SUNY Potsdam’s Guide for Returning to Work

Index
1. Introduction and Potsdam Pledge
2. Policy
3. Preventing the Spread of COVID-19
4. Resources
5. Appendix
   a. Department Head Return to Work Checklist
   b. Department Staffing Plan

1. Introduction and Potsdam Pledge

SUNY Potsdam’s response to returning employees to work is critical in maintaining health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. SUNY Potsdam must follow all regulations and requirements when returning employees to work including regional preparedness for re-opening and establishing and remaining in close contact with local department of health officials. This guide was developed to assist in the return of employees to work. It first important to remember our guiding principles in the Potsdam Pledge.

Potsdam Pledge:

Being more than a collection of individuals, SUNY Potsdam is a community dedicated to the pursuit of common goals. While these goals can be elusive and controversial, the community described below
reminds us not only of what we are seeking to become, but of all that we share in common. Therefore, let it be known that SUNY Potsdam strives to be:

- An **Educational Community** sharing academic goals and in which students, faculty and staff work together to strengthen teaching and learning;
- An **Open Community** uncompromisingly protecting freedom of thought, belief and expression;
- A **Civil Community** expressing disagreements in rational and non-threatening ways, and treating all individuals with consideration, decency and respect;
- A **Responsible Community** accepting obligations under clearly articulated principles of behavior designed to support the common good;
- A **Safe Community** respecting each other’s rights, privacy and property;
- A **Healthy Community** respecting and promoting physical and emotional wellness;
- An **Ethical Community** reflecting honesty, integrity and fairness, in both academic and extracurricular activities;
- A **Diverse Community** celebrating our differences and learning from our diversity;
- A **Socially Conscious Community** seeking to contribute to the betterment of the campus, the local community, the nation and the world;
- A **Watchful Community** remaining alert to the threats posed by hatred, intolerance and other injustices, and ever-prepared to combat them.

2. **Policy**

**Faculty and Staff Health & Safety during COVID-19**

**Definitions**

The following terms are used in this policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19</td>
<td>The virus that causes COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has spread throughout the world. COVID-19 is a virus that can spread from person to person. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has stated that symptoms can appear 2-14 days after exposure and include: cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, headache, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea. Although these symptoms are not all inclusive they are reported by the CDC as the most common. COVID-19 is spread by being in close contact with a person with COVID-19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contact with another person who has COVID-19 less than 6 feet, touching your eyes, mouth or nose after touching a surface with the virus on it, and from respiratory droplets from an infected person when they cough, talk, or sneeze.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>The State University of New York at Potsdam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>A public employee working for The College, a Research Foundation employee associated with The College, or a PACES employee associated with The College.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Any person assigned as a supervisor of record within The College who has the authority to direct and control the work performance of an employee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor</td>
<td>Any person that is not an employee as defined by this policy but is on campus grounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Any person that an employee may have face to face contact with during the course of their workday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Disease Control (CDC)</td>
<td>The CDC is an agency that helps protect America from health, safety and security threats, both foreign and in the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Health Organization (WHO)</td>
<td>WHO's primary role is to direct international health within the United Nations' system and to lead partners in global health responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</td>
<td>PPE is equipment that is worn to minimize exposure to hazards in the work place that can cause injury and/or illness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandemic</td>
<td>A disease that has affected an entire country or entire world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Distance</td>
<td>Social distancing is the practice of staying at least 6 feet from another person. Social distancing is a key component of stopping the spread of COVID-19 as recommended by the CDC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymptomatic</td>
<td>A person producing or showing no symptoms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Underlying Health Condition**
A medical condition that may make an employee more vulnerable to COVID-19. Employees may be required to provide sufficient medical documentation to Human Resources.

**Fully Vaccinated**
Fully vaccinated is defined as two weeks after the one dose vaccine or two weeks after the second dose of the two dose vaccines.

---

**Background**

The World Health Organization (WHO) announced on January 30, 2020 a global pandemic due to the novel coronavirus COVID-19. The first known case was in Wuhan, China during December 2019. The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in the United States was in January 2020. As a result of the global pandemic the State University of New York at Potsdam (the College) will adopt this policy to aid in the safety and well-being of all employees.

**Basis for Policy**

It is of the utmost importance to the College that employee’s work in a safe environment during the pandemic. The College is implementing this policy in order to achieve the safest working environment for employees. This policy will remain in effect through the COVID-19 pandemic and/or until management, the state, and/or health officials have determined it is safe to discontinue its use. Management will review with the appropriate collective bargaining units at that time. This policy may be updated as needed to appropriately respond to the pandemic. Any changes will be discussed with the appropriate collective bargaining units and communicated to the campus community.

**Policy**

This policy applies to all employees and visitors to the campus. Employees must follow the policy below to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- **Face Covering Requirements Policy**
  To view the Face Covering Requirement Policy please click [here](#). Employees must adhere to the Face Covering Requirement Policy.

- **Social Distance**
  Unvaccinated employees or employees who choose not to show proof of full vaccination must practice social distancing to the greatest extent possible. Social distancing is critical as we have learned that people can be asymptomatic, which means they are showing no symptoms of COVID-19.

  Social distancing is one of the best tools we have to protecting each other:
  - Stay at least six feet (approximately two arm’s length) from others at all times. Employees are encouraged to professionally remind someone to maintain six feet between them.
  - Do not gather in large groups. Employees should consider where they take their meal.
break.

o Employees who take breaks during the workday must do so while maintaining social distancing requirements. Supervisors must work with their employees to stagger break times and ensure employees are not in a breakroom where social distancing cannot be maintained.

o Stay out of crowded areas and avoid mass gathering.

The College understands that not all employee’s duties can be effectively completed while engaging in social distancing. In those instances it is of the utmost importance employee’s wear their face covering.

• Department Requirements

  o Visual Cues: Department heads may post visual cues such as tape (or other floor decals) to mark six feet from any front office desk or areas that needs social distancing. This can also include visual cues around desks. This can also be used to indicate where individuals should be waiting in line. Departments may use other items as markers to ensure social distancing.

  • Occupancy: Capacity limits indoors are no longer required for fully vaccinated employees. If meetings include unvaccinated employees or employees who choose not to disclose their vaccination status, capacity is limited by the ability for those individuals to maintain at least six feet of distance between themselves and others.

    o For specifics about your area or an area you may need contact Patrick O'Brien via email at obrienpm@potsdam.edu.

Symptomatic Employee

It is recommended that employees monitor their symptoms. If an employee is feeling symptomatic per the CDC guidance, they must contact their supervisor immediately and Human Resources. If an employee is feeling symptomatic during the course of their workday they should safely isolate themselves and immediately contact their supervisor and Human Resources.

If an employee feels sick, they are highly encouraged to stay home. Employees should follow their normal department time and attendance procedures. If an employee feels well enough to work and their position allows for productive telecommuting the College may consider this. In these instances, supervisors must work with Human Resources prior to the approval of a short term telecommuting option.

Exceptions

If an unvaccinated employee or an employee who chooses not to show proof of full vaccination is unable to wear a face covering due to an underlying health condition, they should contact the Assistant Vice President or Director of Human Resources immediately. Employees may be required to submit appropriate medical documentation to substantiate their underlying health condition. Only the Assistant Vice President or Director of Human Resources will review medical documentation. Employees should not submit medical documentation to their supervisor.

If an employee has an underlying health condition that may put them at greater risk if they contracted COVID-19 must contact the Assistant Vice President or Director of Human Resources to discuss an accommodation. Employees may be required to submit appropriate medical documentation to
substantiate their underlying health condition. Only the Assistant Director or Director of Human Resources will review medical documentation. Employees should not submit medical documentation to their supervisor.

Employees who are found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance to the appropriate collective bargaining agreement.

**Campus Contacts**

- **What if I need assistance with how my office and/or department is configured?**  
  David Fullerton, Director of Physical Plant, fullerdf@potsdam.edu

- **What if I need to discuss an underlying health condition?**  
  Melissa Proulx, Assistant Vice President for Administration & Human Resources, proulxme@potsdam.edu  
  Jennifer Murray, Director of Human Resources Operations, murrayjm@potsdam.edu

- **What if I lose my mask or it is damaged?** Environmental Health & Safety, ppe@potsdam.edu

- **Who should I contact for information about disinfecting products?**  
  Environmental Health & Safety, sds@potsdam.edu

**Responsibilities**

This policy identifies the following responsibilities as assigned to those cited below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Individual/Group</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comply with</td>
<td>All College Faculty &amp; Staff</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Executor(s)</td>
<td>Melissa Proulx</td>
<td>(315) 267-2086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Vice President for Administration &amp; Human Resources</td>
<td><a href="mailto:proulxme@potsdam.edu">proulxme@potsdam.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patrick O'Brien</td>
<td>(315) 267-2596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Director of Environmental Health &amp; Safety</td>
<td><a href="mailto:obrienpm@potsdam.edu">obrienpm@potsdam.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Change History**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Change History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/28/2021</td>
<td>Reflect changes for vaccinated employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/23/2021</td>
<td>Updated contact and title information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/27/2020</td>
<td>Added link to Face Covering Requirements Policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 10, 2020</td>
<td>New Policy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Effective Date:** July 10, 2020

**Responsible Party:**

Melissa Proulx; Patrick O’Brien

Contact Information:

(315) 267-2086
(315) 267-2596

### 3. Preventing the Spread of COVID-19

It is **recommended** that employees follow the guidance below to assist in preventing the spread of COVID-19:

- **Virtual Meetings**: Consider the use of virtual meetings where possible.
- **Use of Appointments**: If an in-person appointment is necessary, departments are encouraged to do so by appointment.
- **Drop Box**: Department heads that determine paperwork can be collected via a drop box outside their office are permitted to do so.
- **Office Objects**: It is recommended to limit the sharing of office objects, such as laptops or pens.

#### Personal Safety Practices

- **Wash Face Covering**: The College recommends that employees wash all cloth face coverings in hot water, which can kill the virus, each day after use. Since COVID-19 can live on surfaces, it is important to wash face coverings as soon as possible each day after use.
- **Putting on your Face Covering**: It is recommended you wash your hands before placing your face covering on your face. Adjust the face covering to properly fit over your mouth and nose. If you have a face covering that is adjustable, make sure it is snug to your face. While wearing a face covering, you should avoid touching the outside of the mask at all times.
- **Taking off your Face Covering**: Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth when removing your face covering. You should remove the face covering by placing your finger in the loop...
around your ear and pull the strap away from your ear (or untie if applicable). Do not place a used face covering on a surface. You should place it in a storage bag alone until proper washing can occur. Wash your hands immediately after removing your face covering.

- **Disposable Face Covering**: If you are wearing a disposable face covering, they should only be worn for one day and must be placed in the trash after use.

- **Hand Hygiene**: Frequent and proper hand hygiene is critical in reducing the spread of COVID-19. Employees are encouraged to wash their hands frequently and always after touching high traffic surfaces (such as an elevator or doorknob). Employees should also wash their hands after sneezing or coughing. Employees should wash their hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, be sure to use alcohol based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

- **Coughing/Sneezing Hygiene**: If you are in a private setting and do not have a face covering on remember to cough and/or sneeze into the inside of your elbow not your hands. Remember to immediately wash your hands as well with warm water and soap. If soap and water are not available use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.

- **Shared Food/Beverages**: Employees should not be sharing any food or beverages.

**Personal Disinfection**

- **Personal Office Space**: Employees are encouraged to disinfect their personal workspace. For example, keyboard, mouse, door knobs. This should be completed before starting your workday. Supervisors will be responsible for reporting any disinfectants brought from home to Environmental Health & Safety prior to its use. This ensures employees are using appropriate and safe disinfectant to clean their workstations. Employees may reach out to the department of Environmental Health & Safety on proper disinfecting procedures. It is also recommended employees store any non-essential items in their desk.

- **Shared Office Equipment**: There are many shared pieces of office equipment. Departments are encouraged to disinfect shared office equipment regularly throughout the day. Examples include copy machines, fax machines, and cabinets.

### 4. Resources

- NYS Office of Mental Health
- New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus Website
- St. Lawrence County Department of Health
- Cloth Face Covering Guidance
• Handwashing Guidance
• Employee Assistance Program
• SUNY Potsdam COVID-19 Website
• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus Website
• Stop the Spread of Germs