

## 2.13 Infectious Diseases

**Last Revised:** May 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.

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### **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 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).

**Furlough**—the placing of an employee in a temporary non-duty, non-pay status due to lack of funds or work, a result of a declared state of emergency, or for other non-disciplinary reasons.

**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 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.

**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\(3a\)](#).

**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.

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**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.

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**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), 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 employee or contracted services person 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. An employee or contracted services person must notify 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, based on healthcare provider documentation.
  - 2.1.2. 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: Prevention**

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

**Section 4: Safely Handling Blood and other Body Fluids**

- 4.1. 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.
  - 4.1.1. The guidelines are included in the College Safety Plan which is posted on the College's website.

**Section 5: Vaccination and Testing Requirements**

- 5.1. College employees whose job duties include interactions with an external partner, organization, or setting are required to adhere to all regulations of the external organization, including but not limited to, vaccination and drug screen requirements.
  - 5.1.1. Such external requirements are included in job postings.

**Section 6: Emergency Closing**

- 6.1. 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 infectious/communicable diseases.
- 6.2. 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.

- 6.2.1. Social distancing, use of face coverings, isolation and quarantine are examples of public health control measures.
  - 6.2.2. Under state public health law, the State Health Director and local health directors have specific authority to order isolation or quarantine when and as long as public health is endangered, all other reasonable means for correcting the problem have been exhausted, and no less restrictive alternative exists.
  - 6.2.3. In the absence of such orders, the President shall consult with local/state public health officials to determine the severity of the situation and to determine what actions shall be taken (including the closure of the College, by facility or location).
  - 6.2.4. 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 infectious/communicable disease.
- 6.3. The College shall follow NC Division of Public Health's guidelines when deciding how to inform employees and employees.

#### Section 7: Mandatory/Essential Employees

- 7.1. The President shall determine mandatory operations and the essential employees needed to staff these operations.
  - 7.1.1. Essential employees shall be notified of reporting requirements.

#### Section 8: Leave

- 8.1. If an employee becomes ill and it is determined to be work related in accordance with the Workers' Compensation Act, PCC Policy 5.4.8 Workers' Compensation and Leave applies.

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**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 of the [NC State Board of Community Colleges Code](#); [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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**History:** Effective October 1987, revised July 1992, January 2011, April 2020, July 2020, December 2021, May 2022—definitions updated, November 2022, May 2024

Cross-references PCC Policy 5.4.8 Workers' Compensation and Leave.