SOWELA Technical Community College

COVID-19 Plan
Revised Spring 2022

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

SOWELA Technical Community College strives to fulfill its mission while protecting the health and safety of its students, employees, and campus community which includes taking steps to minimize the potential spread of COVID-19. In doing so, the College will adhere to state orders, proclamations, and regulations as well as guidelines from the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding COVID-19. This impacts the expectations of students and employees as the College continues to make public health informed decisions to protect the health and safety of those individuals at our main campus and instructional sites. As such, this plan was developed in compliance with 2020 First Extraordinary Session HB 59 Act No. 9 and LCTCS Policy # 4.012.

CAMPUS COVID REPORTING PROTOCOL

Employees COVID-19 Self Reporting

Upon positive exposure to COVID-19, employees access a reporting form at the following link: https://stcc.formstack.com/forms/covid19_exposure_form. The form data is stored on a HIPPA compliant third-party site, and an email is sent to the HR staff.

Positive Exposure Report for Students

Upon positive exposure to COVID-19, students access a reporting form at the following link: https://stcc.formstack.com/forms/covid19_exposure_report_students. The form data is stored on a HIPPA compliant third-party site and an email is sent to the Executive Director of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs.

COVID PROTOCOL

CORE CONCEPTS

- Proceed thoughtfully, carefully, and deliberately.
- Return employees to the workplace gradually and safely.
- Protect the most vulnerable.
- Follow all CDC, state, and regional guidelines.
- Be ready to adjust, including returning to a remote work environment, if the situation indicates
- Mitigate the risk of resurgence.
- Continue to build on innovations developed because of the pandemic's impact.
- Be compassionate and flexible.

EMPLOYEES WHO MAY REQUEST ACCOMMODATIONS THROUGH THE HR OFFICE

- Individuals at Higher Risk for Severe Illness from COVID-19 as identified by the CDC. The CDC maintains and updates a list of conditions which can be found at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html.
- People 65 years and older
- Employees who cannot return to the workplace because they are caring for a child whose school or place of care has been closed due to COVID-19.
- Other qualifying reason
  Note: Preferred Accommodation is Telework.

STRATEGIES GUIDING TACTICS AND ACTIONS

- Hygiene and other Mitigation Measures -- Scale hygiene practices into cultural norms
- Innovation - Continue and expand innovative work practices
- Monitoring - Monitor health to ensure the well-being of our campus community

HYGIENE AND OTHER MITIGATION MEASURES

- STAY AT HOME IF ILL OR EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS, which include:
  - Fever, cough and shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Chills, repeated shaking with chills, and muscle pain
  - Headache
  - Sore throat
  - Loss of taste or smell

- SOCIAL DISTANCING
  - Maintain social distancing guidelines and be mindful of enclosed spaces
  - Use telephones, teleconferences, video conferencing, etc. rather than in-person meetings
  - In-person meetings:
    - ✓ Limit frequency, duration, and number of attendees.
    - ✓ Face coverings must be worn.
    - ✓ Meeting space must follow social distancing guidelines.

- PERSONAL HYGIENE
  - Wash hands often and vigorously with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - Use hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol, if soap and water are unavailable.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or with your elbow or sleeve.

- FACE COVERING
  - Always wear a face mask (preferably cloth) unless working alone in a private office or individual cubicle that allows employee to be at least 6 feet from other individuals.

- CLEANING
  - Increase frequency of cleaning facilities, strictly following CDC guidelines.
  - Emphasis is to be given to high-use areas and frequently touched surfaces.

- COMMON AREAS
  - Common areas are to be kept closed, to the extent possible.
  - Practice social distancing in areas such as breakrooms and restrooms that must be left open.

- ADDITIONAL MEASURES
  - Avoid handshakes and hugs
  - Avoid touching frequently used objects and surfaces
  - Avoid sharing office supplies, equipment, and work areas. If sharing is essential, all items should be disinfected before and after use.
  - Avoid sharing papers and physical objects during meetings.
  - Avoid anyone who appears to be sick, or who is coughing or sneezing.

INNOVATION

- SCHEDULING
  - ELT division leads and supervisors:
    - ✓ have flexibility to utilize modified work schedules (partial or alternate workdays, extended workhours, and staggered days and hours) to facilitate social distancing,
    - ✓ should provide employees with fixed work schedules, and

- WORKSPACES
  - Make changes in layout and design to create natural separation and maintain social distancing guidelines.
  - Avoid desk layouts that are face-to-face.

- When appropriate, utilize Plexiglass shields between workstations and for employees who have regular contact with other employees, students, and/or the public.

- PROCESSES
    - Continue utilizing paperless processes already implemented.
    - Identify and digitize paper processes to the greatest extent possible.

MONITORING

- TEMPERATURE CHECKS
    - Employees are asked to check their temperature each day before coming to work.
    - If temperature exceeds 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, they should notify their supervisor and remain at home.

- SCREENINGS
    - Employees are to promptly notify their supervisor and/or the HR Office if:
        - ✓ they have been exposed to COVID-19,
        - ✓ have any COVID-19 symptoms, or
        - ✓ have been instructed to self-isolate.

    Such employees are to stay home until they have been cleared by HR for return to campus.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

TO SUPPORT THE STRATEGIES AND TACTICS, THE COLLEGE WILL:
- Provide face covering, hand sanitizer, and disposable wipes to all employees.
- If an employee needs supplies for their office area, they may request it at the following link: https://stcc.formstack.com/forms/covid19_supply_request_form.
- Provide additional PPE to employees whose jobs require it.
- Enhance cleaning, especially of high-touch items such as doorknobs, faucets, etc.
- Provide additional cleaning supplies.
- Provide soap and paper towels in all areas with sinks.
- Provide guidance through the HR Office to improve workspace design to ensure that social distancing can be observed.
- Provide signage to support social distancing and additional hygiene measures.
- Provide counter/desk-top plexiglass shields (sneeze guards) for employees who have regular contact with students, other employees, and the public.
- Adjust schedules, shifts, and reporting requirements to help ensure flexibility and social distancing.
- Maintain transformational work practices as needed to help ensure the safety of the college community.
- Provide contact tracing support to the SOWELA Health Center and/or state and local health departments, as appropriate.

Any concerns regarding returning to campus should be directed to your immediate supervisor or the HR Office.

STUDENT RETURN TO CAMPUS PROTOCOL

As the impact of COVID-19 continues, SOWELA will make decisions that provide services to students, while also doing our part to help stop the spread of the virus. Your safety while on campus is our top priority. Our core concepts include proceeding thoughtfully and carefully, while following the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state, and regional guidelines. As of August 16, 2021, all SOWELA courses offered on our campuses will adhere to the following guidelines:

- The class format options include online, on-campus, and hybrid (a mix of online and on-campus course work).
    - Online class instruction will be structured as follows:
        - Guided flexible attendance (asynchronous) and/or
        - Virtual Live Class Meetings (synchronous)

- SOWELA classrooms will be **restricted to students** only. Friends, family, and children will not be permitted in the classroom or in common areas on campus.

- Students are required to always wear masks while on campus. Masks will be provided to students and are available at the One Stop Center located in the Sycamore Student Center. Failure to wear a mask and follow social distancing guidelines while on campus are violations of the student regulations and rules of conduct and may result in disciplinary action.

- Access to public spaces (Library, study rooms, computer labs) will be limited and social distancing will be mandatory.

- Students who have a medical condition placing them at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and want to attend classes on campus should contact the Office of Disability Services at ods@sowela.edu to request accommodations.

- Given the dynamics of the virus, the on-campus class format may change. **Monitor your SOWELA email and Canvas for updates.** Also check out the SOWELA website for COVID updates at https://www.sowela.edu/student-life/student-services/health-center/coronavirus/

Take Precautions:

- Maintain social distancing guidelines.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Sneeze and cough into your elbow or a tissue. Wash hands immediately after.
- 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, or sneezing. 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.
- The CDC recommends COVID-19 testing for any individuals who are experiencing symptoms. The list of symptoms can be found at this link: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html. If you have these symptoms, contact your primary care physician or the SOWELA Health Center, located in the Charleston Building on SOWELA's main campus in Lake Charles. For more information, https://www.sowela.edu/student-life/student-services/health-center/
- **Do not come to on-campus classes if you are sick**. Inform your instructor you are ill. Students should arrange to complete makeup work with their instructor. In some cases, makeup work may be completed online. Students demonstrating signs of illness will be asked to leave class. Students needing an extended absence from class (on-campus or online) due to illness or exposure should inform their instructors as soon as possible to explore and determine their academic options.
- Students attending on-campus classes and testing positive for COVID-19 or having a close contact (as defined by the CDC) with a COVID-19 positive individual, must access a link to the reporting form on the School Website, located at https://stcc.formstack.com/forms/covid19_exposure_report_students. A SOWELA employee will contact students regarding close contacts and the return to campus protocol.

According to CDC guidance, **close contact** with someone who has COVID-19 includes:

- Someone who was **within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes** starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic infected individuals, 2 days prior to date positive test specimen was collected) until the time the infected individual is isolated.
- Someone who provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- Someone who had direct physical contact with an infected person (touched, hugged, or kissed them)
- Someone who shared eating or drinking utensils with an infected person
- Someone who had contact with an infected person who sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on them.

- Sanitization stations are available inside or near classrooms and throughout the buildings. Students should sanitize before entering the class and upon leaving. While on campus, students are expected to help with the sanitization of the classrooms by wiping their seats, desks, and computer keyboards with the cleaning supplies provided prior to leaving a classroom.

SOWELA COVID-19 EXPOSURE AND ISOLATION/QUARANTINE PROTOCOL
(CDC-BASED GUIDELINES ON ISOLATION/QUARANTINE)

All employees and students must notify the College as soon as possible if they develop symptoms of, or are diagnosed with, COVID-19 or if they have been exposed or are suspected to have been exposed to a confirmed positive COVID-19 individual.

A. Employees/students who have COVID-19 symptoms; test positive for COVID-19; or are asymptomatic are to:
- Stay home for 5 days
- May return to campus after at least 24 hours have passed without fever
- Continue to wear a mask when around others for 5 additional days

B. Employees/students who have had exposure through <u>close contact</u> (as defined below) with a known or suspected COVID-19 infected individual should do the following:
- If the employee/student has 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:
  - Wear a mask around others for 10 days
  - Test on day 5, if possible
- If the employee/student has completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over 6 months ago and are not boosted OR completed the primary series of J&J over 2 months ago and are not boosted OR are unvaccinated:
  - Stay home for 5 days; followed by mask usage for 5 additional days
  - Test on day 5, if possible

According to CDC guidance, <u>**close contact**</u> with someone who has COVID-19 includes:
- Someone who was **less than 6 feet away from an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more** over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic infected individuals, 2 days prior to date positive test specimen was collected).

PROTOCOL FOR HANDLING OF REPORTS OF POSITIVE COVID-19 CASES AND/OR EXPOSURES

A. STUDENT CASES/EXPOSURES:

1. If a COVID-19 positive **student notifies a faculty member**, the **faculty member** will:

    a. Instruct the affected student to submit the *COVID-19 Online Reporting Form* at https://stcc.formstack.com/forms/covid19_exposure_report_students, **AND**

    b. Submit the following information to their School Dean with a cc to include the Support Coordinator and Program Coordinator. If the student is enrolled in a workforce program, the faculty member will submit the following information to the Executive Director of Workforce Solutions:
    - Student's name and SOWELA identification number
    - Building and room number(s) where the COVID-19 positive student attended classes
    - Last date of student attendance
    - Information, if known, of any "close contact" the student may have had with other individuals at SOWELA.

2. Students may also **directly report** a COVID-19 illness, positive test result, or "close contact" (as defined in CDC-BASED GUIDELINES ON ISOLATION/QUARANTINE, Section C, above) using the *COVID-19 Online Reporting Form* at https://stcc.formstack.com/forms/covid19_exposure_report_students. This form routes to the EDEMSA, or designee.

3. Once an initial report has been made, regardless of the source, the following actions will be taken:

    a. **Executive Director of EMSA** or designee will do the following:
    - Review the student's class schedule and notify the appropriate School Dean(s) or Executive Director of Workforce Solutions.
    - Contact COVID positive students to determine if additional follow-up/contact tracing is warranted.
    - Clear the student to return to the classroom/campus when all necessary isolation/quarantine criteria have been met. *
    - Email the School Dean(s) and the VCAA or Executive Director of Workforce Solutions when the student is cleared to return to campus.

        *Some academic programs may require documentation from the student's physician or may have other requirements for re-entry to the classroom/lab/clinical settings.

b. **Academic Dean** of the student's academic program will:
- Send an email to covidteam@sowela.edu; this email address includes the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Executive Director of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Director of Human Resources, and Vice Chancellor of Finance
- Submit a maintenance work request to the Office of Facilities, Management & Planning to have affected room(s) cleaned and disinfected using subject title of "COVID Cleaning." Work request should include the last date of affected student's attendance.
- Work with faculty to create a plan for an alternate instructional delivery method if the faculty member must be quarantined; the plan will be dependent on whether the faculty member is able to continue to work via telecommuting
- Notify faculty when students are cleared to return to campus.

c. **Office of Facilities Planning and Management** will do the following:
- Close off areas used by the person who is sick until cleaning and disinfecting of the affected area is complete. To help prevent any additional individuals from being infected, wait 24 hours after the infected individual was present on campus prior to cleaning or disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase circulation in the area.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, etc. Products used for disinfection should be those on EPA List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19).
- Vacuum the space if needed. Use vacuum equipped with high-efficiency particular air (HEPA) filter, if available.
  - Do not vacuum a room or space that has people in it. Wait until the room is empty to vacuum, such as at night, for common spaces, or during the day for private rooms.
  - If possible, consider temporarily turning off room fans and the central HVAC system that services the room or space, so that particles that escape from vacuuming will not circulate through the facility.
- Once area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be opened for use and workers and students without close contact with the person who is sick can return to work immediately after disinfection.

- If more than 7 days have passed since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary. The space can remain open for use.
- If the determination is made that a building or area of a building needs to be closed for an extended period of time, the proper campus individuals will be notified of the closure.

B. EMPLOYEE CASES/EXPOSURES:

1. If a COVID-19 positive **employee notifies a supervisor,** the **supervisor** will:
   a. Instruct the employee to submit the *COVID-19 Online Reporting Form* at https://stcc.formstack.com/forms/covid19_exposure_form **AND**
   b. Submit the following information to the Human Resources group email (humanresources@sowela.edu):
      - Employee's name, position, and campus
      - Building and room number(s) where the COVID-19 positive employee worked or taught
      - Last date of being on campus
      - Information, if known, of any "close contact" the employee may have had with other individuals at SOWELA.

2. Employees may also **directly report** a COVID-19 illness, positive test result, or "close contact" (as defined in CDC-BASED GUIDELINES ON ISOLATION/QUARANTINE, Section C, above) using the *COVID-19 Online Reporting Form* at https://stcc.formstack.com/forms/covid19_exposure_form. This form routes to Human Resources.

3. Once an initial report has been made, regardless of the source, the following actions will be taken by **Human Resources**:

   Contact the employee:
   a. Confirm their exposure date / began being symptomatic
   b. Confirm if they were in "close contact" with anyone else on campus
   c. Discuss the next steps for them (i.e., self-quarantine, ability to tele-work, leave options)

   Notify the employee's supervisor and/or division head:
   a. Update/confirm the employee's ability to tele-work
   b. Potential expected date of return to campus

   If there was "close contact" with other employees/students, notify those employees, division heads, and EDEMSA accordingly.

   Clear the employee to return to the workplace when all necessary isolation/quarantine criteria have been met.

4. **Human Resources** will also submit a maintenance work request to the **Office of Facilities Planning and Management** to have affected room(s) cleaned and disinfected using subject title of "COVID Cleaning." Work request should include the last date of affected employee's attendance. The Office of Facilities Planning and Management will handle the necessary cleaning and disinfection in accordance with the protocol described in Section A.3.c. above.

NON-COMPLIANCE PROCEDURES/PROTOCOL

Students

- When a college-wide mask mandate is in place, students are required to wear masks and always follow social distancing guidelines while on campus. Masks will be provided to students and will be available at the One Stop Center located in the Sycamore Student Center. Failure to wear a mask and follow social distancing guidelines while on campus are violations of the student regulations and rules of conduct and may result in disciplinary action.
- Students who are unable to comply with the mask requirement must contact the Office of Disability Services at ods@sowela.edu to receive an accommodation.

Employees

- When a college-wide mask mandate is in place, employees are required to wear masks and always follow social distancing guidelines while on campus. Masks will be provided to employees. Failure to wear a mask and follow social distancing guidelines while on campus will be considered acts of non-compliance and may result in disciplinary action.
- Employees who are unable to comply with the mask requirement must contact the Office of Human Resources at humanresources@sowela.edu to request an accommodation.