

## Wyndham Community and Education Centre Inc Policy & Procedure

Policy Name	<b>Epidemic and Pandemic Policy &amp; Procedure</b>
Responsible Person	CEO, Epidemic/ pandemic Team (CEO, COO, CFO)
Staff Involved	All staff
Review Dates	2021
Related Documents	<p><b>Legislation:</b> Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth), Biosecurity Act 2015 (Cth), Occupational Health &amp; Safety Act 2004 (Vic), Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, Privacy &amp; Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic).</p> <p><b>Policies:</b> OHS Policy &amp; Procedure, Critical Incident &amp; Emergency Management Policy &amp; Procedure, Privacy Policy &amp; Procedure (students/clients &amp; staff/volunteers), Staff Recruitment Policy &amp; Procedure, Critical Incident &amp; Emergency Management Policy &amp; Procedure, Risk Identification &amp; Management Policy &amp; Procedure.</p> <p><b>Other:</b> Fair Work Act Regulations 2009, Industrial Awards, Health Vic pandemic Influenza - <a href="https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/emergencies/emergency-type/infectious-diseases/pandemic-influenza">https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/emergencies/emergency-type/infectious-diseases/pandemic-influenza</a></p>

### **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.

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

Wyndham CEC will facilitate, through its policies and procedures, strategies designed to reduce risks to its clients, its staff, 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 the 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 epidemics or pandemics, and control the transmission of infectious diseases when a case/s is identified.

**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

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indirectly, from one person to another. This policy is focused on infectious diseases that are declared to be an epidemic or pandemic.

### **Policy**

Wyndham CEC will as far as possible plan for and make advance preparations for the possibility that its operations will be affected by an epidemic or pandemic.

If you are or are likely to be contagious, have been contagious or have been in contact with someone who is contagious or likely to be contagious from an epidemic or pandemic, notify your manager immediately. It may be necessary for you to self-isolate by staying at home until you recover and get a medical clearance to return to work.

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

- Assist its clients, staff, volunteers and others, as relevant, to minimise their exposure to the illness concerned.
- Encourage and assist those who have reason to believe that they are at risk of contracting the epidemic or pandemic to obtain a diagnosis.
- Support employees, volunteers, contractors and clients to take reasonable precautions to prevent infection or contagion.
- If required and available, provide standard personal protective equipment.
- Maintain its services and operations throughout the period of concern while safe to do so.
- Closely monitor and follow advice from national and state authorities.

### **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 your hands with soap and water.
- Maintain at least 1 metre distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, or shaking hands with others.
- Make sure you follow good hygiene, and encourage others to do the same. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze, and disposing of used tissues immediately.
- Stay home if you are unwell.
- Keep up to date on the latest hotspots (cities or local areas where the pandemic or epidemic is spreading widely). If possible, avoid non-essential travel and attendance at events.
- Seek medical advice promptly and follow the directions of your local health authority.

### **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).

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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, childcare etc.

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. The staff member should contact their manager by phone to discuss before returning.

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
- If a position lends itself to working from home, it will be considered

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

### Responsibilities

The **CEO** is responsible for:

- Nominating the Epidemic Team (CEO, COO and CFO). The CEO will override this composition if 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:
  - o Wyndham CEC's own human resources
  - o Wyndham CEC's suppliers of services
  - o 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
  - o Bringing into operation the epidemic or pandemic management procedures specified below
  - o Instituting any administrative measures necessary to reduce the impact of the vulnerabilities detailed above

**Managers** are responsible for:

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

**Employees/volunteers** are responsible for:

- Abiding by the epidemic 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 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 plan
- Advising the CEO on when epidemic 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

### **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 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:
  - o it is necessary or appropriate for nominated staff/volunteers to work from home.
  - o 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.
  - o 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.

### **Contractors and suppliers**

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- 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

#### **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.