

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Exposure Prevention, Preparedness and Response Plan

Effective: Immediately

Revision Date: 1/14/2022

1. Introduction

Aquinas College takes the health and safety of our employees and students very seriously. With the spread of the coronavirus or “COVID-19,” a respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, it is important that all employers have in place a COVID-19 Exposure Prevention, Preparedness and Response Plan. This Plan is based on information available from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Kent County Health Department and is subject to change based on further information provided by the CDC, OSHA, and other public officials. Aquinas College may also amend this Plan based on operational needs.

Aquinas College will continue to be in compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act, which requires employers to comply with the safety and health standards and regulations as set forth by OSHA or by a state with an OSHA-approved state plan. In addition, in compliance with the Act’s General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1), Aquinas College will continue to provide employees with a workplace free from recognized hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm.

In addition to specific standards covering SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19 exposures, Aquinas College OSHA’s Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other safety policies and procedures remain in effect.

2. Transmission of COVID-19

COVID-19 is mostly spread through person-to-person contact (within about 6 feet). Small suspended droplets from coughing and sneezing can enter the mouth and lungs of those nearby. It is also possible that infection can occur by touching a surface or object that has been contaminated by the virus then touching your own eyes, mouth or nose.

People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (i.e., experiencing fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath). However, spread might be possible before people show symptoms or from people who have the virus but are asymptomatic.

3. Symptoms of COVID-19

Symptoms of COVID-19 can range from mild to severe. In some cases, COVID-19 can result in death. The latest medical guidance defines symptoms of COVID-19 to mean at least one of fever, uncontrolled cough, or atypical new onset of shortness of breath, or at least two of the following not explained by a known physical condition: loss of taste or smell, muscle aches, sore throat, severe headache, diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain.

Some people infected with the virus have reported experiencing other non-respiratory symptoms. Other people, referred to as asymptomatic cases, have no symptoms at all.

4. Action Steps to Stay Informed and then to Disseminate and Instruct

To address the ongoing impact of COVID-19, Aquinas College is committed to:

- Monitoring CDC, OSHA and state and local public health department websites for information on the status of coronavirus.
 - CDC (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention):
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
 - State of Michigan : <https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus>
 - Local: Kent County Health Department:
<https://www.accesskent.com/Health/coronavirus.htm>
 - OSHA (Occupational Safety & Health Administration):
<https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus>
 - NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health):
<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/index.htm>
 - MIOSHA (Michigan Occupational Safety & Health Administration):
<https://www.michigan.gov/leo/0,5863,7-336-100207---,00.html>
- Proactively educating our employees on what is known about the virus, including its transmission, as well as its prevention.
- Establishing a written communicable illness policy and response plan that covers communicable diseases readily transmitted in the workplace.
- Implementing Workplace Controls:
 - Administrative Controls (such as the wearing of face masks and social distancing, informing workforce about the symptoms)
 - Safe Work Practices (such as safe and proper work procedures)
 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

5. WORKPLACE PROTOCOLS TO REDUCE SPREADING THE VIRUS

- Stay home if you are sick. Check with your healthcare provider regarding your symptoms. Many are offering telemedicine at this time.
- Self-report symptoms, exposure or a positive test.
- If you have been in close contact with someone diagnosed with the virus or exhibiting symptoms of the virus, stay home if you have not been fully vaccinated or if your vaccination was longer than 6 months ago if you had the Pfizer or Modern vaccines or longer than 2 months ago if you had the J&J vaccine and you have not been boosted (see chart below).
- Avoid people who are sick.
- Maintain a social distance of not less than least 6 feet when interacting with others.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue; then throw the tissue in the trash (use elbow if no tissue is available). Immediately wash hands.
- Clean frequently touched objects and surfaces with EPA-Approved disinfectants.
- Do not use other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment.
- Wear a facemask when in all public spaces (including areas where other people could enter including hallways, stairwells, restrooms, conference rooms).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - If soap and water is not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with greater than 60% alcohol (ethanol) or at least 70% isopropyl alcohol.
 - Wash especially after using the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- If meeting in person, maintain social distance.
- Immediately report any safety and health concerns. You may report your concerns to Kevin Kwiatkowski, the Director of Campus Safety or Lynda Group, the Director of Human Resources, via phone, text, or email.

6. Protecting Yourself and Your Co-Workers

Per the CDC, people with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

When to seek emergency medical attention:

Look for **emergency warning signs*** for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, **seek emergency medical care immediately**:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone

*This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

Call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility: Notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19.

If you develop any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19 or other acute respiratory illness or test positive for COVID-19, notify your supervisor and stay home. Discuss your care and treatment with your healthcare provider. Complete the Google Employee COVID-19 Self-Reporting Form and contact Lynda Group, Director of Human Resources.

If you come into close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, complete the Google Employee COVID-19 Self-Reporting Form and contact Lynda Group, Director of Human Resources.

Per CDC Guidance as of October 21, 2020: For COVID-19, a close contact is defined as any individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period starting 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated; a person who was within 6 feet of a person infected with COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes with or without a mask.

Other examples of close contacts include individuals who were close to a person who is infected with COVID-19 by providing care to them at home, sharing a living space, having direct physical contact with them (touched, hugged or kissed them), and sharing eating or drinking utensils. People may also be close contacts if they were somehow exposed to droplets from an infected person (sneezed or coughed on).

7. EMPLOYEE NOTIFICATION OF COVID-19

Aquinas College requires employees to promptly notify their supervisor and the Director of Human Resources when they have tested positive for COVID-19, have been diagnosed with COVID-19 by a licensed healthcare provider, or have had close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 by completing the online Google Employee COVID-19 Self-Reporting Form and calling Lynda Group, Director of Human Resources.

If an employee experiences symptoms of COVID-19 while on campus, they must notify their supervisor and leave campus immediately. They must then notify Human Resources by completing the online Google Employee COVID-19 Self-Reporting Form and calling Lynda Group, Director of Human Resources.

Employees who test positive or are diagnosed with COVID-19 and who are medically unable to return to work following the mandatory isolation period will be required to apply for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or apply for non-FMLA medical leave if they are not eligible for FMLA. (See Aquinas leave policies posted on Acorn.)

Quarantine or Isolation Periods

Aquinas College has also implemented a policy for keeping COVID-19 positive employees from the workplace in certain circumstances. Aquinas College will immediately remove an employee from the workplace if they have received a positive COVID-19 test or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 by a licensed healthcare provider (i.e., immediately send them home or to seek medical care, as appropriate).

Employees in isolation may be permitted to work remotely if

- 1) they are asymptomatic or experiencing only mild symptoms and
- 2) their job is suitable to remote work and they have supervisor approval.

If these two criteria are not met, the employee will be required to use sick leave.

Employees who have been exposed to a positive COVID-19 case will be required to quarantine in accordance with the chart below. Employees who are quarantined due to exposure to a positive case may be permitted to work remotely if their job is suitable to remote work and they have supervisor approval. If remote work is not feasible, the employee will be required to use accrued paid time off.

Return to Work Criteria

For any employee removed because they are COVID-19 positive or because they have been exposed to a positive case, Aquinas College will keep them removed from the workplace until the employee meets the return to work criteria in CDC’s “Isolation Guidance” as adopted by the Kent County Department of Health; or receives a recommendation to return to work from a licensed healthcare provider.

If an employee has severe COVID-19 or an immune disease, Aquinas College will follow the guidance of a licensed healthcare provider regarding return to work.

CDC/Kent County Department of Health Guidance (as of Dec. 27, 2021):

If you test positive for COVID-19 (Isolate)	
Everyone, regardless of vaccination status.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay home for 5 days. • If you have no symptoms or your symptoms are resolving after 5 days, you can leave your house. • Continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days. <p><i>If you have a fever, continue to stay home until your fever resolves.</i></p>
If you were exposed to someone with COVID-19 (Quarantine)	
If you: Have been boosted OR Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine within the last 6 months OR Completed the primary series of J&J vaccine within the last 2 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear a mask around others for 10 days. • Test on day 5, if possible. <p><i>If you develop symptoms, get a test and stay home.</i></p>
If you: Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over 6 months ago and are not boosted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay home for 5 days. After that, continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.

<p>OR Completed the primary series of J&J over 2 months ago and are not boosted OR Are unvaccinated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test on day 5 if possible. <p><i>If you develop symptoms, get a test and stay home.</i></p>
<p>If you: Have record of a positive COVID-19 test in the past ninety (90) days (PCR test or rapid test administered by healthcare personnel only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear a mask around others for 10 days. • Test on day 5, if possible. <p><i>If you develop symptoms, get a test and stay home.</i></p>

Aquinas College collects information from employees regarding their vaccination status to assist in complying with the quarantine guidance and to provide aggregated data to the College on the vaccination status of its employees.

8. Face Masks

Aquinas College requires all employees, regardless of vaccination status, to wear a face masks when indoors and when occupying a vehicle with another person for work purposes. Face masks must: (i) completely cover the nose and mouth; (ii) be made with two or more layers of a breathable fabric that is tightly woven (i.e., fabrics that do not let light pass through when held up to a light source); (iii) be secured to the head with ties, ear loops, or elastic bands that go behind the head. If gaiters are worn, they should have two layers of fabric or be folded to make two layers; (iv) fit snugly over the nose, mouth, and chin with no large gaps on the outside of the face; and (v) be a solid piece of material without slits, exhalation valves, visible holes, punctures, or other openings. Acceptable face coverings include clear face coverings or cloth face coverings with a clear plastic panel that, despite the non-cloth material allowing light to pass through, otherwise meet these criteria and which may be used to facilitate communication with people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing or others who need to see a speaker’s mouth or facial expressions to understand speech or sign language respectively.

The following are exceptions to Aquinas College’s requirements for face coverings:

1. In a private office alone.
2. For a limited time, while an employee is eating or drinking at the workplace or for identification purposes in compliance with safety and security requirements.
3. When an employee is wearing a respirator.
4. Where Aquinas College has determined that the use of face coverings is infeasible or creates a greater hazard (e.g., when it is important to see the employee’s mouth for reasons related to their job duties, when the work requires the use of the employee’s uncovered mouth, or when the use of a face covering presents a risk of serious injury or death to the employee).
5. See website for protocols pertaining to Our Lady of Wisdom Chapel.

9. Responsibility of Managers and Supervisors

All managers and supervisors must be familiar with this Plan and be ready to answer questions from employees. Managers and supervisor must hold themselves and their employees accountable for following these safety rules so that the risk of spreading COVID-19 is lessened. If a confirmed case of COVID-19 is reported to a supervisor or manager, they must IMMEDIATELY notify the Director of Human Resources. Managers and supervisors are required to report any unsafe situation to one of the COVID-19 Onsite Coordinators or to the Director of Human Resources.

10. Responsibility of Employees

Aquinas College strongly encourages employees to get fully vaccinated and boosted. All employees must comply with the facemask, social distancing, and self-reporting measures outlined in this Plan to protect themselves and their co-workers as much as possible. Employees who test positive for COVID-19 must IMMEDIATELY report their diagnosis to their supervisor and the Director of Human Resources. Any employee who believes an unsafe situation exists on campus is required to report the situation the Director of Campus Safety or to the Director of Human Resources.

11. Confidentiality and Privacy:

All medical information collected from individuals, including vaccination information, test results, and any other information obtained as a result of testing, will be treated in accordance with applicable laws and policies on confidentiality and privacy.

12. Information

Aquinas College's Plan is based guidance received from the Kent County Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control. Changes in the Plan can or will occur as new information from these and other organizations (e.g., OSHA, MIOSHA, MDHHS, etc.).

If there are any questions regarding any information in the Plan or in the information provided from these sites, please contact Human Resources and we will do our best to assist with your situation.