COVID Guidelines at the University

Office of Human Resources

Westfield
STATE UNIVERSITY

Revised: 1/18/22
**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 gpshenichnaya@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](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 gpshenichnaya@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 contract 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.
• During a period of isolation/quarantine, employees may be eligible for Massachusetts Emergency Paid Sick Leave (this program is in effect until 04/01/2021). Employees should [complete the request form] and submit it to Tina Bones at lbones@westfield.ma.edu.

• 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 gpshenichnaya@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 been diagnosed with 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:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Vaccination Status</th>
<th>What do I do?</th>
<th>When do I return to work?</th>
<th>Other Precautions</th>
<th>Can I work from home?</th>
<th>How do I get paid for this time?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test Positive for Covid</td>
<td>Vaccinated with Booster</td>
<td>Isolate for 5 days following date of positive test result.</td>
<td>Return to work on 6th day following positive test result if no symptoms.</td>
<td>Wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days following the positive test result.</td>
<td>If your job permits and you feel well enough, make arrangements with your supervisor to work from home.</td>
<td>The Massachusetts Emergency Paid Leave Act (MEPSL) is in effect, until 4/1/22, if you have not already used these 5 days. Employees who are working from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At-home Covid tests must be confirmed within 48 hours by a PCR test.</td>
<td>Vaccinated w/o booster</td>
<td>Schedule PCR test if you have not taken one already.</td>
<td>If symptomatic; continue to isolate until symptoms cease.</td>
<td>If your job permits and you feel well enough, make arrangements with your supervisor to work from home.</td>
<td>The Massachusetts Emergency Paid Leave Act (MEPSL) is in effect, until 4/1/22, if you have not already used these 5 days. Employees who are working from</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close Contact with someone who tested Positive for Covid</td>
<td>Vaccinated with Booster</td>
<td>No need to quarantine; wear well-fitting mask for 10 days; get PCR Covid test after 5th day of close contact.</td>
<td>Can report to work immediately if displaying no symptoms.</td>
<td>If you experience symptoms; stay out of work and follow instructions for Close Contact for someone experiencing symptoms.</td>
<td>Report to work if not experiencing symptoms</td>
<td>Regular Pay for reporting to work as scheduled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close Contact with someone who tested Positive for Covid</td>
<td>Vaccinated w/o booster</td>
<td>Quaranine for 5 days after close contact if no symptoms.</td>
<td>Report to work after receiving negative COVID test result</td>
<td>Wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days following the close contact; monitor symptoms</td>
<td>If your job permits and you feel well enough, make arrangements with your supervisor to work from home</td>
<td>The Massachusetts Emergency Paid Leave Act (MEPSL) is in effect, until 4/1/22, if you have not already used these 5 days. Employees who are working from home are not eligible for (MEPSL). Employees can also use accrued sick leave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close Contact with someone who tested Positive for Covid</td>
<td>Partially vaccinated</td>
<td>Get a PCR test on the 5th day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unvaccinated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close Contact with someone who tested Positive for Covid</td>
<td>Vaccinated w/o booster</td>
<td>Isolate and get PCR test immediately. If you test positive, isolate for 5 days.</td>
<td>Return to work on 6th day following positive test result if no symptoms. If symptomatic; continue to isolate until</td>
<td>Wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days following the close contact</td>
<td>If your job permits and you feel well enough, make arrangements with your supervisor to work from home</td>
<td>The Massachusetts Emergency Paid Leave Act (MEPSL) is in effect, until 4/1/22, if you have not already used these 5 days. Employees who are</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
symptoms cease.
If you test negative, end isolation and return to work.

working from home are not eligible for (MEPSL). Employees can also use accrued sick leave.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee with primary care giver responsibilities to someone testing positive or school, daycare, elder care closings.</th>
<th>Vaccinated with Booster</th>
<th>Vaccinated w/o booster</th>
<th>Contact HR or the Covid manager for specific guidance.</th>
<th>Dependent on specific situation.</th>
<th>Wear a well-fitting masks; monitor for symptoms</th>
<th>If your job permits and you feel well enough, make arrangements with your supervisor to work from home</th>
<th>The Massachusetts Emergency Paid Leave Act (MEPSL) is in effect, until 4/1/22, if you have not already used these 5 days. Employees who are working from home are not eligible for (MEPSL). Employees can also use accrued sick leave.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More information can be found in the COVID FAQs under the category “employee-specific FAQs for vaccine and mask requirements”—[click here](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](https://www.carson-center.org/locations/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](https://www.mass.gov/info-center/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 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:** All WSU employees, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a CDC recommended mask covering their mouth and nose in non-private spaces inside campus buildings, or indoor facilities or university transportation. The CDC has recently recommended using KN95 masks or surgical masks for the best protection against COVID.

All employees are expected to supply their own masks, unless the department supplies the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), based on the nature of their work. Masks should be worn for only one day at a time, and properly laundered before use again.
Employees seeking exemption from wearing a mask due to medical reasons may seek accommodation through the university’s ADA process by contacting Tina Bonés lbones@westfield.ma.edu in HMC, Room 209 or by phone at 413-572-5274. Employees who are not exempted from the mask requirement and refuse to comply with the mandate will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

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.

Note: Only exemptions granted for the initial vaccine will be honored for the Booster dose.

Testing:
Employees approved for a medical or religious exemption are required to wear masks at all times per DPH guidelines and 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

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

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.