


Clinical and Academic Policy		
	<b>Policy Title</b>	Student Exposure to Infectious and Environmental Hazards
	<b>Policy Number</b>	OME-900.27
	<b>Department/Office</b>	Office of Medical Education
	<b>Effective Date</b>	December 11, 2025
	<b>Last Reviewed</b>	N/A
	<b>Approved By</b>	Executive Medical Education Committee
	<b>Approval Date</b>	December 11, 2025
	<b>Endorsement</b>	Endorsed by WCM-Executive Policy Review Group on January 27, 2026

## Purpose

To describe the requirements for students to be educated about the methods for prevention of exposure to infectious and environmental hazards, to be able to locate procedures for care and treatment after exposure and to follow the policies related to exposure as set by Weill Cornell Medicine (WCM) or its affiliated institutions, including the financial responsibility for care, and the effects of infectious and environmental diseases or disability on learning activities.

## Scope

The policy applies to all students enrolled in the MD program during all phases of their respective curriculums and to applicable Workforce Members at WCM and Affiliated Institutions, as defined in this policy, involved in any aspect of the medical education programs at WCM.

## Policy

### A. Education About the Methods for Prevention of Exposure Care

All students are responsible for being knowledgeable about the prevention of exposure to infectious and environmental hazards as specified by the WCM Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS). These include, but are not limited to:

- EHS Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan (EHS Program Manual 3.1);
- EHS Airborne Infectious Disease Exposure Prevention Plan (EHS Program Manual 3.5); and
- EHS Respiratory Protection Program (EHS Program Manual 7.1).

In addition, each year students are required to complete the NewYork-Presbyterian (NYP) Annual Hospital Training, which includes modules on universal precautions/prevention of exposure to bloodborne and respiratory pathogens, and other topics such as exposure to radiation/magnetic fields, chemical spills and fire safety.

Students must follow all protocols regarding Exposure To Infectious Hazards in the care of patients as specified by NYP Hospital’s Infection Control Policy and Procedure Manual.

Students are required to be fitted for N-95 respirators (“mask fitting”) annually under the aegis of EHS at times specified by the Office of Curriculum and Educational Development.

Students must complete the mandated New York State Infection Control Training for Health Professionals modules at least once every four years, or as otherwise specified by New York State.

Students are also required to have their immunization status and tuberculosis risk screening up to date as specified by Student Health Services.

### **B. Procedures for Care and Treatments After Exposure**

Students are required to follow all procedures for obtaining immediate care, treatment and/or evacuation from hazardous exposures as specified by Student Health Services, the policies and procedures of WCM and its affiliated hospitals and institutions or as directed by emergency personnel or others in authority at the site of exposure to a hazard.

Students are expected to follow all directives of Student Health Services regarding limiting the spread of infectious/contagious diseases (e.g., testing, masking, covering of contagious lesions, quarantine, etc. as relevant). This is to ensure that the exposed student receives proper care and does not, by virtue of their exposure, pose a hazard to other students and Workforce Members.

Students are responsible for providing their health insurance information at the time of evaluation and treatment following exposure to infectious and/or environmental hazards. Evaluations at Student Health Services are provided at no charge to the student. If a student receives care in an emergency department or urgent care setting, charges will be billed to the student's health insurance. Analyses of clinical specimens collected at WCM or at an affiliate site are initially billed to the student's health insurance, and students are financially responsible for all testing. Student Health Services will facilitate reimbursement to the students for costs associated with exposure visits provided they have reported the incident at Student Health Services in a timely fashion as outlined in the body fluid exposure protocol, and that appropriate documentation of expenses is available.

Workforce Members at WCM or Affiliated Hospitals may not prevent a student from: following the established prevention policies or protocols; following procedures for obtaining immediate care, obtaining treatment or removal/evacuation from a potential or actual infectious or environmental hazard.

### **C. Effects of Infectious and Environmental Diseases or Disability on Learning Activities**

Students who have been exposed to infectious or environmental hazards whose treatment requires that they miss required learning activities and/or are unable to complete required assignments or assessments (e.g., quizzes/examinations) will be allowed to these make-up requirements and in manner that does not adversely affect their performance assessment or grades.

Students who incur a disability following an exposure related to infectious agents or environmental hazards incurred while enrolled or who have such a disability prior to enrollment and/or a medical condition that predisposes them to harm from exposure to infectious or environmental hazards (e.g., immunocompromised status) will be granted reasonable accommodations to participate in and complete all required learning activities and assessments.

Students who are infected with any potentially transmissible disease will not be excluded from patient care or other learning activities or restricted in access to patient care areas or other educational facilities because of their health status unless medically-based judgments in individual cases conclude that exclusion or restriction for a period of time is appropriate for the welfare of patients or other members of the health care and educational community.

In situations in which infectious or environmental agents could result in exposure of any students or Workforce Members to the hazards, e.g., epidemics/pandemics, chemical spills, blizzards, fires, catastrophic weather events, earthquakes, etc., the Senior Associate Dean for Education acting in consultation with appropriate institutional leaders and hazard experts may issue new emergency policies and procedures that apply to students, including mandatory testing, restrictions to WCM areas affected by

the hazard and/or the temporary suspension of learning activities while the hazard poses a threat. Students and Workforce Members are required to abide by these emergency policies and procedures. Students will be notified via email and are also responsible for checking the WCM website for any emergency alerts and/or updates.

## Definitions

**Exposure to Infectious Hazards:** Exposure to microbial agents that may transmit infectious/contagious diseases by any route

**Exposure to Environmental Hazards:** Exposure to agents or conditions in the environment that could be reasonably expected to pose actual or potential harm to those exposed, including but not limited to chemical spills, high intensity magnetic fields or radiation, fires/smoke, explosions, floods, or individuals with weapons such as firearms or knives or explosives.

**Student:** An individual actively enrolled in courses at WCM's medical education program, and/or any individual who maintains an active status and is registered with a medical education program or course for whom the institution retains educational records.

**Visiting Student:** A student enrolled at another medical school who is enrolled in clinical learning experiences at WCM (The word "student" when used in this policy refers to both WCM and visiting students.)

**Workforce Members:** Faculty; Non-Faculty Academics; Staff; Students; Volunteers; and other persons whose conduct, in the performance of work for WCM, is under the direction and control of WCM, whether or not they are paid by WCM.

**Workforce Members at Affiliated Institutions:** Any Workforce Member, including house staff (i.e., residents or fellows), and other persons whose conduct, in the performance of work for an institution affiliated with the WCM Medical Education (MD) and Physician Assistant Training Programs, is under the direction and control of the affiliated institution, whether or not they are paid by that institution.

## Procedure

Students with a disability incurred from an infectious or environmental hazard and/or a medical condition which could predispose them to harm if exposed to infectious agents as part of their educational or clinical care activities (e.g., an immunocompromised status) should consult with the Case Manager & Disability Specialist in the Office of Civil Rights and Investigation about obtaining reasonable accommodations to complete the required learning activities of their program of study.

## Compliance with this Policy

All WCM Workforce Members are responsible for adhering to this policy. Students are required to attest that they have read this policy as part of the required "Prep to Learn" module at the times specified by the Office of Curriculum and Educational Development. Students who fail to comply with the policy may incur warnings, professionalism reports or be subject to suspension and/or dismissal, depending on the severity of their noncompliance and/or the consequences of their actions. For other Workforce Members, failure to comply will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and could lead to corrective action, up to and including termination, consistent with other relevant WCM and University policies. Instances of non-compliance that potentially involve a lapse of professionalism may lead to engagement of the Office of Professionalism (OOP) for evaluation and intervention.

Workforce Members at Affiliated Institutions may be reported by the WCM Teacher-Learner Committee to relevant professionalism and compliance offices at the Affiliated Institution for evaluation and possible corrective action in accordance with the policies of that institution.

The Office of Curriculum and Educational Development is responsible for monitoring Student compliance with completion of annual mask fitting, NYP annual hospital training modules, the NY State Infection Control Training for Health Professionals (in conjunction with the Office of the Registrar) and “Prep to Learn” modules.

The Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Student Life, working in conjunction with the Office of Civil Rights and Investigations will counsel Students, regarding the need for accommodations in cases in which Students have transmissible diseases and/or underlying conditions that predispose them or others to potential harm from infectious or environmental hazards.

## Contact Information

### Student Health Services

- Telephone: 646-962-6942

### WCM Office of Civil Rights and Investigations (OCRI)

- Website: [Office of Civil Rights and Investigations](#)

### Environmental Health and Safety

- Email: [ehs@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ehs@med.cornell.edu)
- Telephone: 646-962-7233
- Website: [Environmental Health and Safety](#)

### Office of Curriculum

- Address: 1300 York Avenue, Room C-118
- Email: [curriculum@med.cornell.edu](mailto:curriculum@med.cornell.edu)

## References

Cornell University Policy 8.6 Environmental, Health and Safety  
[https://policy.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/vol8\\_6.pdf](https://policy.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/vol8_6.pdf)

NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital’s Infection Control Policy and Procedure  
Manual <https://exfonet.nyp.org/EPI/Manual/manual-all.pdf>

Office of Civil Rights and Investigations <https://civilrights.weill.cornell.edu/accommodations>

Student Health Services <https://teach.weill.cornell.edu/medical-education/student-resources/student-health-services>

Student Resources Emergency Information <https://emergency.weill.cornell.edu/student>

WCM Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) <https://ehs.weill.cornell.edu/forms-resources/we-offer-services/students>

WCM EHS Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan (EHS Program Manual 3.1)

[https://ehs.weill.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/3.1bbp\\_0.pdf](https://ehs.weill.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/3.1bbp_0.pdf)

WCM EHS Airborne Infectious Disease Exposure Prevention Plan (EHS Program Manual 3.5)

[https://ehs.weill.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/3.5\\_airborne\\_infectious\\_disease\\_exposure\\_prevention\\_plan.pdf](https://ehs.weill.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/3.5_airborne_infectious_disease_exposure_prevention_plan.pdf)

WCM EHS Respiratory Protection Program (EHS Program Manual 7.1)

[https://ehs.weill.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/7.1\\_respiratory\\_protection\\_program.pdf](https://ehs.weill.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/7.1_respiratory_protection_program.pdf)

## Policy Approval

This policy was reviewed and approved by the Executive Medical Education Committee on December 11, 2025.

This policy was endorsed by the WCM-Executive Policy Review Group on January 27, 2026.

## Version History

Date	Author	Revisions
12/11/2025	Office of Medical Education	Original date of issue.

## Appendix

N/A