SUNY Potsdam's Guide for Returning to Work

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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.

Term	Definition
COVID-19	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 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.
College	The State University of New York at Potsdam.
Employee	A public employee working for The College, a Research Foundation employee associated with The College, or a PACES employee associated with The College.
Supervisor	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.
Visitor	Any person that is not an employee as defined by this policy but is on campus grounds.
Public	Any person that an employee may have face to face contact with during the course of their workday.
Center for Disease Control (CDC)	The CDC is an agency that helps protect America from health, safety and security threats, both foreign and in the U.S.
World Health Organization (WHO)	WHO's primary role is to direct international health within the United Nations' system and to lead partners in global health responses.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	PPE is equipment that is worn to minimize exposure to hazards in the work place that can cause injury and/or illness.
Pandemic	A disease that has affected an entire country or entire world.
Social Distance	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.
Asymptomatic	A person producing or showing no symptoms.

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.

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:

- **Screening**

  Employees must complete the self-screening tool in its entirety on each workday they physically report to work within 60 minutes prior to reporting to work. The screening tool can be found here. If an employee does not have access to the screening tool from home, they may contact Human Resources for an alternate method of screening. If an employee does not have a thermometer, they may contact Student Health Services. Supervisors will receive notice when an employee has completed their self-screening tool and they are clear to report to work. It is the responsibility of the employee and supervisor to ensure the screening tool is completed on a daily basis. If an employee answers yes to any of the questions in the screening tool, Human Resources will be notified. The employee is not to report to work and must contact Human Resources and their supervisor immediately for next steps. Employees that are in their period of no obligation or not in work status do not need to complete the screening tool until they physically begin reporting to work again.

- **Face Covering Requirements Policy**
  To view the Face Covering Requirement Policy please click here. Employee must adhere to the Face Covering Requirement Policy.

- **Training**

All employees will be required to complete a return to work training presented by the departments of Student Health and Environmental Health & Safety. The training will be administered online through the department of Human Resources.

- **Social Distance**

All employees 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:

   o Stay at least six feet (approximately two arms length) from others at all times. Employees are encouraged to professionally remind someone to maintain six feet between them.
   o 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.

- **Using the Elevator**

   Employees are encouraged to use the stairs whenever possible. However, the College understands that may not always be possible. If an employee uses an elevator, no more than one person may enter an elevator. You should stand at least 6 feet from the elevator door to maintain social distancing should someone be exiting off the elevator. While on the elevator, you must wear your face covering. Employees should avoid touching the buttons with exposed hands/fingers, if possible. Wash your hands upon departing the elevator or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

- **Department Requirements**

   Department heads are responsible for the following:

   o **Signage:** Departments heads must ensure to post signage in their department and on their office door. You can obtain the signs by clicking here. If appropriate, department heads may place one-directional signage in large open spaces or areas with multiple through-ways.

- o **Visual Cues:** Department heads must post visual cues such as tape (or other floor decals) to mark six feet from any front office desk or area that needs social distancing. This can also include visual ques 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.
  - o **Occupancy:** There may not be more than 50 percent occupancy in a specific area at a time. For specifics about your area or an area you may need contact Andy Martin via email at martinaj@potsdam.edu.
  - o **Shared Workstations:** In the event more than one employee uses a workstation, it must be cleaned between users.
- **State Vehicles**
  - o If an employee if required to use a state vehicle as part of their job, they must disinfect high touch surfaces upon entering the vehicle. This may include the steering wheel, key, shifter and seat belt. The College will provide disinfectant for the vehicles. Don't forget to wear your face covering if you are in a vehicle with two or more people!

Symptomatic Employee

Employees must monitor their symptoms as described in the screening section of this policy. 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 employee is unable to wear a face covering due to an underlying health condition, they should contact the Assistant Director or Director of Human Resources immediately. Employee's 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.

If an employee has an underlying health condition that may put them at greater risk if they contracted COVID-19 must contact the Assistant Director or Director of Human Resources to discuss an accommodation. Employee's 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?
  Andrew Martin, Assistant Vice President for Facilities Planning, martinaj@potsdam.edu

- What if I need additional training for myself or department?
  Tracy Harcourt, Director of Student Health Services, harcoutj@potsdam.edu
  Patrick O'Brien, Interim Director of Environmental Health & Safety, obrienpm@potsdam.edu

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

- What if I need hand sanitizer? 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.

Role	Individual/Group	Contact Information
Comply with	All College Faculty & Staff	n/a
Policy Executor(s)	Melissa Proulx Director of Human Resources Patrick O'Brien Interim Director of Environmental Health & Safety	(315) 267-2086 proulxme@potsdam.edu (315) 267-2596 obrienpm@potsdam.edu

Change History

Date	Change History
8/27/2020	Added link to Face Covering Requirements Policy.

July 10, 2020	New Policy.

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:

- **Working in an Office Environment**

The College understands that working in an office setting and maintaining social distancing can be a challenge. Employees should maintain at least 6 feet from co-workers. Remember a face covering should be worn at all times when interacting with others. Departments should assess their own spaces and meeting rooms to institute measures to physically separate and increase distance between people. The following can be used as guidance:

  - **Virtual Meetings:** Gathering in groups increases the risk of spreading COVID-19. Face to face meetings are not encouraged at this time, even with your own department. Whenever possible, the College supports the continued use of virtual meeting platforms to reduce contact with other persons and assist in social distancing. This may include virtual meetings with members of your own department. Keep in mind the College must comply with all local, state, and federal guidelines for in person gatherings.
  - **Use of Appointments:** If an in person appointment is absolutely necessary (although not encouraged), departments are encouraged to do so by appointment only. This will control drop in traffic and ensure proper social distancing can be maintained.
  - **Drop Box:** Department heads that determine paperwork can be collected via a drop box outside their office are permitted to do so. This will allow office doors to remain closed and control traffic. Signs must be posted with the office contact number. Materials that may be considered confidential must be collected with a locking drop box.
  - **Office Objects:** It is recommended to limit the sharing of office objects, such as laptops or pens. This will reduce the need to disinfect and help control the spread of the virus.

- **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.

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

- **Staffing Options**
  - o **Stagger Reporting/Departing:** Employees need to consider staggering reporting to and from their office space. Often times the beginning and end of a workday causes more density in common spaces.
  - o **Alternating Days:** In order to reduce density within departments with more than one employee in the physical space, alternate workdays may be permitted. For example, rotate the days and number of employees reporting to the office on a particular day. Supervisors must work with the Director of Human Resources or designee before implementing an alternate workday schedule and obtain President's Council designee approval. Alternate workdays will only be permitted while there is an approved state-wide telecommuting program in place. Management reserves the right to discontinue the use of alternate workdays with 48 hours' notice.
  - o **Telecommuting:** In order to reduce density in an office telecommuting plans may be considered if a department is alternating workdays as described above. All telecommuting plans must be approved by the employee's supervisor/chair, Dean (if faculty), President Councils Designee and Director of Human Resources (or designee). Telecommuting will only be permitted while there is an approved state-wide

telecommuting program in place. Management reserves the right to discontinue telecommuting plans with 48 hours notice.

- **Personal Disinfection**
  - o **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.
  - o **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.

- **Using the Restroom:** Use of a restroom should be limited based on size to ensure social distancing can be maintained. Always ensure you wash your hands as detailed by the hand hygiene section of this guide.

- **Tight Spaces:** While walking in a narrow hallway or stair well you must have your face covering on. It is recommended that if you are in a tight area where social distancing cannot be maintained that both parties turn their backs as you pass.

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
- CDC Approved Disinfectants

5. Appendix

A. Department Head Checklist for Returning Employees to Work

As the supervisor of a department you will have a critical role in ensuring employees are returning safely. During these difficult times your staff will be looking to you for guidance. In order to assist with this process below is a checklist each supervisor should utilize as employees return to work.

Review the Guide for Returning Employees to work

Ensure employees are wearing a face covering as outlined in the policy

Review disinfectant products with Environmental Health & Safety

Review the campus policy for faculty & staff safety during COVID-19

Review guide and policy with direct reports

Review office configuration to ensure social distancing.

Do desks need to be moved?

Do I need to place visual queues for waiting in line?

Do I need to place visual queues to mark 6 feet from the front desk?

Do I need to place signs to mark traffic flow?

Do I need to stagger employee breaks?

Do I need to stagger employee's meal periods?

Do I need a protective screen at public facing desks? (If so, contact Andy Martin)

Please describe all physical office space changes below (for example, chair will be placed in vacant office number 2):

Place signs on office door

Complete Staff Planning Document (next page)

*A copy of all completed checklists must be sent to the following email address: sds@potsdam.edu. Physical Plant and Environmental Health & Safety will review checklists to ensure fire code compliance and social distancing.

B. Department Staffing Plan

Each department head should complete a staffing plan prior to returning employees to campus. Department heads can utilize the supervisor checklist as a tool to create their staffing plan. Staffing plans will be in effect as the College responds to the global health pandemic. The College understands that this crisis is constantly changing and staffing plans may be need to be alternated. Changes must be approved by President's Council and Human Resources. Changes or discontinuation to staffing plans may also be required by President's Council and Human Resources. Once a staffing plan has been approved you should share the document with your team.

Department:

The following employees must break at different times. The break schedule will be as follows:

The following employees must take their meal period at different times. The meal period will be as follows:

Department plan to ensure social distancing (refer to supervisor checklist):

Department will participate in alternate staffing. The schedule is as follows:

Department will participate in telecommuting. The following employees have an approved telecommuting plan:

Department Head:

President's Council Representative:

Human Resources: