



Infectious Disease Policy

Utopian Academy for the Arts (UAFA) 2026–2027 School Year

Utopian Academy for the Arts (UAFA) is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for students, staff, and visitors. UAFA will take appropriate and proactive measures to prevent and control the spread of infectious and communicable diseases in accordance with Georgia Rule 160-1-3-.03, Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) guidance, and other applicable public health requirements.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the prevention, identification, reporting, management, and control of infectious and communicable diseases within the school environment.

UAFA recognizes the importance of protecting the health and safety of students and staff while minimizing unnecessary disruption to the educational environment.

2. Notification of Illness

Parents and guardians are expected to notify the school when their scholar has been diagnosed with a communicable or infectious disease that may affect the health and safety of the school community.

Immediate notification should be provided to the school nurse when a scholar is diagnosed with or suspected of having a communicable disease that may require exclusion, public health notification, or additional precautions.

Students experiencing fever or symptoms that may indicate a communicable illness should remain home and follow current school, healthcare provider, and public health guidance regarding return to school.

Students should generally be fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication before returning to school, unless otherwise directed by a healthcare provider or public health authority.

Parents and guardians should follow UAFA attendance procedures regarding documentation for student absences.

3. Emergency Information and Pick-up Procedures

Each student must have current emergency contact information on file. Emergency information should be reviewed annually and updated whenever changes occur.

Changes in telephone numbers, addresses, emergency contacts, or authorized individuals should be reported to the appropriate school office or registrar promptly.

When a student becomes ill during the school day and requires dismissal, the parent, guardian, or authorized individual will be contacted.

Parents and guardians are responsible for identifying individuals authorized to pick up their child in accordance with UAFA procedures.

4. Communicable and Infectious Diseases

Parents and guardians should notify the school nurse as soon as possible when a student has been diagnosed with a communicable disease.

Communicable diseases may include, but are not limited to:

- Chickenpox (Varicella)

- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease
- Head Lice
- Impetigo
- Influenza
- Measles (Rubeola)
- Mumps
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
- Pinworms
- Ringworm
- Rubella (German Measles)
- Scabies
- Other infectious or communicable illnesses identified by public health authorities

Exclusion and return-to-school decisions will be based on current Georgia Department of Public Health guidance, applicable CDC recommendations, healthcare provider recommendations when appropriate, and the student's individual circumstances.

Because public health recommendations may change, UAFA will not rely solely on fixed exclusion periods contained within this policy. The school nurse may consult with the student's healthcare provider, Georgia Department of Public Health, local health department, and school administration when determining appropriate exclusion and return-to-school requirements.

Head Lice

Students identified with head lice will be managed in accordance with current school health and public health guidance. Students may return to school following appropriate initial treatment. The presence of nits alone will not automatically require continued exclusion from school.

Measles (Rubeola)

Suspected or confirmed cases of measles require immediate attention. The school nurse and administration will follow current Georgia Department of Public Health guidance regarding notification, exclusion, exposure management, and return to school.

Chickenpox (Varicella)

Suspected or confirmed cases of chickenpox will be managed according to current Georgia Department of Public Health recommendations. The school nurse will coordinate with public health officials when necessary regarding exclusion, exposure, and return-to-school requirements.

Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

Suspected or confirmed cases of pertussis will be managed in accordance with current Georgia Department of Public Health guidance. Appropriate public health notification and recommendations regarding treatment, exposure, exclusion, and return to school will be followed.

5. Reporting of Communicable Diseases

UAFA will comply with applicable Georgia requirements for reporting suspected or confirmed notifiable diseases.

When required, the school nurse or appropriate designated school official will coordinate with the Georgia Department of Public Health and/or local public health authorities.

Public health officials may provide additional instructions regarding:

- Student or staff exclusion
- Return-to-school requirements
- Identification and management of exposed individuals
- Outbreak investigation
- Additional infection-control measures
- Communication with families and staff

UAFA will cooperate with public health authorities during the investigation and management of communicable disease cases and outbreaks.

6. Immunization and School Entrance Requirements

Students must meet applicable Georgia immunization requirements for school attendance.

Parents and guardians are responsible for providing appropriate immunization documentation, including a valid Georgia Certificate of Immunization (Form 3231), when required.

Medical and religious exemptions will be handled in accordance with Georgia law and Georgia Department of Public Health requirements.

Parents or guardians requesting a religious exemption must provide the appropriate Georgia Department of Public Health religious exemption documentation as required by state regulations.

During an outbreak or threatened outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, students who are not adequately immunized may be subject to temporary exclusion in accordance with Georgia Department of Public Health requirements.

7. Prevention and Standard Precautions

UAFA will promote infection-prevention practices throughout its campuses.

Students and staff are encouraged to follow appropriate infection-control measures, including:

- Frequent handwashing with soap and water
- Appropriate use of hand sanitizer when soap and water are not readily available
- Covering coughs and sneezes
- Avoiding unnecessary sharing of personal items
- Appropriate cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces
- Following school nurse and public health recommendations during infectious disease events

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be made available as appropriate for employees performing tasks with potential exposure to infectious materials.

8. Staff Education and Training

UAFA will provide employees with information, education, or training related to infectious diseases, transmission risks, prevention, and standard precautions in accordance with applicable requirements and current public health recommendations.

Staff members who may encounter blood, bodily fluids, or students with actual or suspected infectious illnesses will be expected to follow standard precautions and applicable UAFA health and safety procedures.

9. Suspected Infectious Disease

When there is reasonable concern that a student or employee may have an infectious disease, appropriate school personnel will take reasonable steps to protect the health and safety of the individual and school community.

For students, the parent or guardian will be notified when medical evaluation or removal from the school environment is appropriate.

Operational decisions involving an individual with a suspected or confirmed communicable disease will be made, as appropriate, in consultation with the school nurse, school administration, healthcare professionals, and state and/or local public health officials.

10. Outbreak Response

In the event of a suspected or confirmed infectious disease outbreak, UAFA will work with appropriate public health authorities to determine necessary actions.

Actions may include:

- Increased monitoring of illness and absenteeism
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfection
- Reinforcement of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Identification of potentially exposed individuals
- Temporary exclusion when medically or legally indicated

- Communication with affected families and staff
- Additional measures recommended by public health officials

UAFA will adjust its response as necessary based on the specific disease, level of risk, public health recommendations, and circumstances affecting the school community

11. Confidentiality and Privacy

UAFA will protect the confidentiality of student and employee health information in accordance with FERPA and other applicable federal and Georgia privacy requirements.

Health information will only be disclosed to individuals who have a legitimate need for the information or when disclosure is permitted or required for health, safety, or public health purposes.

When communicating information regarding an infectious disease case or outbreak, UAFA will make reasonable efforts to protect the identity and privacy of affected individuals.

12. Communication

UAFA will maintain appropriate communication with students, parents, guardians, employees, and other members of the school community when an infectious disease situation may affect school operations or community health.

Communication may include letters, emails, electronic notifications, or other appropriate methods.

The school nurse will work collaboratively with administration to monitor illness trends, communicate health concerns, and coordinate appropriate responses.

When necessary, UAFA will follow guidance provided by the Georgia Department of Public Health or local public health authorities regarding community notification.

13. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically and may be updated as necessary to reflect changes in Georgia law, Georgia Department of Public Health guidance, CDC recommendations, or other applicable health and safety requirements.

When current public health guidance differs from information previously provided by UAFA, current applicable public health requirements and recommendations will guide the school's response

14. Conclusion

Utopian Academy for the Arts is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy learning and working environment. Through prevention, education, timely reporting, appropriate infection-control practices, collaboration with public health authorities, and effective communication, UAFA will work to minimize the spread and impact of infectious diseases throughout the school community.