Public Health Guidance for Educational Institutions

Universities | Colleges

**Conduct Risk Assessment**
Establish critical protective guidelines. Consider the following questions:

- Are there locations where employees routinely congregate?
- Are tools and equipment frequently shared by multiple employees?
- Does customer flow allow for social distancing measures?
- Where are areas in your business that would not allow customers and staff to properly distance?
- Who are your high risk employees?
- Is your business actively engaged in activities that promote disease transmission?
- Does your business have existing cleaning and disinfecting procedures?
- How quickly can you communicate with employees?
- Are communication resources needed in multiple languages?

**Physical Distancing**
Establish policies and procedures for social distancing. Consider the following:

- Maintain a safe social distance of six feet or more in all settings, including meetings.
- Meeting sizes, in terms of number of participants, should be kept to a minimum in order to maintain safe social distance of six feet.
- Meeting venue should be large enough to accommodate the six feet minimum social distancing.
- In areas of high-volume traffic, utilize spacing tools for social distancing screenings and lines (e.g., place tape on floor to keep people adequately spaced; place arrows in the aisle to direct the flow of movement in one direction).
- Rearrange student desks/workstations to accommodate appropriate social distancing measures.
- Limit cafeteria and snack area tables and chairs to minimize congregation of students.

**Engineering & Environmental Controls**
Improve engineering controls and perform routine environmental cleaning.

Consider the following:

- Increase ventilation rates and percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system.
- Support respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene for employees, students, and visitors by:
  - Provide tissues, no-touch disposal receptacles, and soap and water in the workplace (if not readily available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol). Ensure adequate supplies are maintained and place hand sanitizers in multiple locations.
  - Place posters that encourage hand hygiene to help stop the spread of COVID-19 at the entrance to your building and in other areas where they are likely to be seen.
  - Discourage handshaking – encourage the use of other non-contact methods of greeting.
  - Direct employees and students to visit CDC website for information on coughing and sneezing etiquette and handwashing.
Engineering & Environmental Controls

**Improve engineering controls and perform routine environmental cleaning.**

Consider the following:

- Perform routine environmental cleaning and disinfection.
  - Routinely disinfect all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs.
  - Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, and common areas) used by staff and students focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces; if surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.
- Discourage workers and students from using others’ phones, desks, offices, or other office tools and equipment, when possible. If they must use, provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (including doorknobs, remote controls, etc.) can be wiped down between each use.
- Perform enhanced cleaning and disinfection after suspected cases of COVID-19 has been in the building.
- Use of existing infrastructure and services (e.g., Blackboard, Skype, Zoom) to support efficient transition of classes from in-person to distance-based formats. This may include using strategies such as faculty check-ins, recorded class meetings or lectures, and live class meetings.
- Other student support services such as online library services, print materials available online, phone- or Internet-based counseling support, or study groups enabled through digital media.
- Consider using webinar hybrid classes; offer an in-person class as well as live stream via a webinar service at the same time. Participants would need to pre-register.
- To avoid lines and waiting time, encourage participants to call ahead to register for classes; ideally take payment information over the phone or invest in a touchless payment system.
- Install physical barriers (plexiglass or plastic window) in areas that would minimize direct face-to-face interaction.

Administrative Controls

**Establish administrative controls while employees and visitors are onsite.**

Consider the following:

- Identify a workplace coordinator who will be responsible for COVID-19 issues and their impact at the workplace
  - Implement daily health and temperature screenings for employees upon arriving to work.
- Review Human Resource policies to make sure that policies and practices are consistent with both public health recommendations and existing state and federal workplace laws.
  - Implement flexible sick leave and supportive policies and practices.
  - Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and provide employee training on new policies. If sick leave is not a benefit, it is recommended that the employer draft a non-punitive emergency sick leave policy.
  - Maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member or take care of children due to school/daycare closures.
Review Human Resource policies to make sure that policies and practices are consistent with both public health recommendations and existing state and federal workplace laws (continued).

- Employers should not require a positive COVID-19 test result or a healthcare provider’s note for employees who are sick to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or to return to work.
- Connect employees to Employee Assistance Program (EAP) resources and community resources as needed. Employees may need additional social, behavioral, and other services for mental health support.
- Encourage students and staff to stay home when sick, even without documentation from doctors. Use flexibility, when possible, to allow staff to stay home to care for sick family members.

Assess essential functions and the reliance the community has on your services/products.

- Talk with companies that provide your business with contract or temporary employees about the importance of sick employees staying home and encourage them to develop non-punitive leave policies.
- Determine how you will operate if absenteeism spikes from increases in sick employees, those who stay home to care for sick family members, and those who must stay home to watch their children. Plan to monitor and respond to absenteeism in the workplace. Implement plans to continue your essential business functions. Prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies. Cross-train employees to perform essential functions so the workplace can operate even if key employees are absent.

- Ensure the emergency operation plan emphasizes everyday preventive actions for students and staff.
- Test communication capacity, and reiterate steps staff and students can take to stay healthy.
- Identify critical job functions and positions, and plan for alternative coverage by cross-training staff.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Require the appropriate type of PPE for employees and customers.

Consider the following:

- Cloth face coverings should be worn at all times by students and school staff (teachers, administrators, security, etc.).
- Gloves can be worn as necessary.