



COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan and Reference Guide

Thiel College adheres to guidelines based on recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA-DOH), and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). The following information is a general reference guide to the College's COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan.

Coordination with Local Public Health Officials:

Thiel is fortunate to be partnered with expert healthcare providers and organizations, including UPMC, Sharon Regional Medical Center, and the Mercer County Department of Health. The College will work directly with the Mercer County Health Department to mitigate and contain the spread of the coronavirus. Should there be any confirmed cases of COVID-19 on our campus, the College will work with the Mercer County Health Department and support their efforts tracing contacts and containing its spread.

Designated Points of Contact for the Department of Health:

Jennifer Clark, Director of Human Resources, will serve as the single point of contact to the Mercer County Health Department for matters involving employees.

Mike McKinney, Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students, will serve as the single point of contact to the Mercer County Health Department for matters involving students.

Four Primary Mitigation Strategies:

- 1. Screening Stations.** All employees, students and visitors are required to process through a screening station upon arrival to campus and before accessing other facilities.

Monitor Your Health. Aside from a temperature screening station, all faculty, staff and students are expected to self-monitor for [symptoms of COVID-19](#) before coming to campus or attending practice or class.

- Employees experiencing symptoms should stay home and contact their healthcare provider, Human Resources (jjclark@thiel.edu/X2858), and supervisor.
- Students experiencing any symptoms, should stay home or in their campus housing and contact the Campus Health Center (health_services@thiel.edu/724-589-2195) for a phone screening or triage.

- 2. Face Covering.** Masks, shields, or related coverings must be worn in all campus facilities and where physical distancing is not possible (including outdoors). This applies to all students, faculty staff and visitors. Exceptions to this policy for medical reasons and certain College approved activities can be found in the COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan.

3. **Physical Distancing.** Physical distancing rules must be followed, which means maintaining a 6-foot distance from others, avoiding large gatherings, limiting the number of passengers in an elevator or vehicle, and avoiding sharing of any food, drinks and other personal items.
4. **Good Hygiene and Increased Sanitation.** Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds or apply hand sanitizer. Avoid touching nose, mouth and eyes. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow and immediately wash hands or apply hand sanitizer. Avoid person-to-person contact, including handshaking, when possible. Increase cleaning of high-touch areas.

Containment Strategies to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

If a student or employee is found to have tested positive for COVID-19 or been in contact with someone who has recently tested positive or is believed to be infected with COVID-19, certain actions will be triggered.

- **Isolation** – Isolation will be used to separate people infected with the virus (those who are *sick* with COVID-19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected. People who are in isolation should stay home or in designated campus housing until [it's safe for them to be around others](#). When able, students will be expected to isolate themselves at home. However, some designated on-campus isolation housing has been prepared in the case the student can't travel home.
- **Quarantine** - Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been *exposed* to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. People in quarantine should stay home or in designated quarantine housing, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health department. Some designated on-campus quarantine housing has been prepared for student use. The College may ask students to quarantine from home depending on the availability of facilities.

The College will maintain open communication to the Mercer County Health Department, and support their efforts to trace contacts and prevent the spread of the virus. The College will assemble and train a group of students and employees to assist with contact tracing efforts.

Safely Resuming In-Person Instruction:

Many strategies, policies, and practices (including those previously mentioned) have been established to support the safe transition back to in-person instruction this fall. We aim to offer face-to-face instruction for the entire academic year (Make it to May). Therefore, the academic calendar has been adjusted with hopes of increasing the likelihood of avoiding a resurgence of the virus. Likewise, additional safety measures have been established to adhere to the College's 4 primary mitigation strategies (i.e., screening, physical distancing, face coverings, and good hygiene and sanitation). The following highlights some of the broad changes within this area of planning.

Start Date / Academic Schedule

- Fall classes will begin Monday, August 17 and conclude on Friday, November 20.
- Final exams will take place Saturday, November 21 through Tuesday, November 24.

- Classes will meet on Labor Day and there will be no Fall Break this year.
- Students will move items into their housing in advance of staying on campus to accommodate physical distancing (with exception to International students and students who are unable to schedule an advance trip due to distance).

Classes

- Most classes will be offered in-person or face-to-face, with some courses offered in hybrid format.
- Classroom furniture will be reconfigured to accommodate lower capacity in each space and support physical distancing guidelines.
- Additional time has been allotted between classes to allow for the cleaning of work spaces and surfaces between uses.
- Face coverings will be required in the classroom.
- Additional online courses will be offered this year.
- All classes will be designed to be offered in-person and online to accommodate student illnesses and/or the need to pivot to fully online delivery due to the pandemic.
- Attendance policies have been adjusted to support students who are ill.
- Course contents will be housed on Moodle and synchronous platforms including, Zoom, Microsoft Teams and others will be used to deliver course content.

To support the face-to-face teaching and learning, health and safety plans and protocols have also been developed for other areas of campus life (e.g., housing, dining, athletics, activities, and events, travel, etc.). For more information about planning in these areas, please review the full Thiel College COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan.

Accurate and Timely Communication throughout the Pandemic

Thiel's Office of Communication and Marketing has established a robust communication plan to keep constituents well informed. The plan involves targeted messaging through email and social media, the use of our Tomcat alert system to send text, voicemail and messaging, and a [coronavirus updates page](#) housed on the Thiel College website. An abundance of signage will also be strategically placed throughout campus to remind students, employees and guests of our four mitigation strategies (i.e., screening procedures, physical distancing, face coverings, and good hygiene and sanitation practices) and other important health and safety information.

Planning for Additional Campus Activities

Thiel College has developed and/or is in the process of developing health and safety plans to support additional campus activities like athletics, campus housing, dining, and student events. As those plans are finalized, links to each plan will be included in this document and available online.

Pandemic Planning Team Co-Coordinator

For any questions related to Thiel's COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan, please contact Jennifer Clark, Director of Human Resources (jclark@thiel.edu / 724-589-2858) or Mike McKinney, Vice President for Student Life (mmckinney@thiel.edu / 724-589-2600).