

Wyndham Community and Education Centre Inc Policy & Procedure

Policy Name	Epidemic and Pandemic Policy & Procedure
Responsible Person	CEO, Epidemic/Pandemic Team (CEO, COO, CFO)
Staff Involved	All staff
Review Dates	2021
Related Documents	Legislation: Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth), Biosecurity Act 2015 (Cth), Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004 (Vic), Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, Privacy & Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic). Policies: OHS Policy & Procedure, Critical Incident & Emergency Management Policy & Procedure, Privacy Policy & Procedure (students/clients & staff/volunteers), Staff Recruitment Policy & Procedure, Critical Incident & Emergency Management Policy & Procedure, Risk Identification & Management Policy & Procedure, Working from Home Policy & Procedure Other: Fair Work Act Regulations 2009, Industrial Awards, Health Vic Pandemic Influenza - https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/emergencies/emergency-type/infectious-diseases/pandemic-influenza, Return to Work Plan and Guidelines, National COVID-19 Safe Workplace Principles (10), Government Stay at Home Directions.

Policy context

From time to time infectious diseases develop into epidemics or pandemics, and create increased risks for the community. These occasions require specific policies targeted at the particular disease in question and general efforts at preparedness and risk mitigation.

Wyndham Community and Education Centre (Wyndham CEC) aims as far as possible to protect its staff, its clients and students, its volunteers, and the general public from infection or contagion by epidemics and/or pandemics.

Wyndham CEC takes its duty of care in a pandemic seriously and staff have the right to a healthy and safe working environment.

Wyndham CEC will facilitate through its policies and procedures, strategies designed to reduce risks its staff, its clients and students, its volunteers, and the general public.

Wyndham CEC will comply with all directions from authorised public health officers and recognised medical authorities in relation to an epidemic or pandemic.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the strategies and actions that Wyndham CEC intends to take to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases that are declared epidemics or pandemics, and control the transmission of infectious diseases when a case/s is identified.

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For the purpose of this policy, infectious diseases mean diseases caused by pathogenic microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi; the diseases can be spread, directly or indirectly, from one person to another and is highly contagious. This policy is focused on infectious diseases that are publicly declared to be an epidemic or pandemic by federal or state government and/or other authority such as the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Policy

Wyndham CEC will as far as possible plan for and make advance preparations for the possibility that its operations will be affected by a declared epidemic or pandemic. This means taking all necessary precautions to meet legal requirements and appropriate decisions for the safe management of the organisation.

Any staff member who is contagious, is likely to be contagious, has been contagious, or has been in contact with someone who is contagious or likely to be contagious from an epidemic or pandemic, must notify a senior manager immediately. It may be necessary for the staff member to self-isolate by staying at home until recovered and/or a medical clearance to return to work is provided.

In the event of an epidemic or pandemic, Wyndham CEC will, as far as possible:

- Assist staff, clients and students, volunteers and others, as relevant, to minimise their exposure to the pandemic by monitoring the organisation's work and community spaces.
- Develop and monitor an organisational Pandemic Risk Plan.
- Encourage and assist those who have reason to believe that they may have been exposed to the epidemic or pandemic to be tested.
- Support employees, volunteers, contractors and clients to take reasonable precautions to prevent infection or contagion.
- If required and appropriate, provide standard personal protective equipment.
- Maintain services and operations throughout the period of concern only if safe to do so.
- Closely monitor and follow advice from national and state authorities.
- Close or pause programs and services as required.
- Transition staff to work remotely if appropriate.

Preventative measures

In the event of an infectious disease being declared an epidemic or pandemic, or possible or likely epidemic or pandemic, Wyndham CEC requires people covered by this Policy to take the following precautions:

- Regularly and thoroughly wash hands with soap and water.
- Maintain at least 1.5m distance between yourself and anyone else.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Do not shake hands with others.
- Follow good hygiene health guidelines, and encourage others to do the same including covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze, and disposing of used tissues immediately.
- Stay at home if you are even slightly unwell.

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- Keep up to date on the latest hotspots (cities or local areas where outbreaks of the pandemic or epidemic have been reported). Avoid non-essential travel and attendance at external events.
- Seek medical advice immediately and follow the directions of your local health authority if you come into contact with a confirmed case.

Leave and Flexibility

Workers can make use of leave consistent with Wyndham CEC leave policy, relevant industrial instruments and the National Employment Standards (including access to unpaid leave).

Wyndham CEC recognises that staff may request or require paid and unpaid leave when they are unwell, at risk of, or vulnerable to infection, and at risk of infecting others. Staff may also require leave to look after children who are sick or who have been isolated from school or childcare.

Wyndham CEC will at its discretion direct staff affected, or reasonably at risk of being affected by the pandemic or epidemic, to remain away from the workplace and seek immediate medical advice and a medical clearance before returning to the workplace. A staff member who is a confirmed or suspected case should contact a senior manager by phone to discuss directions for returning to work.

In the event of a positive diagnosis, staff must exclude themselves from the workplace including during the period they are awaiting test results. Staff should contact a manager immediately by phone to discuss.

For staff without sufficient leave entitlements where possible during an epidemic or pandemic, Wyndham CEC will provide staff the flexibility to take ~~paid~~ leave in advance.

Employment Conditions during Natural Disasters and Emergencies

In the event that an epidemic or pandemic is declared by the national or state authority in Australia as an emergency, Fair Work Australia guidelines regarding stand down could apply.

Wyndham CEC will assess the following options before standing staff down:

- Inviting employees to take accrued paid leave eg. Annual leave
- Requiring employees to take leave if their award allows it
- Flexible arrangements across work sites where possible and safe to do so
- Consider staff working from home.

Any arrangements to alter working conditions will be made in accordance with the Fair Work Act and relevant Industrial Awards.

Responsibilities

The **CEO** is responsible for:

- Nominating the Epidemic/Pandemic Crisis Team (CEO, COO and CFO). The CEO will override this composition as they see fit.
- Ensuring that the organisation's Staff Leave and OH&S policies are consistent with the intention of this Epidemic or Pandemic Policy
- Assessing the organisation's vulnerabilities, in the light of the epidemic or pandemic, to:

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- Wyndham CEC's own human resources;
- Wyndham CEC's suppliers of services;
- In the event of an epidemic or pandemic,
 - Giving notice to staff, volunteers, clients, and any persons likely to be affected that epidemic or pandemic procedures are in effect;
 - Bringing into operation the epidemic or pandemic management procedures specified below;
 - Instituting any administrative measures necessary to reduce the impact of the vulnerabilities detailed above.

Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff and volunteers are aware of the epidemic/pandemic procedures in effect at any time.

Employees/volunteers are responsible for:

- Abiding by the epidemic/pandemic procedures specified below, when informed by authorised staff that epidemic or pandemic procedures are in effect

Clients/students are responsible for:

- Abiding by the epidemic/pandemic procedures specified below, when informed by authorised staff that epidemic or pandemic procedures are in effect

The **Epidemic/ Pandemic Team** is responsible for:

- Working with the CEO on the preparation of a comprehensive epidemic/pandemic Risk and Return to Work Plan
- Advising the CEO on when epidemic/pandemic procedures should be activated
- Familiarising staff with recommended procedures regarding epidemic avoidance
- Working with all sectors of the organisation to identify mission-critical staff and functions
- Provision of hygiene products
- Working from home arrangements
- Staff training

Procedures

The following procedures apply in the event of the CEO giving notice that epidemic or pandemic procedures are in effect.

Events

- The CEO, with the advice of the Epidemic/ Pandemic Team, will consider on a continuing basis whether any events involving the attendance of staff or members of the public should be changed, rescheduled, paused or cancelled to minimise the risk of infection.

Work procedures

- The CEO, with the advice of the Epidemic/ Pandemic Team, will consider on a continuing basis whether:
 - it is necessary or appropriate for nominated staff/volunteers to work from home.

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- staff/volunteer travel, (or other activities that may cause them to come into contact with other people in Australia or overseas) should be modified or terminated.
 - arrangements for staff/volunteers who work with clients or the public should be modified to minimise risks for all parties.
- The CEO, with the advice of the Epidemic/ Pandemic Team, may require any member of staff to not attend the workplace, and/or to work from home, or, if this is not feasible or appropriate, to take leave.
- The CEO, with the advice of the Epidemic/ Pandemic Team, may require any member of staff to provide satisfactory evidence that they are fit to return to work if they have been a confirmed case or in contact with a confirmed case.

Contractors and suppliers

- The CEO, with the advice of the Epidemic/ Pandemic Team, will consider on a continuing basis whether arrangements with existing suppliers need to be modified or supplemented to ensure uninterrupted service delivery. This includes contractors or suppliers following epidemic/pandemic procedures and guidelines that are in place.

Health Messaging

- The Epidemic/ Pandemic Team will familiarise staff/volunteers and others, as relevant, with recommended procedures on epidemic avoidance guidelines (e.g. handwashing, soap, sneezing) as appropriate.
- The above includes possible direction to staff around acceptable hygiene behaviours in the workplace.
- Wyndham CEC will develop a workplace communication and training plan to ensure ongoing informed health messaging.

Responding to an incident

Wyndham CEC will work with authorities in the case of a confirmed case in the workplace.

Responses include:

- Immediate closure of venue affected
- Immediate and effective reporting to State health authority (DHHS)
- Cooperating with health officials re contact tracing
- Notifying community/those potentially impacted following health authority advice.
- Notifying Worksafe Victoria in the event of a death from a pandemic related incident

Returning to the workplace

In the event that staff have been transitioned to working from home during a pandemic, staff will be required to follow an organisational Return to Work Plan.

Returning to work safely will require:

- Staged returns
- Social distancing/separation
- Control and surveillance
- Personal hygiene and health
- Worker behaviour change
- Return to work training
- Remodelling the workplace
- Surveillance and screening (including entrance/exit checks)

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