

Infectious Disease Policy

General

Wallace Community College Dothan (WCCD) is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for employees and students. Wallace recognizes that individuals employed or enrolled at the College may be exposed to disease and desires to minimize their risk of contracting a significant infectious disease. This policy establishes general principles regarding persons with infectious diseases within Wallace Community College. Persons with an infectious disease may be considered by law to have disabling conditions. The legal rights of disabled individuals must be guaranteed. The College strives, in cooperation with the Center for Disease Control of the United States Public Health Service and the Alabama State Health Department, to maintain a balance between the need to educate all students, protect employee and student rights, to prevent the transmission of significant infectious diseases.

Communicable Disease shall be defined as any disease that can be spread/transmitted directly from one person to another. A disease that can spread very quickly and easily from person to person by means of contact or close proximity is a communicable disease. An Infectious Disease shall be defined as an illness caused by an infectious agent such as germs, organisms, bacteria, or a viruses. The illness is 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. While not every disease is communicable (e.g. food poisoning), some are (e.g. influenza). This policy is concerned with those infectious diseases that are highly communicable. **The College is required by law to notify the state health department of all cases of reportable infectious disease.** These diseases shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and AIDS related complex (ARC)
- Chickenpox
- Ebola virus disease (EVD)
- Hepatitis A, B, C and D
- Influenza
- Measles
- Meningitis
- MRSA
- Positive HIV antibody status
- SARS to include COVID
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases including Chancroid, Chlamydia Trachomatis, Gonorrhoea and Syphilis
- Staph Infections
- Tuberculosis
- Whooping Cough

For additional reportable diseases, see Chapter 420-4-1 of the Administrative Code of the Alabama State Board of Health. The College will comply with legal requirements regarding the reporting of communicable diseases. See § 22- 11A-1 et seq., Alabama Code (1975, as amended) (reporting of notifiable diseases and health conditions) and Alabama Department of Public Health, Rule 420-4-1 Appendix I - Alabama Notifiable Diseases/Conditions Persons who know or who have reason to believe that they are infected with a significant infectious disease have an ethical and legal obligation to conduct themselves in accordance with such knowledge in order to protect themselves and others.

Students and employees who have been diagnosed with, exposed to, or show signs of significant infectious diseases, whether symptomatic or not, are expected to seek expert medical advice and are encouraged to advise local health authorities. Local health authorities should offer counseling to individuals about measures which can be taken to prevent the spread of infection and about ways to protect their own health.

Definitions

1. **Communicable Diseases**: Communicable diseases are spread from person to person. For example, a communicable disease may be spread through direct physical contact like touching the person who has the infection. Another way is when an infectious microbe travels through the air after somebody nearby sneezes or coughs.
2. **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**: Protective items, such as masks, gloves, or other garments and equipment designed to protect the wearer's body from injury. PPE may also minimize the risk of spread to others around you.
3. **Pandemic**: A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease that usually affects a large number of people. A pandemic occurs when a new virus emerges for which people have little or no immunity and for which there is no vaccine. The disease spreads easily from person-to-person, causes serious illness or fatality and can spread across the country and around the world in a very short time.
4. **Medically-confirmed diagnosis**: A medical diagnosis performed by a licensed health care provider based on information from sources including but not limited to a physical examination, interview with the individual or family or both, medical history of the individual and family, and/or clinical findings as reported by laboratory tests or radiologic studies.

Notification

Due to the contagious nature of infectious diseases and the requirements imposed on Wallace Community College by Alabama State law, it is necessary for the College to be aware of all persons diagnosed with, exposed to, or who exhibit symptoms of a significant infectious disease. Students and employees who have been diagnosed, exposed to, or show

signs of significant infectious diseases, whether symptomatic or not, are required to share that information with the appropriate College administrator. The College also urges all students to report their diagnosis of any other communicable infectious diseases, including conjunctivitis and infectious mononucleosis to the appropriate College administrator. Medical information relating to the communicable diseases of a student or employee will be disclosed to responsible College officials only on a strictly limited need-to-know basis.

Procedures for Employees and Students with a Significant Infectious Disease:

1. An employee who is diagnosed with, exposed to, or has cause to believe he or she has a significant infectious disease, or who requests special accommodations, should notify the Director of Human Resources/Employee ADA Coordinator who will inform the Dean of Business Affairs as necessary.
2. A student who is diagnosed with, exposed to, or has cause to believe he or she has a significant infectious disease, or who requests special accommodations, should notify the Director of Student and Campus Services/Student ADA Coordinator who will inform the Dean of Business Affairs as necessary.
3. Wallace Community College will report all necessary information, as required by law, to the County or State Health Department.
4. If necessary, Wallace will develop a plan and procedure for addressing the reported significant infectious disease in conjunction with and after consulting the County or State Health Department.

Any restrictions applied to the use of campus facilities or personal contact will be based on a case-by-case basis after consulting with the State or County Health Department. The College has the authority to restrict an employee or student with a significant infectious disease from campus facilities for the purpose of ensuring the well-being of all of its employees and students.

If the College, in consultation with the State or County Health Department, determines that the significant infectious disease requires limited contact with others, some of the restrictions available are to prohibit attendance at class or work or College functions until a diagnosis has been made and clearance given by a healthcare provider or the State or County Health Department.

COVID-19 Procedures Health Precautions

Employees and students should self-assess their health DAILY.

- Members of the College community, employees and students, should check their temperatures before reporting to campus.
- Members of the campus community should **NOT** come to campus if they
 - Have a fever of 100.4 degrees or above;

- Are experiencing any of the **other symptoms of COVID-19** (these include shortness of breath, chills, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell); or
 - Have been exposed to someone in their household diagnosed with COVID-19, tested for COVID-19 (but not received results), or with symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Employees should notify their supervisors immediately of any symptoms or exposure.
 - Notified supervisors will contact HR.
 - Employees who are approved to travel should take all necessary precautions during and after travel.
- Personnel in the College community (administrators, supervisors, faculty, advisors, etc.) should ensure the following through direct communication, monitoring, and documentation:
 - All of those over whom they have influence follow social distancing guidelines when in their office, lab, or other College space;
 - Should a faculty/staff or student arrive to campus/work exhibiting signs/symptoms of COVID-19, institutions should ask the person to leave campus and consult a healthcare provider before returning to campus/work;
 - Students with significant concerns regarding their own health do not feel coerced into coming to campus.
 - All concerns should be reported to direct supervisors.

Contract Tracing/Procedures for Students and Employees with COVID-19 Symptoms/Positive Test Results

- Student Affairs is responsible for implementing contact tracing protocols if a student with a positive COVID-19 test has been on campus.
- Human Resources (HR) is responsible for implementing contact tracing protocols if an employee with a positive COVID-19 test has been on campus.
- The College will follow protocols listed in *Memo 2021-EXE-010*
- Employees/students with COVID-19 symptoms will be asked to leave and consult with a healthcare provider before returning to campus. See the following for specific details:

Persons WITH Positive COVID-19 test results returning to campus/work:

The following CDC guidance should be utilized when providing guidance to students, faculty/staff returning to work and/or campus.

1. Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:

- At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*, **and**
- At least 1 day (24 hours) have passed *since recovery* defined as the resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvements in respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath)

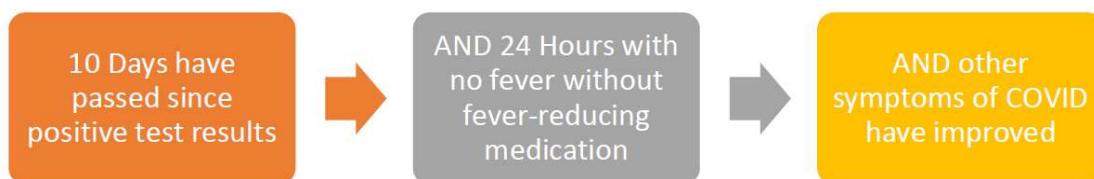
2. Persons with COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:

- At least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their first positive test. If they develop symptoms, then the symptom-based strategy listed in 1. Above should be used.

3. Persons who received a second positive COVID-19 test within three months of the initial positive test and who have not had any symptoms may return to work/campus under the following conditions:

- At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*, **and**
- At least 1 day (24 hours) have passed *since recovery* defined as the resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvements in respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath), **and**
- Individual has received clearance from a healthcare provider (e.g. physician or mid-level provider) that he/she may return to work/campus.

Quarantine for Persons with Laboratory Confirmed Test results



**CDC recognizes the following information:

If you had severe illness from COVID-19 (you were admitted to a hospital and needed oxygen), your healthcare provider may recommend that you stay in isolation for longer than 10 days after your symptoms first appeared (possibly up to 20 days) and you may need to finish your period of isolation at home.

NOTE:

- *CDC data shows that a person who has had and recovered from COVID-19 may have low levels of virus in their bodies for up to 3 months after diagnosis. This means that if the person who has recovered from COVID-19 is retested within three months of initial infection, they may continue to have a positive test result, even though they are not spreading COVID-19.*
- *Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.*
(ADPH, CDC, September 2020)

If you have recovered from your symptoms after testing positive for COVID-19, you may continue to test positive for three months or more without being contagious to others. For this reason, you should be tested only if you develop new symptoms of possible COVID-19. Getting tested again should be discussed with your healthcare provider, especially if you have been in close contact with another person who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days.

Per the CDC and ADPH, retesting is not recommended within 3-months after the date of symptom onset for the initial COVID-19 infection.

NOTE: following the three-month mark of the initial POSITIVE COVID-19 test, any individual exhibiting signs/symptoms of COVID or those who are exposed to someone with an initial test should fall into the exposure category outlined in numbers 1 or 2.

Persons with EXPOSURE to laboratory-certified positive COVID-19 (excluding people who have had COVID-19 within the past 3 months)

DEFINITIONS:

Exposure is defined as *close contact*.

Close Contact is defined as within 6 feet of a person with COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 15-minutes or more over a 24-hour period without an N-95 mask and includes household contacts, intimate partners, and in-home caregivers, starting 2 days before symptoms appeared or specimen collection date (whichever was earlier). Distance could be longer and time shorter, depending on the exposure level and setting.

1. Employee/Student is EXPOSED to someone with a POSITIVE COVID-19 Test AND the exposed individual has signs/symptoms of COVID-19

- The person will be asked to leave campus and consult a healthcare provider before returning to campus/work.

- If the person is positive for COVID-19, the following steps will be in place for persons with positive COVID-testing.
 - The person may return when at least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared* **and** once 1 day (24 hours) have passed *since recovery* defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath).

2. Employee/Student is EXPOSED to someone with an initial (first) POSITIVE COVID-19 test AND the exposed individual does NOT have signs/symptoms of COVID-19:

- The individual is asked to self-quarantine for 14 days following the last exposure to the positive case, even if the individual obtains a negative test result (Viral or Antibody) or does not obtain testing at all. A negative test does not necessarily mean the person is negative or will remain negative. These individuals must complete the 14-day isolation period. If the individual tests positive during the 14-day isolation period the guidance above for persons with positive COVID-19 results would apply.

3. Employee/Student is EXPOSED to someone with a second POSITIVE COVID-19 test within three months of the initial COVID test AND the EXPOSED individual does NOT have signs/symptoms of COVID-19:

- The individual should self-monitor for signs/symptoms of COVID-19, self-isolation is not necessary.
 - **Exceptions to Quarantine Requirements (e.g., persons who meet the following requirements do not need to quarantine):**
 - People who tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3-months and recovered do not have to quarantine as long as they do not experience any symptoms.
 - People who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 are not required to quarantine if they meet **ALL** of the following criteria:
 - Are fully vaccinated (e.g. greater than or equal to 2 weeks after second dose in a 2-dose series or one dose of a single-dose vaccine).
 - Are within 3 months following receipt of the last dose in the series.

- Have remained asymptomatic (e.g. no symptoms) since the current COVID-19 exposure.

Pandemic

To prepare for the most severe health scenario to affect the campus community – that of a highly infectious and fatal virus entering the United States – the College may do as follows:

1. Wallace Community College may need to suspend in-person classes and close the campus for some number of weeks or months until the rate of transmission of the virus begins to reasonably subside.
2. The College shall follow guidelines from the Alabama Community College System Office (ACCS), the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), and from the CDC.
3. The decision to suspend in-person classes and close the campus will be made by the President in conjunction with the Chancellor of the Alabama Community College System and the Board of Trustees of The Alabama Community College System based on the recommendation of the Alabama Department of Public Health, Emergency Management Team, and other appropriate entities.

Confidentiality and Assurance against Retaliation

Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of information received as a part of this policy and to protect the privacy of all parties involved. Retaliation against employees and/or students who report concerns is strictly prohibited and may be grounds for disciplinary action.

Temporary COVID-19 Masking Protocol

Effective April 10, 2021 through May 22, 2021; Wallace Community College will require face coverings for all students, faculty, staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors. This means masks or face coverings should be worn while inside any and all College buildings, College facilities, as well as while outdoor in areas of campus where recommended physical distancing is difficult or not possible.

Masks or face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected, but does not have symptoms.

While we encourage all students, faculty, staff, contracted workers, visitors and volunteers to wear a mask or face covering **AT ALL TIMES** while on Wallace Community College locations, a mask/face covering will be **REQUIRED** when:

1. Any/all faculty, student, staff, visitor, volunteer, contracted worker is inside any College building, to include: All classrooms, labs, and common areas. This is inclusive of all lecturing, teaching and

learning activities. All non-academic and work spaces which are open such as cubicles, meeting rooms, lobbies, waiting areas and restrooms; **NOTE:** A face mask/face covering must still be worn even if there is a plexiglass barrier present or a face shield is being worn.

2. Outside on the campus where physical distancing is not possible.

The College will issue one washable face masks to students at the beginning of the semester. Disposable masks will be available if a mask is lost or forgotten. While the College will provide masks once a semester, individuals are encouraged to supply their own mask or face covering for regular daily use.

The mask or face covering should fit snugly and comfortably against the side of the face and completely cover the mouth and nose and extend over the chin area.

Exceptions to the required mask/face covering may include:

1. While in a single-occupancy office alone,
2. In an outdoor area if social distancing can be maintained.

These Masking Protocols will be in effect until further notice. The evaluation of the need to further modify these protocols or implement additional practice modifications will be continuous. The decision regarding when and under what conditions these protocols will be rescinded will be based upon the evaluation of information and guidance received from federal, state, and local government and prevailing health authorities.

NON-COMPLIANCE WITH MASKING PROTOCOLS

Non-compliance with this or other Safety guidelines may result in corrective/disciplinary action depending on the severity and/or frequency of the non-compliance.

What if someone refuses to wear a mask?

1. Remind the individual of the requirement to wear a mask.
2. Refusal to comply with the published safety requirement may result in disciplinary action through the applicable *Code of Conduct* for faculty, staff, or students.
3. For student refusal, ask the student to leave the area and report the Director of Student and Campus Services (Ryan Spry) on the Wallace Campus and the Coordinator, Student Services (Earl Bynum) on the Sparks Campus.
4. For faculty or staff issues, supervisors should report non-compliance to the Dean, Business Affairs (Marc Nicholas).
5. For visitor issues, report non-compliance to the Dean, Business Affairs (Marc Nicholas).

Disciplinary Procedures

Employees found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Personnel Handbook and the ACCS Board of Trustees policies. Students found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.