A. Gaston College is committed to assure insofar as possible that each employee and student enjoys safe and healthful work and/or study conditions. To this end, the College offers the following information for students and employees.

B. Persons infected or reasonably believed to be infected with communicable diseases shall not be excluded from enrollment or employment, or restricted in this access to the institution's services or facilities unless medically-based judgments in individual cases established that exclusion or restriction is necessary to the welfare of the individual or the welfare of other members of the institution.

C. Persons who know or have a reasonable basis for believing that they have an infectious/communicable disease which may pose a threat to others have an obligation to conduct themselves in accordance with such knowledge so as to protect themselves and others. Employees and students should report such information to Human Resources and the Chief Officer for Student Services respectively. All information will be kept confidential except to those persons as determined who have a need to know. These persons will be informed after the individual is advised that such action will be taken.

D. Students or Applicants Currently Infected

1. Any applicant or currently enrolled student in a health or related program who has tuberculosis, HIV, Hepatitis B infection, or other communicable diseases will be individually evaluated and all enrollment decisions concerning the individual shall be based upon a consideration of the following factors:
   
a. potential harm that the individual poses to other people,

b. ability of the individual to accomplish the objectives, of the course or curriculum, and

   c. whether or not a reasonable accommodation can be made that will enable the individual to safely and efficiently accomplish the objectives and/or tasks of the course or curriculum in question without significantly exposing the individual or other persons to the risk of infection.

2. All students who have a communicable disease will be assessed as needed by a college-approved physician(s) in keeping with the current standards, requirements, and recommendations of the Center for Disease Control and in keeping with the provisions of this policy.
3. The evaluation of an applicant or currently enrolled student with a known communicable disease will include a physician's statement of the individual's health status as it relates to the individual's ability to adequately and safely accomplish the essential objectives of his/her course or curriculum.

4. All faculty/staff who are involved with nursing are required to adhere to universal precautions, including the appropriate use of hand washing, protective barriers, and care in the use and disposal of needles and other sharp instruments.

5. The College will give the following instructions to nursing and allied health students as well as any student who is identified as positive for communicable diseases. These instructions are consistent with CDC Universal Guidelines used by affiliating agencies.

6. The student must be made aware by the College of the potential risks associated with patient care, and the student will, at all times, follow recommendations regarding positive HIV/HBV or other infectious diseases for health care workers from the affiliating clinical agencies.

7. In each instance, a determination will be made as to an appropriate and limited release of the student's infectious disease status to the student's clinical instructor or department head in order that performance may be adequately reviewed and supervised on an ongoing basis. When a student is known to be positive for HIV/HBV or other infectious diseases, the student's college-approved physician and the Dean of Health Education program will carefully evaluate whether or not someone in the clinical agency needs to be told of the student's positive infectious disease status. The student will be advised of this release of information.

8. In the event a patient is exposed to a student's blood or body fluids, the student will immediately report the incident to the clinical instructor, who will, in turn, report the incident to the infection control nurse/site physician. The clinical instructor will complete an accident/incident report and send it to the Dean of Health and Business and the Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management. This procedure of reporting applies to ALL students regardless of their HIV/HBV status.
E. Employees (includes contracted worker, volunteer, intern, part-time, or other non-regular worker)

1. The College will institute a program to protect employees from infectious diseases by implementing the following Department of Health and Human Services recommended steps.

   a. Classification of Work Activity - Employees in health care and related occupations will be classified in one of three categories of potential exposure.

      (1) Category I - Employees perform tasks that involve exposure to blood, body fluids, or tissues. Appropriate protective measures will be required of these employees. Employees in Category I include all who are directly associated with nursing and allied health programs and all other programs related to direct health care.

      (2) Category II - Employees normal work routine involves no exposure to blood, body fluids, or tissues but unplanned tasks could involve Category I exposures. Appropriate protective measures should be readily available to Category II employees. Category II employees are in such programs as science programs with a laboratory component.

      (3) Category III - Employees have no exposure to blood, body fluids, or tissues. Protective measures are not required.

   b. Control Measures - Exposure risks should be evaluated and one or more of the following controls instituted as appropriate:

      (1) Universal Precautions - Control procedures that treat all human blood and other potentially infectious materials as if they are infectious.

      (2) Engineering Controls - The use of available technology and devices to isolate or remove hazards from the worker. Examples would include puncture resistant sharps containers, splash guards, and self-sheathing needles.
(3) Work Practice Controls - Alterations in the manner in which a task is performed in an effort to reduce the likelihood of a worker's exposure to infectious materials.

(4) Personal Protective Equipment - Using specialized clothing and/or equipment to protect workers from direct exposure to potentially infectious materials.

c. Post-Exposure Evaluation and Follow up - Following a written report of an exposure incident, the College shall make available to the employee a confidential medical evaluation and appropriate OSHA recommended follow-up actions for the incident.

d. Infectious Waste Disposal - Disposal of all infectious waste shall be in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

e. Tags- Labels- and- Bags - OSHA approved tags shall be used to identify the presence of an actual or potential biological hazard.

f. Housekeeping-Recommended housekeeping will be followed as applicable.

g. Training and Education of Employees - All Category I and II employees will be expected to participate in a training and education program provided by the College.

h. Record Keeping - The College shall track any worker's reported exposure incident to potentially infectious materials. Proper records will be maintained including the OSHA 200 Occupational Injury and Illness Log.

F. Employees or Applicants Currently Infected

1. Any applicant or current employee who has a communicable disease will be individually evaluated and all employment decisions concerning the individual shall be based upon a consideration of the following factors:

   a. potential harm that the individual poses to other people

   b. ability of the individual to accomplish the objectives of the employment position
c. whether or not a reasonable accommodation can be made that will enable the individual to safely and efficiently accomplish the objectives and/or tasks of the position in question without significantly exposing the individual or other persons to the risk of infection.

2. All employees who have a known infectious disease will be routinely assessed by a college-approved physician in keeping with the current standards, requirements, and recommendations of the Center for Disease Control and in keeping with the provisions of this policy.

3. The evaluation of an applicant or current employee with a known infectious disease will include a physician's statement of the individual's health status as it relates to the individual's ability to adequately and safely accomplish the essential objectives of his/her position.

4. All health care workers are required to adhere to universal precautions, including the appropriate use of hand washing, protective barriers, and care in the use and disposal of needles and other sharp instruments.

G. Disclaimer

The foregoing policy and procedures are based upon the latest information available to Gaston College and do not purport to be, or to include, all the latest or most definitive information available. Gaston College makes no such claim and offers no assurance that this is the case. Information in this area changes frequently, and students, employees, and any others affected by this policy or procedures are responsible for keeping themselves informed and taking any necessary precautions for their own safety and the safety of others relating to any communicable disease.