

Infectious Disease Policy

I. PURPOSE

This policy helps prevent infectious diseases on campus, limit their spread, and respond appropriately to outbreaks.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Goucher community (students, staff, faculty, visitors).

This policy is intended for students, particularly those living residentially and/or attending classes in person on the Goucher College campus. However, portions of this policy may apply and expand to include the entire Goucher College community, which may include visitors.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. **Communicable Disease:** An illness or disease that is contagious. This means that they can spread from person to person, from an animal to a person, or from a surface or food to a person.

Examples of communicable diseases:

1. Influenza
2. Salmonella
3. HIV/AIDS

B. **Contact Tracing:** A public health tool that is used to identify people who have recently been in contact with someone diagnosed with a communicable disease. Once a person tests positive for a disease, they will be asked to list the people they have been in contact with and the places they visited while contagious. Health officials contact these individuals without identifying the person with whom they came into contact. Contact tracing is essential in controlling outbreaks of infectious diseases.

C. **Epidemic:** An increase, often sudden, in the number of cases of a disease above what is normally expected in that population in that area. An epidemic is typically confined to a localized area. Epidemics not only refer to infectious diseases, but also include health-related behaviors such as smoking.

D. **Incubation Period:** The time it takes for an infection to develop after being exposed to a disease-causing organism. The incubation period is over once the first symptoms develop. Incubation periods vary based on the infection.

Example: If a person was exposed to the influenza virus on October 5, but did not develop any symptoms until October 9, this means the incubation period was 4 days.

- E. **Infectious Disease:** Illnesses caused by germs (such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites) that enter the body, multiply, and cause an infection. Some infectious diseases are contagious, which means they can spread from person to person. Others can be spread by germs carried in the air, water, food, soil, or even animals and insects.
- F. **Isolation:** Separates sick people with a contagious disease from those who are not sick. Individuals who may potentially be infectious without yet having tested positive for the disease can also be placed in isolation. Ultimately, the goal is to prevent the spread of communicable disease. The length of time for isolation is determined by current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines and varies based on the infection present.
- G. **Non-Communicable Disease:** a disease that is not contagious and cannot spread to others.

Examples of non-communicable diseases:

1. Cancer
 2. Cardiovascular disease
 3. Diabetes
- H. **Outbreak:** A sudden increase in the number of cases of a communicable disease above what is normally expected. An outbreak is like an epidemic but is often used in a more limited geographic area, like a college campus or a small town. An outbreak can last for days, weeks, or even years.
 - I. **Pandemic:** An epidemic that has spread over several countries or continents, usually affecting a large number of people. Pandemics typically cause much higher numbers of deaths than epidemics. They also tend to lead to social disruption and economic loss.

Examples:

1. SARS (2003)
 2. Spanish flu (1918)
 3. COVID-19 (2020)
- J. **Quarantine:** Separate people who MAY have been exposed to an infectious disease to see if they become sick. They are usually asked to stay home or at another location to prevent the possible spread of a communicable disease. The length of time for quarantine is determined by current CDC and Prevention guidelines.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Prevention

1. **Immunizations:** Goucher requires that students receive certain immunizations prior to their first year. The [Student Immunization Policy](#) outlines specific required and recommended vaccinations.

Certain members of the faculty and staff are required to receive certain vaccinations based on their role on campus and should follow the policy that is appropriate for them. The [COVID-19 Vaccination Policy](#) and the [Bloodborne Pathogens](#) Plan address specific instances where vaccinations are required or recommended for certain faculty and staff. All other faculty and staff should consult with their medical provider regarding vaccinations to reduce their risk of illness.

2. **Education:** Goucher provides education in areas of hand and respiratory hygiene, general wellness practices like sleep, exercise, nutrition, and prevention measures for sexually transmitted infections.

B. Outbreak Response Plan (Appendix A)

1. **Evidence-based outbreak response measures:** In the event of an outbreak, the College takes measures to control infections specific to each infectious disease. These measures can include additional cleaning, masking, isolation/quarantine, contact tracing, vaccination clinics, etc. The Student Health Center (SHC) coordinates with other offices on campus (Facilities Management Services, Residential Life, Dining Services, Athletics) when needed.
 - **Testing & treatment:** A key tool in preventing the spread of infectious diseases is early detection and treatment of individuals who have that disease. When a student presents to the SHC with symptoms of an infectious disease, they are tested and treated according to their symptoms and diagnosis.
 - **Masking:** Mask mandates are implemented when necessary to help control the spread of an infectious disease.
 - **Isolation/Quarantine:** Occasionally, there is a need to isolate or quarantine individual(s) who are exposed to or show signs of an infectious disease. The College has designated residence hall rooms for this purpose and the SHC works with the student and with the Office of Residential Life to move a student into isolation or quarantine housing. The length of time for isolation and quarantine is determined by current CDC and/or local health department guidelines.
2. **Baltimore County Department of Health:** Depending on the nature of the infectious disease, the SHC communicates with the Baltimore County Department of Health when there is a case of a [reportable disease](#) or there is a concern for a potential outbreak and follows their direction.

C. Communication

1. **Internal Stakeholders:** In the event of a suspected outbreak of an infectious disease on campus, the Director of Student Health and Wellness and the Office of the Dean of Students work with the Office of Communications to send a notification to Goucher's campus community (students, staff, and faculty). The notification includes the following information:
 - The presence of an outbreak of a disease.
 - What populations are at higher risk of severe complications from the disease?
 - Guidance on how students, families, faculty, and staff can take reasonable protective measures.
 - Information on testing for students, faculty, and staff.
2. **External Stakeholders:** The College has a designated spokesperson within the Office of Communications who coordinates communication with all external stakeholders.

3. **Health Department:** The SHC staff communicates with the Baltimore County Department of Health.

V. RESOURCES/RELATED POLICIES

- A. [Goucher Student Immunization Policy](#)
- B. [Goucher Quarantine & Isolation Policy](#)
- C. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- D. [World Health Organization Outbreak Toolkit](#)
- E. [Maryland Department of Health](#)
- F. [Baltimore County Department of Health](#)

VI. RESPONSIBLE OFFICES

Student Affairs and the Student Health Center are responsible for the administration of this policy for students. Human Resources is responsible for the administration of this policy for employees.

For more information or if you have questions about this policy, students can contact student.affairs@goucher.edu and employees can contact hr@goucher.edu.

VII. HISTORY

Adopted: March 2024.

Appendix A

Outbreak Response Plan

1. Testing & Treatment: A key tool in preventing the spread of infectious diseases is early detection and treatment of individuals who have that disease.
 - On Campus: When a student contacts the SHC with symptoms of an infectious disease/illness, they are clinically evaluated, tested based on the evaluation, and treated accordingly.
 - Off Campus: If the SHC learns of a student testing positive for an infectious disease/illness and the circumstances warrant concern for an outbreak, the SHC will contact the student for more information.
2. Masking: Mask mandates are implemented when necessary to help control the spread of an infectious disease.
 - The SHC will advise the infected student to wear a mask for the duration of their infectious period.
 - Depending on the nature of the illness, the SHC will advise anyone who has had close contact with the infected individual to wear a mask for a duration determined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or health department guidance at the time.
 - Depending on the nature of the outbreak, the Director of Student Health and Wellness will inform the Associate Vice President for Student Well-Being/Dean of Students and the Vice President for Student Affairs that a campus-wide mask recommendation or mandate should be considered.
3. Isolation/Quarantine: Occasionally, there is a need to quarantine individual(s) who are exposed to or show signs of an infectious disease/illness and isolate individual(s) who have tested positive for an infectious disease/illness. The College has designated residence hall rooms for this purpose.
 - SHC works with the student and with the Office of Residential Life to move a student into isolation or quarantine housing.
 - The length of time for isolation and quarantine is determined by current CDC and/or local health department guidelines.
 - Depending upon the nature of the illness, the College may need to consider an alternate isolation space and plan.
4. Baltimore County Department of Health: Depending on the nature of the infectious disease/illness, the SHC communicates with the Baltimore County Department of Health when there is a case of a [reportable disease](#) or there is a concern for a potential outbreak and follows their direction.

Timeline of Response:

1. Identify a single case of an infectious disease/illness through clinical evaluation or self-report.
2. SHC takes measures to control the spread of the infection based on the nature of the infection. These measures can include contact tracing, masking for the infected student, isolation of the infected student, quarantine or masking for individuals who were exposed to the disease,

additional cleaning, etc. The SHC works with other campus offices to carry out these measures, as indicated below.

3. The SHC communicates with the Baltimore County Health Department as needed.
4. The SHC clinical staff communicates with the Director of Student Health and Wellness to notify them of the situation and coordinate a plan.
5. The Director of Student Health and Wellness communicates with the Associate Vice President for Student Well-Being/Dean of Students and the Vice President for Student Affairs as needed.

Responsibilities of Campus Offices:

1. Student Health & Wellness
 - Clinical evaluation and treatment – when a student contacts the Student Health Center or Sports Medicine with symptoms of an infection.
 - Conducts contact tracing.
 - Coordinates outbreak response with the Baltimore County Health Department
 - Coordinates on campus response with other campus offices.
2. Residential Life
 - Coordinates moving a student into quarantine or isolation.
 - Works with FMS to ensure residential spaces are cleaned appropriately.
 - Works with Bon Appetit to ensure student has access to food while in quarantine or isolation on campus while maintaining the safety of the community.
3. Facilities Management Services (FMS)
 - Cleans and disinfects spaces occupied by sick individuals.
 - Procures masks when campus-wide mask mandates are imposed.
 - Provides and maintains hand sanitizing stations in the event of an outbreak.
4. Bon Appetit/Dining Services
 - Implements sanitation measures when needed.
 - Assists with investigations if illness is foodborne.
 - Works with Residential Life to ensure student has access to food while in quarantine or isolation on campus.
5. Communications
 - Announcements to the campus community, including working with Campus Safety to send any emergency alerts needed.
 - Website updates & maintenance of reporting dashboard, as needed.
 - Handling of any press releases, etc.
6. Campus Safety
 - OneCard access to residence halls in instances of isolation/quarantine
 - Works with communications to send any emergency alerts needed.