

How to Implement the Coronavirus Requirements

We may all be faced with interacting with a student, coworker, volunteer or visitor who is not following requirements that are meant to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Here are some tips to help you navigate that situation.

Have good signage, clear instructions and supplies: We are all becoming accustomed to going to stores and seeing arrows to point to the direction to walk, social distance floor markings to show us where to stand and signs on entrances telling us of the store rules. All of this will prevent someone from entering your area and you having to be the one to tell them what is expected of them. It is also helpful to have a supply of masks and other items to make it easier for the person to comply.

Be visible: A staff member should be there as students or visitors enter the area. It is better to have the conversation before they actually enter and your presence will be a form of enforcement of the expectations.

Be informative: If they are not following the rules, provide information in the most positive manner possible. "Good morning. To reduce the spread of the coronavirus UMaine is requiring all visitors to wear a mask. If you do not have a mask we have a supply on the table." If they declare they are physically unable to follow that expectation we should craft a protocol to get them what they need without them having to be in the office location. Can a brochure or other paperwork be mailed?

Don't take it personally: If a person begins to complain about the requirements, defame those who follow the coronavirus rules or is angry about what is being asked of them; remember it is not about you. There is a story behind why they feel the way they do and it started before they came in contact with you. Avoid debating their point of view. They can feel the way they do, they just cannot ignore the requirements.

Actively listen: A natural human tendency is to step away from or avoid conflict. This is a good time to show you care about them by listening to their concerns.

Cultivate connection: Say something to show you understand and can relate to their complaint. Only do this if you can be sincere. Saying something like "I know. I find wearing a mask for many hours each day to be uncomfortable at times too." Your statement should have a connection to something they said.

Focus on helping them: People do things that benefit themselves. They came to your area for a reason. You might say something like, "I do want to help you and as soon as you comply with the requirement I'd be happy to do what I can to help you today."

If they will not comply: Let them know they are unable to stay if they do not comply. If this makes them angry and you feel unsafe, you should contact the UMaine Police department at 207.581.4053 or your local police.

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