

**West Chester University**  
**Temporary Policy for COVID-19 Emergency**  
March 2020

**(A) Background**

As of the middle of March 2020, due to the uncontrolled spread of the COVID-19 virus (“the COVID-19 emergency”), West Chester University (“WCU” or the “University”), along with the rest of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States as a whole, finds itself in the middle of a public health emergency. Among the indicators of the scope of this emergency are the following:

- On March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national emergency.
- On March 13, 2020, the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (“FEMA”), was authorized to provide appropriate assistance to states for required emergency measures.
- On March 13, 2020, after the Governor of Pennsylvania announced that all K-12 schools in Pennsylvania would close starting Monday, March 16, and the Chancellor of the State System of Higher Education directed that no in-person instruction occur at any State System university for at least two weeks.
- On March 11, 2020, WCU President Christopher Fiorentino announced that WCU would extend its spring break for classes that were not originally designed as distance education, until March 30, 2020, and would not hold any instruction in person for the rest of the spring semester.
- On March 12, 2020, WCU residential students were directed to sign up for specific move-out times. Students were permitted to return to campus during a 2.5-hour time slot between Saturday, March 14, and Friday, March 20, to retrieve all belongings and do an express checkout. Students were not permitted to enter the residence halls without a scheduled appointment.
- On March 13, 2020, the Mayor of the Borough of West Chester declared a State of Emergency and by March 22, 2020, had directed social distancing requirements for the Borough Community, including the closure of certain businesses and parks, and mandated that social gatherings of 10 or more people in the Borough will be considered a violation subject to citation.

Because of extraordinary circumstances facing a very limited number of students, WCU is permitting some students to remain on campus during this emergency period.

In light of the need for some students to remain on campus, and in light of the University’s need to maintain good order and to take all necessary and proper steps to reduce the spread of COVID-19, WCU hereby adopts this *Temporary Policy for COVID-19 Emergency*.

**(B) Policy**

- (1) The University’s highest priority and interest is to protect and preserve the health and safety of students and employees of the University, and members of the local, state, and national communities.
- (2) In order to advance those interests, there is a heightened need for the University to maintain order on and off campus.

(3) In order to protect and preserve the health and safety of all affected persons, the following rules will be in place, effective immediately:

(a) Only students who have a demonstrated hardship, local academic requirement or live internationally were granted an exception request to remain in campus housing and are thereby permitted to live in campus housing. In order to remain in campus housing, a student must be authorized by letter of exception issued and continually maintained by the Office of Residence Life and Housing.

(b) Students who are not authorized to remain in campus housing (under paragraph (B)(3)(a)) are not permitted on campus, unless they have express written permission from the Vice President for Student Affairs.

(c) Strict compliance with the Student Code of Conduct is essential at this time, and violations will not be tolerated.

(d) Violations of criminal law, local ordinances, directives of municipalities, or federal guidelines related to the COVID-19 emergency also will not be tolerated.

(e) Additional restrictions on student conduct are imposed by this Policy:

(i) Students who remain on campus may not gather in groups of four or more in lounges or open areas.

(ii) Students in a double occupancy room may not entertain a guest within the room.

(iii) Students whose clinical, practicum, or internship host site closes or cancels student placement agree to an express move out within 48 hours.

(iv) Students may not host gatherings off-campus of 10 or more people.

### **(C) Procedures**

(1) Any student who violates section (B)(3)(c), (B)(3)(d), or (B)(3)(e) of this Policy may be immediately excluded from campus housing for the remainder of the emergency period. This sanction shall be **in addition to** any sanction condition provided for under the Code of Conduct.

(2) Exclusion from housing may be imposed on an interim basis, with a virtual hearing provided after the exclusion takes place.

(3) Any student, who is not in campus housing during the emergency period and violates section (B)(3)(b), (B)(3)(d), or (B)(3)(e)(iv) of this Policy shall be subject to discipline, up to and including a significant fine and/or suspension from the University.

(4) The sanctions described in paragraph (C)(3) above may be imposed on an interim basis, with a virtual hearing provided if requested.

### **(D) Additional Provisions**

(1) Students who remain on campus understand that there may be health risks—associated with COVID-19—that are beyond the control of the University. By remaining on campus, students accept those risks in exchange for the privilege of remaining on campus.

(2) This Policy supplements and is in addition to the Code of Conduct and the emailed Guidelines that were provided to students when authorized to remain in University housing during this emergency period.

(3) This Policy is in effect as of the date set forth below, and it will remain in effect until rescinded by WCU's President.

Dated: March 23, 2020