



Mercyhurst University Vaccination Policy

Responsible Oversight Executive: University Pandemic Officer

Date of Creation: February 2022

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to communicate the University's vaccination requirements for students and employees.

B. AUTHORITY

The administration has the inherent authority to implement policies and procedures that ensure compliance with the law and that support the health and safety of our community.

C. DEFINITIONS

CDC: Centers for Disease Control

ECDH: Erie County Department of Health

Measles: Measles is a highly contagious virus that can result in serious health consequences. Measles virus causes rash, cough, runny nose, eye irritation, and fever. It can lead to ear infection, pneumonia, seizures (jerking and staring), brain damage, and death.

Meningococcal Meningitis: Meningitis is rare. But when it strikes, this potentially fatal bacterial disease can lead to swelling of fluid surrounding the brain and spinal column, as well as severe and permanent disabilities, such as hearing loss, brain damage, seizures, limb amputation and even death. It is spread through the air via respiratory secretions or close contact with an infected person. This can include coughing, sneezing, kissing, or sharing items like utensils, cigarettes and drinking glasses. Symptoms of meningococcal meningitis often are like those of the flu and can include high fever, severe headache, stiff neck, rash, nausea, vomiting, lethargy, and confusion. College students, particularly those residing in residence halls or similar large group settings, have been found to have an increased risk for meningococcal meningitis.

Meningitis Outbreak: A meningococcal disease outbreak occurs when multiple cases of the same serogroup (type) happen in a population over a brief period. Outbreaks can occur in communities, schools, colleges, prisons, and other populations. Depending on the population size and specific circumstances, health officials may declare an outbreak after just two cases occur within a three-month period.

Meningitis Vaccine: An FDA-approved vaccine to protect against four of the five most common strains of the disease. The vaccine provides protection for approximately three to five years. As with any vaccine, vaccination against meningitis may not protect 100 percent of all susceptible individuals. At least 70% of all cases of meningococcal disease in college students are vaccine preventable (types A, C, Y, and W135), and the recent approval of an additional meningitis vaccine for type B further increases the efficacy.

MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella): These diseases spread from person to person through the air. An individual can easily catch them by being around someone who is already infected. Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine can protect children (and adults) from all three of these diseases.

MMR Vaccine: An FDA-approved vaccination shot provided to inoculate an individual from Measles, Mumps, and Rubella.

MMR Outbreak: An outbreak is an increase in the number of cases of a disease above what is normally expected in a defined population. Measles is highly contagious, and an outbreak is defined as a chain of transmission including 3 or more cases linked in time and space. One case of rubella is considered an outbreak. An outbreak of mumps is defined as three or more cases linked by time and space in a defined setting, such as a college or university campus.

Mumps: Mumps virus causes fever, headache, muscle pain, loss of appetite, and swollen glands. It can lead to deafness, meningitis (infection of the brain and spinal cord covering), painful swelling of the testicles or ovaries, and rarely sterility.

PA DOH: Pennsylvania Department of Health

Quarantine: Quarantine refers to the practice of separating individuals who have had close contact with someone with an infectious disease.

Rubella (German Measles): Rubella virus causes rash, arthritis (mostly in women), and mild fever. If a woman gets rubella while she is pregnant, she could have a miscarriage, or her baby could be born with serious birth defects.

D. SCOPE

This policy applies to all University employees and students. This includes all full-time, part-time, per diem, faculty, staff, administration, student workers, volunteers, and contract/vendor/third-party employees.

E. POLICY STATEMENT

The University requires all employees and students to be fully vaccinated against certain diseases prior to coming to campus. Employees and students are required to show proof of an MMR vaccination. Additionally, students living in MU housing are required to show proof of Meningitis vaccination. Students and employees may be subject to vaccination requirements against other diseases, including COVID-19 as part of their program requirements (e.g., Nursing, Allied Health programs, etc.), or specific work-related considerations. These specific requirements may vary from program to program, and across departments. It is the student's responsibility to understand and comply with any additional vaccination requirements they may be subject to during their matriculation. The Human Resources Department will identify and communicate with employees any additional vaccination requirements they may be subject to during their employment.

F. PROCEDURES

1. Employees and Students are required to submit proof of vaccination or an approved exemption request through the [Mercyhurst Vaccine webpage](#).
2. Exemptions from mandated vaccines are available on two grounds: Medical or Religious. Students and Employees requesting a vaccine exemption should complete and submit a Vaccination Exemption Request Form on the [Mercyhurst Vaccine webpage](#).
3. Students aged 18 and older must request the waiver under their own signature; students younger than 18 may have parents or guardians complete and sign the waiver.
4. MU reserves the right to quarantine or otherwise remove from campus unvaccinated



- students or employees in the event of disease outbreak on campus.
5. MU will determine if an “outbreak” has occurred in consultation with the ECDH and informed by the definitions contained herein. MU reserves the right to in its sole discretion declare that an “outbreak” is occurring on campus and take necessary steps to contain the spread of the relevant disease.
 6. Students quarantined or removed from campus during an outbreak may experience disruptions affecting coursework or other on-campus activities, with limited or no available online work available. Refunds of room, board, tuition, or fees are not guaranteed in an outbreak leading to removal from campus.
 7. Employees quarantined or removed from campus during an outbreak may be required to use paid time off to cover periods with no remote work availability. Remote work is not guaranteed in the event of an outbreak leading to removal from campus.
 8. Unvaccinated students and employees may be restricted from certain campus activities, programs, and events if it is determined that restriction is necessary to protect the health and well-being of the campus community. Students may also have housing assignments adjusted based on vaccination status.
 9. The ECDH, PA DOH, or other controlling agency may direct the University to undertake additional or different actions than outlined in this policy on a case-by-case basis. When this policy conflicts with guidance from ECDH, PADOH, or other controlling agency the University will defer to ECDH, PA DOH, or another controlling agency.
 10. The University reserves the right to require members of the Mercyhurst community to quarantine or remain off-campus, if in its sole discretion, the facts and circumstances of the situation while not meeting existing quarantine requirements in university policies, indicate the individual’s presence on campus may pose unnecessary risk of disease spread to the community.
 11. The University reserves the right to amend this policy.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICERS

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RELATED INFORMATION

[Mercyhurst Vaccine Webpage](#)

Policy Revision Dates: June 2023

Scheduled Review Date: Ongoing