



CEAT Communication During A Pandemic

**Procedures
CCB-017
Effective Date: 10/23/20**

- 1.01 During a pandemic (such as COVID-19), there is a lot of confusion, questions, and fear/anxiety. It is important to communicate effectively when communicating with your stakeholders, whether they are parents, students, customers, employees, etc. Following are OSU College of Engineering, Architecture, and Technology (CEAT) guidelines to follow when communicating.

Protecting Employee Medical Information

- 2.01 OSU employees are to respect the confidentiality of individuals who test positive or are ill with COVID-19 symptoms. Supervisors can notify Misty Daniels at ceathr@okstate.edu, but should not release information otherwise.
- 2.02 Always be aware of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) violations. Giving out personal information (medical information, academic information, personal information, etc.) to anyone, including parents, is against OSU policy. For more information, see <https://hr.okstate.edu/protecting-employee-medical-information>.

What should I do if a parent calls to check on their child (who has tested positive)?

- 3.01 You are prohibited to release any personal information about the student, even to parents due to HIPAA, FERPA and OSU policies. Instead, reassure them by telling them what measures OSU and CEAT are taking to keep their child safe. Explain, in detail, what actions are being taken to keep the CEAT community safe.

If I have an employee who has tested positive, may I inform my other employees (for their safety)?

- 4.01 No. This would violate HIPAA and OSU policies. UHS takes proactive measures to inform all those necessary. Instead, you can inform your employees that an employee will be absent for a while and discuss what will need to be done in his/her absence. You should reassure your employees by explaining why you cannot release personal information, and what all the University and College is doing to keep the CEAT community safe.

What should I say to someone who is angry because I will not share information about someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

- 5.01 Explain to them that under the HIPAA and FERPA guidelines and OSU policy, you are not legally allowed to provide this information and that University Health Services is taking care of informing



CEAT Communication During A Pandemic

**Procedures
CCB-017
Effective Date: 10/23/20**

anyone who needs to know. Reassure your employees that if there is concern of exposure (Refer to CCB-003 procedure) to them, they will be notified by the proper authorities.

What should I say to an OSU student, employee or OSU vendor who is not following proper safety measures (such as social distancing, wearing a mask, etc.)?

6.01 Politely remind the employee to social distance and that masks are required in all public areas on campus. If possible, offer them a mask, or direct them to someone/somewhere that have masks. Remember, your job is not to shame or ridicule them, as they could be someone who medically cannot wear one. Your job is to educate them and offer guidance. Some things to consider when talking to them:

- Highlight the concerns for others in the same work environment.
- Appeal to common humanity and shared values, such as the Cowboy Culture.

6.02 If the problem persists, you can report them to:

- Faculty Violations: Office of the Provost at 405.744.5627 or provost@okstate.edu
- Staff Violations: OSU Human Resources at 405.744.7607 or osu-hr@okstate.edu
- Vendor Violations: OSU Purchasing at 405.744.5984 or purchase@okstate.edu
- Student violations: Student Conduct Education and Administration office: 405.744.5470 or student.conduct@okstate.edu

What should I do when I encounter someone who is showing signs of being sick in a common area (such as an office space or classroom)?

7.01 Please always remain social-distanced and wear your mask. Supervisors have the authority to ask an employee who is showing signs of being ill to go home until he/she is feeling better and no longer showing symptoms.

What should a faculty member do when a student refuses to wear a mask in the classroom?

- 8.01 Students who do not wear a mask or who refuse to maintain social distancing of six (6) feet may not attend class in person. Anyone attending class in person without a mask should be asked to put one on or leave. Instructors may end class if anyone present refuses to appropriately wear a mask for the duration of class. Students who refuse to wear masks appropriately or adhere to other stated requirements may face disciplinary action from Student Conduct.
- 8.02 Like other classroom expectations, instructors are empowered to address any concerning behaviors in their classrooms. Encouraged efforts include:
- Reiterate the university's expectation of facial coverings in your syllabus.
 - Consider emailing students before the start of the course to clarify this expectation in writing.
 - Verbally discuss this expectation in the first-class period.
 - Empower students to respectfully address their peers who are not wearing a mask.
 - Continue to remind and encourage facial covering by thanking everyone for following the expectation.

Addressing Failure to Comply with Expectations

- 8.02 When you address students who are not meeting classroom expectations, consider the following:
- Stay calm. Even when discussing topics that we are very passionate about we may not be able to get the best message across when angry. By being angry, we may put others on the defensive.
 - Choose a good time and place for the conversation. When possible, find a place free from interruptions to have difficult conversations. This also allows you to have the time to formulate how you would like the conversation to look. Crowded areas may put others on the defensive.
 - Focus on the problem. Focus on the concerning behavior, rather than focusing on the person.
 - Use facts. When discussing the issue with others, be sure to use factual information to support your argument.
 - Respond vs. reply. Take time to hear the other person, recognize thoughts and feelings, and respond to what he or she said. Do not reply only to have your thoughts heard.

CEAT Communication During A Pandemic

**Procedures
CCB-017
Effective Date: 10/23/20**

8.03 Guidelines for Conversations

Clearly state the behavior causing the disruption	“Pete, as we discussed at the start of this course, as stated in the syllabus, and communicated by the university, it is an expectation that everyone in the classroom is wearing a facial covering.”
Allow the student to respond	“Can you please share why you were not wearing a facial mask?”
Set expectations going forward	“It is my expectation in all future classes, you will be wearing a facial covering when you enter the building and classroom.”
Explain what will happen in the future if expectations are not met	“This expectation is in place for the safety of our OSU community. Therefore, continued failure to comply with this expectation will lead me to refer the incident to Student Conduct.”
Discuss resources to promote student success	“Do you have anything else we need to talk about regarding facial covering or anything else you need from me?”
Document in an email to the student a summary of the conversation	“I will send you an email summarizing this conversation and my expectation going forward.”

Continual Failure to Comply with Expectations

8.04 When students are not meeting classroom expectations, instructors should address these concerns with students. However, after instructors have addressed the concern and the behavior continues, then a referral should be made to Student Conduct. Reports of students intentionally failing to comply with the expectation of wearing facial coverings could violate the Student Code of Conduct Failure to Comply policy.

Section II, 32, Failure to Comply: Failing to comply with the lawful directions of any university employee acting within the scope of their official duties or failing to identify oneself to such a person when requested to do so.

8.05 Complaints may be filed online at <https://studentconduct.okstate.edu/report>. Student Conduct will have specialized educational sanctions for students found responsible for violating this policy. Permanent removal from the classroom will not be likely unless there are repeated violations or outright refusal to cooperate with requests.

8.06 Student Conduct is located at 328 Student Union and can also be reached at 405-744-5470 and <https://studentconduct.okstate.edu>.

What should I say to a student or employee who is concerned and worried about the COVID-19 situation?

9.01 If someone is showing signs of distress you can talk to them and let them know that you want to help. Assist them with finding the right resources for them (such as University Counseling Services, their advisor, supervisor, etc.). OSU has many resources available to faculty, staff and students that can assist with anxiety and distress. University Counseling Services may be contacted at: <https://ucs.okstate.edu/> or 405-744-5458.

What should I tell an employee who is in the high-risk category, and is concerned about coming back to work?

10.01 Explain to them that they will need to follow the OSU procedure with the Office of Equal Opportunity (405-744-7607 or eeo@okstate.edu). Schedule a time with the CEAT HR representative (ceathr@okstate.edu) to discuss their options.



CEAT Communication During A Pandemic

**Procedures
CCB-017
Effective Date: 10/23/20**

What should I tell an employee who is not comfortable coming to work due to possible exposure?

11.01 You should let the employee know you understand their concerns, show compassion. Schedule an appointment with CEAT HR (ceathr@okstate.edu) to discuss their options. HR can provide support in facilitating conversations with supervisors and employees to determine needs and accommodations available to meet those needs. Possible accommodations may include continuing telework arrangements, office restructuring, possible schedule rotations, or approving temporary use of appropriate accrued leave. Any request for accommodation for a disability should comply with the Americans Disabilities Act (ADA), in coordination with the Office of Equal Opportunity.

What should I tell an employee who would rather work from home than come into the office, but does not have any underlining health concerns?

12.01 Explain to them that staying off campus prevents others from interacting with them and requires others to do campus duties that would typically fall to them. Explain that we are a university with interactions that are not easily done virtually. Talk to them about the measures OSU and CEAT is taking to keep the CEAT and OSU community safe. Listen to their concerns and try to work out an arrangement that will work for everyone. If the employee would still rather work from home, the employee should visit with CEAT HR (ceathr@okstate.edu) to discuss what their options are.

Who can I contact for further guidance?

- 13.01 Below is a list of resources that can assist you when you have questions:
- OSU Human Resources: osu-hr@okstate.edu or <https://hr.okstate.edu/>
 - CEAT HR: ceathr@okstate.edu
 - University Health Services: 405-744-7665
 - OSU COVID-19 Information: <https://go.okstate.edu/coronavirus/>
 - CEAT COVID-19 Information: <https://ceat.okstate.edu/COVID-general.html>

Date approved by the CEAT COVID-19 Incident Management Team (IMT) Chief of the Planning Section and IMT Head: 8/13/20, Revised 8/18/20, Revised 10/23/20