



## 2020 Shepherds Theological Seminary Coronavirus Plan

Dear STS Family,

As we face the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic with appreciation for good-will attempts to understand the science and the acknowledgement of the potential for politicizing and fearmongering, we desire to promote a context for our campus and teaching sites that is respectful of a diversity of opinion on the growing body of data and governmental guidance—a perspective that promotes mutual care, creativity, flexibility, and Spirit-empowered love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

Shepherds Theological Seminary aims to provide a healthy learning environment with some specific policies in place during this COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, we have established the following enhanced health and safety plan in order to offer in-person instruction this fall at all of our locations within governmental guidelines. Despite the thoroughness of our preventative measures, we face the possibility that a STS student, staff, or faculty member may test positive for **COVID-19**.

For the Fall 2020 semester, all students and faculty have the right to request to livestream the course. Those wishing to livestream the entirety of the fall semester need to complete their livestream request forms for each class they are taking. Those that come for in-person instruction must abide by the following policies.

The following prevention protocols outline STS's policies enacted to limit the spread of COVID-19 at STS. STS's measures have been developed based on recommendations from both the CDC's "[Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Institutions of Higher Education](#)" (March 18, 2020) and "[Considerations for Institutions of Higher Education](#)" (May 30, 2020).

**Prior to visiting any STS location, all students, employees, contractors, and visitors must adhere to the following safety measures:**

- **Daily Self-Screening**—Complete a daily self-screen for COVID-19. This includes daily taking one's temperature at home before arriving at any STS location.
- **Travel Guidelines**—Follow these STS Travel Guidelines for Self-Isolation.
  - Please follow prudent measures of self-analysis and potential self-isolation if you have travelled domestically or internationally to locations experiencing an outbreak.

### **Staying Home or Self-Isolating when Appropriate**

- All Students and Faculty/Staff who have been sick with COVID-19 symptoms, tested positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 through close contact (either through community-related exposure, domestic/international travel, or conference attendance) to follow CDC guidance to self-isolate and stay home. Those with what is suspected as a cold/flu should also stay home.

and livestream their classes that week. Self-isolation would only occur in such cases if there are COVID-19 specific symptoms.

- Self-Isolation/Stay home orders consist of a 14-day period after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19.
- Watch for fever (100.4°F), cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.
- If possible, stay away from others, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.

What counts as close contact?

- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes.
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- You had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them).
- You shared eating or drinking utensils.
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you.

### **Returning to school after a 14-day quarantine.**

You can be around others after:

- 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
- 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- COVID-19 symptoms have improved (for example, cough, shortness of breath).

Most people do not require testing to decide when they can be around others. However, if your healthcare provider recommends testing, they will let you know when you can resume being around others based on your test results. Note that these recommendations **do not** apply to persons with severe COVID-19 or with severely weakened immune systems (immunocompromised). Anyone who has had close contact with someone with COVID-19 should stay home for 14 days **after their last exposure** to that person.

However, you do not need to stay home if you have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and who:

- developed COVID-19 illness within the previous 3 months **and**
- have recovered **and**
- remain without COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)

### **Enhanced Safety Measures taken by STS.**

The following preventive measures are in place:

- **Enhanced Sanitization and Cleaning Protocols**—STS has implemented the following measures to increase sanitization and cleaning at our locations:
  - Frequent hand washing and/or hand sanitization is an effective method for limiting the spread of the coronavirus on surfaces. Therefore, STS has placed hand sanitization stations in high-traffic areas.
  - STS has increased both the frequency and duration of our cleaning routines in order to mitigate the spread of coronavirus.
- **Face Covering Requirement**—With the Fall Semester potentially offering a return to our normal capacity and operational levels at STS, we are requiring that face coverings be worn indoors at all STS

locations in addition to following standard social distancing measures.

- This policy applies to indoor locations such as (but not limited to) classrooms, and common areas of buildings. When outdoors, face coverings must be worn whenever six feet of social distance cannot be maintained.
  - Cloth face-coverings (masks) must meet CDC recommended specifications and cover the nose and mouth. Face shields may be used in lieu of a mask as long as it is a full-face shield that extends past the wearer's chin and wraps around the side of the face.
  - During classroom instruction, face coverings can be removed if social distancing is maintained. Face coverings are not required by staff in their offices.
- **Social/Physical Distancing**—STS will be making numerous changes to our locations in order to help our constituents maintain the recommended six feet of social distance at all times.
    - All high-traffic areas at our campus locations will be specifically marked for one-way pedestrian traffic flow. This includes (when feasible) all entrances, exits, hallways, stairwells, and classrooms in high-traffic or high-occupancy buildings.
    - Restrooms, breakrooms, and common gathering areas will be marked with limited occupancy signage to ensure social distance is easy to maintain.
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The following preventative measures will be implemented for all classrooms in which live, face-to-face classes are taught. These are in addition to the measures outlined above.

- **Self-Screening before Coming to Class**—Professors will remind students on the first day of class that all students need to follow the preventative measures outlined above when coming to any campus for classes, including self-screening protocols. It is recommended that individuals take their temperature at home before arriving at any STS location.
- **Directional Entry and Exit from Classrooms**—In classrooms with more than one entrance and exit, signage will be provided to direct students to enter the classroom through one door (or doors) and exit the classroom through the other door (or doors).
- **Hand-Sanitizing**—Stations for hand-sanitizing will be provided in the hallway outside the classrooms. Students and faculty are asked to use them when entering and exiting classrooms.
- **Assigned Seats**—Students will be encouraged to occupy the same seat throughout the semester if possible. This will reduce potential exposure across the entire class and make it easier to trace student contact in the event that a student later tests positive for the Coronavirus.
- **Blocked Seating to Ensure Social Distancing**—Classrooms will be marked for appropriate seating to ensure social distancing. This can be done by removing chairs or blocked seating.
- **Use of Face Coverings in Class**—Students and faculty will be encouraged to wear a mask or approved face-covering during class even when social distance is maintained, due to the duration of time and contact in traditional classroom settings. It is not mandatory.

In light of the highly charged and emotionally challenging nature of opinions on the sensitive matters of personal freedom and public safety, we request that members of our community give grace to others, avoid personally confronting those who may have difficulty following these protocols, and bring any concerns they have directly to our Chief Academic Officer, Thomas Pittman.