

2.13 Infectious Diseases

Last Revised: November 2022

Policy: Piedmont Community College (PCC) actively promotes the good health, safety and well-being of students and employees to such extent or degree as possible while prohibiting discrimination against persons with communicable diseases.

Purpose/Definitions:

Purpose

A person who knows, or has a reasonable basis for believing, that he or she is infected with a communicable disease has an ethical and legal obligation to conduct him or herself in accordance with such knowledge to protect him or herself and others. In this respect, College employees, students, and contracted services personnel have an obligation to confidentially report such information.

Definitions

Communicable disease—an illness resulting from an infectious agent, or its toxic products, being transmitted directly or indirectly to a person from an infected person or animal through the agency of an intermediate animal, host, or vector, or through the inanimate environment. [N.C.G.S. 130A-2(1)(c)]

Communicable diseases include, but are not limited to, influenza, tuberculosis, conjunctivitis, infectious mononucleosis, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) and AIDS related complex (ARC), Hepatitis-A (infectious hepatitis), Hepatitis-B (serum hepatitis) meningitis, sexually transmitted diseases, measles, chickenpox, and whooping cough. PCC may choose to broaden this definition in accordance with information received from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Note: The most recent list of reportable diseases as established by the NC Commission for Public Health is found in the Administrative Code 10A NCAC 41A .0101. The list is constantly updated as new diseases emerge.

N.C.G.S. 130A-141.1 also authorizes the State Health Director to issue a temporary order requiring health care providers to report symptoms, diseases, conditions, or other health-related information when necessary to conduct a public health investigation or surveillance of an illness, condition, or symptoms that may indicate the existence of other communicable diseases or conditions that present a danger to the public health.

Information related to communicable diseases, warning signs, and protective measures are available from the Person or Caswell County Health Department, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Emergency layoff/furlough—a temporary separation from payroll because funds are not available, work is not available or because of another emergency situation requiring employees to remain away from the worksite. The employer believes that the condition will change and intends to recall the employees as soon as feasible.

Epidemic—a disease occurring suddenly in a community, region, or country in numbers clearly in excess of normal. This includes the occurrence of several cases of a disease associated with a common source.

Face covering—at a minimum, a cloth covering, whether made at home or commercially, that is designed to cover the wearer’s mouth and nose in order to reduce the spread of respiratory droplets produced when a person coughs, sneezes, or talks. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) publishes information about cloth face coverings including how to make them, how to wear them, how to wash them, and recommendations regarding their use.

High-Risk Employees—those employees in a certain age group or who have serious underlying medical conditions and might be at higher risk for severe illness from a communicable disease as identified by the Centers for Communicable Diseases or NC DHHS Division of Public Health.

Incubation Period—the time, usually in days, between exposure to an illness and the onset of symptoms.

Isolation—a control measure issued by a local health director or the state health director under [N.C.G.S. 130A-145](#) limiting the movement or action of persons or animals infected or reasonably suspected to be infected with a communicable disease or condition for the period of communicability to prevent the spread of the communicable disease or condition, as described in [N.C.G.S. 130A-2\(3a\)](#).

Mandatory/Essential Employees—employees with contractual appointments who are required to report to a designated worksite (particularly when all other employees are restricted from coming into the workplace), other than their personal residence, and only for those specific dates and times that such onsite reporting is required during a public health emergency. These mandatory employees include, but are not limited to, employees in positions that directly impact public health and patient care; public safety; operation of critical infrastructure and facilities; and the custody or care of persons or property for whom the state has a duty to continue to serve.

Pandemic—an outbreak and spread of an infectious/communicable disease over a wide geographic area that affects a high proportion of the population.

Quarantine—a control measure issued by a local health director or the state health director under GS 130A-145 limiting the movement or action of persons or animals who have been exposed to or are reasonably suspected of having been exposed to a communicable disease or condition for the period of time necessary to prevent the spread of the communicable disease or condition, as described in GS 130A-2(7a).

Religion—all aspects of religious observance and practice as well as belief ([Title VII](#)).

Social Distancing—actions taken to reduce the opportunities for close contact between people in order to limit the spread of a communicable disease.

Approval Authority/Monitoring Authority: Piedmont Community College’s Board of Trustees has approval authority for this policy. The Vice President, Administrative Services/CFO; and the Vice President, Student Development have monitoring authority for this policy.

Procedure:

Section 1: Non-Discrimination

- 1.1. The College will not unlawfully discriminate in policy or practice and will comply with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- 1.2. PCC reserves the right to exclude a person with a communicable disease from employment, programs, and functions if the College finds that, based on a medical determination, such restriction is necessary for the welfare of the person who has the communicable disease and/or the welfare of others within the College.

Section 2: Reporting

- 2.1. Any college employee, student, or contracted services person who knows or has a reasonable basis for believing that he or she is infected with a communicable disease has the responsibility to voluntarily report this fact, on a confidential basis.
 - 2.1.1. An employee or contracted services person notifies their direct supervisor and the Office of Human Resources and Organizational Development (HROD) to determine the appropriate response to their health needs, including reasonable accommodations they may be entitled to by law.

- 2.1.2. A student notifies the Vice President, Student Development to determine the appropriate response to their health needs, including reasonable accommodations they may be entitled to by law.
- 2.1.3. Information regarding an individual's communicable disease may be shared for legal, medical, or operational purposes confidentially, in accordance with applicable laws that protect the privacy of individuals with communicable diseases.

Section 3: Medical Advice

- 3.1. Any College employee, student, or contracted services person who knows or has reasonable basis for believing that he or she is infected, must seek expert advice about their health circumstances and are obligated, ethically and legally, to conduct themselves responsibly in accordance with such knowledge for the protection of other members of the community.

Section 4: Prevention

- 4.1. Piedmont Community College recommends that all employees whose jobs may bring them into contact with communicable diseases, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, be vaccinated against said diseases.
- 4.2. The College will make arrangements for administration of the vaccination for employees according to CDC/OSHA guidelines.
- 4.3. Any employee who is recommended to have the vaccination and declines must sign a waiver form.

Section 5: Safely Handling Blood and other Body Fluids

- 5.1. Piedmont Community College will publicize and carefully observe the safety guidelines published by OSHA for handling of blood and other body fluids and secretions in all health care programs on campus and in other college contexts in which such fluids or secretions may be encountered.
 - 5.1.1. The guidelines are included in the College Safety Plan which is posted on the College's website.

Section 6: Social Distancing and Face Coverings

- 6.1. In order to minimize transmission from person to person, the College will implement social distancing measures immediately upon orders from the Governor and/or Public Health officials.
- 6.2. Social distancing is designed to limit the spread of a disease by reducing the opportunities for close contact between people. Measures may include:
 - 6.2.1. maintaining sufficient distance between individuals to reduce risk of transmission of a communicable disease as defined by the Centers for Disease Control or DHHS
 - 6.2.2. reducing face-to-face exposure by using conference calls and video conferencing
 - 6.2.3. avoiding unnecessary travel
 - 6.2.4. canceling in-person meetings, workshops, training sessions and scheduled events
 - 6.2.5. allowing employees to work from home or alternative worksites to reduce exposure in the workplace
 - 6.2.6. establishing flexible working hours to avoid mass transportation, at least during peak hours
 - 6.2.7. installing protective barriers between workstations or increasing space between workers
 - 6.2.8. reinforcing hand washing and requiring the use of protective equipment such as hand sanitizers and face coverings (provided by the College)
 - 6.2.9. scheduling employees in staggered shifts
 - 6.2.10. controlling access to buildings
 - 6.2.11. requiring asymptomatic individuals traveling to affected countries/areas not to return to work until one incubation period has passed after returning home
- 6.3. The College may choose to practice social distancing by use of alternate worksites or teleworking.

- 6.3.1. The President is authorized to establish immediate telework arrangements, bypassing any normal requirements that may be outlined in the College's personnel procedures, during the declared emergency.
- 6.3.2. Employees shall establish regular work schedules, follow procedures to request leave, and notify their supervisor of work being performed as if they were physically working in the office.
- 6.3.3. Employees required to telework shall receive regular pay.
- 6.4. The College may modify its instructional methods to include suspending courses and transitioning to hybrid or online instruction.
 - 6.4.1. Such emergency modifications will be communicated via student and employee communication platforms and the College's website.

Section 7: Vaccination and Testing Requirements

- 7.1. College employees whose job duties include interactions with an external partner or organization, or in an external setting, are required to adhere to all regulations of the external organization, including but not limited to, vaccination and drug screen requirements.
- 7.2. Finalists for employment will be notified of the College's vaccine and testing requirements via the offer letter, and the Office of HROD will discuss the requirements with new employees during the onboarding process.

Section 8: Emergency Closing

- 8.1. Under the North Carolina Emergency Management Act, the Governor and the General Assembly have the authority to declare a state of emergency, including a state of emergency based on threats posed by communicable diseases or conditions.
- 8.2. During a state of emergency, the Governor has broad powers to issue emergency orders to protect the public health and safety, including orders to close a state facility or workplace.
 - 8.2.1. Isolation and quarantine are public health control measures.
 - 8.2.2. Under state public health law, the State Health Director and local health directors have specific authority to order isolation or quarantine when and so long as the public health is endangered, all other reasonable means for

correcting the problem have been exhausted, and no less restrictive alternative exists.

8.2.3. In the absence of such orders, the President shall consult with local/State Public Health officials to determine the severity of the individual situation and to determine what actions shall be taken (including the closure of the College, by facility or location).

8.2.4. The College will comply with and adhere to any control measures, other orders, or instructions from State or local public health agencies to prevent transmission of a communicable disease.

8.3. The College shall follow NC Division of Public Health's guidelines, when deciding how to inform employees and employees.

Section 9: Mandatory/Essential Employees

9.1. The President shall predetermine and designate mandatory operations and designate the employees to staff these operations.

9.2. Mandatory employees may be excused from work if they are isolated, quarantined, ill, or subject to other public health control measures, or if they are required to care for a member of the immediate family who is isolated, quarantined, or ill.

9.2.1. Based on the College's operational needs, a supervisor may excuse a mandatory employee if they are a parent (or guardian) who is required to stay home with underage children because of the closure of a day care facility, public/private school, or eldercare facility.

9.2.2. If operational needs change, a mandatory employee may be required to return to work.

9.3. The College shall maintain a list of mandatory employees by position, including current employee name and contact information.

9.3.1. The direct supervisors of mandatory employees shall identify an alternative plan for personnel in case the designated personnel are unable to work.

9.3.2. Alternative workers may include current employees who are not designated as mandatory but who possess the skills to fill in for mandatory employees, retirees, contract workers or other temporary employees. This will be especially important in a pandemic or adverse weather conditions that may last for several weeks or months.

- 9.4. Employees designated as mandatory personnel shall be notified of such designation and the requirement to report for, or remain at, work in emergency situations.
- 9.5. Individuals designated as mandatory employees may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, for willful failure to report for or remain at work. Each situation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine appropriate action.
- 9.6. When the College is closed or when the President, or designee, determines that only mandatory employees are required to report to a specific worksite (particularly when all other employees are restricted from coming into the workplace), the mandatory employees may be granted additional pay for the duration of the period of emergency for all hours worked at the President's discretion, subject to the availability of funds.
 - 9.6.1. If funds are not available, the employee may be granted additional compensation or compensatory time at a later date, as approved by the President or designee.
 - 9.6.2. This provision applies to all designated mandatory employees, both exempt and non-exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).
 - 9.6.3. Under special and limited circumstances, highly compensated professional and management employees may be granted these special compensation provisions or may be considered for other compensation options with the approval of the President.
 - 9.6.4. This provision does not include temporary employees under any circumstances. However, at the College's discretion, temporary employees (including retirees) whose positions support emergency operations may receive a temporarily adjusted higher hourly pay rate while supporting the emergency operations.

Section 10: Leave

- 10.1. The College should stress to non-mandatory employees that they will not be penalized for using their leave, thereby encouraging compliance with public health control measures to prevent the spread of disease and also recognizing that employees with ill family members may need to stay home to care for them.
- 10.2. Mandatory employees are also authorized to use leave.
- 10.3. Isolation by a Public Health Official

- 10.3.1. When an employee is isolated by a public health official or is ill, the employee shall follow the Sick Leave Policy unless the Federal Government, or State Human Resources Director has authorized the College to provide specific State of Emergency Leave for employees (which may include employees with temporary appointments), subject to the availability of funding.
- 10.3.2. When an employee is quarantined by a Public Health Official, the employee shall be granted paid State of Emergency Leave (Administrative Leave – CDE) until the specified period of time ends or the employee becomes ill or is isolated by a public health official, whichever comes first. This shall include employees with temporary appointments.
- 10.4. If the College believes that an employee has symptoms associated with a communicable disease, the employee may be required not to report to work and to use any available compensatory leave, sick leave, vacation leave or bonus leave.
- 10.5. In response to a severe public health emergency, the Federal Government or the State Human Resources Director may authorize paid state of emergency leave that agencies may grant to employees who experience symptoms associated with a communicable disease. This may be extended to temporary employees, subject to the availability of funding.
- 10.6. When the College is closed or only mandatory/essential employees are required to report to a specific worksite (particularly when all other employees are restricted from coming into the workplace), all efforts should be made to allow non-mandatory employees to telework or work from an alternative location.
- 10.7. Non-mandatory employees who are not able to telework or work from an alternative location may be granted paid Federal leave or State of Emergency Leave by the College if such leave is authorized by the State Human Resources Director.
 - 10.7.1. This leave may be extended to temporary employees, subject to the availability of funding.
 - 10.7.2. The employee's pay shall continue at the same rate the employee would have received had the employee been working.
 - 10.7.3. If a non-mandatory employee is required to telework or work from an alternative location, the employee shall not receive additional pay.

- 10.8. Employees who are on prearranged leave shall charge leave to the appropriate account until the end of the scheduled days off unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- 10.9. Employees on leave without pay shall continue on leave without pay until the scheduled leave without pay period ends, unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- 10.10. If an employee becomes ill and it is determined to be work related in accordance with the Workers' Compensation Act, the Workers' Compensation Policy applies.
 - 10.10.1. If the employee's illness is determined not to be work related in accordance with the Workers' Compensation Act, the Sick Leave Policy applies, unless otherwise covered by State of Emergency leave options.
 - 10.10.2. The provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Policy and the Family Illness Leave Policy shall also apply, as appropriate.
- 10.11. Employees who have symptoms of a communicable disease and are required to stay home or who are ill with the communicable disease should be cautioned not to return to work until they are sure that they are fully recovered, in accordance with CDC or NC Division of Public Health guidelines.

Section 11: Review of Policy Provisions

- 11.1. If any public health emergency exceeds 30 days, the leave and compensation provisions of this policy shall be reviewed, and revised, as applicable.
- 11.2. The State Human Resources Director shall determine the appropriate course of action, in consultation with the Governor's Office, and the State Budget Director.
- 11.3. Pending a decision on renewing these provisions, the employee may be allowed to take leave (compensatory, sick, vacation, bonus), if available, until a decision is made. If leave is not available, leave shall be advanced and paid back within 24 months.

Section 12: Other Provisions

- 12.1. During the communicable disease emergency, if additional staff are needed to cover emergency operations, the President is authorized to execute the immediate hiring of temporary or up to one-year time-limited permanent employees who are determined to be qualified and able to do the work by:
 - 12.1.1. waiving the posting policy

- 12.1.2. posting positions with the provision that the hiring authority does not have to wait until the closing date to make job offers
- 12.1.3. waiving the minimum qualifications policy
- 12.1.4. waiving the hiring of relatives (nepotism) policy
- 12.2. A time-limited permanent appointment may be extended per the appointment policy up to 30 days beyond the duration of the State of Emergency.
- 12.3. The President is also authorized to offer competitive salaries to employees hired under these provisions for the duration of the emergency.
- 12.4. The President is authorized to assign employees where they are most needed and compensate them accordingly for the duration of the emergency.
- 12.5. The President may grant an acting promotion or temporary in-range salary adjustment for positions that are deemed directly related to the public health emergency operations.
 - 12.5.1. Acting promotions and temporary in-range salary adjustments made during this period are on an interim basis and will continue no longer than 30 days following the end of the public health emergency.

Legal Citation: [N.C.G.S. 130A-2\(1c\)](#) ; [N.C.G.S. 130A-2\(3a\)](#); [N.C.G.S. 130A-145](#); [10A NCAC 41A .0101](#); [1C SBCCC 200.94](#); [EEOC--Title VII](#); [NC OSHA](#)

For additional information about communicable diseases, surveillance and reporting, disease laws and rules, and public health preparedness and response, please refer to the OSHR website for links to the NC Division of Public Health and US Department of Labor.

<https://oshr.nc.gov/policies-forms/workplace-wellness/communicable-disease-emergency>

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