

Revision Responsibility: Vice President, Finance and Administration

Responsible Executive Officer: President

Source/Reference: [TBR Policy 07.03.00.00](#)
[T.C.A. § 49-8-203](#)

PURPOSE

This policy informs Columbia State staff, students, and campus visitors of college policy, procedures, and/or plans designed to prevent the spread or outbreak of infectious and/or communicable diseases. This policy will be interpreted and the procedures/plans administered in order to protect the health, safety and well-being of the College community.

DEFINITIONS

- Blood borne pathogens - Infectious microorganisms in human blood that can cause disease in humans, which include, but are not limited to, Hepatitis B Virus (HBV), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and other infectious blood borne diseases.
- Communicable Disease - An illness due to an infectious agent or its toxic products which is transmitted directly or indirectly to a well person from an infected person or animal, or through the agency of an intermediate animal host, vector, or inanimate environment.
- Infectious Disease - A disease, e.g. influenza, malaria, meningitis, rabies, or tetanus, caused by the entrance into the body of pathogenic agents or microorganisms, e.g. bacteria, viruses, protozoans, or fungi, which arises through transmission of that disease agent from one individual to others, either directly or indirectly. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and/or Tennessee Department of Health provides information on different infectious diseases.
- Quarantine - A mandatory or voluntary separation and/or restriction of the movement of people have been, or are reasonably suspected to have been, exposed to an infectious/communicable disease to see if they become sick.
- Isolation - A mandatory or voluntary separation of sick people diagnosed with an infectious/communicable disease from people who are not sick.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - Equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards from contact with infectious/communicable disease, chemical, radiological, physical, electrical, mechanical, or other workplace hazards. Personal protective equipment may include items such as gloves, safety glasses and shoes, earplugs or muffs, hard hats, respirators, or coveralls, vests, and full body suits.

POLICY/GUIDELINES

Columbia State Community College will comply with all Federal and State laws, Executive Orders, Rules, Regulations, and Guidance from Public Health Agencies/Authorities applicable to outbreaks of infectious and/or communicable diseases. This policy authorizes the College to enact policies, procedures, and/or plans to facilitate compliance with such laws, orders, and guidance, for the purpose of making best efforts to prevent the spread of infectious/communicable diseases within the campus community.

College employees, students, and other persons entering the premises of any Columbia State campuses shall be required to comply with all policies, procedures, and/or plans established relating to the control of an outbreak of infectious/communicable diseases. Implementation and enforcement of policies, procedures, and/or plans promulgated in response to an outbreak of an infectious/communicable disease shall be enforced with the primary goal of achieving compliance with the applicable policy or plan. Removal from campus or discipline of individuals who are not compliant with the College's policy or plan, is authorized as necessary after efforts at obtaining compliance have been exhausted or as health, safety, and security require.

PROCEDURES

I. Infectious/Communicable Disease Plans

- A. During certain communicable disease outbreaks such as a large epidemic or pandemic, Columbia State may be required, or may find it appropriate, to develop and implement a plan or procedure to comply with laws, orders or directives issued by government or public health officials to address and/or curtail such outbreaks. In developing such plans/procedures, Columbia State shall do so in a manner that is consistent with applicable lawful orders issued by government authorities and guidance from public health authorities including, but not limited to, the CDC, federal, state and local public health agencies. When creating such a plan/procedure, Columbia State shall also take care to comply with all applicable state and federal laws, including but not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), and/or all laws governing/prohibiting unlawful discrimination. Columbia State shall consult with the TBR Office of General Counsel (OGC) to ensure that any policy or plan promulgated in response to an outbreak of an infectious/communicable disease is compliant with such laws.
- B. During an outbreak of an infectious/communicable disease, and consistent with guidance from appropriate health authorities, Columbia State may take steps to identify and address potential actions or protocols that are appropriate given, the nature and circumstances associated with a particular outbreak/disease, including but not limited to the following:

1. Implementation of health screening protocols as a pre-condition to entry onto/into any campus or facility owned, or controlled by Columbia State, consistent with guidance or directives from local, state, or federal authorities.
2. Implementation of health safety protocols as a requirement of permitted presence for persons entering any campus or facility owned or controlled by Columbia State, consistent with guidance or directives from local, state, or federal authorities. (e.g., wearing a mask or PPE to prevent shedding/spreading a virus.)
3. Establishment of requirements requiring individuals who travel to and from countries with active communicable disease outbreaks to report such travel and quarantine and/or isolate for established periods of time prior to entry/return to any campus/facility owned or controlled by the institution.
4. Restrict business related travel to high-risk locations.
5. Require individuals seeking to return to any campus or facility after any period of travel, to self-quarantine, or isolate and to provide evidence of testing, screening(s) or other information from a treating medical professional, that the individual is free from, or not likely to transmit, a particular infectious/communicable disease consistent with public health/medical guidance, as permitted by law, prior to returning to any College campus/facility.
6. Require individuals seeking to return to any campus or facility after any period of quarantine or isolation related to a diagnosis or exposure to an infectious/communicable disease, to provide evidence of testing, screening(s) or other information from a treating medical professional, that the individual is free from or not medically likely to transmit the particular infectious/communicable disease at issue consistent with public health/medical guidance and as permitted by law, prior to returning to any campus/facility.
7. Inquire about any symptoms recently experienced, consistent with an infectious/communicable disease, by any individual seeking to enter campus.
8. Require an individual to submit to an appropriate medical evaluation from a physician of the College's choosing at the College's expense prior to entering any campus or facility.
9. Consult with an individual's physician (with appropriate consent) regarding the health of any individual relative to an infectious/communicable disease, prior to entering any College campus or facility.

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10. Consult with public health authorities and/or other qualified persons or resources, to assist in determining any appropriate course of action.
 11. Exclude individuals from any campus/facility who are infected with, or have been exposed to, an infectious/communicable disease from any campus, facility, or activity. Employees will be subject to the College's policies, procedures and other requirements for requesting/receiving benefits and leaves of absence.
 12. Activate College Emergency Operations to consider measures such as social distancing, College closure, cleaning procedures, travel monitoring, class suspension, use of PPE, etc.
 13. Implement other temporary action(s) that is/are reasonably required to prevent unacceptable risk of introduction or exposure of an infectious or communicable disease to a Columbia State campus or community, until the College is able to consult with a physician or local, state, or federal authorities.
 14. Establish alternate work plans and/or education delivery plans.
 15. Implement all health/safety requirements imposed by federal, state, and/or local authorities as applicable to members of the College community.
- C. The primary focus of Columbia State's infectious/communicable disease plan shall be to maintain and protect the health and safety of the College community.
- D. Columbia State's infectious/communicable disease plan should permit, to the extent reasonably possible, students who are impacted by an infectious/communicable disease to continue to participate in an educational program. The College's infectious/communicable disease plan should permit, to the extent reasonably possible, employees who are impacted by an infectious/communicable disease to continue to work, as long as an employee is able to perform the essential functions of the job satisfactorily. The College will consider making reasonable accommodations for impacted students and employees consistent with applicable federal, state, and local laws as well as guidance from public health Authorities. Discrimination against and/or harassment of employees and/or students impacted by an infectious/communicable disease is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.
- E. Health care workers, personal service workers, and food service workers employed by the College will be expected to follow all guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and protocols at affiliate sites for the prevention of transmission of infectious/communicable diseases. The College will make educational materials on infectious, communicable diseases available for students and employees.

II. Responsibilities

A. General

Through the President, and/or designee, the College Administration will develop procedures and regulations concerning the outbreak of infectious, communicable, and/or life-threatening diseases that are appropriate to the particular circumstances and guidance, and consistent with this policy. The President, and/or designee, should include individuals with appropriate authority over essential functions of the College, as well as persons with relevant medical/health education/experience in the process to develop procedures and/or regulations responsive to the outbreak of an infectious/communicable disease. Such procedures and/or regulations will be published to the College community as appropriate. In meeting its compliance obligations, Columbia State will prioritize, in descending order:

1. Health and Safety of the Campus and Surrounding Community,
2. Continuity of Education Mission for Students,
3. Minimized Disruption of Employment for Faculty & Staff

B. Environmental Health and Safety

Plans will require the appropriate Vice President(s), or designees, to coordinate environmental health and safety, police/security, custodial, and maintenance services personnel to ensure that procedures, regulations, and appropriate precautions are implemented to minimize the risk of introduction, exposure, and/or spread of infectious/communicable, and/or life-threatening diseases. This will include special attention to custodial, public safety and other employees and students with increased likelihood of exposure to the infectious/communicable diseases.

C. Internal Communication of Procedures

1. Plans will include the requirement that the appropriate Vice President(s), Human Resources Director(s), or designees will ensure education and outreach programs are developed to provide employees and students with appropriate factual material regarding relevant disease protocols and precautions.
2. Plans should ensure that clear guidance is provided about the referral of questions regarding infectious/communicable diseases, or life threatening illnesses, to the appropriate Vice President, Human Resources Director, designee, or the College's Employee Assistance Program.

D. Response to Notifications

Infectious/Communicable disease plans should provide for the response to information acquired by the institution regarding any individual present on an institution's campus who is/has been diagnosed, infected, or exposed to an infectious/communicable disease. The plan will provide for the President and/or designee(s) to recommend medically reasonable efforts/action to confirm, assess, and respond to the reasonably anticipated risk to the campus community and communication with the appropriate health department authorities as required. Responsibilities will also include the confirmation of reports of infectious/communicable diseases affecting the college/campus/community.

E. External Communications

Infectious/Communicable disease plans should provide that decisions concerning official communications with external stakeholders will be disseminated from the President's or other designated office. Columbia State will follow Tennessee Department of Health guidance for reporting occurrences to appropriate health authorities.

F. Confidentiality

1. Infectious/Communicable disease plans shall provide that Columbia State will maintain confidentiality of medical information received and will not disclose the identity of any individual who has been infected, diagnosed or exposed to an infectious/communicable disease, except to individuals with a need to know or as may be permitted or required by law, absent consent from the affected individual.
2. College employees will be informed that they are to take reasonable precautions to comply with confidentiality obligations, e.g. FERPA, ADA, FMLA, HIPAA, and/or state confidentiality laws. An employee, other than the affected employee or student, who inappropriately releases confidential medical information shall be subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment. In certain situations, specific government reporting requirements or a medical justification may necessitate the disclosure of health information, and nothing in this policy shall be construed to prohibit disclosure of health information consistent with mandatory and permissive disclosure laws and obligations.

New policy: Recommended by Cabinet Approved by the President November 17, 2020. Reviewed, accepted by Cabinet and approved and signed by the President May 2023