

CHESTNUT HILL COLLEGE

Subject: Social Distancing Policy

Policy: 2.33

Effective: July 2020
Revised December 2020

Contact: Chief of Staff

PURPOSE

In a society that is interconnected and interdependent, highly infectious and contagious diseases such as influenza, and most recently, COVID-19, can spread rapidly causing widespread illness and death. In the event of a pandemic or other health crisis, it is the responsibility of the College to take action and implement protocols and procedures across the campus to protect its students, faculty, staff, and their families from potential exposure to disease.

Social distancing, a recognized public health safety practice, is one tactic to reduce and limit the spread of a contagious disease by ensuring sufficient physical distance between individuals. Social distancing involves minimizing exposure to infected individuals by avoiding large public gathering venues, adhering to spacing requirements in the workplace, and following proper personal hygiene practices. Social distancing is especially important for employees who are at a higher risk of contracting a disease due to underlying health conditions.

POLICY

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Chestnut Hill College has enacted its Social Distancing Policy in an attempt to limit the spread of disease through human-to-human contact. Actions to minimize contact between infected and healthy individuals will range from the use of sick time, a move to remote work and learning, limitation or cancellation of events and suspension of some or all in-person services and operations.

This policy applies to all employees of the Chestnut Hill College community while working either on campus or remotely and engaged in College business.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of Human Resources Office.

PROCEDURES

In collaboration with federal, state, and local governing authorities, the College president, in consultation with other College administrators, will determine the appropriate level of social distancing measures to employ during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those named authorities are likely to follow Center for Disease Control (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines.

Decisions regarding social distancing for COVID-19, as well as an outbreak of influenza or other highly contagious diseases, will be guided by such factors as the epidemiology of the disease, its response (if any) to anti-viral or other medications, the availability of effective medications, specific at-risk groups, proximity of confirmed infection to a particular locale, and other factors.

In support of decisions made by College administrators regarding social distancing, the Human Resources Office will develop specific protocols that will address the nature and severity of the health emergency. These protocols may establish new guidelines or may modify existing policies and procedures such as those related to leaves, return to work requirements, notification, remote work access, and others.

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE SOCIAL DISTANCING

The goal of social distancing is to limit exposure to infectious bacteria and viruses during a communicable disease outbreak.

Avoiding close contact and maintaining a social distance between one another is considered a best practice and required on the College's campus to avoid exposure to the COVID-19 virus and mitigate its spread. Because employees can spread the virus before they know they are sick, it is important to stay away from other employees and avoid close contact whenever possible, even if an employee has no symptoms.

There are many circumstances when an employee may have even a greater risk of exposure to COVID-19. Defined by the CDC, close contact, is someone who was within six (6) feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from two days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, two days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

Individual exposures are added together over a 24-hour period, for example, three 5-minute exposures would result in a total of 15 minutes' exposure.

Employees are required to practice social distancing at work and ideally, outside of work, by adhering to the following strategies useful in conducting social distancing and the accompanying best practices to minimize exposure to disease:

- Maintain a personal space of at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other employees.
- Limit physical contact with others. Avoid in person meetings. Use online collaboration tools such as Skype for Business, Zoom and Microsoft TEAMS, email or the phone rather than face-to-face interaction.
- Do not congregate in workrooms, copy rooms or other areas where people socialize.

- Adhere to CDC recommendations by washing your hands properly with soap and hot water for a minimum of 20 seconds after touching commonly used items or coming into contact with someone who is sick.
- In accordance with the Commonwealth's safety order issued on July 1, 2020, face masks/coverings (e.g., disposable masks or cloth face coverings) must be properly worn by all employees working on and off campus at all times in public settings (e.g., common workspaces, public spaces, hallways, stairwells, elevators, meeting rooms, classrooms, break-rooms, campus outdoor spaces, restrooms, etc.).
- Faculty members teaching in person in a classroom have the choice of utilizing a plastic face shield in place of using a face mask/covering, recognizing that the CDC does not recommend the use of face shields as a substitute for a face mask.
- Employees in individual offices should work with their office door shut.
- Avoid coming in contact with individuals displaying symptoms of illness.
- Avoid touching your face, nose, and mouth and avoid rubbing your eyes.
- Practice proper coughing or sneezing etiquette.
- Properly dispose of anything that comes in contact with your mouth such as tissues or plastic eating utensils.
- Limit public events, including civic, cultural, athletic, educational, social, and others that are not essential.

Members of the College community are required to abide by this policy as well as all other policies related to COVID-19, recognizing that the unique circumstance of living, learning, teaching, and working during a global pandemic call for an additional level of accountability to each other as members of the Chestnut Hill College community.

Failure to follow the Social Distancing Policy 2.33 may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination from the College.