

Return to Campus – Staff
Rhodes College
June 2020

As we plan our return to campus, employees, supervisors, and the relevant Vice Presidents will work together to determine who will be required to return to work on campus and who may be allowed to work remotely over the coming months. These decisions will be made based on the essential functions of each individual position as well as the necessary operations of the College. Some positions require the employee to be physically present on campus while others do not. Student-facing positions are on-campus essential. Vice Presidents should work directly with the employees to determine work schedules for the Fall Semester. Faculty and Staff health and safety concerns are primary in Rhodes personnel decisions.

There are likely to be situations where employees express a reluctance to return to campus due to vulnerabilities or other concerns. The following is a brief guide to questions and situations that you may face. Please refer to the pertinent College Handbook sections (linked below) for more information about how the College handles similar situations in more “normal” times. As always, contact Human Resources if you are unsure about how to handle an employee’s request. If an employee seeks an accommodation related to their own personal health condition, please refer them to Martha McGeachy in Human Resources. Likewise, supporting remote work where it doesn’t compromise the student experience will remain an important part of our strategy. Reducing the density on campus reduces risks for those whose work needs to be done on campus.

Illness or Exposure to COVID-19

Employees who show symptoms or who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 should be treated the same as any other employee with an illness.

Staff should follow procedures under the [Staff Sick Leave policy](#) and [FMLA](#) as well. In addition to the staff member’s accrued Sick leave, the College may allow an additional 12 days of paid time off. This is authorized on a case-by-case basis during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff members should contact Martha McGeachy for more information.

An employee who needs to care for a family member who has symptoms of or tested positive for COVID-19 (spouse, child, or parent) may also be eligible for FMLA and should contact Martha McGeachy for more information.

Employees who are quarantined due to exposure (or that of a family member) to COVID-19 should stay home as advised by their health care provider. The staff sick leave policies still apply.

Vulnerable employees

If an employee has a medical condition that may place them at higher risk for severe illness if they contract COVID-19, they may request an accommodation. This requires an individualized assessment of the employee’s medical condition, and the employee should be referred to Martha McGeachy. Human

Resources will work with the employee and his or her physician to determine whether an accommodation is necessary. Accommodations may include adjustments to the employee's work space or schedule, or may involve continuing to work remotely.

If you or one of your employees is at higher risk and would like to request an accommodation prior to our return to campus please do so **no later than June 30th, 2020**. This will give the College ample time to make reasonable adjustments to the work environment or schedule as needed.

Childcare Issues

Employees may not be able to secure child care, particularly if K-12 schools remain closed or implement a reduced schedule. Many child care facilities will have to limit the number of children they care for so that they can comply with CDC guidelines. Caring for a healthy child does not qualify for Sick leave policies or FMLA. Supervisors should evaluate each case individually and be as flexible as possible in exploring options for these employees, without compromising the student experience. Some of these options may include:

- Working remotely;
- Flexible hours;
- Using accrued [Vacation](#) time; or
- Taking a [Leave of Absence Without Pay](#)

Employees may not bring their children to campus while they are working. Career Services has a database of students who are available to provide child care on a short-term basis.

Generalized Fear of COVID-19

We also anticipate that some employees may not want to return to work on campus due to a generalized fear of contracting COVID-19 in the workplace. This fear alone is an insufficient reason to be excused from returning to work if the employee's position requires an on campus presence. In these situations, supervisors should take the time to make employees aware of the precautions that Rhodes is taking to avoid the spread of COVID-19 including the wearing of masks, cleaning of common work areas with CDC approved cleaning supplies, symptom and temperature checks as well as protocols for dealing with suspected cases of COVID-19.

To contact Martha McGeachy about sick leave, FMLA, or an accommodation, call (901)843-3748 or email mcgeachym@rhodes.edu