



Policy Title: Team Member Absence Due to Communicable or Contagious Illness

Workforce Ready System	Applicable Department(s): All Departments
Policy Administrator: Administrators, Managers, DON, Infection Control RN, Human Resources	Review Cycle: As Needed
Original Date: 9/2022	Last Review / Revision: 10/2023

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to help protect Residents, Team Members, and the wider community from infection or illness that may be spread on our campus.

APPLICABILITY:

This policy applies to all Team Members, as well as to contracted and agency staff.

GUIDELINES:

Infection Control Measures

Team Members are asked to monitor their health status, and regularly take appropriate measures to help prevent the spread of illness. Infection control measures include:

- properly disinfecting equipment and work stations;
- frequently and thoroughly washing your hands;
- covering coughs and sneezes with your arm, and wearing a face mask if coughing or sneezing while around others;
- correctly and consistently using personal protective equipment;
- refraining from reporting to work when ill.

Additionally: Team Members who are not vaccinated against COVID-19 due to an approved medical or religious exemption are required to wear a face mask, or a surgical mask based on job duties, at all times while on campus. Those who are not vaccinated against flu are required to wear a face mask during “flu season”.

Absence Guidelines

For the health and safety of Residents, staff, and campus guests, Team Members are asked not to report to work if they are experiencing any of the following conditions or symptoms:

- **If experiencing “stomach flu” or norovirus-like symptoms:** The Team Member should not report to work until symptom-free for at least 48 hours, or until cleared to return by a licensed healthcare provider. Symptoms may include diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, stomach pain, fever.
- **If experiencing flu-like symptoms:** The Team Member should not report to work until at least 24 hours have passed since last having a fever, *without the use of fever-reducing medicine* (i.e., after the Team Member stops using medicine, he/she should be fever-free for at least the next 24 hours). After returning to work, if coughing or sneezing are present, the Team Member is to wear a face mask. Symptoms of flu may include fatigue and muscle aches, fever, nausea, runny nose, sore throat, sneezing, dry cough, headache.
- **If positive for COVID-19:** Team Members who test positive for COVID-19 may not return to work for 10 calendar days (10 days are counted starting the day after symptoms first developed, or if the Team Member has no symptoms, 10 days starting the day after he/she tested positive). The Team Member must also be fever-free, *without the use of medicine*, for at least 24 hours before returning to work.

The 10 day “isolation period” may be reduced to 7 days (counted starting the day after symptoms began or the day after the positive test if asymptomatic), if the Team Member tests negative within 48 hours of returning to work, and has been fever-free, without the use of medicine, for at least 24 hours.

- **If experiencing symptoms of COVID-19:** A Team Member with symptoms of COVID-19 should remain off work until he/she has 1 negative PCR test, or 2 negative rapid antigen tests 48 hours apart. (**Symptomatic Team Members should not report to Brethren Village for testing.** Team Members are asked to contact their own healthcare provider or obtain a COVID test from a retail pharmacy.) Upon return to work following a *negative* COVID test(s), the Team Member is to wear a face mask until 10 days have passed following the first day COVID symptoms began. COVID symptoms may include cough, congestion, runny nose, sore throat, headache, shortness of breath, fatigue, and/or new loss of taste or smell.
- **If in close-contact with someone else who tested positive for COVID-19:** Team Members who have been in close-contact with *someone else* who tested positive for COVID-19 may continue working if they (the Team Member) have no symptoms of COVID (if symptoms are present, see above). However, COVID testing is recommended 5 days following the day of close-contact with someone else who tested positive, or immediately if the Team Member in close-contact with someone else has symptoms of COVID. **Please Note:** All Team Members who have been in close-contact with someone who tested positive for COVID, even if the Team Member does not have symptoms, are to wear a face mask on the Brethren Village campus for 10 days after the date of close-contact.
- **If diagnosed with another communicable or contagious condition:** The Team Member should not return to work until authorized by his/her licensed healthcare provider, or based on guidance / directives, applicable to *healthcare facilities*, from the Department of Health or the Centers for Disease Control.

Important Information: The infection control guidelines above are not intended to replace the advice of a Team Member's licensed healthcare provider, or current guidance, applicable to *healthcare facilities*, from the Department of Health (DOH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Infection control guidance applicable to healthcare facilities may be more stringent than guidance for the general public. If a Team Member is diagnosed with a communicable or contagious illness, he/she is encouraged to discuss a safe return to work date with his/her licensed healthcare provider, and refer to any guidance for healthcare facilities from the state DOH (<https://www.health.pa.gov>) and the CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/>).

Brethren Village reserves the right to require a Team Member to remain off-campus, if there is reason to believe the Team Member presents a risk, in terms of spread of infection, to others. Brethren Village will rely on guidance from the DOH and/or the CDC when making determinations.

Team Member Notice Requirements

- In all cases, a Team Member must first follow his/her normal department procedures for reporting an absence (for "calling-off") – i.e., **the Team Member must contact his/her supervisor or department Scheduler, in advance, to report the absence.**
- Additionally, Team Members who work in Skilled Care or Personal Care areas of campus and are diagnosed with, or have symptoms of, a communicable or contagious illness are asked to immediately notify their Director of Nursing, Administrator, or Department Manager. Providing notice will allow Brethren Village to track such illness, and help ensure the health and safety of members of the Brethren Village community.

Note: If a Team Member prefers not to let his/her Director, Administrator, or Manager know of a contagious illness, the Team Member may notify a Human Resources representative (717-581-4239 or 717-581-4269) of the reason for the absence. Human Resources should only be contacted if the reason for the absence is related to a *contagious illness*, and if the Team Member prefers not to provide his/her diagnosis to a Manager.

- Team Members who are off work 4 days or more are to provide documentation to Human Resources, from their healthcare provider, upon return to work. Documentation should include the first date the Team Member was unable to work, and the date the healthcare provider authorized the Team Member to return to work. Human Resources may request additional documentation, depending on the nature and length of the absence.

Please Note: Information provided by a Team Member regarding a contagious illness will typically be shared with the facility's Infection Control RN, the applicable Director of Nursing, and the Skilled Care or Personal Care Administrator, for the purpose of limiting the spread of illness throughout the facility. *The least amount of information necessary will be shared, and only with those who have a bona fide reason to know, related to preventing the spread of illness.*