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Epidemic/Pandemic Policy

Approved by Board on 17th March 2020

1. Introduction

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.

- 1.1 Canterbury and District Preschool wishes as far as possible to protect its children, families, its staff, its volunteers, and the general public from infection or contagion by epidemics and/or pandemics.
- 1.2 Canterbury and District Preschool will facilitate, through its policies and procedures, strategies designed to reduce risks to its clients, its staff, its volunteers, and the general public.
- 1.3 Canterbury and District Preschool will comply with all directions from authorised public health officers and recognised medical authorities in relation to the epidemic or pandemic.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline the strategies and actions that Canterbury and District Preschool 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 indirectly, from one person to another. This policy is focused on infectious diseases that are declared to be an epidemic or pandemic.

3. Scope

3.1 This policy applies to:

Employees	Members Committee of Management	Families	Contractors (including employees of contractors)	Volunteers	Suppliers	Consultants
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

4. Policy

- 4.1 Canterbury and District Preschool 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.
- 4.2 In the event of an epidemic or pandemic, Canterbury and District Preschool will, as far as possible:
- 4.2.1 Assist its children, families, staff, volunteers and others, as relevant, to minimise their exposure to the illness concerned.
 - 4.2.2 Encourage and assist those who have reason to believe that they are at risk of contracting the epidemic or pandemic to obtain a diagnosis.
 - 4.2.3 Support employees, volunteers, contractors, children and families to take reasonable precautions to prevent infection or contagion.
 - 4.2.4 Provide standard precautions such as personal protective equipment where available (e.g. masks, soap, hand sanitiser, anti-bacterial wipes and gloves).
 - 4.2.5 Maintain its services and operations throughout the period of concern.
- 4.3 In the event of an infectious disease being declared an epidemic or pandemic Canterbury and District Preschool requires people covered by this Policy to take the following precautions and any other precautions recommended by the World Health Organization, Department of Education and Training and Department of Health.
- 4.3.1 Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.
 - 4.3.2 Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
 - 4.3.3 Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, or shaking hands with others.
 - 4.3.4 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.
 - 4.3.5 Stay at home if you feel unwell. If you are well enough to work but would like to minimise the risk of infecting others, ask the President of Canterbury District Preschool and/or Nominated Supervisor whether you can temporarily work from home.
 - 4.3.6 Keep up to date on the latest hotspots (cities or local areas where the pandemic or epidemic is spreading widely). If possible, avoid traveling to places - especially if you are more at risk.
 - 4.3.7 If you are or are likely to be contagious, notify Nominated Supervisor and Committee of Management as soon as possible. It may be possible or necessary for you to self-isolate by staying at home until you recover.
 - 4.3.8 Seek medical advice promptly and follow the directions of your local health authority.

- 4.3.9 Maintain an illness register on all staff and children absent from Canterbury and District Preschool.
- 4.3.10 Review any risks associated with any scheduled incursions and excursions and cancel if required.
- 4.3.11 Ensure all arranged visitors have not travelled to high risk countries or been in contact with the infectious disease prior to visiting Canterbury and District Preschool.

5. Staff Leave and Flexibility

- 5.1 Canterbury and District Preschool 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.
- 5.2 Workers may make use of leave consistent with Canterbury and District Preschool leave policy, VECTEA and the National Employment Standards (including access to unpaid leave).
- 5.3 Canterbury and District Preschool may, at its discretion, direct those staff affected or reasonably at risk of being affected by the pandemic or epidemic, to remain away from the workplace or work remotely.

6. Children and Families

- 6.1 Canterbury and District Preschool may, at its discretion, direct those families and/or children affected or reasonably at risk of being affected by the pandemic or epidemic, to remain away from Canterbury and District Preschool.
- 6.2 Canterbury and District Preschool may, at its discretion, restrict non-essential visitors to the Preschool, and request one parent/carer access the premises at one time during drop off and pick up.

7. Notes

In carrying out the procedures listed below, Canterbury and District Preschool will be guided by the information and directions provided by local health authorities and the World Health Organisation, and its occupational health and safety obligations.

8. Above and beyond provisions

- 8.1 Canterbury and District Preschool may subsidise any reasonable medical expenses incurred by any workers directed by Canterbury and District Preschool to obtain medical clearance for the infectious disease before returning to work.
- 8.2 Canterbury and District Preschool will offer any staff member who is diagnosed with the infectious disease in question additional paid leave in accordance to VECTEA 2016, Infectious diseases leave.
- 8.3 Where possible during an epidemic or pandemic, Canterbury and District Preschool will aim to provide workers with flexibility to work remotely and to attend medical appointments.

9. Related Documents

- 9.1 Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza ([AHMPPI](#))
- [ACT - Australian Capital Territory](#)
 - [NSW - New South Wales](#)
 - [NT - Northern Territory](#)
 - [Qld - Queensland](#)
 - [SA - South Australia](#)
 - [Tas - Tasmania](#)
 - [Vic - Victoria](#)
 - [WA - Western Australia](#)
- 9.2 Trusted Information Sharing Network (TISN) for Critical Infrastructure Resilience: [Template Pandemic Emergency Management Plan](#)

10. Legislation & Industrial Instruments

This policy & procedure is not intended to override any industrial instrument, contract, award or legislation.

- *Biosecurity Act 2015 (Commonwealth)*
- *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*
- *Fair Work Regulations 2009 (Cth)*
- *Victorian Early Childhood Teachers and Educators Agreement 2016 (VECTEA)*

Epidemic/Pandemic Procedure

Procedure number	[insert number]	Version	1
Drafted by	OHS Committee Member	Approved on	[insert date]
Approved by Board on	[insert date]	Scheduled review date	March 2021 or as required

1. Responsibilities

- 1.1 The **Canterbury and District Committee of Management** is responsible for:
- Nominating the Epidemic Officer. The normal expectation will be that the Workplace Health and Safety Officer shall be appointed as Epidemic Officer, but the **CDPS Committee of Management** may override this if they see fit.
 - Ensuring that the organisation's Leave and Workplace Health and Safety policies are consistent with the intention of the Epidemic/Pandemic Policy.
 - Assessing the organisation's vulnerabilities, in the light of the epidemic or pandemic, to:
 - Canterbury and District Preschool own human resources
 - Canterbury and District Preschool suppliers of goods and services
 - In the event of an epidemic or pandemic,
 - Giving notice to staff, families, volunteers, 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
- 1.2 **Supervisors/managers** are responsible for:
- Ensuring that staff, families and volunteers are aware of the epidemic procedures in effect at any time.
- 1.3 **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
- 1.4 The **Epidemic Officer** is responsible for:
- Working with the **CDPS Committee of Management** on the preparation of a comprehensive epidemic plan
 - Advising the **CDPS Committee of Management** on when epidemic procedures should be activated
 - Familiarising staff with recommended procedures regarding epidemic avoidance

2. Procedures

The following procedures apply in the event of the **CDPS Committee of Management** giving notice that epidemic or pandemic procedures are in effect.

2.1 Events

- The **CDPS Committee of Management**, with the advice of the Epidemic Officer, 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.

2.2 Work procedures

- The **CDPS Committee of Management** with the advice of the Epidemic Officer, will consider on a continuing basis whether:
 - it is necessary or appropriate for nominated staff/volunteers to work from home.
 - 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.
 - staff to provide details of any scheduled travel, including destination, stop overs, flight numbers and date of travel.
 - arrangements for staff/volunteers who work with external clients or the public should be modified to minimise risks for all parties.
- The **CDPS Committee of Management**, with the advice of the Epidemic Officer, may prepare response plans specific to particular infectious diseases, where and if deemed necessary. Refer to [Annexure A: CDPS COVID-19 Response Plan](#).
- The **CDPS Committee of Management**, with the advice of the Epidemic Officer, 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 [personal/annual leave](#)
- The **CDPS Committee of Management**, with the advice of the Epidemic Officer, may require any member of staff to provide satisfactory evidence that they are fit to return to work.

2.3 Contractors and suppliers

- **CDPS Committee of Management**, with the advice of the Epidemic Officer, will consider on a continuing basis whether arrangements with existing contractors and suppliers need to be modified or supplemented to ensure uninterrupted service delivery.

3. Health Messaging

- 3.1 The Epidemic Officer shall familiarise staff/volunteers and others, as relevant, with recommended procedures on epidemic avoidance guidelines (e.g. handwashing, soap, sneezing policy) as appropriate.

Annexure A: CDPS COVID-19 Response Plan

1. What is Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory System (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The Novel Coronavirus is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans.

1.1 Common signs of infection include:

- Respiratory symptoms
- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath and breathing difficulties

In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.⁽¹⁾

1.2 How does the Coronavirus spread?

The coronavirus is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

- Direct close contact with a person while they are infectious;
- Close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes; or
- Touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

Most infections are only transmitted by people when they have symptoms as noted above.

2. CDPS Scenario Response Plan

Scenario	CDPS Response
A child presents potential symptoms during session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to Illness and Infectious Disease Policy • Note the illness within the Illness Register maintained at the premises • Socially distance the unwell child from the remainder of the class • Disinfect areas known to have been occupied/handled by the unwell child • Returning children from being absent due to illness will be required to provide a medical certificate, stating fitness to return
A person within the same household as an attending child travels internationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide communication to families, requesting international travel arrangements by persons living with, or closely interacting with a child from the Preschool be disclosed to staff or the Epidemic Officer • In accordance with established government self-quarantine protocols, children living with any persons under government self-quarantine shall be subject to the same self-quarantine requirements prior to attending CDPS • Prior to a child returning post international travel, confirmation of the successful completion of the government-mandated quarantine period may be requested
A child/person living with a CDPS child reports a confirmed case of COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending child is to self-isolate from the Preschool • Staff to escalate and report incident through established critical incident reporting protocols

Scenario	CDPS Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where the infected person is a child who may have attended during an infectious period, formal communications shall be issued to the parents • Prior to returning to CDPS, the child must provide a doctor's certificate stating fitness to return

3. Additional Precautionary Measures

If and where CDPS Committee of Management deem it necessary, the additional precautionary measures will be considered:

- Increased cleaning schedule and extent of cleaning, to include disinfecting toys, additional areas
- Revision of play stations and learning programs where there is a potential increase in risk with cross-contamination
- Restricting non-essential visitors to the Preschool to one carer/parent during drop off and pick up
- Locating sign in books outside of the classroom to restrict the number of external visitors
- Requesting external service providers confirm no known exposure or international travel within 14 days of accessing the premises

ⁱ World Health Organisation (WHO)