



## Spring 2022

With the changing nature of the pandemic in the Northland Pioneer College (NPC) service area, the college is obligated to periodically update its operational plan guiding the institution's response to this public health crisis.

NPC strongly encourages all eligible individuals to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 by becoming vaccinated. Inside college facilities, all individuals are required to wear face coverings, and engage in physical distancing when feasible. When at NPC facilities on the Navajo, Hopi, and White Mountain Apache nations, all students, faculty, and staff are required to follow local/tribal guidelines.

NPC is **not** requiring any of the following: vaccination, proof of vaccination, or COVID-19 testing. **Note:** 1) proof of vaccination may change with pending legislation. 2) partner organizations may have different requirements.

**Nursing & Allied Health, Early Childhood Studies:** Vaccine requirements for faculty and students may be imposed by clinical and practicum partners, and are an exception to NPC's policy. If an agency imposes a vaccine requirement, faculty and students engaging in rotations or practicum activities including student supervision, at that agency are obligated to comply. Vaccine waivers are not an option.

## Objectives

1. Operate the College in a safe and productive manner during the pandemic, maintaining compliance with directives and guidance from federal, state, tribal, and local public health and governmental entities.
2. Implement instructional support activities based on Objective 1.
3. Amend plans as needed in response to evolving circumstances.

## Guiding Principles

A team of faculty, staff, administrators, and students has developed this plan to achieve the objectives noted above. This plan has been developed under the following guiding principles.

1. **The health and safety of all members of the College community, and communities in which we operate, is paramount.** This College utilizes public health best practices to operate as safely as possible. Our decisions are based on the best available sources. We rely on agencies such as the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and public health departments for guidance on what strategies to employ.
2. **The mission of the College continues.** The College will continue to seek and implement methods to meet the ongoing needs of students. We will continue to pursue our mission utilizing methods appropriate to the current working and learning environment in order to promote student persistence, retention, and success.
3. **We involve College employees in the development and implementation of the plan.** The development team itself represents all groups within the College. Implementation of many plan elements relies upon the decision making of local NPC supervisors and employees.

4. **The plan must be flexible, and College implementation of the plan must be flexible.** We know we are operating in a rapidly changing environment in which static decisions lose meaning over time. We will continue to update this plan as conditions change, and all involved must be prepared to quickly adjust College operations as needed.
5. We respect and allow for differing opinions on issues surrounding the implementation of procedures related to the pandemic and require all members (students and employees) of the college community to treat each other in a civil and respectful manner at all times.

## General Instructions for Students/Employees

### Before Coming to Campus:

1. **Daily Self-Screening.** Employees and students are encouraged to review the self-screening tool issued by the College (*see last page of this document*). Should the employee/student meet any item of the self-screening, the employee/student is asked to contact their supervisor/faculty before attending work/school that day. The employee/student may need to work from home or self-quarantine depending on their status.
  - a. The College will maintain confidentiality of employees and students who self-report a COVID-19 diagnosis.
  - b. Illness. If an employee/student experiences COVID-19 symptoms or is diagnosed as COVID-19 positive, they should contact their supervisor/faculty. The employee/student should self-quarantine per medical direction and should not return to work/school until cleared to do so by a medical professional. Should an employee/student develop symptoms listed on the self-screening tool while at work/school, the employee/student should notify their supervisor/faculty and plan to leave work/school for the day. *An employee/student experiencing symptoms and undergoing COVID testing should not return to work/school until test results are known; a positive test result requires a self-quarantine of 10 days from the onset of symptoms or date of testing, whichever occurs first.*
  - c. Exposure to a COVID-Positive Individual. Employees/students who are fully vaccinated, defined as having received 1 dose of a single-shot vaccine or the second dose of a multi-dose vaccine at least 10 days prior to exposure, are *not* required to quarantine unless experiencing COVID symptoms *but* should be tested 3-5 days after exposure until the test result comes back negative.

Employees/students who are not fully vaccinated or who have been vaccinated within 10 days of exposure are asked to contact their supervisor/faculty to develop a 10-day remote work/instruction plan.
2. Exceptions to the quarantine requirements may be made where it can be determined that all parties were correctly masked at the time of exposure.
3. Any employee/student who develops symptoms after known exposure should undergo COVID testing and follow instructions above in 1.b regarding quarantine while awaiting and after receiving results.

### While on Campus:

1. **Face Coverings.** Following the latest CDC guidelines, NPC will **require** face coverings to be worn indoors every campus/center as long as our service area falls within the category of “high” or “substantial” transmission according to the publicly available CDC reports.
  - a. Employees/students/public are required to wear a mask/face covering indoors on campus/center regardless of vaccination status.

- b. Face Coverings may be removed in individual offices, enclosed study spaces, or other places where only one to two individuals are present. NPC employees will follow the face covering guidelines of any partner organizations where the college does business.
- c. Additional Guidance for classrooms and instructional settings:
  - i. Face coverings are required indoors. Face coverings will be provided outside of classrooms and in central locations on campus to allow easy access for students
- d. Additional Guidance for meetings:
  - i. Face to face meetings can be held on campus/centers. Participants are required to wear face coverings and physical distancing should occur to the extent possible.
  - ii. Options for remote attendance should be offered using one of the distance technology platforms as needed.
- e. Additional Guidance for consumption of Food and Drink on Campus:
  - i. Face Coverings can be removed for brief periods while actively eating or drinking.
  - ii. Every effort should be made to physical distance while eating or drinking.
- f. At no time is wearing a mask/face covering a substitute for staying home when feeling ill or experiencing symptoms, regardless of the cause.
- g. The college will communicate any changes to the face covering policy by email to faculty, staff, and students.

**2. Physical distancing.** Employees/students should maintain a six-foot distance from others when feasible, in order to further protect themselves and others. The college will work to ensure that physical distancing is maintained in classrooms, meetings, and in other settings as possible. In cases where this is not possible students, faculty, or staff may speak with their supervisor, faculty member, or appropriate administrator to see what adjustments can be made.

**3. Sanitization.**

- a. Because handwashing limits the spread of many illnesses and may lessen the likelihood of contracting COVID-19, employees/students are encouraged to **wash their hands** for at least 20 seconds with soap and water several times daily. Employees/students in frequent contact with others or handling items taken from others should plan to wash hands more frequently.
- b. Surface areas, restrooms, high-touch surfaces, and public spaces will be cleaned nightly by custodial staff. The college will provide cleaning materials for employees to use in individual workspaces. In most situations, a household cleaner containing soap or detergent removes most virus particles on surfaces and decreases risk of infection from surfaces (CDC).

## Additional Instructions for Students and Employees On-Site

1. Students may, at the direction of their instructor, assist with cleaning lab and instructional work areas. Employees can obtain cleaning products from their campus/center front office to facilitate workspace sanitation.
2. Reckless or disruptive behaviors by students such as but not limited to deliberately coughing on another person or intimidating others for wearing (or not wearing) a mask will be addressed initially as a classroom management issue. If unresolved at that level, the incident will be elevated to a violation of the Student Conduct Code (<https://www.npc.edu/procedure-2625>). NPC employees are expected to follow the current mask-wearing policies established by the College. Employees who interact with students and the public are expected to courteously ask students and the public to follow NPC's mask guidelines. Refusal by students or the public to follow NPC mask guidelines should be referred to that employee's immediate supervisor for resolution.
3. Intimidating or harassing a student or college employee about their vaccination status by anyone will not be tolerated. Students will be considered in violation of the Student Code of Conduct

(<https://www.npc.edu/procedure-2625>) for such behavior. NPC Employees will be referred to the Human Resources Office for disciplinary action.

## Additional Instructions for Employees/Supervisors

- 1. Employees Who Report an Illness, COVID-19 Symptoms, or Contact with a COVID-19 Positive Individual.**
  - a. An employee may need to contact Human Resources to discuss options for medical leave and/or COVID-related FMLA.
  - b. Employees who report an illness or COVID-19 symptoms are encouraged to seek medical care. Individuals who are diagnosed with COVID-19 should follow the recommendations of their health care provider or county health department regarding a return to work, which is typically 10 days after the onset of symptoms or the date of testing, whichever occurs first. Any employee who misses **three or more** consecutive workdays due to illness of any kind is required to provide their supervisor with written authorization from a health care provider in order to return to work.
  - c. **Confidentiality and Contact Tracing.** Per Americans with Disabilities Act regulations, the College will treat as confidential and therefore not disclose the medical status of any employee, including COVID-19 positive status. Per a recent Attorney General's opinion on this issue, the College can disclose that an employee at a specific location was positive, but that may be restricted if such disclosure could reasonably be assumed to reveal the employee's identity. The Navajo or Apache County health department may conduct contact tracing of identified COVID-19 patients, and College employees who are considered to be at risk due to contact with a COVID-19 patient may be contacted by the County.
- 2. Employees at Increased Risk for Severe Illness.** Some people are more likely than others to become severely ill. Severe illness means that a person with COVID-19 may need: hospitalization, intensive care, a ventilator, or may even die. If a college employee self-identifies to their supervisor that they are at increased risk for severe illness, the supervisor should work with the employee and HR, as necessary, to develop an alternative work plan according to the Telework Procedure 2795.
- 3. Space Configuration.** Plexiglass shielding has been placed in high-contact areas such as campus offices, computer labs, and libraries. Classroom and other spaces may be adjusted to allow for physical distancing as necessary. General facilities work (public spaces, etc.) for each location will be coordinated by that location's campus or center manager. Supervisors should work with their employees and appropriate College staff to implement adjustments, as necessary.

## General Public/Community Members in NPC Facilities

NPC is open with COVID-19 mitigation efforts in place such as requiring masks, physical distancing, plexiglass shielding, and other efforts.

Requests to use NPC facilities for gatherings by community members will be evaluated by the President or his appointee(s) on a case-by-case basis. The College remains prepared to implement more restrictive mitigation efforts should pandemic conditions worsen.

**NOTE:** Local Conditions/Local Government directives may override College desires or plans for on-site work and instruction. In these cases, the President and President's Cabinet will determine appropriate College responses.

## COVID-Related Issue Response Protocol

Should a COVID-related issue occur, College employees/students will take the following steps:

- If an employee or student is *diagnosed* with COVID-19, they will follow the guidance noted under General Instructions for Students/Employees On-Site in this document.
- Employees and students may choose to notify their instructor, supervisor, or Human Resources of their positive COVID-19 diagnosis. They may authorize HR or the College to notify fellow employees or students. Should the College become aware of an employee or student with a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, HR (employee) or the VPLSS (student) will notify the appropriate county public health office so that contact tracing and notification by that office can take place.
- Employees or students *exposed* to someone with a positive COVID-19 diagnosis will follow the guidance noted under General Instructions for Students/Employees On-Site in this document. The College may require this quarantine action, upon notification by county public health or an employee/student of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis.
- Upon HR or the VPLSS office being notified that someone with a positive COVID-19 diagnosis has been present at a College facility, the notified office will contact that facility's campus or center manager (Note: If the student is a NAVIT student, the VPLSS will inform the NAVIT Superintendent of the student's quarantine status). The College will work to assist students and employees who have been diagnosed as COVID-19 positive or who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. HR will provide an affected employee with information regarding their leave and benefits options while they are following this document's quarantine requirements. Faculty will work with affected students to minimize the impact of missed classes and coursework while a student is following this document's quarantine requirements.