



## INTERIM GUIDANCE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

When you have read this document, you can affirm at the bottom.

As of June 28, 2020

### Purpose

This Interim Guidance for Higher Education during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (“Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Higher Education”) was created to provide colleges, universities and other higher education institutions, and their employees, students, visitors, contractors, and vendors with precautions to help protect against the spread of COVID-19.

This guidance is intended to address all types of in-person higher education institutions, including but not limited to community and junior colleges, universities, graduate and professional schools, medical schools, and technical schools. In addition to affirming to understand and meet the requirements described herein, higher education institutions must develop a plan for reopening and operating for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Plans should reflect engagement with campus stakeholders, including but not limited to administrators, faculty, staff, students and, where appropriate, affiliated organizations (e.g., union, alumni, and/or community-based groups). Specifically, each institution must develop and submit a plan that, at a minimum, covers:

- (1) Reopening of the campus,
- (2) Monitoring of health conditions,
- (3) Containment of potential transmission of the virus, and
- (4) Shut down of in-person operations on the campus, if necessitated by widespread COVID-19 transmission.

**Reopening** includes plans for restarting campus operations including student, faculty, and staff return. The following considerations must be included, at a minimum:

- **Capacity:** Phasing and quantity of students, faculty and staff to return to campus, considering factors such as ability to maintain social distance in public spaces and residence halls, testing capabilities, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) availability, quarantine and isolation capacity, local medical capacity, and availability of safe transportation;
- **PPE:** Develop plans for obtaining and providing acceptable face coverings to all employees of the institution. Determine if the institution will be providing face coverings or other PPE to students. Develop requirements about what PPE is required where and when for employees, students, and other individuals on campus, in accordance with state and local public health laws, regulations, and policies;
- **Testing:** Plan for screening and diagnostic testing students and faculty for SARS-CoV-2 upon return, especially any individuals with recent international or long-distance travel, particularly from areas with widespread community transmission of the virus. Plans should indicate if individuals will be tested, who will be tested, the frequency of testing, the method of testing, notification of test results, and the process for those arriving to campus untested. Plans may determine whether to quarantine students upon arrival until they receive testing and a negative test result;

- **Residential living:** Residential living plans should include protocols for capacity limits, enhanced cleaning and disinfection, appropriate social distancing, use of acceptable face coverings in common areas, restrictions on non-essential gatherings and activities, limited access by students to other residential facilities (e.g. dormitories), restrictions of visitors, special housing considerations for students who are immunocompromised or who have an underlying health condition, separate living spaces for persons undergoing isolation or quarantine, and a modified set of rules for students to follow;
- **Operational activity:** Determine how classes, shared spaces, and activities may be adapted in various phases of return and operations (e.g., identify which classes will offer alternate approaches such as A/B schedules or remote instruction; appointment-only use of shared spaces, limiting number of individuals participating in in-person activities at any given time);
- **Restart operations:** Implement plans to safely reopen buildings such as cleaning and disinfection, and restarting ventilation, water systems, and other key facility components, as applicable;
- **Extracurriculars:** Institute policies regarding extracurricular programs and which activities will be allowed, considering social distancing and risk of COVID-19 transmission;
- **Vulnerable Populations:** Consider vulnerable populations on campus and individuals who may not feel comfortable returning, to allow them to safely participate in educational activities and accommodate their specific circumstances; and
- **Hygiene, cleaning and disinfection:** Establish campus-wide cleaning and disinfection protocols for classrooms, residence halls, restrooms, dining halls and other facilities. Promote hand and respiratory hygiene among all individuals on campus.

**Monitoring** includes policies to track health conditions on campus. The following considerations must be included, at a minimum:

- **Testing responsibility:** Identify who is responsible for purchasing and administering testing, as well as notification of test results; plans should offer contingencies for continual screening of symptoms and temperature checks without testing, if needed.
- **Testing frequency and protocols:** Determine testing frequency and process which may include plans to test for cause (e.g. symptomatic individuals, close or proximate contacts, international travel), plans to test for surveillance to proactively monitor for symptoms of influenza-like illness, as well as protocols around group testing.
- **Early warning signs:** Define metrics that will serve as early warning signs that positive cases may be increasing beyond an acceptable level; define method(s) to monitor against such metrics;
- **Tracing:** Consider plans for contact tracing in close coordination with state and local health departments using the protocols, training, and tools provided through the [New York State Contact Tracing Program](#) – an initiative between the Department of Health, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and Vital Strategies; and
- **Screening:** Develop plans for regular health screening of employees, students, and visitors.

**Containment** includes plans for how to respond to positive or suspected cases as well as preventative policies and practices. The following considerations must be included, at a minimum:

- **Isolation:** Identify how to isolate symptomatic individuals, both residential and non-residential (as applicable). Plans must specifically identify where individuals will be residing (e.g. residence halls, hotels, home) throughout the duration of their isolation, as well as the support system that will be provided including food, medicine, psychosocial, academic and/or other support, as needed;

- **Quarantine:** Identify how exposed individuals (residential and non-residential) will be quarantined away from others, including the support system that will be provided including food, medicine, psychosocial, academic and/or other support, as needed;
- **Students confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19:** Residential institutions need to include plans to monitor and provide medical care and other health services to students who test positive and are in isolation, need more advanced medical care, or who are awaiting test results;
- **Hygiene, cleaning and disinfection:** Implement strategies for cleaning and disinfection of exposed areas and appropriate notification to occupants of such areas; and
- **Communication:** Develop plans to share protocols and safety measures taken by the institution.

**Shutdown** includes contingency plans for decreasing on-campus activities and operations and/or closing the campus. The following considerations must be included, at a minimum:

- **Operational Activity:** Include which operations will be decreased, scaled back, ramped down, or shutdown and which operations will be conducted remotely; include process to conduct orderly shutdown which may include phasing, milestones, and involvement of key personnel.
- **Move-out:** For residential universities, plans need to be put in place for how students would safely depart campus. Institutions should consider policies for students who may not be able to depart campus quickly (e.g. international students); and
- **Communication:** Develop comprehensive plans to communicate internally and externally throughout the process.

Higher education institutions involve a variety of activities and should reference relevant “industry-specific” guidelines provided by the Department of Health – and available on the [New York Forward](#) website – for operations of dining halls, research, office workspaces, transportation, retail stores, and others, as applicable. Specifically, operations of dining halls and other on-campus food services must operate in accordance with, “[Interim Guidance for Food Services during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.](#)” Research activities must operate in accordance with, “[Interim Guidance for Higher Education Research during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.](#)” Administrative functions must operate in accordance with, “[Interim Guidance for Office-Based Work during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.](#)” Transportation services run by the institution must operate in accordance with “[Interim Guidance for Public Transportation Activities during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.](#)” Campus bookstores and other retail locations must operate in accordance with, “[Interim Guidance for Retail Business Activities during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.](#)” On-campus gyms and fitness centers must operate in accordance with forthcoming guidance. Collegiate athletics operated by the institution must operate in accordance with forthcoming guidance.

These guidelines are minimum requirements only and each institution is free to provide additional precautions or increased restrictions. These guidelines are based on the best-known public health practices at the time of publication, and the documentation upon which these guidelines are based can and does change frequently. The Responsible Parties – as defined below – are accountable for adhering to all local, state and federal requirements relative to higher education, and auxiliary activities. The Responsible Parties are also accountable for staying current with any updates to these requirements, and related guidance as stated above, as well as incorporating same into any higher education activities and/or Site Safety Plan.

## Background

On March 7, 2020, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo issued [Executive Order 202](#), declaring a state of emergency in response to COVID-19. Community transmission of COVID-19 has occurred throughout

New York. To minimize further spread, social distancing of at least six feet must be maintained between individuals, where possible.

On March 20, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued [Executive Order 202.6](#), directing all non-essential businesses to close in-office personnel functions. Essential businesses, as defined by Empire State Development Corporation (ESD) [guidance](#), were not subject to the in-person restriction, but were, however, directed to comply with the guidance and directives for maintaining a clean and safe work environment issued by the New York State Department of Health (DOH), and were strongly urged to maintain social distancing measures to the extent possible.

On April 12, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued [Executive Order 202.16](#), directing essential businesses to provide employees, who are present in the workplace, with a face covering, at no-cost, that must be used when in direct contact with customers or members of the public during the course of their work. On April 15, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued [Executive Order 202.17](#), directing that any individual who is over age two and able to medically tolerate a face-covering must cover their nose and mouth with a mask or cloth face-covering when in a public place and unable to maintain, or when not maintaining, social distance. On April 16, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued [Executive Order 202.18](#), directing that everyone using public or private transportation carriers or other for-hire vehicles, who is over age two and able to medically tolerate a face covering, must wear a mask or face covering over the nose and mouth during any such trip. It also directed any operators or drivers of public or private transport to wear a face covering or mask which covers the nose and mouth while there are any passengers in such a vehicle. On May 29, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued [Executive Order 202.34](#), authorizing business operators/owners with the discretion to deny admittance to individuals who fail to comply with the face covering or mask requirements.

On April 26, 2020, Governor Cuomo [announced](#) a phased approach to reopen industries and businesses in New York in phases based upon a data-driven, regional analysis. On May 4, 2020, the Governor [provided](#) that the regional analysis would consider several public health factors, including new COVID-19 infections, as well as health care system, diagnostic testing, and contact tracing capacity. On May 11, 2020, Governor Cuomo [announced](#) that the first phase of reopening would begin on May 15, 2020 in several regions of New York, based upon available regional metrics and indicators. On May 29, 2020, Governor Cuomo [announced](#) that the second phase of reopening would begin in several regions of New York. On June 11, 2020, Governor Cuomo [announced](#) that the third phase of reopening would begin on June 12, 2020 in several regions of New York.

On May 8, 2020, Governor Cuomo [launched](#) New York's Reimagine Education Advisory Council – made up of educators, students, parents, and education leaders – to help colleges, universities, and school districts reimagine teaching and learning as they prepare to reopen while protecting health and safety of students and educators. The collective expertise and experience of this advisory council helped address key questions about how to strengthen New York's entire education system and helped inform this guidance.

In addition to the following standards, higher education institutions must continue to comply with the guidance and directives for maintaining clean and safe work environments issued by DOH.

Please note that where guidance in this document differs from other guidance documents issued by New York State, the more recent guidance shall apply.

### **Standards for Responsible Higher Education Activities in New York State**

No higher education activities can operate without meeting the following minimum State guidance, as well as applicable federal requirements, including but not limited to such minimum standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and United States Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health

Administration (OSHA). The State standards apply to all higher education activities in operation during the COVID-19 public health emergency until rescinded or amended by the State.

The primary executive/owner/operator of the higher education institution (e.g., university president), or another party designated by the executive/owner/operator (in either case, "the Responsible Parties"), shall be responsible for meeting these standards. The designated party can be an individual or group of individuals responsible for the operations of the higher education institution.

The following guidance is provided to help higher education institutions develop their reopening plans and is organized around three distinct categories: people, places, and processes.

## I. PEOPLE

### A. Physical Distancing

- Responsible Parties should ensure that a distance of at least six feet is maintained among individuals while on campus, inclusive of employees and students, to the extent possible and when seated in a classroom setting or meeting, unless safety or the core activity (e.g., moving equipment, using an elevator, performing a transaction) requires a shorter distance or individuals are of the same residence. Any time individuals come within six feet of another person who does not reside in the same residence (i.e., roommate), acceptable face coverings must be worn. Individuals should be prepared to don a face covering if another person unexpectedly comes within six feet.
  - Acceptable face coverings are required for individuals who are over the age of two and able to medically tolerate such covering.
  - Acceptable face coverings for COVID-19 include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings (e.g. homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana), surgical masks, and face shields that cover both the mouth and nose.
  - However, cloth, disposable, or other homemade face coverings are not acceptable face coverings for workplace activities that typically require a higher degree of protection for personal protective equipment (PPE) due to the nature of the work. For those activities, N-95 respirators or other PPE used under existing industry standards should continue to be used, as is defined in accordance with [OSHA guidelines](#).
  - This provision should not be construed to require physical distancing among roommates, or require face coverings to be worn while inside an individual's residence. For the purposes of this guidance, students who share the same residence (i.e., dormitory room) should be considered members of the same household.
- Responsible Parties are encouraged to modify or reconfigure spaces and/or restrict the use of classrooms and other places where students and employees congregate, so that individuals are spaced at least six feet apart in all directions (e.g. side-to-side and when facing one another) and are not sharing workstations without appropriate cleaning and disinfection between use. When distancing is not feasible in public spaces, Responsible Parties must require the use of face coverings or physical barriers (e.g. plastic shielding walls, in lieu of face coverings in areas where they would not affect air flow, heating, cooling or ventilation, or otherwise present a health or safety risk).
  - Physical barriers should be put in place in accordance with [OSHA guidelines](#).
  - Physical barrier options may include strip curtains, cubicle walls, plexiglass or similar materials, or other impermeable dividers or partitions.

- Responsible Parties should limit gathering in small spaces (e.g. elevators, supply rooms, faculty offices) by more than one individual at a time, unless all individuals in such space at the same time are wearing acceptable face coverings or are members of the same residence. However, even with face coverings in use, occupancy should not exceed 50% of the maximum capacity of the space, unless it is designed for use by a single occupant. Responsible Parties should increase ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible (e.g. opening windows and doors) while maintaining health and safety protocols. Further, Responsible Parties should take additional measures to prevent congregation in elevator waiting areas and limit density in elevators, by, for instance, enabling the use of stairs.
- Where feasible, Responsible Parties should put in place measures to reduce bi-directional foot traffic using tape, signs, or other indicators with arrows in hallways, or spaces throughout campus, and post signage and distance markers denoting spaces of six feet in all commonly used areas and any areas in which lines are commonly formed or people may congregate (e.g., campus centers, libraries, classrooms, dining halls, health screening stations).
  - Responsible Parties may choose to mark six feet distance circles around desks, workstations and other common work areas or areas where gathering is likely to occur (e.g. libraries, study centers, lawns).
- Responsible parties should determine which on-campus facilities (e.g., libraries, study lounges, recreational facilities) will be closed to the general public (i.e., not students or employees) or offer limited, specific hours to members of the general public. Recommended practices for limiting public interactions on campus include, but are not limited to:
  - Limiting visitors to "invited guests" only, who are expected to abide all campus and building specific protocols; and
  - Requiring student/institutional identification (IDs) to enter any on-campus building(s).
- In consultation with the local health department, Responsible Parties must identify where students who are exposed to, or infected with, COVID-19 will be residing and how daily needs (e.g., food, medication) will be met if it becomes necessary to have a period of quarantine or isolation. Recommended facilities include, but are not limited to:
  - Reserved residence halls with private bathrooms, if possible, used solely for the purpose of isolating or quarantining individuals living on-campus who have, who are suspected to have, or who were exposed to COVID-19;
  - Nearby hotels that are arranged to accommodate individuals who have, who are suspected to have, or who were exposed to COVID-19; and/or
  - Individual student homes, pending the student's ability to safely get home (e.g., not using mass transit) and their home is safe for them to isolate away from other individuals.
  - Local health departments may, under their legal authority, implement monitoring and movement restrictions of COVID-19 infected or exposed persons including home isolation or quarantine
- Responsible Parties should post signs throughout the institution or campus, consistent with DOH COVID-19 signage. Responsible Parties can develop their own customized signage specific to their workplace or setting, provided that such signage is consistent with the Department's signage. Signage should be used to remind individuals to:
  - Stay home if they feel sick.
  - Cover their nose and mouth with an acceptable face-covering.
  - Properly store and, when necessary, discard PPE.

- Adhere to social distancing instructions.
- Report symptoms of or exposure to COVID-19, and how they should do so.
- Follow hand hygiene and cleaning and disinfection guidelines.
- Follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.

## **B. Gatherings in Enclosed Spaces**

- Responsible Parties may choose to use and encourage video or teleconferencing in lieu of in-person gatherings (e.g. classes, conferences, office hours) to reduce the density of congregations, per CDC guidance "[Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)". When videoconferencing or teleconferencing is not preferable or possible, Responsible Parties may choose to hold classes or meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces and ensure that individuals maintain six feet of social distance between one another (e.g. leave space between chairs, have individuals sit in alternating chairs).
- Responsible Parties may consider closing non-essential amenities and communal areas that promote gathering or are high-touch (e.g., break areas, communal coffee machines); or providing cleaning and disinfecting supplies that may be used by individuals before and after they use the amenity or area.
- Responsible Parties should put in place practices for adequate social distancing in small areas, such as restrooms and breakrooms, and should develop signage and systems (e.g. flagging when occupied) to restrict occupancy when social distancing cannot be maintained in such areas.
- Responsible Parties should consider staggering schedules for employees to promote social distancing (e.g. coffee breaks, meals, and shift starts/stops).

## **C. Operational Activity**

- Responsible Parties should consider a mix of traditional in-person and remote classes depending on student needs (e.g., vulnerable populations), technological capabilities, and/or immediately following historically high-travel periods (e.g., limiting in-person classes during holiday travel periods), among other measures to reduce in-person congregation.
- Responsible Parties should take measures to reduce interpersonal contact and decrease density on campus, through methods, such as:
  - adjusting class or work hours, where appropriate and possible;
  - limiting in-person presence to only those employees who are necessary to be at the institution;
  - reducing in-person workforce and increasing remote workforce to accommodate social distancing guidelines;
  - staggering schedules and allowing more time between classes to reduce congestion in walkways and buildings; and/or
  - shifting design of class schedules to create cohorts or sections of students (e.g., A/B schedule or course sections) to reduce risk of exposure and transmission among students.
- When COVID-19 cases develop, Responsible Parties should consider restricting social contact and mobility across campus, particularly in affected areas (e.g., shutting down some functions, but keeping others open to help contain the spread).

- Responsible Parties may choose to temporarily move all classes where an individual has tested positive to remote/virtual format until all contacts can be identified, notified, tested, and cleared.

#### **D. Movement and Commerce**

- Responsible Parties should establish designated areas for pickups and deliveries, limiting contact to the extent possible.
- To the extent feasible, Responsible Parties should limit on-site interactions (e.g., designating separate ingress or egress for employees, eliminating bidirectional flow of individuals to the extent practicable).

## **II. PLACES**

#### **A. Protective Equipment**

- In addition to the necessary PPE as required for certain workplace activities, Responsible Parties must procure, fashion, or otherwise obtain acceptable face coverings and provide such coverings to their employees who directly interact with students or members of the public while at work at no cost to the employee, pursuant to Executive Order 202.16, as amended.
- Responsible Parties should have an adequate supply of face coverings, masks and other required PPE on hand should an employee need a replacement. Acceptable face coverings include, but are not limited to, cloth (e.g. homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana), surgical masks, N95 respirators, and face shields.
- Responsible Parties should advise employees, students, and visitors that they are required to wear face coverings in common areas or situations where social distancing may be difficult to maintain, such as riding in elevators, entering/exiting classrooms or student centers, and traveling around the campus.
- Face coverings should be cleaned or replaced after use and must not be shared. Please consult CDC [guidance](#) for additional information on cloth face coverings and other types of PPE, as well as instructions on use and cleaning.
  - Note that cloth face coverings or disposable masks shall not be considered acceptable face coverings for workplace activities that require a higher degree of protection for face covering requirements. For example, if N-95 respirators are traditionally required for specific activities, a cloth or homemade mask would not suffice. Responsible Parties must adhere to [OSHA guidelines](#) for such safety equipment.
- Responsible Parties must allow individuals to use their own acceptable face coverings but cannot require employees to supply their own face coverings. Further, this guidance shall not prevent employees from wearing their personally owned protective coverings (e.g. surgical masks, N95 respirators, or face shields), as long as they abide by the minimum standards of protection for the specific activity. The Responsible Parties may require employees to wear more protective PPE due to the nature of their work. Employers should comply with all applicable OSHA standards.
- Responsible Parties must train employees on how to adequately put on, take off, clean (as applicable), and discard PPE, including but not limited to, appropriate face coverings. Such training should be extended to contractors if the Responsible Parties will be supplying the contractors with PPE.

- Responsible Parties should put in place plans to limit the sharing of objects, such as laptops, notebooks, touchscreens, and writing utensils, as well as the touching of shared surfaces, such as conference tables; or, require employees to perform hand hygiene before and after contact.

## B. Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection

- Responsible Parties must ensure adherence to hygiene and cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH, including "[Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19](#)," and the "[STOP THE SPREAD](#)" poster, as applicable. Responsible Parties must maintain logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection. Responsible Parties must identify cleaning and disinfection frequency for each facility type and assign responsibility.
- Responsible Parties should provide and maintain hand hygiene stations around the institution, as follows:
  - For handwashing: soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels.
  - For hand sanitizing: an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for areas where handwashing facilities may not be available or practical.
  - Make hand sanitizer available throughout common areas. It should be placed in convenient locations, such as at building entrances, exits, and points of reception. Touch-free hand sanitizer dispensers should be installed where possible.
    - Responsible Parties should place signage near hand sanitizer stations indicating that visibly soiled hands should be washed with soap and water; hand sanitizer is not effective on visibly soiled hands.
    - Responsible Parties should remind individuals that alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be flammable and may not be suitable for certain areas on campus.
  - Place receptacles around the institution for disposal of soiled items, including paper towels and PPE.
- Responsible Parties may choose to provide appropriate cleaning and disinfection supplies for shared and frequently touched surfaces and encourage their employees (or cleaning staff) to use these supplies following manufacturer's instructions for use before and after use of these surfaces, followed by hand hygiene.
  - Consider providing disposable wipes to employees so that commonly used surfaces (e.g., keyboards, desks, remote controls) can be wiped down before and/or after use.
  - To reduce high-touch surfaces, Responsible Parties should install touch-free amenities such as water fountains, trash receptacles, and paper towel dispensers, where feasible.
  - If installing touch-free amenities is not feasible, Responsible Parties should, at a minimum, make hand sanitizer available near high-touch surfaces (e.g. trash receptacles, paper towel dispensers).
- Responsible Parties must conduct regular cleaning and disinfection of the facilities and more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high risk areas used by many individuals and for frequently touched surfaces. Cleaning and disinfection must be rigorous and ongoing and should occur at least daily, or more frequently as needed. Please refer to DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19](#)" for detailed instructions on how to clean and disinfect facilities.

- Responsible Parties must ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of restrooms. Restrooms should be cleaned and disinfected more often depending on frequency of use.
- Responsible Parties should ensure that materials and tools used by employees are regularly cleaned and disinfected using registered disinfectants. Refer to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) [list of products](#) registered in New York State and identified by the EPA as effective against COVID-19. If cleaning or disinfection products or the act of cleaning and disinfection causes safety hazards or degrades the material or machinery, Responsible Parties must put in place hand hygiene stations between use and/or supply disposable gloves and/or limitations on the number of employees using such machinery.
- Best practices to implement in residential, shared (i.e., communal) bathrooms include, but are not limited to:
  - Installation of physical barriers between showers, toilets, and sinks if six feet of separation is not feasible;
  - Use of paper towel dispensers in lieu of air dryers;
  - Where the physical layout of the building permits, designation of communal bathrooms on a residential hall floor for use by specific rooms or individuals may limit cross contamination and assist with traffic control; and/or
  - Limit storage of personal items within communal bathrooms, particularly if they are shared by individuals who are not members of the same residence (i.e., roommates).
- Responsible Parties must ensure distancing rules are adhered to by using signage, occupied markers, or other methods to reduce restroom occupancy at any given time, where feasible.
- Responsible Parties must provide for the cleaning and disinfection of exposed areas in the event an individual is confirmed to have COVID-19, with such cleaning and disinfection to include, at a minimum, all heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces.
- Responsible Parties are expected to follow CDC guidelines on [“Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility”](#) if someone is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19:
  - Close off areas used by the person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.
    - Responsible Parties do not necessarily need to close operations, if they can close off the affected areas.
  - Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
  - Wait 24 hours before you clean and disinfect. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
  - Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, such as offices, classrooms, bathrooms, and common areas.
  - Once the area has been appropriately cleaned and disinfected, it can be reopened for use.
    - Individuals without close or proximate contact with the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 can return to work area or resume on-campus activities in the area immediately after cleaning and disinfection.
    - Refer to DOH’s [“Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure”](#) for information on “close and proximate” contacts.

- If more than seven days have passed since the person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary, but routine cleaning and disinfection should continue.
- Responsible Parties should prohibit shared food and beverages among employees (e.g. self-serve meals and beverages), unless individuals are members of the same household, and reserve adequate space for employees and students to observe social distancing while eating meals.
- Responsible Parties may open buffets, provided that they are not self-serve and that they are sufficiently staffed to ensure that there is no customer touching of common objects (e.g. serving spoons, tongs) and that appropriate social distance is maintained.

### C. Phased Reopening

- Responsible Parties must designate a campus safety monitor whose responsibilities include continuous compliance with all aspects of the higher education institution's reopening plan.
- Responsible Parties are encouraged to phase-in reopening activities to allow for operational issues to be resolved before activities return to normal levels. Responsible Parties should consider limiting the number of employees, hours, and number of students when first reopening so as to provide operations with the ability to adjust to the changes.

### D. Communications Plan

- Responsible Parties must affirm that they have reviewed and understand the state-issued industry guidelines and must submit reopening plans, as instructed below, prior to reopening.
- Responsible Parties should engage with campus community members (e.g., employees, students, interested organizations) when developing reopening plans. Plans for reopening should identify the groups of people involved and engaged throughout the planning process.
- Responsible Parties should develop a communications plan for students, parents or legal guardians, employees and visitors that includes reopening-related instructions, training, signage, and a consistent means to provide individuals with information. Responsible Parties may consider developing webpages, text and email groups, and/or social media groups or posts.
- Responsible Parties should encourage all students, employees, and visitors to adhere to CDC and DOH guidance regarding the use of PPE, specifically face coverings when a social distance of six feet cannot be maintained, through verbal communication and signage.
- Responsible Parties should designate points-of-contact or coordinators to be the main contact upon the identification of positive cases and who are responsible for subsequent communication. Coordinators should be responsible for answering questions from students and employees regarding the COVID-19 public health emergency and plans implemented by the institution.
  - If feasible, coordinators should also work closely with local health departments and other higher education institutions to monitor public health conditions and jointly develop monitoring strategies.

## III. PROCESSES

## A. Screening and Testing

- Residential higher education institutions may choose to test students, faculty, and/or student-facing staff for COVID-19 using a molecular diagnostic test prior to or upon arrival.
  - It is recommended, at a minimum, that institutions test students who are arriving from other states and countries upon arrival.
  - The best practice is to re-test individuals arriving from other states and countries between 7 to 14 days after arrival, or upon development of symptoms.
  - Individuals who become symptomatic, but who have a negative COVID-19 test result should continue to stay home or in isolation while they are sick and should consult their health care provider about the need for additional testing and when to resume normal activities.
  - In residential higher education institutions, Responsible Parties should determine whether to separate students upon arrival until they can be tested, and test results return negative.
- Responsible Parties should remain aware that quarantine of students or employees may be required after international travel, pursuant to current CDC and DOH guidance.
- Responsible Parties may consider developing testing systems on campus or self-testing systems, as able.
- Responsible Parties must implement mandatory regular health screening practices of their employees, students, and, where practicable, scheduled visitors (e.g., on-campus tour groups), but such screening shall not be mandated for delivery personnel.
  - Employees reporting to work on-campus must be screened on a daily basis.
  - Students must be screened periodically as determined by the higher education institution but are not required to be screened on a daily basis.
  - Screening practices are recommended to be conducted remotely (e.g., by telephone or electronic survey), before the individual reports in-person to the higher education related activity, to the extent possible; or may be performed on site.
  - Screening should be completed using either a digital or in-person questionnaire that determines whether the individual has:
    - (a) knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19;
    - (b) tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days; and/or
    - (c) has experienced any symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
- As able, Responsible Parties should consider implementing health screening practices for unscheduled visitors (e.g., members of the public allowed to use campus facilities).
- Refer to CDC guidance on "[Symptoms of Coronavirus](#)" for the most up-to-date information on symptoms associated with COVID-19.
- Any individual who screens positive for COVID-19 exposure or symptoms must be immediately sent home, to their residence, or to the designated quarantine or isolation location with instructions or arrangement for health assessment and testing. Responsible Parties must immediately notify the state and local health departments about the case if test results are positive for COVID-19.

Responsible Parties should also provide the individual with information on health care and testing resources, if applicable.

- Responsible Parties must designate a central point of contact(s), which may vary by activity, location, shift or day, responsible for receiving and attesting to having reviewed all screening activities, with such contact(s) also identified as the party for individuals to inform if they later are experiencing COVID-19-related symptoms or COVID-19 exposure, as noted on the questionnaire.
- Responsible Parties must require individuals to immediately disclose if and when their responses to any of the aforementioned questions changes, such as if they begin to experience symptoms, including during or outside of work hours.
  - In addition to the screening questionnaire, temperature checks may also be conducted per U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or DOH guidelines. Responsible Parties are prohibited from keeping records of employee health data (e.g. the specific temperature data of an individual), but are permitted to maintain records that confirm individuals were screened and the result of such screening (e.g. pass/fail, clear/not cleared).
- Responsible Parties must ensure that any personnel performing in-person screening activities, including temperature checks, are appropriately protected from exposure to potentially infectious employees or visitors entering the facilities. Personnel performing screening activities should be trained by employer-identified individuals who are familiar with CDC, DOH, and OSHA protocols.
- Screeners should be provided and use PPE, including at a minimum, an acceptable face covering or mask, and may include gloves, a gown, and/or a face shield.

## **B. Tracing and Tracking**

- Responsible Parties must notify the state and local health department immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 test result by an individual on campus, including employees, students, and visitors.
- In the case of an individual testing positive, Responsible Parties must develop plans with local health departments to trace all contacts of the individual, in accordance with the protocols, training, and tools provided through the [New York State Contact Tracing Program](#). Confidentiality must be maintained as required by federal and state law and regulations. Responsible Parties must cooperate with state and local health department contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine efforts.
  - If feasible, Responsible Parties may offer optional tracing and tracking technology (e.g., mobile applications) to streamline contact tracing and communication process among the workforce and student body.
  - Responsible Parties should partner with local health departments to train staff and students to undertake contact tracing efforts for on-campus populations, where feasible.
- State and local health departments will implement monitoring and movement restrictions of COVID-19 infected or exposed persons, including isolation or quarantine.
- Responsible Parties must ensure that reporting plans are in place for individuals who are alerted that they have come into close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19, and have been alerted to such exposure via tracing, tracking or other mechanism.

- Responsible Parties should refer to DOH’s “[Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure](#)” regarding protocols and policies for individuals seeking to return to work or class after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after individuals have had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19.

## IV. INSTITUTION PLANS

Responsible Parties must submit an affirmation at the below link that they have read and understand this guidance. Further, pursuant to this guidance, Responsible Parties must prepare and submit plan(s) for reopening and operating during the ongoing emergency.

Plans should reflect engagement with campus stakeholders and, in accordance with the minimum requirements referenced herein, cover: (1) reopening of the campus, (2) monitoring of health conditions, (3) containment of potential transmission of the virus, and (4) shut down of in-person operations on the campus, if necessitated by widespread COVID-19 transmission. Responsible Parties must conspicuously post completed reopening plans for employees and students to access.

**Private and other non-public higher education institutions** should use the following submission form link to file their plans with DOH. DOH may require such higher education institutions to modify their plans, to the extent necessary to ensure compliance with this guidance.

<https://forms.ny.gov/s3/higher-education-reopening>

**State University of New York (SUNY) and City University of New York (CUNY) institutions** should submit their plans to their respective chancellor’s office and should not use the above submission form. SUNY and CUNY officials will directly contact each institution regarding their submitted plans.

### **Additional safety information, guidelines, and resources are available at:**

New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website  
<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Occupational Safety and Health Administration COVID-19 Website  
<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>

American College Health Association Website  
<https://www.acha.org>

**[At the link below, affirm that you have read and understand your obligation to operate in accordance with this guidance:](#)**

<https://forms.ny.gov/s3/ny-forward-affirmation>