



Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science

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6/5/20—PIMS COVID-19 HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN

This policy, the COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan for the Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science (PIMS), is effective immediately through December 31, 2020. In accordance with State and Federal advisement, PIMS has appointed **Michael Burns, Dean of Faculty and Students as the COVID-19 PANDEMIC OFFICER, thus he will be the first line of communication and contact for any questions or concerns.** Dean Burns will work in conjunction with the Program Director, Dr. Barry Lease, to monitor our preparedness to mitigate this situation and reduce risks to all involved. The Institute will use advisement from the State and Local Health Departments, State Department of Education, well as other State and Federal resources, including the CDC as an integral part of this plan.

While the pandemic officer and school administration will continue to monitor this ever-evolving situation, PIMS has been advised by State (Pennsylvania Department of Education—Private License Schools or PDE-PLS) and Federal agencies to develop contingency plans for both adherence to the December 31st date as well as continued extensions. Such plans also consider the possibility of a resurgence in the spread and subsequent movement in the Governor's stoplight phase approach. Unfortunately, it is impossible to predict any kind of certainty during these unprecedented times.

Accordingly, this COVID plan features the following strategies proposed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education for planning and resuming in person education and can be viewed at <https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/HigherEd/Section1/Pages/default.aspx>. These strategies are intended for the health and safety of the campus and specifically consider how the Institute will:

1. **Establish expectations for continuing operations during the COVID-19 pandemic depending upon the zone in the Governor's stoplight phase policy for the State of Pennsylvania—these expectations are designed to mitigate and/or contain the spread on campus should transmission rates change.**
 - **PIMS is currently operating in the most open or Green Phase, however the school continues limiting in person instruction and using AD when possible.**
2. **Plan to help students continue making pace and progression depending upon the specific stoplight phase to move towards the completion of the program.**
3. **Safely resume in-person instruction and monitor health conditions on campus.**
4. **Coordinate with local public health officials, or the equivalent of--inform the DOH in the event that transmission occurs at the institution.**
5. **Communicate accurate and timely information to students, faculty, staff, and the communities served by the Institute.**

1. Establish expectations for continuing operations during the COVID-19 pandemic depending upon the zone in the Governor’s spotlight phase policy for the State of Pennsylvania.

RED PHASE	YELLOW PHASE	GREEN PHASE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No in-person instruction is permitted except for small group clinical and practical training with all appropriate safety and health protocols outlined in this policy. • Alternative delivery (AD) would be used to continue classroom instruction. AD is approved by PDE-PLS through December 31, 2020. • Telework for all non-essential employees. • Essential employees, which includes all full-time administrators and staff may continue to operate the necessary functions of the school maintaining all safety and health protocols as outlined in this policy. • PIMS will continue to provide timely updates to students and all stakeholders as the situation evolves or conditions change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited in person instruction may be provided in this phase. • In person instruction would be limited to 25 people. • A delineation is necessary for instructional classes vs. non-instructional gatherings. Non-instruction or social gatherings are not authorized in the yellow zone. • Small group clinical and practical training would continue with all appropriate safety and health protocols outlined in this policy. • To mitigate the spread, Alternative delivery (AD) may be used to continue classroom instruction. AD is approved by PDE-PLS through December 31, 2020. • Telework for all non-essential employees would continue. • Essential employees, which includes all full-time administrators and staff may continue to operate the necessary functions of the school maintaining all safety and health protocols as outlined in this policy. • PIMS will continue to provide timely updates to students and all stakeholders as the situation evolves or conditions change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In person instruction and normal business operations may resume with all appropriate safety and health protocols outlined in this policy. • Non-instructional social gatherings may be held with a limit of 250 people in accordance with appropriate safety and health guidelines outlined in this policy. • To mitigate the spread, Alternative delivery (AD) may be used to continue classroom instruction AD is approved by PDE-PLS through December 31, 2020. • PIMS will continue to provide timely updates to students and all stakeholders as the situation evolves or conditions change.

2. Plan to help students continue making pace and progression depending upon the specific stoplight phase to move towards the completion of the program.

RED PHASE	YELLOW PHASE	GREEN PHASE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AD instruction is the only option for classroom work throughout December 31, 2020 as approved by PDE-PLS. Small group clinical and practical training would continue with appropriate safety and health guidelines outlined in this policy. • To adequately provide such AD, PIMS would strictly adhere to the stated precepts of PDE-PLS Memo #84: “to communicate to students through one of several types of technology, and instructors must initiate substantive communication with students, either individually or collectively, on a regular basis, in accordance with 34 CFR §600.2. In other words, an instructor could use email to provide instructional materials to students enrolled in his or her class, use chat features to communicate with students, set up conference calls to facilitate group conversations, engage in email exchanges or require students to submit work electronically that the instructor will evaluate. • The modalities that may be involved regarding the statement above include but are not limited: Zoom or other virtual class conferencing, email, Sonis Admin database, snail mail of materials or “curbside” pickup by students, teleconferencing, itslearning LMS where applicable. • Class schedules and academic calendars may be adjusted to help students continue towards completion of the program. • Absentee polices (see below) would be reconsidered for COVID-19 specific incidents to assist students continue to make pace and progression. • Specific communication regarding accurate and timely information will be coordinated through the COVID Pandemic Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited in person instruction adhering strictly to 25 people or less would continue for funeral service core classes, clinical and practical training. • In person instruction for funeral service core curriculum may include accommodations to limit class sizes including scheduling adjustments, time changes, different classroom assignments, and appropriate safety and health guidelines outlined in this policy. • Class cohorting will be used minimize the number of people in the school. • AD instruction, as approved by PDE-PLS would continue in this phase for funeral service core curriculum throughout December 31, 2020. • ASB specific courses would employ AD instruction in this phase throughout December 31, 2020 to help limit the number of student s on campus and mitigate the spread. • Please see the Red phase policies for providing AD instruction consistent with PDE-PLS Memo #84. • Also see the Red phase for specific details on the use of modalities, scheduling, and absentee policies to assist students continue to make pace and progression towards completion of the program. • Specific communication regarding accurate and timely information will be coordinated through the COVID Pandemic Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations more fully resume with considerations still on limiting the size of gatherings to mitigate transmissibility or spread for funeral service core classes, clinical and practical training with appropriate safety and health guidelines outlined in this policy. • Schedule changes and time changes from typical modular scheduling will be adhered to as well as appropriate safety and health guidelines outlined in this policy. • Class cohorting will continue to minimize the number of people in the school. • AD instruction, as approved by PDE-PLS would continue in this phase for funeral service core curriculum throughout December 31, 2020. • ASB specific courses would employ AD instruction in this phase throughout December 31, 2020 to help limit the number of student s on campus and mitigate the spread. • Please see the Red phase policies for providing AD instruction consistent with PDE-PLS Memo #84. • Also see the Red phase for specific details on the use of modalities, scheduling, and absentee policies to assist students continue to make pace and progression towards completion of the program. • Specific communication regarding accurate and timely information will be coordinated through the COVID Pandemic Officer

Other ways for students to continue making pace and progression, regardless of the phase that PIMS is operation under include:

- I. Adjustments to PIMS attendance requirements specifically for COVID-19 situations:
 - a. It should be noted that missed time for COVID symptoms or COVID related situations will not disqualify an individual from pace and progression in the program as previous attendance policies have indicated.
 - b. The Institute will attempt to assist a student to make up all missed assignments, exams, assessments and provide materials virtually, however, a student is still responsible to perform this make up work. One is NOT exempted due to COVID-19. Therefore, it should also be noted that if a student must miss significant time due to COVID-19 and feels he/she cannot make up the work, he/she should consult the Dean of Faculty and Students (who will consult the Registrar and Financial Aid Administrator) about options. If withdrawal and retaking the term is a consideration, he/she will work out a plan with the Registrar (if you are receiving Financial Aid, you might also want to reach out to Mrs. Elachko). Every attempt will be made to help a student continue making pace and progress towards completion of the program, however, due to the unpredictability of the virus and this situation in general, accommodations made cannot be guaranteed.
 - II. A new policy was recently presented and approved by the ABFSE in conjunction with Federal policies. If a campus-based student decides he/she does not wish to return to campus, when a school is permitted to return to in-person instruction during the COVID-19 crisis, he/she has approved status for acceptance into the distance education program presented by a school. That said, the student will abide by the enrollment protocols, schedules, fees, and policies of becoming a DE student as per the institution, but he/she will not be “left behind.” However, in the post COVID-19 timeframe, the student would be expected return to his/her campus-based program unless he/she decides to transfer permanently to the online learning environment. Once again, a school is NOT obligated to convert campus schedules into distance educational opportunities (as in the temporary case of alternative delivery), however, a student can decide to make pace/progression in a school’s online program. It should be noted that PIMS Online is a different pace, increased tuition costs, and requires certain technology to succeed. It should also be noted that a campus student “moving to DE” for the interim may not get the scheduled classes he/she needs—to consider this option, a student should reach out to Registrar Karen Rocco who will consider each situation on a case by case basis (if you are receiving Financial Aid, you might also want to reach out to Mrs. Elachko).
 - III. Finally, the ABFSE has also stated that students choosing not to return to their campus-based program, when the school is approved to return to in-person instruction during the COVID-19 outbreak, may seek out other mortuary schools to earn credits at their campus or online. For example, if you live near Community College of Baltimore County and do not want to return to Pittsburgh, you might consider inquiring with CCBC about their available classes. If approved by PIMS, you could continue your PIMS education by supplementing a few courses at CCBC, BUT YOU MUST GET PRE-APPROVAL OF THE COURSES FROM PIMS PRIOR TO ENROLLING. In other words, please do not go to CCBC or any other school and come back with a Funeral Law course that is not the same as the one we offer—it will be denied. A strong recommendation would be for you to contact our Registrar in advance for such special scheduling (if you are receiving Financial Aid, you might also want to reach out to Mrs. Elachko).
- 3. Safely resume in-person instruction and monitor health conditions on campus.**
- a. It should be noted that the guidelines provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education for Resuming In Person Instruction for Post-Secondary Schools have been the foundation for this strategic concern in the policy. Complete details can be found at:
<https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/HigherEd/Section2/Pages/default.aspx#5>
 - b. All staff, faculty, and students are advised that if they are not feeling well on a given day, and in particular, having respiratory symptoms and fever, they should STAY HOME and isolate.
 - i. In conjunction with this advisement, sick leaves and absentee policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidelines.

- For students, every effort will be made to help them continue on pace and progression and when it is determined by the student he/she cannot keep up with pace and progression by alternative measures, the refund/withdrawal policy will be prorated to the exact date of last attendance on campus. This revised policy will continue throughout December 31, 2020 and be reevaluated at that time.
 - For full-time employees, PIMS will follow the guidelines provided by the Families First Coronavirus Act. Employees can access this by clicking <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-employee-paid-leave>.
 - For part-time employees, PIMS will provide a substitute for the missed hours until the employee can return healthy and safely.
- c. PIMS has contracted with a new cleaning service to provide necessary deep cleaning of the building daily in accordance with CDC guidelines listed at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>.
 - d. Social distancing should continue in the building at six feet or “two arm’s length” should be maintained from other individuals. If anyone violates these social distancing guidelines, he/she may be asked to leave the building.
 - e. Classrooms have been redesigned to create this “two arms-length” social isolation workspace from another individual. These spaces have been designed on the second and fourth floor classrooms.
 - f. Cohorting has been implemented at PIMS to keep groups as small and consistent as possible.
 - g. Class schedules have been reconfigured (with no loss of contact hours) to bring students in at different times and create limitations on the number of students (even in the green phase in order to mitigate transmissibility and spread). The use of AD throughout December 31, 2020 will also help in limiting the number of people on campus at any point.
 - h. Students are provided with personal sanitation and hygiene supplies to maintain their space daily.
 - i. Universal masking will continue until otherwise advised. If students do not have a face covering, one will be provided.
 - j. Signage from the CDC site regarding hand washing, hygiene protocols, sanitation, social distancing, and universal masking are throughout the building including restrooms.
 - k. Students and others must move in the controlled setting of the building as follows:
 - i. Individuals must use front stairwell to move UP the building.
 - ii. Individuals must use the fire stairwell to move DOWN the building.
 - iii. Proper social distancing should be maintained on stairwells and in hallways.
 - iv. Additionally, arrows mark the entrance and exit into classrooms. Taking breaks in the hallways is permitted but students must observe social distancing guidelines—this will be monitored by proctors.
 - l. All communal areas have been closed. This includes the lunchroom, the library, the computer lab and the third floor. Students are asked to “break” outside maintaining proper social distancing or remain at their social space in the classroom. For longer or lunch breaks students should consider driving or walking off campus for the break period.
 - m. Physical barriers have been installed in some high contact offices (Registrar or Financial Aid) but this does not mean social distancing or wearing PPE is waived.
 - n. Special instructions regarding how to communicate or contact a staff member or administrator or faculty have been posted on the doors at the school; no party shall walk in on a PIMS staff member or faculty UNANNOUNCED.
 - o. In fact, the preferred method to meet with anyone would be that you contact the individual via email and set up an appropriate time to meet. This allows the individual to consider a) Zoom conference or b) scheduling the meeting in an appropriate area TBD that maintains proper social distancing.
 - p. Restrooms now have door locks and signage indicating that **ONLY ONE PERSON AT A TIME MAY USE THE FACILITY AND THE DOOR SHOULD BE LOCKED WHEN IN USE.**
 - q. The Elevator should be used **ONLY ONE PASSENGER AT A TIME** and sanitation wipes have been provided for you to use after touching the buttons (please consider wiping down the elevator board).
 - r. High contact areas will be maintained as frequently as possible by staff with the purchase of hospital grade disinfectant wipes—not only will the full time staff diligently work on these areas, but Dean Burns is going to impress upon the students the need to be a part of this effort.

- s. ALL social events, seminars, and outside presenters to limit social contacts have been suspended. Instructors are considering virtual presentations as a possibility, but this will be on a case by case basis and subject to the availability of the presenter.
- t. ALL field trips and off campus visits have been cancelled.
- u. In an effort to support the pre-screening and contact tracing initiatives proposed by the CDC, the PA and Allegheny County Department of Health, PIMS has adopted the procedure of wellness checks for all staff, faculty, administrators, students and guests upon entering the building. The wellness check will include taking your temperature using a temporal thermometer and record the results. These results will be a matter of record for State and Federal auditors if requested. Based on the reading, the following actions will occur:
 - i. If an individual's temperature is normal, he/she will be admitted to the building considering all other precautions.
 - ii. If an individual's temperature is high, additional readings will be taken. If the individual's temperature remains high, he/she will not be admitted to the building. The individual will be advised to consider contacting a health care professional or the Allegheny County Health Department at 412-687-ACHD (2243) or online at <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Health-Department/COVID-Form.aspx>.
 - iii. While recording temperature is one definitive way for the Institute to protect all individuals (with a fever present in 83-99% of the COVID cases, the CDC also recommends that a person should stay home if feeling sick with symptoms the include, but are not limited to: cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, GI symptoms, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and also notably a **sudden loss of taste or smell (this symptom has been noted in 70% of COVID-19 cases)**. If an individual manifests any of these symptoms, he/she should consult medical advisement. Additionally, if a person has been exposed to anyone who tested positive or manifests any of the above symptoms, he/she should advise the Institute to help the County with "contact tracing." For more information from the CDC about COVID-19, please click the following link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
 - iv. PIMS cannot provide medical advisement and is not responsible to provide COVID-19 testing, however, the Institute can take actions to protect the safety and health of those on campus.
- v. For detailed information on COVID-19 and how to protect yourself from getting sick please click: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>
- w. For detailed information on COVID-19 and what to do if you are sick please click: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>
- x. It is important to identify that, according to the CDC guidelines, certain individuals may be more vulnerable and higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Such individuals include but may not be limited to:
 - i. People at Higher Risk for Severe Illness
 - ii. People Who Are Immunocompromised
 - iii. Older Adults
 - iv. People with Asthma
 - v. People with HIV
 - vi. People with Liver Disease
 - vii. For specific information for people who may need to take extra precautions click on: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html>
- y. Finally, it should be noted that on March 30, 2020 Bactronix Corporation, an industry leader in providing hospital grade disinfection for office buildings and schools, disinfected our entire building against bacteria, mold, yeast, spores, and viruses, including the full spectrum of coronaviruses.

4. Coordinate with local public health officials, or the equivalent of--inform the DOH in the event that transmission occurs at the institution.

- a. PIMS will work to monitor public health situations at the Institute with the County and State Departments of Health.
 - i. County--Questions or concerns regarding these matters will be directed to the Allegheny County Health Department at 412-687-ACHD (2243) or online at <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Health-Department/COVID-Form.aspx>.
 - ii. State—Questions or concerns regarding these matters will be directed to the Pennsylvania

Department of Health 1-877-724-3258 or <https://expressforms.pa.gov/apps/pa/health/contact-us>

- b. In efforts coordinated with State and Local Health Departments, PIMS is committed to monitoring the spread of the virus, keep aware of the potential for resurgence, voluntary reporting should someone on campus become infected, and developing protocols to a) minimize the effects to others and b) assist health officials in contact tracing. The recommendations put forth by PDE for postsecondary institutions resuming in-person instruction and other related services listed below adhere to the following standards, practices, and guidelines for implementing mitigation efforts and containment protocols:

i. Monitoring, Surveillance, and Voluntary Reporting

- Students, faculty, and staff should report to the COVID Pandemic Officer if they have visited an area of high prevalence (domestic or international) in the previous 14 days.
- Students, faculty, and staff should report to the COVID Pandemic Officer if they know they have been exposed to anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- PIMS will conduct wellness checks daily, including temperature checks, prior to admission into the building. Please see the previous strategy for guidance on such wellness checks.
- Individuals exhibiting symptoms:
 - Must not be permitted to enter campus buildings.
 - Must self-quarantine at home.
 - Must not report to work, class, clinical assignments.
 - May not participate in any institution-sponsored events or activities.
 - Should consult with their medical provider about options for testing and necessary treatment.
 - Individuals should consider using the CDC's "Self-Checker" (see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/diagnostic-testing.html>) to assist in making decisions in regards to seeking medical care.
 - If a student, faculty, or staff has been exposed, they will be asked to self-quarantine at home for 14 days and to follow additional state guidance (see: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Documents/HAN/COVID-19%20Patient%20Instructions%20for%20Self%20Isolation.pdf>).

ii. Protocol for a Confirmed Case on Campus

- PIMS will notify DOH and local health officials and/or emergency management personnel.
- Determine if a temporary suspension (2-5 days) of in-person instruction is warranted.
- Clean and disinfect all areas thoroughly per CDC guidance (see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>)
- Communicate case or exposure information with students, staff, and faculty.
- Ensure continuity of education and research for all those impacted by any temporary suspension of in-person operations.
- If individuals were in close contact with someone who became infected with the disease, follow CDC guidance (see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/critical-workers/implementing-safety-practices.html>)
- Work with local public health officials, if possible, to determine when routine operations can resume on campus.
- Access additional CDC guidance on dealing with confirmed cases on campus (see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-ihe-response.html>)

iii. The strategies listed in this section are directly from the PDE. More details can be found at:

<https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/HigherEd/Section2/Pages/default.aspx#5>

5. Communicate accurate and timely information to students, faculty, staff, and the communities it serves.

- a. During the COVID-19 situation, communications with all stakeholders will be coordinated using the email system and/or the Sonis Admin database.

- b. Additionally, to inform the community at large information will be posted to the PIMS COVID-19 PROTOCOLS, POLICIES, AND PRECAUTIONS page on the website listed as: <https://pims.edu/covid-19-protocols-precautions-and-policies/>
- c. If students or other stakeholders have questions, they should contact the following:
 - PIMS COVID-19 Pandemic Officer: Dean Michael Burns at mburns@pims.edu or 4123628500 ext. 119 or
 - PIMS Program Director: Dr. Barry T. Lease at blease@pims.edu or 4123628500 ext. 106
 - General questions may be forwarded to info@pims.edu

Due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, all will be advised when modification or adjustments are made to this plan. Once again it is our intent with this plan to maintain safety and health protocols on campus.

Effective June 5, 2020/BTL