



1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Mater Dei acknowledges its duty of care to provide a safe environment for employees and also to the students, children, young adults, parents, carers, supporters, volunteers, visitors and contractors to our School, Preschool, Playgroup and NextPath Continuous Learning and Assessment and Therapy Programs across our Camden and Narellan sites. This policy aims to minimise risk and disruption to the day to day life and function of the organisation through minimising the impact of human pandemic.

2. SCOPE

This document applies to all to all Mater Dei Programs and their participants including employees, students, children, young adults, parents, carers, supporters, volunteers, visitors and contractors outlines the roles and responsibilities of all parties.

3. BACKGROUND

The Australian Government has implemented strict public health guidelines and the National Campaign "*Help Stop the Spread and Stay Healthy*" and continues to provide advice to minimise the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus) and keep our communities safe.

More recently the NSW Government has implemented a number of Public Health Orders to protect the most vulnerable groups in society. A number of these apply to Mater Dei and its Programs.

Mater Dei is committed to adhering to Public Health Orders in place from time to time and implementing guidelines as far as reasonably practicable in accordance with advice from the Government and regulatory bodies.

4. WHAT IS COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause respiratory infections. These can range from the common cold to more serious diseases.

The COVID-19 virus is a new disease not been previously identified in humans. Due to a lack of immunity in the community, this means it can spread quickly and widely.

Common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- fever
- respiratory symptoms including cough, sore throat or shortness of breath

Other symptoms can include runny nose, acute blocked nose, headache, muscle or joint pains, nausea, diarrhoea, vomiting, loss of sense of smell, altered sense of taste, loss of appetite or fatigue



5. HOW IS COVID-19 SPREAD?

COVID-19 is most likely to spread from person to person through:

- close contact with an infectious person (including in the 48 hours before they had symptoms)
- contact with droplets from an infected persons cough or sneeze, or
- touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles, tables, hand rails etc) that have been contaminated by an infected person and then touching their mouth or face.

There are self-isolation and testing requirements for people considered to be a “close contact” or “casual contact” by NSW Health. The definitions of close contact and casual contact are determined and advised by NSW Health from time to time.

Close contact is defined as having been in close range of someone with a positive case of coronavirus (COVID-19) while they were infectious. You may have had contact with the infectious person at home, or any other venues and are at risk of developing COVID-19. You may be notified by phone call or text you are a close contact by NSW Health or alternatively, by Mater Dei.

Self-isolation and testing requirements for **close contacts** and **casual contacts** are different based on vaccination status and exposure. There are also restrictions on attending high risk settings for a period of time after exposure including early childhood centres, primary schools and disability settings.

Casual contact is defined as someone who may have been at the same location at the same time as a positive COVID case for a **short period of time** or at a location that carries a lower risk of transmission e.g. schools, public transport, public places. A casual contact is deemed to be at a lower risk of becoming a positive case than a close contact.

If you have been identified as a casual contact, you may be notified by text or call from NSW Health. You may also be notified by Mater Dei if we become aware of a positive case in our workplace or any of our Programs (you do not need to wait for formal communication from NSW Health). Alternatively, you may recognise a location you have been to on the NSW Government case locations web page or via other communications.

6. WHEN TO GET TESTED FOR COVID-19?

If you have been identified as a close or casual contact, get tested immediately and self-isolate.

Follow testing and isolation directions and advice from NSW Health. Please note testing and isolation requirements will vary according to your vaccination status and exposure. Mater Dei (and its programs) identify as a high risk setting for the purposes of self-isolation and limitations on activity for a period of time after exposure.



7. HOW CAN WE PROTECT OUR STUDENTS, CHILDREN, YOUNG ADULTS, FAMILIES, STAFF AND VISITORS?

The best way to protect our children, young adults, families, employees, volunteers and visitors to Mater Dei is for our educators and employees continue to implement **effective hygiene and cleaning practices** at all times.

Hand washing is a vital strategy in the prevention of spreading many infectious diseases including COVID-19.

We ask that all our employees, students, young adults, parents, carers, supporters, volunteers and visitors continue to practice good hygiene by engaging in regular hand washing whilst at Mater Dei, at our Camden and Narellan Campuses and also when at home. Our educators have instructed, students, children and young adults on our process for hand washing and we ask that this process continue at home for consistency, and as a precautionary measure in all settings.

Social or physical distancing is another national strategy to slow the spread of COVID-19. Where possible we ask that our employees, students, young adults, parents, carers, volunteers and visitors practise the physical distancing measures recommended by the Australian Government and NSW Health department and regulatory bodies when on site at Mater Dei and our Camden and Narellan sites and also when at home and out in public until otherwise directed. It is important to recognise that physical distancing cannot be practised in all situations (e.g. when toileting or changing students or student travel by taxi) and the aim is to generally reduce the potential for transmission. Note schools are exempt from physical distancing requirements in classrooms. Whilst adults must adhere to 1.5 metre physical distancing rules, our students (in classrooms) need not. Currently, we recognise the need for students to remain with their 'cohorts' as a form of physical distancing.

Contact tracing is the process of identifying all people that a person who has tested positive to COVID-19 has come in contact with. Mater Dei is required to keep track of any employees, volunteers, parents, carers, supporters, visitors or contractors to our Programs, and we have implemented a Services NSW QR code for check in as a condition of entry. The QR code requires you to provide your contact details for contact tracing purposes in the event that we have a positive case at Mater Dei. We will work cooperatively with the Public Health Unit, contract tracers and authorities should a positive case be identified for Mater Dei or its Programs.

For those without a mobile phone who are unable to check in electronically, Mater Dei has a paper based record for this purpose.

Working in Partnership with Families, Carers and Supporters

In addition, Mater Dei will continue to help prevent the spread of any and all diseases by monitoring our children, students and young adults' health in partnership with our families, carers and supporters. We therefore request that:

- each and every one of our families, carers, supporters and/or young adults advises us if your child (or young adult) is unwell
- you keep your children/ young adult at home if they are unwell to avoid contact with other people to reduce contamination, and



- you contact their GP immediately if your children, young adult and/or any member of your family develops any of the symptoms of the COVID-19 virus or any symptoms that are of concern.
- our staff stay home if they feel unwell or experience respiratory symptoms.

8. OUR PROTECTION AND RESPONSE MEASURES

At Mater Dei, we have taken all necessary and reasonable steps in relation to the wellbeing of staff, our children, students and young adults across all Programs. We have also taken reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of parents, carers, supporters, volunteers and visitors when on site.

Risk assessments have been conducted and continue to be monitored to ensure appropriate controls are in place, and that we operate in a Covid Safe environment in accordance with NSW Government's Roadmap to recovery, NSW Public Health Orders and the advice of our various regulatory bodies.

We will continue to review our current Policies and Procedures related to hygiene practices in response to the pandemic and ongoing health advice and have registered each Mater Dei Program as COVID Safe with the appropriate COVID-19 Safety Plan.

Mater Dei has a Mandatory Vaccination Policy for all staff and requires all staff across of our Programs be fully vaccinated (with 2 doses of COVID-19 vaccination) or have a valid medical contraindication certificate exemption to attend work at either of our Camden or Narellan sites in accordance with Public Health Orders.

In accordance with our Risk Assessments and Safety Plans, we have a number of controls/protection measures in place and will continue to communicate these expectations and responsibilities in an ongoing way to all parties and asked that all staff, students, children, young adults, volunteers and visitors comply with the following procedures to minimise spread of the virus and risk of further infection. These include:

- washing our hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds:
 - o before preparing food
 - o before eating
 - o after using the toilet
 - o after coughing, sneezing and disposal of a used tissue
 - o after completing cleaning tasks, gardening etc
 - o providing staff in high risk roles with appropriate PPE including robes and face shields where appropriate
- adhering to physical distancing measures as appropriate, including the passing on of government recommendations that parents, carers and supporters keep their children at home (when and wherever appropriate in accordance with government advice)



- considering external advice from our regulatory bodies Catholic Schools NSW, the Department of Education, NDIA and employer associations regarding meetings of large groups, assemblies, student excursions and external sport providers, structured work placements, swimming, community access, canteen, external professional development activities, prayer gatherings and communication meetings for staff as well as fundraising activities and/or limiting numbers of people who can attend, opting for virtual meetings or cancelling these until further notice where appropriate
- facilitating remote, blended learning and tele-health models (when appropriate) to prevent the risk of infection
- requiring that children, young adults and staff with compromised immune systems and greater vulnerability to respiratory illness, as well as children that are on prescribed medications for specific disabilities that can cause immune-suppression take advice from their medical professionals before attending School or Early Childhood, Continuous Learning and Assessment and Therapy Programs
- where reasonable and/or practical to do so, enabling staff to work from home (where appropriate) in accordance with Government and/or external advice provided there is no disruption to the School or our Early Childhood, Continuous Learning and Assessment and Therapy Programs
- requiring that anyone who has travelled overseas self-isolate in accordance with Public Health advice or until they are symptom free prior to returning to Mater Dei, our Camden or Narellan sites or any of our School, Early Childhood, Continuous Learning and Assessment and Therapy Programs. We also ask that staff, students, parents, carers, supporters and visitors keep us informed of any overseas travel. *Please refer to Section 9 of this Procedure for further information*
- requiring that coughing and sneezing be into the crook of our (flexed) elbow in accordance the National Strategy, and the
- disposal of used tissues straight into the bin (as opposed to the storage of used tissues in your pocket, sleeve or handbag etc)
- not allowing the sharing food and/or drinks on the premises
- asking that sick and unwell staff, students, young adults, parents, carers, supporters, siblings and visitors or anyone experiencing respiratory symptoms consistent with COVID-19 remain at home and not come to our School or Programs until medically cleared to do so
- immediately sending home any member of staff, student, child, young adult, parent, carer, supporter, volunteer, visitor or contractor who is unwell or showing symptoms of COVID-19



- regularly disinfecting learning, teaching and assessment resources, restrooms, touch points and surfaces, door handles, hand rails etc
- reviewing parent/carer drop off procedures and access to the School, Preschool and Playgroup rooms to minimise risk to our children, families, educators and staff.
- notifying staff, parents and carers as soon as possible in the event that we become aware of a positive case on either of our two sites and taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of all students, children, young adults, parents, carers, supporters, volunteers, visitors and contractors (subject to clauses 10 and 11).

We also require that all volunteers, parents, carers, supporters and visitors complete a "*COVID-19 Health Declaration*" prior to coming into Mater Dei or its respective Programs. Should any individual answer "YES" to any of the identified health statements, Management reserves the right to refuse the entry of that person to the School, our Camden and Narellan campus and our Early Childhood, and NextPath Continuous Learning and Assessment and Therapy Programs. Instead they will be directed to seek immediate medical advice and health screening and/or to isolate in accordance with NSW Health advice.

Furthermore and as part of the Declaration, we ask that staff, parents, carers, supporters and visitors keep Mater Dei informed of any changes to their child, young adults or own health situation, should they receive a positive COVID-19 diagnosis or be in close contact of someone who has received a positive diagnosis so that we can comply with the appropriate notification and reporting process to Safe Work and NSW Health to undertake the appropriate prevention control to minimise the risk of further infection to others.

Given a temperature has been identified as one of the symptoms of COVID-19, we have implemented (non-contact) infra-red temperature checking for all parents, carers, supporters, volunteers, visitors and contractors upon entry as an additional precaution. Anyone exhibiting a temperature above 37.5 degrees will not be permitted to enter Mater Dei, the School or our Early Childhood, Continuous Learning and Assessment and Therapy Programs.

Further in accordance with our internal infection control procedures, we reserve the right to check the temperature of children, students, young adults and staff, should they be exhibiting symptoms, as a way of ensuring the health and safety of our Mater Dei community. Anyone exhibiting a temperature will be asked to leave the premise. Staff and students will not be permitted to return to Mater Dei Programs until they have received a negative COVID result and are symptom free. Further, Mater Dei will require evidence of a negative COVID result and/or doctor's clearance for the staff member, child, student, young adult or employee to return.

In the interests of good hygiene, Mater Dei has installed hand sanitiser units upon entry and in high volume and readily accessible locations within the School and in classrooms as well as in our Camden and Narellan campuses for the use of our employees, students, young adults, families, carers, supporters, volunteers and visitors to help stop the spread of Coronavirus and other infectious diseases.



Mater Dei will keep doors and windows open to increase ventilation where possible provided there is no foreseeable risk to health and safety. We have purchased a number of air purifiers for classrooms in accordance with public health advice.

Furthermore, we will work in collaboration with the Public Health unit, contract tracers and relevant authorities if there is a positive case identified at Mater Dei or its Programs.

9. IF AN EMPLOYEE, CHILD, STUDENT, YOUNG ADULT OR VISITOR HAS TRAVELLED TO ANOTHER COUNTRY, WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

Mater Dei requires that any employee, child, student, young adult, parent, carer, supporter, volunteer, visitor or contractor who has travelled into Australia by air or sea in the last 14 days to comply with department of health requirements. Unless there is a valid exemption, this may include a requirement to quarantine for 14 days from arrival and to comply with any other state and territory travel restrictions.

Please review <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-and-restrictions/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-international-travellers>

Where appropriate, we ask that you:

- self-isolate from others in accordance with quarantine requirements (or from the date you last experienced symptoms), and:
- monitor yourself for symptoms.

If you develop a fever or respiratory symptoms, please:

- call your doctor or National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 022 222. When you call, tell them where you have travelled or if you have been in contact with a confirmed case.
- or (if your symptoms are severe) visit your local Emergency Department. When you arrive, immediately tell staff where you have travelled or if you have been in contact with a confirmed case.

If you, or your child or young adult have symptoms it is important that you don't come to work or to Mater Dei for any scheduled learning, early childhood, preschool, continuous learning or assessment and therapy services. In addition, you should not use public transport, taxis, or ride-sharing services. If you need to seek medical care, wear a surgical mask if available when attending. You should not use public transport, taxis, or ride-sharing services to get to your doctor or emergency department.

COVID-19 variants

Please note any returned traveller who is diagnosed with a COVID-19 variant of concern while in hotel quarantine, may have their quarantine period extended in order to further reduce the risk of transmission into the Australian community. In this situation, you will not be able to return to Mater Dei or its Programs until your quarantine period is satisfied and you are symptom free.



Variants of concern are new variants of COVID-19 emerging from around the world which may have increased transmissibility. NSW Health is taking a precautionary approach to managing 'variants of concern' to ensure that people with these variants pose no risk to the community when they are discharged from quarantine.

Returned travellers may be health screened when they arrive in Australia. You may be tested for COVID-19 in the first 48 hours and then between days 10-12 of quarantine. Exact testing arrangements depend on states and territories.

10. HOW TO RESPOND IF AN EMPLOYEE IS TESTED FOR COVID-19 OR RETURNS A POSITIVE TEST RESULT

If an employee presents with symptoms and is tested for COVID-19, they must inform their Director or Manager and self-isolate at home until they receive their results. During this time, where appropriate and practicable, employees may be able to work from home subject to CEO/Principal approval or alternatively access paid or unpaid personal leave. They should not return to work during this time.

If their COVID-19 test is returned positive, the employee is asked to provide evidence to the employer and self-isolate in accordance with NSW health advice (or until symptom free) and **cleared by their general practitioner**. In this situation the staff member is required to advise their Director or Manager as soon as possible after receiving their test result so that Mater Dei and/or NextPath Directors can act quickly to prevent further spread of the disease. This requires:

- asking the employee who they may have been in "close contact" with during the last two weeks while infectious in the workplace, then
- Using the contact classification tool to conduct a contact risk assessment
- confidentially notifying any employee, volunteer, parent, carer, supporter, young adult, visitor or contractor that may have come into "close contact" with that staff member of the need to be tested and isolate in accordance with NSW Health advice until they get a negative result (They need not wait for official communication from NSW Health)
- notifying Safe Work NSW on 131050 there is an active case within the workplace. Safe Work NSW will share this information with NSW Health for contact tracing and management of COVID-19.

Please note, Directors and Program Managers should seek to protect the employee's privacy and confidentiality and simply advise that there is a confirmed case rather than to identify the employee by name.

11. HOW TO RESPOND IF AN ENROLLED CHILD, STUDENT OR YOUNG ADULT IS TESTED FOR COVID-19 OR RETURNS A POSITIVE TEST RESULT

If an enrolled child, student or young adult presents with symptoms and is tested for COVID-19, they must inform their Director or Program Manager and self-isolate at home until they receive their results.

If their COVID-19 test is returned positive, the child, student or young adult is asked to provide evidence to the employer and self-isolate in accordance with NSW Health advice or until symptom



free and **cleared by their general practitioner**. In this situation families, carers or supporters are required to advise their Principal or Deputy Principal, Director or Manager as soon as possible after receiving their test result so that Mater Dei and/or NextPath Directors can act quickly to prevent further spread of the disease. This requires:

- asking who their child or young person may have been in “close contact” with while infectious at Mater Dei or its Programs during the last two weeks
- Using the contact classification tool to conduct a contact risk assessment, then
- confidentially notifying any employee, volunteer, parent, carer or contractor that may have come into “close contact” with that child or young person of the need to self-isolate in accordance with NSW Health advice
- notifying any casual contacts that there is an active case and they must follow NSW health advice regarding testing and isolation
- notifying the Public Health Unit there is an active case on our site and facilitating a deep clean of the premise.

Please note, Mater Dei will seek to protect the child, student or young adult’s privacy and confidentiality and simply advise that there is a confirmed case rather than to identify the child or young person by name.

12. WHAT LEAVE IS AVAILABLE TO EMPLOYEES WHO ARE REQUIRED TO SELF-ISOLATE FOR ANY REASON?

Employees who are required to self-isolate or quarantine will be able to access available personal/carer’s leave if they are unwell or an immediate family or household member requires their care during that period. Other leave options include annual leave, long service leave or unpaid leave. Mater Dei will discuss with any employee in this situation the leave options available to them.

13. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information about this document can be sought from your CEO/Principal, Assistant Principal, relevant Program Director, Business or HR Manager.

14. PROCEDURE HISTORY

Version	4.0
Publication Date:	27 April 2020
Contact:	CEO/Principal, Assistant Principal, Director, Business or HR Manager
Review Date:	08 November 2021
Next Review Date:	09 May 2022