as possible with what we have found to work effectively for our students throughout our 122-year history.

The well-being of our Fork Union Military Academy community is our highest priority.

Although no one can guarantee 100% safety from the risk of COVID-19, we will continue to follow the best advice of health professionals, including the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), our local Thomas Jefferson Regional Health District, and our Academy Physician.

Our campus—over 1,000 acres within a rural setting—offers an ideal sanctuary.

Our campus is hours away from the densely-populated regions of Virginia in which COVID-19 cases have been primarily centered. The risk of community spread of COVID-19 has been low in Fluvanna County, where Fork Union is located. Our campus has excellent outdoor facilities where cadets can get fresh air, enjoy athletics and recreation time, and remain removed from greater risk of exposure.

Our One Subject Plan helps ensure that groupings are as small and static as possible.

One of the key recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is that schools practice cohorting—keeping small groups of students and staff together for as much of the class day as possible, and limiting the mixing between groups. This almost perfectly describes our One Subject Plan curriculum. At Fork Union Military Academy, students in class (typically fewer than fifteen) spend all day, every day, with one teacher for the entire 7-week grading term. We avoid the frequent changing of classes and rooms throughout the day, and other such exposure risks.

Our Cadet Corps system provides structure, social support, and a system of accountability that is central to the success of our students.

We believe that the structured environment we provide on our campus is one of the biggest reasons our young men achieve success in the classroom, on the playing fields, and in their development of life skills and foundational values. While we are prepared to provide distance education if circumstances require it during the school year, we remain committed to providing a full boarding experience, with classroom instruction, athletic competition, and residential life activities to the fullest extent possible.

We will follow recommendations of the CDC and local health professionals, to include...

Daily Health Screenings

- ✓ Symptom screenings and temperature checks will be completed each morning for all cadets and staff.



Hand Hygiene

- ✓ Cadets and staff will be directed to wash their hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- ✓ Each cadet barracks room is equipped with a sink.
- ✓ Additional hand sanitizing stations have been placed throughout the campus.



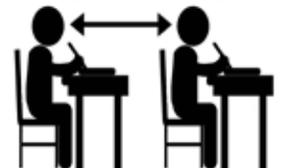
Cloth Face Coverings

- ✓ Cadets and staff will wear cloth face coverings as required by Virginia law.
- ✓ Cloth face coverings will be part of each cadet's uniform issue.



Physical Distancing

- ✓ Cadets and staff will be directed to maintain appropriate physical distancing between persons of at least 6 feet or as recommended according to CDC and local health guidelines.
- ✓ Classroom desks will be placed to maintain appropriate physical distancing as recommended by the CDC and local health guidelines.



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How will this affect...

Academics

- *We are committed to do everything in our power to keep our cadets on campus with in-person classroom instruction as planned for in our Academic Calendar, but at the same time, we are prepared to pivot to distance education should that be required.
- *We have modified our Academic Calendar to allow students to remain at home between Thanksgiving Leave and the end of Christmas Leave.
- *During the first three weeks of December, students will continue their Term 3 class by distance education. Upon their return to campus in January, students will continue their Term 3 class in person. The majority of Term 3 will be conducted by in-person classroom instruction.
- *We will practice virtual learning with students and teachers each week to help cadets develop their individual distance education skills.
- *Our classrooms will be set up to follow all appropriate physical distancing and other guidelines then in effect.
- *Class sizes may be limited based on physical distancing requirements.

Athletics

- *We are committed to providing a robust athletic program this fall with meaningful competition.
- *We are actively planning and scheduling interscholastic events for all fall sports.
- *Physical distancing and other appropriate guidelines then in effect will be followed in our locker rooms and facilities.
- *The Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association and the Virginia Prep League in which we participate may not sanction a state or league championship for some or all fall sports, but we maintain the autonomy to schedule interscholastic competitions with other schools who are participating in fall sports.

Dining Hall

- *We will continue to provide food choice and deliver outstanding nutrition to cadets within our dining hall in a thoughtful manner that follows all physical distancing and other appropriate guidelines then in effect.
- *The physical layout of the dining room has been modified to provide appropriate physical distancing, and plexiglass barriers at appropriate locations such as the salad bar and serving lines.

Day Students

- *All day students will report to the Commandant's Department first thing each morning to undergo health screening.

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Infirmary

- *Our on-campus infirmary is staffed 24 hours with a registered nurse, and our Academy Physician will continue to hold sick call on campus each weekday morning...that hasn't changed.
- *The Infirmary has a capacity of more than 20 patient beds, with two isolation rooms.
- *Our Academy Physician is now able to perform COVID-19 and antibody testing for students with a turnaround time of approximately 72 hours from our contracted lab company.

Military / Residence Life

- *We will take steps to ensure that our Cadet Corps structure and military activities such as formations, Morning Colors, and Retreat will be conducted in accordance with physical distancing and other appropriate guidelines then in effect.
- *Weekend Leave schedules will be announced one term at a time after evaluating the current COVID-19 environment. No leaves are currently planned for Term 1.
- *Our Activities Coordinator has planned a variety of activities on campus to keep our students active and take advantage of our extensive facilities including tennis courts, indoor pool, field house, basketball courts, fields, disc golf, fishing lake, and hiking/biking trails.

Chapel

- *We are committed to providing chapel services as a part of our regular schedule. We will comply with applicable restrictions on group events that may have an impact on holding chapel services with the full Cadet Corps in Wicker Chapel. Whether it be in Wicker Chapel, done in our classrooms (virtually or otherwise), or by technology during our distance education portion of Term 3, the spiritual development of our students remains a valued part of our mission and practices this year, whatever the circumstances.

What if there is a case of COVID-19?

1. If a student is displaying symptoms of illness, he will report to the Infirmary where he will be examined by the Academy Physician who will determine whether or not a test for COVID-19 should be performed.
2. If a COVID-19 test is ordered, the student will be kept isolated in the Infirmary until his test results come back.
3. If the test is positive for COVID-19, we will report his test result to the Thomas Jefferson Health District (TJHD) of the Virginia Department of Health. Their staff will then investigate and begin to manage the necessary contact tracing process.
4. We will follow Virginia Department of Health's guidance regarding communicating to our cadet families if there has been a positive case of COVID-19 on campus, while complying with confidentiality guidelines and legal regulations.
5. Any students identified by the Virginia Department of Health as potentially exposed will be quarantined (if ordered) and tested.
6. Staff from the Virginia Department of Health will consult with our Infirmary and Academy Physician regarding next steps.