

PANOLA COLLEGE

Infectious/Communicable Disease Policy

Panola College 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 afflicted with communicable diseases.

Communicable disease is defined as any condition which 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. Communicable disease includes, but is not limited to: influenza; tuberculosis; conjunctivitis; infectious mononucleosis; pertussis (whooping cough); acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), AIDS-related complex (ARC), positive HIV antibody status; hepatitis A, B, C and D; meningitis; community associated methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (CA-MRSA); Coronavirus (COVID-19); measles; West Nile virus; Ebola; and sexually transmitted diseases.

Bacterial Meningitis: Texas Education Code, §51.9192, Subchapter Z, establishes the requirement for bacterial meningitis vaccination for certain students and identifies exceptions to that requirement. Typically, all entering students who are less than 22 years of age must show proof of having received a bacterial meningitis immunization or booster within the five-year period immediately preceding enrollment.

Infectious/Communicable Disease Procedures:

Persons who know or who have reason to believe they are infected with a communicable disease have an obligation to conduct themselves in accordance with such knowledge in order to protect themselves and others. Students and employees who have communicable diseases, whether symptomatic or not, will be allowed regular classroom and work attendance in a non-restrictive manner, as long as they are able to attend classes and/or work and do not pose a medically proven threat for transmission of the disease or condition. Therefore, when there is no medical justification for restricting the access of students and employees who have communicable diseases, they will be allowed access to all College facilities and services. All medical information related to the communicable diseases of students and employees will be kept confidential and no person, group, agency, insurer, employer, or institution will 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.

Employee Self-Monitoring Requirements in Relation to Coronavirus (COVID-19):

Anyone showing the following symptoms should not report to campus and should contact their supervisor immediately to make alternate working arrangements:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Having recently traveled to or been on a cruise to any high-risk areas for transmission of COVID-19 within the U.S. or other countries.

Return to Work Criteria – COVID-19

Should an employee test positive for COVID-19, the following criteria will be used for their return to work:

1. The employee certifies in writing that the employee is fever-free and has been completely symptom free (no cough, chills, or other symptoms consistent with COVID-19) for at least three (3) days; and
2. At least fourteen (14) calendar days have passed since the employee first exhibited symptoms.

OR

3. The employee provides documentation from a medical provider confirming that the employee can return to work, and that the employee had a negative test for COVID-19. Even with a medical release, the employee cannot return within seventy-two (72) hours of being screened with fever.

On-Campus Safety Measures:

- Employees and students should maintain six feet separation where possible, which will be reinforced through signs, posters, and markings on the floors.
- Employees are required to wear face coverings in all common areas and any time the six-foot separation barrier cannot be maintained.
- Everyone should practice the following safety measures:
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Avoid close contact.
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick, even inside your home. If possible, maintain six feet between the person who is sick and other household members.
 - Put distance between yourself and other people outside of your home.
 - Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread a virus.
 - Stay at least six feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.
 - Do not gather in groups and stay out of crowded places.
 - Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.
 - Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others.
 - You could spread germs to others even if you do not feel sick.
 - Cover coughs and sneezes
 - Throw used tissues in the trash.
 - Immediately wash your hands.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
 - Monitor your health
 - Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms.
 - Take your temperature if symptoms develop.

This policy and information reflects the current understanding and ongoing response needs for higher education institutions based on recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Texas Department of State Health Services.