



Castleton University

RESTART PLAN

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Castleton University Plan for a Successful Return to Campus

The faculty and staff at Castleton University have worked diligently to determine the safest possible plan to open the University during these trying times. This plan has been developed with the awareness that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 is an evolving public-health emergency and that plans may need to adapt and change in order to ensure the safest possible environment for the Castleton Community. The University is monitoring this ever changing situation closely and has developed this restart plan with guidance from Governor Scott, Dr. Levine, and other medical and public health experts.

Castleton University developed this restart plan with several goals in mind. These goals include: 1) providing the safest possible return to campus for all of our students and employees, and 2) developing a plan that would help provide the continued health and safety of the communities around us. In this spirit, this plan identifies the requirements set forth by the University that are in addition to the requirements set by the State of Vermont. All employees and students must comply with the protocols as written. Individuals that choose not to comply with these regulations will face disciplinary action.

Castleton announced on July 15, 2020, that it will offer students the option of a residential campus experience for the fall 2020 semester and deliver its academic courses online. The plan offers the benefits of both online teaching and a residential campus experience. Under the plan, any student who chooses to access campus may do so by agreeing to the Spartan Pledge, which mandates COVID-19 testing and adherence to social distancing protocols. Additionally, the University will follow the guidelines put in place by the State of Vermont and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations. Students and commuters will have access to many of the offices, services, and resources the campus provides. Those who wish to remain off-campus can remotely access services such as the Academic Support Center, Wellness Center, and Career Services.

Castleton University developed this plan to minimize the likelihood of an outbreak of COVID-19 and to outline methods to decrease the seriousness of an outbreak if one does occur.

1. **DECREASE RISK OF INDIVIDUALS INFECTED WITH COVID-19 ENTERING THE CAMPUS THROUGH EFFECTIVE PUBLIC HEALTH PREVENTION**

a. Spartan Pledge:

Castleton University has developed and distributed a campus-wide [Spartan Pledge](#) that outlines expectations for behavior and requirements while on campus. The pledge defines the expectation to participate in mandated testing and quarantine, visitor limitations, travel restrictions, and face covering policies. It states the expectation that non-compliance will be addressed through student conduct and/or personnel policies and procedures as applicable.

In addition an [addendum](#) to the housing contract was created indicating specific COVID-19 related policy changes to the agreement to live on campus.

b. Quarantine:

Castleton has taken the requirement of quarantine seriously and has strict guidelines for students to follow before coming to campus. Pre-arrival quarantine was offered beginning August 1st so that residents could fulfill the most stringent quarantine mandate of 14 days to assure being ready to move into their fall assignment by the start of classes on August 18th. Additionally, some students in off-campus housing moved back to apartments to complete this requirement. [Guidelines](#) for returning to campus were published to help a student identify early how they would meet the state mandate for quarantine.

c. Health Screenings

All employees or students that come to campus at any time during the semester will be required to perform daily self-attestation health screenings including temperature checks, symptom checks, and potential exposure checks. This self-attestation will be logged using CastleBranch. All screening must occur prior to leaving their residence hall or arrival onto campus. System administrators are assigned to each user profile (employee, student, etc.) as well as all users.

d. Curtail Visitors and Campus Events:

The University has elected to allow two designated guests to assist residents on move-in day. No person who is not a resident under contract will be allowed in the Residence Halls. This includes family, significant others who don't reside in housing, and Castleton students living off campus.

We will limit outside speaker programming and have changed the typical family homecoming weekend activities to a weeklong, virtual-only experience that will showcase the talents of alumni and others.

SHAPE Gym will be open to pass holders for the fall semester. The Library may be open for use by the public; however, it will open August 10 only to faculty, staff, and students. The University Bookstore will be open to the general public. The dining hall and associated retail will be for the exclusive use of Castleton students and employees.

e. Testing:

COVID-19 testing is required for all students living on campus and for off-campus students who wish to access Castleton University facilities. Following State guidelines, students coming from a quarantine county as defined by yellow or red on the [ACCD](#) map published on August 1 will be required to complete quarantine mandates and complete a COVID-19 test on the day of arrival. All students will be required to test 7 days into the semester.

Tests are being coordinated by Castleton Family Health (CFH), with testing being performed by Rutland Regional Medical Center (RRMC). All students will register with CFH indicating their insurance provider. Insurance will be billed by RRMC, and those not covered will be paid for by Castleton using COVID Relief Funds (CRF).

f. Travel:

All official travel conducted by the University will meet the expectations of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) travel guidelines and require presidential approval. Students living in Vermont will be expected to follow the same guidelines, performing quarantine requirements before returning to campus from a quarantine county.

g. Change Academic Calendar:

Castleton has modified the academic calendar to decrease the possibility of students leaving campus to return home and then return to campus. The academic calendar has been adjusted to eliminate our traditional fall break, and those students leaving on November 20 at the end of regular classes and the end of the residential meal plan will be expected to stay away until the start of the spring term.

Castleton University has not made decisions about spring semester at this time in order to allow more time for events to unfold and assist with this decision.

2. **DECREASE POTENTIAL TRANSMISSION OF COVID-19 AMONG FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENTS ON CAMPUS THROUGH EFFECTIVE PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES.**

a. Face Coverings:

All faculty, staff, students, and visitors (including vendors/deliveries) will be required to wear facial coverings when in the presence of others. Masks must be worn covering the nose and mouth.

A culture of mutual reminding has been adopted to ensure that our community is respectfully encouraging the use of masks.

While the expectation is that each person is responsible to supply and use a mask while on campus, free masks will be made available to all faculty, staff, and students through the Student Government Association, the new student orientation program, and the Office of Human Resources. An additional supply of 7,500 surgical masks was acquired for use as needed. A supply of facial shields (200) and clear masks (200) are available to accommodate when this type of face covering is essential.

Face coverings are not required in private faculty or staff offices when alone or in personal residence hall rooms.

In addition to the required facial coverings, Castleton has installed plexiglass “sneeze guards” in areas where student interaction is inevitable and physical distancing may not be feasible. Areas such as front desks, science labs, and food areas are where most of the plexiglass has been installed.

b. Health Screenings:

All health screening will occur through the CastleBranch system. See details in Health Screenings in section 1.

c. Contact Tracing Journal:

The entire Castleton community has been encouraged to maintain a contact tracing journal of all close contacts.

d. Hand Hygiene:

Castleton understands that good hygiene practices, including hand hygiene, is a key resource in mitigating the spread of COVID-19. With this in mind, our facilities team has worked hard to ensure that hand sanitizer is available in classrooms, hallways, offices, and restrooms. All restrooms are stocked with soap for easy handwashing.

Additionally, the college has taken steps to place signs in restrooms reminding community members to wash their hands frequently and to educate on the proper method to use for effective handwashing.

e. Cleaning and Disinfecting:

Castleton has put significant thought and effort into ensuring that the plan for cleaning and disinfecting will be more than adequate to ensure community safety with coordinated centralized guidance from the Chancellor's Office and the coordinated efforts of the Directors of Facilities at each VSCS campus. Additionally, the University has taken steps to place signs in restrooms reminding community members to wash their hands frequently and to educate on the proper method to use for effective handwashing.

As classes will be delivered through remote instruction, cleaning and disinfecting efforts can be concentrated in the Residence Halls and public-facing spaces on campus in the fall semester. While classrooms may be used as meeting space, use will be limited and scheduled to allow adequate cleaning between uses. Additional wipes and self-service options for cleaning will be made available. Cleaning will be completed with the use of supplied and approved disinfectants.

Dormitories: In addition to daily service on weekdays by the facilities team, students will be responsible for cleaning their own personal space after each use. Disinfectant cleaner will be supplied in kitchenette areas and bathrooms for students to use after using the area.

Fleet Vehicles: All vehicles will be cleaned before and after each use by the facilities team. Occupancy is limited to three people, with required mask use if more than one person, for service vehicles. Occupancy numbers for vans, mini-buses, and the two larger CDL-required vehicles are being researched in coordination with the Governor's Restart team for Higher Education.

Ventilation and Air Flow: Throughout the summer, HVAC systems have been serviced to ensure maximum air quality. Upgrades from MERV 8 to MERV 10 were achieved in building systems, along with disinfecting the coils and fogging of the return vents in consultation with our vendors. Individual unit filters have also been upgraded wherever possible. More frequent filter changes will occur than in the past.

f. Physical Distancing:

While on campus, all faculty, staff, students, and visitors must maintain proper physical distancing of six (6) feet or more. While there is a certain element of self-responsibility to ensure this distancing, we have taken steps to facilitate this requirement. The following steps have been implemented:

- No guests will be allowed in the dorms.
- Classrooms and Labs have documented maximum occupancy limits that will be followed at all times.
- Common areas such as break rooms will be assessed for safe use by employees.
- Furniture has been removed or rearranged to decrease the possibility of groups congregating in one area.
- Signage has been placed throughout campus reminding all individuals of the required distancing while on campus.

g. Dining Halls:

Sodexo has been working to align the dining hall to match state guidelines. They will monitor the occupancy numbers and have created a system to aid in contact-tracing journal entries. A video, "How to Do Huden," was published to showcase the changes a person will experience in our dining hall. This proactive approach by our partner in dining services has helped ease the transition students can expect when returning to the facility.

Any individual choosing to do takeout will be provided with a single-use food container and utensils. Students may elect to eat in their residence rooms or in common areas around campus, including outside.

h. Classrooms:

All classrooms and labs have been assigned COVID-19 max room occupancy levels. This ensures that there is adequate space in each classroom to ensure proper physical distancing.

Classrooms and labs will be cleaned before and after use by the faculty member. Additionally, any students with permission to use the classroom will be responsible for cleaning their table space before and after each learning experience.

All faculty and students must wear facial coverings during all lab or clinical experiences.

i. Athletics:

Castleton University will plan on conducting fall sports with practices and limited competition, if possible. Student-athletes who are living on campus, in town, or at home within driving distance from the University and not living in a yellow or red zone are welcome to attend practices. Student-athletes will not be invited to attend a practice or team meetings until they have the results back from their first COVID-19 test. Not all fall teams will have a roster size large enough to conduct practices but those student-athletes may attend strength and conditioning activities if they choose.

Once a team has started practice, outside competition may be considered after three weeks of practice should no cases of COVID-19 appear in that group. This scenario may change as we receive daily reports from the Governor of Vermont, mandates from the NCAA, and if there are reported cases on our campus.

j. Performing Arts:

Large events have been canceled or will be delivered virtually. Castleton's Soundings program will be completed by students through online delivery. Some limited in-person programming will be coordinated through the Campus Activities Board, but always in alignment with ACCD guidelines for large group events. Some in-person ensembles will be allowed to perform with the option of online involvement available. Use of specialty spaces, such as music practice rooms, is being evaluated.

- k. Protect at-risk faculty, staff and students:

Castleton is taking every feasible precaution to protect the vulnerable members of our community. Any individual that has a pre-existing condition that may place them at higher risk of contracting COVID-19 or developing severe illness in the event of contracting the virus will be encouraged to maintain remote access to their classes.

- l. COVID-19 Trainings for Employees and Students:

All employees, including students, are required to complete the [training issued by VOSHA](#) prior to their return on campus.

3. QUICKLY IDENTIFY INDIVIDUALS WITH COVID-19 AND PUT CONTAINMENT PROCEDURES IN PLACE TO MINIMIZE THE IMPACT ON STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, AND EDUCATION

- a. Adequate Health Services:

Castleton has partnered with Castleton Family Health and Rutland Regional Medical Center to ensure that adequate testing is available for all of our students.

Additionally, our small staff of Registered Nurses that work per diem in the Castleton Wellness Center will be available during the week to offer education and referrals for students using a combination of telemedicine and limited in-person appointments.

- b. Isolation Procedures:

The state has mandated 5% bed capacity for those needing to isolate. We have three residence halls for this exclusive use. Any resident with a positive test will be immediately isolated in Adams Hall and be connected to Castleton Family Health for telehealth monitoring and to VDOH for contract tracing. They will be supported through telepresence by the Residence Life staff and as needed by the RN Staff.

- c. Campus Contingency Plans:

Castleton is delivering academics almost exclusively through remote instruction for the fall semester. An adjustment to campus life can be done quickly as needed.

Options for quarantining individual rooms, suites, floors, or buildings can be done as required or directed by local health officials.

d. Contact Tracing:

In the event of a positive case, Castleton is prepared to work closely with the Vermont Department of Health to assist them in conducting a contact tracing.

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