

7.16 Infectious Diseases

Last Revised: February 2024

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 infectious diseases.

Purpose/Definitions:

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a safe and healthy working and learning environment.

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 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).

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—a covering, whether made at home or commercially, that is designed to cover the wearer’s mouth and nose to reduce the spread of respiratory droplets produced when a person coughs, sneezes, or talks.

High-Risk Students—those students 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.

Infectious diseases—illnesses caused by germs (such as bacteria, viruses, and fungi) that enter the body, multiply, and can cause an infection. Some infectious diseases are contagious (or communicable), meaning they are capable of spreading from one person to another.

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\(3a\)](#).

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).

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. PCC will not discriminate against individuals with infectious diseases and will take precaution to ensure that information about individual health conditions remains confidential, in accordance with FERPA, The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and other federal, state, and local laws.
- 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 student who knows or has a reason to believe they have an infectious disease has an obligation to conduct themselves in accordance with such knowledge in order to protect themselves and others.
 - 2.1.1. A student (curriculum and continuing education) must notify the Vice President, Student Development to determine the appropriate response to their health needs, including reasonable accommodations they may be entitled to by law, based on healthcare provider documentation.
 - 2.1.2. A student who believes they are infected with an infectious disease should seek advice from a healthcare provider.
- 2.2. All medical information regarding an individual's infectious disease shall be kept confidential, and no person, group, agency, insurer, employer, or institution shall be provided any medical information without the prior, specific written consent of a student or employee unless providing such information is required by state and/or federal law.

Section 3: Safely Handling Blood and other Body Fluids

- 3.1. PCC publicizes and observes 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.
- 3.2. The guidelines are located on the College's website as part of the College Safety Plan.

Section 4: Vaccination and Testing Requirements

- 4.1. Students whose placement, program, or course includes 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.

Section 5: Emergency Closing

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. 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.
 - 5.2.1. Social distancing, use of face coverings, isolation, and quarantine are examples of public health control measures.
 - 5.2.2. 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.
 - 5.2.3. 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).
 - 5.2.4. 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.
- 5.3. The College shall follow NC Division of Public Health's guidelines, when deciding how to inform students.

Legal Citation: [N.C.G.S. 130A-2\(1c\)](#) ; [N.C.G.S. 130A-2\(3a\)](#); [N.C.G.S. 130A-145](#); NC Administrative Code [10A NCAC 41A .0101](#); NC State Board of Community Colleges Code [1C SBCCC 200.94](#)

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>

History: Effective October 1987, revised July 1992, January 2011, April 2020, July 2020, May 2022—updated definitions, September 2022, February 2024