

COVID-19
**Fall Semester Safe
Operating Protocols**



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COVID-19 Fall Semester Safe Operating Protocols

This plan outlines the approved protocols to bring employees and students back to Western Nebraska Community College's Alliance, Scottsbluff, and Sidney locations for the Fall 2020 semester. The protocols outlined in this plan apply to credit and non-credit classes, and will take effect August 10, 2020 for all three locations. The plan is designed to ensure academic and service excellence and safety for students, faculty and staff as we continue to minimize the risk of exposure to the coronavirus. Items outlined in this plan are subject to change based on updated recommendations or guidelines from the following:

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/index.html>

Panhandle Public Health District (PPHD)

<http://www.pphd.org/>

University of Nebraska Medical Center

https://www.unmc.edu/healthsecurity/_documents/Higher-Education-Pandemic-Recovery-Guide-Step-I-III-5-12-2020-v1.35.pdf

Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services

<http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

Tuscany Strategy Consulting, Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, Council for Higher Education Accreditation

<https://www.opensmartedu.org/>

Disaster Resilient Universities (DRU) Network

<https://safety.uoregon.edu/disaster-resilient-universities-network>

Health & Safety

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. It is the virus responsible for the current global pandemic and is a highly contagious and potentially lethal virus. Its spread continues in many areas of the world and the United States, including Nebraska.

WNCC is closely monitoring the ongoing developments regarding COVID-19 and is engaged in numerous efforts to prevent, mitigate, and respond to the COVID-19 situation facing our campuses. Efforts include the implementation of mask-wearing protocols, social distancing measures, increased cleaning, and other recommended mitigation strategies. Despite the College's best efforts, it is impossible to eliminate the risk of positive cases or an outbreak on our campuses. We cannot guarantee that people present at college locations will not be exposed to and become infected with COVID-19. The risk of exposure and possible infection is real and present in any community environment where large numbers of people are regularly interacting, particularly when they do not adhere to the established protocol that includes wearing masks when in public and frequent hand washing.

Recent information from the CDC indicates that COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person, mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. The College continues to follow the guidance of the CDC, PPHD, County Health Departments and medical experts. At this time, however, there is no vaccine currently available to eliminate the risks associated with COVID-19. While the College will strive to reduce the risk and mitigate the effects of this virus, we need for every member of our community to cooperate with these ongoing efforts.

WNCC's COVID-19 Response Team will continue to assess the contents of this plan throughout the fall semester.

WNCC staff, faculty, and students should understand that this pandemic is a fluid situation with circumstances ever-changing, and the protocols within this document are subject to change at any time.

WNCC has identified multiple modes of communicating updates to plans, so please pay attention to the following sources for information:

- WNCC Email
- WNCC.edu COVID-19 Information Page
- WNCC Portal COVID-19 FAQ Page
- WNCC Social Media
- Local media sources

Campus Preparation

WNCC continues working to prepare our facilities for a return to campus with decisions based on reliable guidance for institutions of higher education. The following preparations will be in place for the fall semester: Physical barriers (plexiglass, or “sneeze guards”) have been placed between individuals on service lines such as front-line walk-up counters in all WNCC locations that will see high levels of traffic and contact.

Appropriate social distances will be marked on floors in high traffic areas.

WNCC mask covering guidelines and COVID-19 safety informational posters have been placed on all entrances to WNCC facilities as well as throughout the buildings.

Occupancy limits will be posted at all open or shared spaces (meeting rooms, classrooms, commons spaces, etc.) at all WNCC locations.

Classrooms and open or shared spaces have been setup to meet social distancing guidelines. Furniture in these spaces may have been removed, marked as unusable, or placed in a manner to meet these guidelines.

WNCC has secured appropriate and necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), hand hygiene products, and cleaning materials to support the college population for this semester.

Upon return to campus on June 15, 2020, staff departments have assessed their operations and developed processes to limit person to person contact and utilization of highly touched surfaces to further mitigate transmission of the COVID-19 virus. Please familiarize yourself with these changes and respectfully follow them throughout the fall semester.

An educational presentation regarding the COVID-19 virus will be made available to all staff, students, and faculty via BizLibrary (staff and faculty) and Blackboard (students).

Before Reporting to Campus

As recommended by PPHD, employees should continue to monitor themselves for symptoms related to COVID-19 throughout the fall semester, and should NOT report to work if they are sick or if they or any person within your household has had exposure to an individual testing positive for COVID-19 that has self-quarantined for less than 14 days.

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

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

To assist staff, faculty, and students in pre-screening themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 before reporting to campus, WNCC will make available an electronic screening process via mobile app designed by RAVE, WNCC's emergency notification service provider. More details regarding this app will be made available as faculty and students return for the fall semester.

Staff, faculty, and students should use the attachment **“Public Health Recommendations for the Screening, Exclusion, and Re-Admittance of Ill Students and Staff for COVID-19 in Schools”** when pre-screening themselves before reporting to campus to determine if it is safe to report to campus for the day.

Employees that are sick or exhibiting symptoms should report this to their supervisor immediately from home, and in conjunction with their supervisor, implement contingency plans for the department and position.

Students that are sick or exhibiting symptoms should report this to their instructors immediately from home, in conjunction with their instructor, implement plans to complete coursework.

If an employee believes that their illness and/or symptoms may be related to COVID-19, they should contact the Unified Command Center 24/7 Hotline, 308.262.5764, to receive a screening for COVID-19 from a public health professional. PPHD will guide employees what to do next, whether that be returning to work, seeing a healthcare professional, or being tested for COVID-19.

Employees who have contracted COVID-19, or been quarantined as a close contact will have been issued orders from PPHD to quarantine at home for a specific period of time. These orders should be forwarded to WNCC Human Resources Executive Director, Kathy Ault, and employees will not be allowed back to work until allowed by their orders. WNCC will maintain confidentiality of personal health information of employees in all matters regarding COVID-19.

Students who have contracted COVID-19, or been quarantined as a close contact will have been issued orders from PPHD to quarantine at home for a specific period of time. These orders should be forwarded to WNCC Dean of Students, Norman Coley, Jr., and students will not be allowed back to class or activities until allowed by their orders. WNCC will maintain confidentiality of personal health information of students in all matters regarding COVID-19.

Employees who become ill, regardless of symptom type, during the work shift, are expected to voluntarily go home for the day. Supervisors who reasonably believe that an employee is not feeling well should require the employee to go home for the day and report this information to Human Resources. Once home, the employee should screen themselves for symptoms of COVID-19, and contact the Unified Command Center 24/7 Hotline, 308.262.5764, if they believe they may have contracted COVID-19.

Students who become ill, regardless of symptom type, during any class or activities, are expected to voluntarily go home for the day. Faculty who reasonably believe that a student is not feeling well should require the students to go home for the day and report this information to the Dean of Students. Once home, the student should screen themselves for symptoms of COVID-19, and contact the Unified Command Center 24/7 Hotline, 308.262.5764, if they believe they may have contracted COVID-19.

WNCC works very closely with PPHD during any situation regarding COVID-19 taking place at any of our three locations. When WNCC is notified of any employee who has been ordered to quarantine for any reason related to COVID-19 by PPHD, and/or who has tested positive for COVID-19, this will immediately activate our cleaning and disinfection protocols. This protocol includes contact tracing to reveal where the employee has been and who they have interacted with during that work shift before being sent home. Any areas of the College which may be at risk for exposure will be cleaned and disinfected by WNCC's contract cleaning service, utilizing reviewed and approved CDC cleaning products and procedures immediately. These areas may be closed or relocated for the day to ensure proper cleaning and disinfection has taken place.

The WNCC Human Resources department will be as flexible as possible while maintaining a consistent leave administration process.

WNCC Face Covering Protocol

Resulting from survey analysis and inter-departmental discussion, regarding transmission mitigation of the COVID-19 virus, **beginning Monday, August 10, all WNCC students, faculty, and staff will be required to wear face coverings whenever in a public area on campus.** While faculty and staff are not required to wear face coverings when in their offices or personal workspaces, nor students when in their respective residence hall rooms, the protocol applies to any “open” indoor spaces

(classrooms, meeting rooms, commons areas, restrooms, etc.) on WNCC property in Alliance, Scottsbluff, and Sidney.

Please make sure to arrive to campus each day with a face covering on before you enter any WNCC facility.

WNCC defines acceptable face coverings as:

Acceptable face coverings are a reusable cloth mask or disposable mask or face shield. Face shields should only be used in conjunction with an acceptable face covering. Regardless of type used, the mask should not be designed with an exhalation valve. All facial coverings must extend from the bridge of the nose to below the chin, at minimum.

Face coverings should be worn appropriately at all times when required. For instruction on how to wear a face covering appropriately, as well as to apply and remove it appropriately, please click the following the video link.

<https://youtu.be/z-5RYKLYvaw>

Staff and faculty should continue to work directly with Human Resources to request reasonable accommodations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Employees can begin the accommodation process by first completing a WNCC Employee Request for Accommodation Form found on the HR portal page.

Students should continue to work with the Dean of Students and Disability Services Officer to request reasonable accommodations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each WNCC department and faculty member will be given a supply of disposable face coverings that should be used on an emergency basis. For example, when an employee or student loses their face covering or to replace a soiled or damaged face covering. WNCC encourages all staff, faculty, and students to utilize their own personal face coverings (reusable or disposable) while on campus. Should there be concerns regarding not having a personal supply of masks, employees should contact Human Resources, and students should contact the Dean of Students.

Campus Physical Distancing and Hygiene Practices

It is highly important that Staff, Faculty, and Students maintain awareness of their physical distancing from others while on campus. **PPHD defines close contact as “being within 6’ (feet) of another person for more than for more than 15 minutes” and maintaining this distance whenever possible significantly decreases the chance of transmission of the virus between persons.** Out of respect to all persons on campus, WNCC expects that the following physical distancing and hygiene practices be maintained by all persons whenever possible. Following these practices offers maximum protection for all persons on campus.

- Maintain a physical distance of 6’ (feet) from persons when possible.
- Refrain from physical contact with others when possible (greeting, shaking hands, etc.)
- Respect occupancy limits of all spaces on campus.
- Follow all floor physical distancing stickers while waiting in line (where applicable).
- Refrain from moving furniture in all open public spaces, as these have been setup for appropriate physical distancing from others.
- Utilize hand hygiene after entering the building by either: washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or utilizing a hand sanitizing product with at least 60% alcohol.
- Sanitize items between use that are shared between persons.
- Use sneeze/cough etiquette even when wearing a face covering.
- Utilize hand hygiene after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose, etc.
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose, and mouth without properly sanitized hands.
- Reusable cloth face coverings should be laundered after each day.

Cleaning / Infection Control Protocols

FBG Services will continue to clean routinely (offices, restrooms, public spaces, highly touched surfaces) throughout the Alliance, Scottsbluff and Sidney locations utilizing products and practices that are consistent with CDC and PPHD guidelines.

However, there are times where it is more practical for staff to clean and disinfect spaces between uses such as:

between meeting space use, when sharing items such as computers between use, and occasionally in the classroom. Staff, faculty, and students must recognize that cleanliness of our buildings is a team effort and there are times where all persons on campus could be responsible for their own sanitation efforts.

Routine cleaning concerns and requests can continue to be made via the WNCC Requests system via the WNCC Portal by selecting "FBG Custodial Services."

WNCC has worked in conjunction with FBG Services to develop a strategy for disinfection of classrooms during the fall semester. FBG has been provided a schedule of all classes taking place on a daily basis at the Scottsbluff location throughout the semester to ensure classrooms can be cleaned thoroughly between use. When a classroom has been sanitized, FBG will leave a courtesy card at the instructor's lectern so that the faculty and students are assured the room has been cleaned. In the instance that no courtesy card is at the lectern upon arrival to the classroom, faculty and students will be responsible for cleaning their own personal space for that class period, utilizing the materials supplied to instructors. Classrooms at the Alliance and Sidney campus will be sanitized between classes by faculty, with nightly routine cleaning by FBG.

Before the fall semester begins, each WNCC department and faculty member will be given a supply of CDC-approved cleaning wipes, and hand hygiene products for which they will be responsible for making available in their respective work areas (departments should securely store and make available to employees, and faculty should securely store in their office and make available in classroom for their students during class).

Each department or faculty member can replenish supplies by contacting the Administrative Services department and requesting more product.

Employees should check the label of their cleaning product for disinfection procedures to ensure proper disinfection occurs when cleaning.

Teaching and Learning Environment

In accordance with the WNCC Face Covering protocols, faculty and students will both be required to wear face coverings for the entirety of the class. WNCC understands that there are certain instances when appropriate physical distancing cannot be maintained such as (student and faculty one on one contact, lab times, etc.) but an awareness of close contact should be maintained to ensure we are not within 6 feet of another for more than 15 minutes if possible.

During lab courses when students and faculty are working together in close proximity, faculty should try to cohort students together as much as possible for as long as possible to help further reduce the risk of virus transmission.

The maximum occupancy of a classroom should never be exceeded.

Desks and furniture have been setup for appropriate physical distancing and faculty and students should refrain from moving furniture in the classroom.

Hand hygiene and sanitation materials should be made available to the students before class.

Faculty should be as flexible as possible while maintaining a consistent leave administration process for students in the classroom.

Faculty will have the flexibility to conduct class times outdoors when feasible, but must ensure that WNCC protocols herein are still maintained.

Should a student begin to exhibit symptoms related to COVID-19 in the learning environment, faculty members should respectfully excuse the student from class.

Employee / Business Travel

All employees will continue to check out vehicles ahead of time through Administrative Services department in Scottsbluff, and with the designated individuals in the Alliance and Sidney locations. Supervisor consideration and approval is required before any travel outside of the WNCC service area. The Travel Request Authorization form must also be completed and approved before the vehicle is authorized for use.

More than one employee will be allowed to use the same vehicle for travel as long as the following measures are utilized during travel:

- Use social distancing as much as possible. For example, when two persons are traveling the passenger should utilize the rear passenger seat while the driver maintains their seat.
- To avoid any potential exposure (being within 6 feet of each other for more than 15 minutes) to COVID-19 or any other illnesses, all passengers in the vehicle are required to wear masks for the duration of travel in the vehicle.
- Seatbelts must always be worn!
- The vehicle's ventilation system should not be set to recirculation mode, but to allow fresh air into the vehicle for the duration of travel. Fresh air can also be introduced into the vehicle by opening windows frequently, or for the duration of travel.
- If possible, employees should cohort themselves into vehicles by department, or by ensuring the same employees travel to and from the destination together.
- Employees who utilize WNCC vehicles for travel will be given supplies at checkout to sanitize the vehicle after use. Employees are required to sanitize the vehicle before checking the vehicle back in.

Fall Semester Student Transport

WNCC has developed a process for transporting students to and from campus during this pandemic. The process is described below.

Employees who request a vehicle for student transport will be given one of WNCC's SUVs for transport. All WNCC SUVs will be stocked with appropriate PPE for transport (masks, hand sanitizer, facial tissues, etc.)

- Both the students and employee should wear face coverings before entering the vehicle and continue to wear them for the duration of travel.
- Both the employee and student should use proper hand hygiene before entering the vehicle.
- The vehicle's ventilation system should not be set to recirculation mode, but to allow fresh air into the vehicle for the duration of travel. Fresh air can also be introduced into the vehicle by opening windows frequently, or for the duration of travel.
- Employees should transport no more than two (2) students at one time in a WNCC transport vehicle. Students should be seated as follows to allow for social distancing as much as possible:
 - One student in the second row passenger side
 - One student in the third row drivers side seat
- The student's luggage and belongings should sit next to them in their seating row. Do not combine all luggage in the cargo space.

If the students are required to quarantine upon arrival to Nebraska, the employee should refrain from stopping during the travel back to not allow the students to exit the vehicle until they arrive at WNCC.

Students required to quarantine should be taken directly to residence halls for quarantine upon arrival, and notification should be made to Residence Life ahead of time to ensure check in.

All WNCC transport vehicles will be sanitized between use by FBG before it is authorized to be used again.

If more than six students require transport at approximately the same time, arrangements should be made with Administrative Services department to schedule transport via bus/shuttle.

Travel Requiring Charter Bus / Shuttle

All travel arrangements that require the WNCC charter bus or shuttle will continue to be scheduled through the WNCC Information Coordinator.

Persons traveling via charter bus or shuttle will be required to wear a face covering for the entirety of bus travel.

Arrangements will be made by the Information Coordinator and requestor to allow for maximum physical distancing (i.e. multiple vehicles may be used to transport persons).

Bus / Shuttle drivers should refrain from physical contact with travelers, and their personal belongings during the trip.

The event coordinator will be responsible for maintaining physical distancing during travel and for disinfection of the vehicles during and after use.

Should any person traveling become ill, or begin to exhibit symptoms of illness during travel, the event coordinator should be responsible for obtaining assistance from their department to activate the Fall Semester Student Transport process. Persons who become ill during travel should not continue to travel with the rest of the group to further ensure transmission of the virus is limited or nonexistent.

Residence Life Health and Safety Responsibilities

We expect that all members of the housing community - residents, staff, and visitors - act in a manner that demonstrates respect and consideration for those around them, including respect and consideration for the health and safety of all community members. All residential students are prohibited from creating a health or safety hazard within College Housing. Residential students are required to comply with health and safety laws, orders, ordinances, regulations and health and safety guidance adopted by the College or Residence Life as it relates to public health crises, including COVID-19. Adherence to health and safety requirements applies to all residents, staff and visitors and extends to all aspects of residential life, including but not limited to, bedrooms, bathrooms, lounges, computer rooms, and all common spaces.

Quarantining/Isolation/Separation

At any time, the College may request or require a resident to leave College Housing when that resident's continued presence in the housing community poses a health or safety risk for community members. Not all College Housing residential rooms or halls are appropriate for self-quarantine or self-isolation, for example, and in those situations where a student is recommended to self-quarantine or self-isolate, students may not be permitted to continue residing in their residential space for the quarantine or isolation period and may be provided alternative housing arrangements as needed. A temporary removal from College Housing to isolate or quarantine does not constitute a termination of a residential student's housing contract.

Distancing and De-Densifying Efforts

Residential students are required to comply with any de-densifying efforts needed on campus due to COVID-19 or other public health emergency, including, but not limited to, the relocation of all or some residential students to alternative housing. In the event College Housing must relocate students as part of a de-densifying strategy due to public health concerns for an extended period of time and alternative housing is not available, College Housing will offer impacted students fair and reasonable reimbursement for alternative temporary housing secured by the student as appropriate and based on information available at that time.

Consolidation

Residential students are required to comply with any consolidation efforts needed on campus due to COVID-19 or other public health emergency, including, but not limited to, the relocation of all or some residential students to alternative housing in order to better use our staff/ building resources.

Dining

Dining service, including where and how it will be offered to residential students, is subject to the discretion of the College and is subject to modification to address public health concerns. Due to health and safety guidance adopted by the College or Residence Life, Dining Services may limit the occupancy of dining halls, limit the amount of time students may reside within dining halls or make other operational adjustments needed to address health and safety concerns.

Cleaning

College Housing will continue to implement and modify its cleaning protocols to address COVID-19 or other public health emergency in the interest of minimizing the spread of disease. College Housing / Residence Life will educate and inform residential students on appropriate cleaning protocols within their assigned spaces to reduce the spread of COVID-19 within residence halls.

Counseling Services

WNCC has licensed counselors on staff who are trained to help you resolve personal difficulties that interfere with optimal personal and academic functioning. Specifically, WNCC offers individual and group counseling, as well as substance abuse evaluation and education needed to assist students.

All services are free and confidential to WNCC students and their families. To schedule an appointment, call 308.635.6050 or email counseling@wncc.edu.

Visitors / Contractors / Vendors

All visitors, contractors, and vendors are subject to follow the procedures within the following sections of this plan:

- Before Returning to Campus
- WNCC Face Covering Protocol
- Campus Physical Distancing & Hygiene Practices
- Cleaning / Infection Control Practices
- Residence Life

Reporting

Please report **EMERGENT** concerns regarding employee's non-compliance with protocols within this plan to Human Resources, 308.635.6005.

Please report **EMERGENT** concerns regarding student's non-compliance with protocols within this plan to the Dean of Students, 308.635.6050.

Please report non-emergent concerns regarding non-compliance with protocols within this plan via Maxient, by visiting wncc.edu and clicking "Report a Concern/Incident" at the bottom of the home page.

Athletics

The National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) has ruled that all close-contact fall sports move to the spring semester. These sports include men's and women's soccer, and volleyball. All sanctioned athletic competitions will now take place in the Spring semester. The NJCAA has allowed a 60-day time period in the fall for practices and scrimmages to take place during the fall semester.

WNCC Athletics has developed protocols for safe practices, workouts, team meetings, pre-screening, sanitation, and travel.

Events on Campus

Prior approval by supervisors and Senior Leadership is required before any events scheduled to take place on any WNCC campus.

For any events that will host 500 or more persons, PPHD requires that a safety plan be submitted to them for approval.



Public Health Recommendations for the Screening, Exclusion, and Re-Admittance of Ill Students and Staff for COVID-19 in Schools

The following symptom screening criteria for ill students and staff is based on the most current research. Because people with COVID-19 have reported a wide range of symptoms – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness – the following criteria has been developed to assist schools in identifying possible COVID-19 cases.

Students with two of the following: fever (measured or subjective), chills, cold/shivering, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
OR:
At least one of the following: new cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, loss of taste and smell
OR:
Has at least one symptom and answers yes to: Is there someone in your household who is currently in quarantine or currently positive for COVID-19?

Students and staff who meet criteria should immediately isolate in the designated area and be sent home as soon as possible. Require the symptomatic person to wear a surgical or procedure mask while waiting, if tolerable.

Re-Admittance to School

Symptomatic staff /student who tests positive:

Exclude for:
- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared
AND:
- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever reducing medication
AND:
- Symptoms have improved

Symptomatic staff /student not tested:

Exclude for:
- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared
AND:
- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication
AND:
- Symptoms have improved
OR
- May return to school if an alternative diagnosis is established with a health care provider's note.

Symptomatic staff /student who tests negative:

Exclude until fever free for 24 hours (or meets the schools' requirements for readmission) **AND** improved respiratory symptoms

There is no reason for a student or staff member to get a "negative test" to be cleared for the return to school. A COVID-19 positive individual does not need a repeat COVID-19 test or a health care provider's note in order to return. Recovery will be determined and communicated to the school by public health.

If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, please call the 24/7 help line at 308-262-5764.