

COVID Guidelines at the University

Office of Human Resources



Revised: 3/16/22

Workplace Expectations & Guidelines

Our goal is to continue all campus activities with a full complement of faculty and staff teaching and working on campus. The return to campus has been implemented with the utmost consideration given to protecting the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff. This document provides information, expectations, and guidelines that all Westfield State employees are expected to follow.

Employee Expectations:

Safeguarding the health and safety of the campus community is paramount. Therefore, employees are expected to notify the Covid-19 Manager by calling 413-572-5636, or emailing gpschenichnaya@westfield.ma.edu, if they have been in contact with, exposed to, exhibiting symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19.

Vaccinated and unvaccinated employees reporting to the workplace are expected to inform the Covid-19 Manager (identified above) if they:

1. Have come in contact with or have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Based on the CDC's current knowledge, a close contact is: Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, *three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes*).
2. Are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19; or
3. Have tested positive for COVID-19.

When employees call in sick:

Consistent with existing University policy, employees are responsible for contacting their supervisor if they are unable to report to work for any reason. When an employee calls in sick, the employee should provide and/or may be asked if they are exhibiting symptoms consistent with COVID-19. CDC states that symptoms include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, sore throat, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and/or diarrhea. For the current list of symptoms, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

The University regards any responses from employees as confidential medical information and asks that employees contact the Covid-19 Manager if they are experiencing symptoms consistent with the virus. If a supervisor, manager, or department head receives a call from an employee who discloses information about symptoms, they must immediately notify the Covid-19 Manager at 413-572-5636 or gpschenichnaya@westfield.ma.edu. Supervisors, managers, and department heads are expected to direct employees to contact the Covid-19 Manager directly rather than discuss confidential medical information or collect confidential medical information from their employees.

What to do if you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms:

- If an employee is experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, the employee should remain out of the workplace and use their leave accruals to cover their absence. Symptomatic employees are encouraged to get tested for COVID-19, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated.
- If an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and has worked on campus, experiencing symptoms and/or diagnosis, the employee should contact the Covid-19 Manager and remain out of the workplace for a minimum of 5 days, from the date of the test, or when a medical clearance allows them to return. Providing this information to the Covid-19 Manager will help the University with the notifications for contact tracing.

- Employees diagnosed with COVID-19 will not be able to return to the workplace before receiving approval from Human Resources. The University reserves the right to require medical documentation before an employee is permitted to return to work.
- If employees have exhausted all accrued leave, eligible APA and MSCA employees shall be allowed to use the sick leave bank. AFSCME employees who have exhausted their accrued leave may apply for an extension of sick leave, provided they have been employed for a minimum of twelve (12) consecutive months prior to the commencement of such request for an extension of sick leave.
- Employees must contact their supervisor, prior to their shift start, if they are unable to report to work.

What to do if you have been in close contact to someone who tested positive:

Before reporting to work, all employees are expected to contact the Covid-19 Manager at 413-572-5636 or gpschenichnaya@westfield.ma.edu. The Covid-19 Manager will provide instructions on any necessary quarantine time, testing, and when to return to work. Employees must contact their supervisor, prior to their shift start, if they are unable to report to work.

Human Resources asks that the employee follow-up with the Covid-19 Manager if they have contracted COVID-19.

When an employee in the workplace has COVID-19:

When an employee has contracted COVID-19, the employee will be asked by the Covid-19 Manager to leave the workplace and use sick leave or other available accrued leave. Should the employee not have available accrued leave to cover their absence, Human Resources will discuss with the employee available leave options or possible alternative work arrangements.

Symptom Monitoring:

Before coming back to work, employees who have been quarantined must be free of any symptoms potentially related to COVID-19. Employees are encouraged to take their temperature every day before returning to work.

Updated COVID Guidelines:

The CDC continues to revise the COVID protocol guidelines. See the grid below to answer your questions or refer to the FAQ located on the website.

COVID Protocol Guidelines:

Condition	Vaccination Status	What do I do?	When do I return to work?	Other Precautions	Can I work from home?	How do I get paid for this time?
Test Positive for Covid At-home Covid tests must be confirmed within 48 hours by a PCR test.	Vaccinated with Booster	Isolate for 5 days following date of positive test result.	Return to work on 6 th day following positive test result if no symptoms.	Wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days following the positive test result.	If your job permits and you feel well enough, make arrangements with your supervisor to work from home.	Employees should use accrued sick leave.
	Vaccinated w/o booster	Schedule PCR test if you have not taken one already.	If symptomatic; continue to isolate until symptoms cease.			
	Partially vaccinated					
	Unvaccinated					

Close Contact with someone who tested Positive for Covid	Vaccinated with Booster	No need to quarantine; wear well-fitting mask for 10 days; get PCR Covid test after 5th day of close contact.	Can report to work immediately if displaying no symptoms.	If you experience symptoms; stay out of work and follow instructions for Close Contact for someone experiencing symptoms.	Report to work if not experiencing symptoms	Regular Pay for reporting to work as scheduled.
Close Contact with someone who tested Positive for Covid - Not experiencing symptoms	Vaccinated w/o booster Partially vaccinated Unvaccinated	Quarantine for 5 days after close contact if no symptoms. Get a PCR test on the 5th day	Report to work after receiving negative COVID test result	Wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days following the close contact; monitor symptoms	If your job permits and you feel well enough, make arrangements with your supervisor to work from home	Employees should use accrued sick leave.
Close Contact with someone who tested Positive for Covid - Experiencing symptoms	Vaccinated w/o booster Partially vaccinated Unvaccinated	Isolate and get PCR test immediately. If you test positive, isolate for 5 days.	Return to work on 6 th day following positive test result if no symptoms. If symptomatic; continue to isolate until symptoms cease. If you test negative, end isolation and return to work.	Wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days following the close contact	If your job permits and you feel well enough, make arrangements with your supervisor to work from home	Employees should use accrued sick leave.
Employee with primary care giver responsibilities to someone testing positive or school, daycare, elder care closings.	Vaccinated with Booster Vaccinated w/o booster Partially vaccinated Unvaccinated	Contact HR or the Covid manager for specific guidance.	Dependent on specific situation	Wear a well-fitting masks; monitor for symptoms	If your job permits and you feel well enough, make arrangements with your supervisor to work from home	Employees should use accrued sick leave.

More information can be found in the COVID FAQs under the category “employee-specific FAQs for vaccine and mask requirements”—[click here](#).

For a list of symptom updates, employees should go directly to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

Mental and Emotional Wellbeing

In a time of crisis, such as COVID-19, it’s not unusual to experience emotional and psychological disturbances. You might find that you feel more anxious, depressed, angry, as well as have times when you have difficulty sleeping, eating, focusing or enjoying life. These may be reactions to the stress the virus brings to your life. At times like these, it may be helpful to see someone for help in managing the feelings you’re having. You wouldn’t be alone in the need for extra help; many people are turning to mental health providers to assist in taking care of their mental health.

Community resources include:

- [Behavioral Health Network: The Carson Center \(413-568-1421\) in Westfield;](#)
- [National Suicide Prevention Hotline:](#) 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for English, 1-888-628-9454
- [National Domestic Violence Hotline:](#) 1-800-799-7233 or text LOVEIS to 22522; and
- [The Eldercare Locator:](#) 1-800-677-1116 – TTY Instructions.
- [Child care:](#) visit https://eeclead.force.com/apex/EEC_ChildCareEmergencyProcedure
- [Wellness During COVID-19](#)

The following resources have been made available through Human Resources:

The Albert and Amelia Interfaith Center

Fr. Warren J. Savage, Campus Clergy and Spiritual Advisors
Director and Catholic Chaplain (413) 572-5567 wsavage@westfield.ma.edu

AllOne Health, Westfield State’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP), offers services and support to employees and their family members in need of guidance. Free confidential telephone or video counseling is available, as well as online courses and a broad a range of self-assessment tools to guide you to healthy learning-and-decision making. If you need to speak with a counselor, or have questions about the program, call the EAP at 800-451-1834, or visit its website at mylifeexpert.com . *As a first time user, you will need to sign up. Please select create a new account with your company code. The company code is westfield.*

Mass4You, the State Employee Assistance Program provided by the Group Insurance Commission (GIC), is a friendly, confidential service that provides a range of resources for any life situation. Need a rental car? Meals delivered to your home? Mass4You will search and verify services to help you and your family, and will provide support when times are tough. For information and assistance, call 1-844-263-1982, or visit liveandworkwell.com and use the access code mass4you.

Training for COVID-19 Protocol

Westfield State will continue to offer training to its faculty and staff about hygiene protocols. The training for faculty and staff will continue to be administered through Human Resources, and the Division of Student Affairs will continue to administer the appropriate training for students. Supervisors are expected to continually remind employees of safety precautions, hygiene protocols, and other measures aimed at reducing virus transmission.

Campus training will include:

- Supervisory responsibility around COVID-19 policy and procedures;
- Self-screening at home, including temperature-and-symptom checks;
- Importance of not coming to work if experiencing Covid-19 symptoms;
- When to seek medical attention if symptoms become severe

Supervisors who conduct training should know that the training does not need to include in-person training. Training can be done through virtual means or providing this document for discussion with teams. Departments may request a representative from Human Resources to join their department meeting to discuss/clarify specific health and safety or workplace/personnel matters.

Health and Safety Guidance

Continued Personal Safety Practices

Handwashing: 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, sneezing, or touching your face. 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, and wash your hands after touching your face.

Facemasks: As of March 21, 2022, masks will no longer be a requirement at Westfield State University except those areas where healthcare services are being provided (healthcare center and counseling center), and on-campus transportation. This applies to all university employees, students and visitors regardless of vaccination status.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health advises a fully vaccinated individual should wear a mask indoors if you have a weakened immune system, or if you are at increased risk for severe disease because of your age or an underlying medical condition, or if someone in your household has a weakened immune system, is at increased risk for severe disease or is unvaccinated.

Vaccinations and Boosters:

All Faculty and Staff are required to be fully vaccinated and obtain the booster for COVID variants at the beginning of the Spring 2022 Semester. The booster eligibility date is dependent upon the date and type of your last vaccination (varies between 2 -5 months). You need to receive your booster within 30 days from eligibility date.

Vaccine and Booster Exemptions:

Employees may seek a medical or religious exemption from Human Resources. These exemption forms are linked below: [Employee Medical Exemption Request](#) & [Religious Exemption Request](#).

Employees must file a request form and provide medical documentation for a medical exemption or a written statement for a religious exemption. Requests should be sent to Tina Bones in Human Resources (lbones@westfield.ma.edu). Human Resources will also be able to assist you with any questions.

Testing:

Employees approved for a medical or religious exemption are required to participate in the University's weekly surveillance testing. Weekly asymptomatic (surveillance) testing is offered at the University (New Hall, 141B) on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., or an employee can provide the Covid-19 Manager weekly proof of a test conducted at an external site. Employees who are symptomatic can come on campus for testing however; they should not go back to their offices until cleared or symptom free.

Guidance for Specific Workplace Consideration

Public Transportation: Wear a mask before entering any shared transportation vehicle (bus, ride-sharing service, carpool, etc.) and avoid touching surfaces with your hands. Upon disembarking, wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers with greater-than 60% alcohol as soon as possible and before removing your mask.

Meals: Before and after eating, thoroughly wash your hands to reduce the potential transmission of the virus.

Resources and References

Employees may visit the CDC, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and/or Westfield State University's websites for more information and updates regarding COVID-19.

The following resources are available to employees to check symptoms:

Buoy Health – Symptom Checker

[https://www.buoyhealth.com/symptom-checker/?configuration=ma %20covid&concern=coronavirus](https://www.buoyhealth.com/symptom-checker/?configuration=ma%20covid&concern=coronavirus)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

Tips for at Home Quarantine or Self-Monitoring

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/10-tips-for-at-home-quarantine-or-self-monitoring/download>

Note: This document was prepared using resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts state government executive orders, Memorandums of Amendment from Union Contracts, and guidance and memorandums from the Office of the Governor.

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