

2.2.18 Communicable Disease Policy for Employees

Policy approved by the Board of Trustees – June 24, 2020

Purpose

Westmoreland County Community College is committed to assuring that all necessary training and precautions are taken with regard to communicable diseases. The College adopts this communicable disease policy for employees in an effort to provide a safe working environment, control communicable diseases and the threat of pandemics on campus based upon established rules and regulations of local government officials, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

Definitions

A communicable disease is an illness which is capable of being spread to a susceptible host through the direct or indirect transmission of an infectious agent or its toxic product by an infected person, animal or arthropod, or through the inanimate environment. 28 Pa Code Chapter 27. Communicable Disease shall include those diseases listed in 28 Pa Code Chapter 27 as well as those diseases contributing to an outbreak as declared by either the local government officials, the PA DOH or the CDC. Examples of communicable diseases include, but are not limited to: chickenpox, mononucleosis, conjunctivitis, hepatitis A, B and D, acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), AIDS-related complex, positive HIV antibody status, COVID-19 and other forms of highly contagious influenza, measles, meningitis, tuberculosis and pertussis.

Practice and Procedure

1. College employees who have symptoms of, are infected with or have a reasonable basis for believing that they are infected with a communicable disease have an ethical and, in some cases, a legal responsibility of reporting this fact to the College in order to protect themselves and prevent spread of the disease to their coworkers and students. The College abides by all state and federal privacy laws and does not intend to deprive employees of the rights afforded them by these statutes by adopting this policy.
2. Employees who wish to report a communicable disease or who have questions regarding their reporting obligations under this policy may make confidential inquiries to the Director of Human Resources. Inquiries made regarding interpretation or application of this policy will remain strictly confidential. Any medical information received by the College regarding an employee's medical condition will be handled in accordance with this policy.
3. Employees shall not be denied access to the workplace solely on the grounds that they have possible symptoms of a communicable disease unless such exclusion is authorized by law. However, if employees are experiencing symptoms they should seek medical treatment at their medical provider. In addition, employees are encouraged not report to work or come into any College facility until such time as the symptoms subside and they have medical clearance to return to work.

Employee Policies

4. In the case of a pandemic or similar emergency as declared by local, state or national officials, the College is committed to adhere to the governmental guidelines for workplace safety as issued by state and federal agencies such as OSHA, the PA DOH and CDC. In these cases, the College will issue appropriate workplace directives which must be adhered to by all employees as a condition of employment. Such directives may include medical assessment or examination of employees such as taking body temperatures or other physical examination in the workplace. When such examinations or assessment are required, they will be done so in accordance with state and federal law including procedures recommended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
5. Employees who are infected with a communicable disease are expected to seek expert medical advice and are encouraged to advise appropriate health authorities. Local health authorities as well as the PA DOH and CDC can offer guidance and/or counseling to these employees about measures that can be taken to prevent the spread of infection and to protect their own health.
6. Medical information relating to the communicable disease of an employee will be kept strictly confidential and disclosed to responsible College officials only on a need to know basis in accordance with applicable law including, but not limited to, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. No person, group, agency, insurer, employer, or institution will be provided any medical information without the prior specific written consent of an employee unless required by law.
7. If an employee reports a communicable disease condition, the employee may be excluded from the College until an appropriate evaluation of the employee's medical condition can be made. The evaluation may be made by a physician or a health department official and testing may be required if appropriate.
8. Employees who work in any School of Health Professions program may have additional requirements, as specified by each program's policy. These employees may be required to report all suspected communicable diseases.
9. The final determination of whether an employee who has contracted a communicable disease is able to remain at work will be made by the Director of Human Resources based upon professional medical evaluation results and recommendations. The attendance of such an employee on campus or at any College activity may be prohibited until a satisfactory letter or certificate is obtained from one or more licensed physicians or public health officials stating that the employee is not a health risk to students and other employees at the College.