



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 risk and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as far as reasonably practicable.

2. SCOPE

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

3. BACKGROUND

The NSW Government continues to implement public health advice to minimise the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus) and keep our communities safe.

Mater Dei is committed to adhering to public health advice and implementing guidelines as far as reasonably practicable in accordance with advice of our 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 relatively 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?

The risk of getting COVID-19 increases:



- With the amount of time you spend with someone who has COVID-19 and how closely you interact with them
- When you are indoors (the risk is lower if you are outdoors)
- When you don't wear a mask (the risk is much lower if the person you are with also wears a mask).

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

- close contact with an infectious person or household contact (including in the 2 days before they had symptoms and while they have acute symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, cough and fever for up to 10 days
- contact with droplets from an infected person's 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.

COVID-19 Isolation Requirements for workers, children, students and participants

Given Mater Dei is identified as a high-risk setting, **mandatory self-isolation requirements continue for workers, children, students and participants who test positive to COVID-19**. Staff, children, students and participants must therefore isolate for 7 days if they test positive to COVID-19 and follow NSW health advice [here](#).

Close Contact and Household Contact Requirements

If you have spent a long period of time with someone with COVID-19 or interacted closely with someone with COVID-19 you are a close contact. A household contact is a person who lives with someone who has COVID-19.

In accordance with changes to isolation rules in the community, **please note from Term 2, 2023 the need for close contacts to isolate for 7 days will be removed, subject to the following covid-smart measures being adhered to by those staff, children, students and participants concerned:**

While not exhibiting symptoms, **workers** must follow the advice of NSW Health and may attend the workplace if:

- i. They wear a mask where reasonable to do so (unless they have a medical contraindication);
- ii. They exercise social distancing where reasonable to do so;
- iii. They provide a daily RAT test to their Program Manager at the start of each day for 7 days (or when on site).



While not exhibiting symptoms, **children, students and participants must** follow the advice of NSW Health and may attend Mater Dei if:

- i. They chose to wear a mask (Please note all children, students and participants are exempt from mask wearing by virtue of their disability);
- ii. They RAT test at the start of each day and get a negative result before coming to Mater Dei for 7 days (or when on site).

Requirements for casual contacts

If you have been in contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 but are not a close contact you should watch for symptoms and undergo symptomatic testing as needed.

6. WHEN TO GET TESTED FOR COVID-19?

If you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, get tested immediately and self-isolate if you test positive. You should also test if you are unwell, have symptoms of COVID-19 or are experiencing the mildest of symptoms.

Follow any Program specific testing and isolation directions from Mater Dei via your Deputy Principal, Director or Program Manager and advice from NSW Health. 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 or testing positive.

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 to continue to implement **effective testing, hygiene and cleaning practices** at all times.

Rapid Antigen Testing is one measure to help protect the health and wellbeing of our children, students, young adults and staff and Mater Dei community. All staff have been given specific advice on RAT testing requirements and will continue to be updated by their Director or Program Manager. Currently we recommend symptomatic testing for employees, children, students, participants, parents, carers, supporters, volunteers and visitors.

Mask Wearing continues to be a requirement for all staff (including Assisted Travel Drivers and Support Officers) who provide direct supports to students in our School when working indoors and outdoors when physical distancing is not possible. Mask wearing for all other Programs is strongly recommended for staff who provide direct supports (including for therapists who provide in-class therapy and in early childhood education e.g where assisting with a child's mobility). For all other Programs, mask wearing remains an issue for individual discretion with the exception of close contacts while at work and not exhibiting symptoms.



Vaccinations Mater Dei has a COVID-19 Vaccination Policy for all workers which requires vaccination and boosters in accordance with Government recommendations or a valid medical contraindication.

Mater Dei strongly recommends staff, students and participants continue to remain 'up to date' with COVID vaccinations and influenza vaccinations in accordance with advice from NSW Health and as part of our overall covid-smart measures.

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 sites 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.

Physical distancing is another national strategy to slow the spread of COVID-19. Where possible we ask that our employees, young adults, parents, carers, volunteers and visitors maintain physical distancing when on site at Mater Dei and our Camden and Narellan sites. It is important to recognise that physical distancing is not required by students in classrooms or early childhood education programs and cannot be practised in all situations (e.g. when toileting or changing babies, children or students or in the case of student or participant travel by taxi) and the aim is to generally reduce the potential for transmission. Whilst adults must adhere to 1.5 metre physical distancing rules, our early education, primary and high school students need not.

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 or tests COVID positive; and
- encourage families, carers and supporters to register a positive RAT test result with Service NSW at service.nsw.gov.au or the Service NSW app and reference Mater Dei in their registration;
- you keep your child or young adult at home if they are unwell or COVID positive and self-isolate in accordance with advice from NSW Health or until symptom free to avoid contact with other people to reduce contamination

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.



We continue to operate in a Covid-smart environment in accordance with NSW Health advice and guidance 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.

Mater Dei has a Mandatory Vaccination Policy for all staff and requires all staff across of our Programs be fully vaccinated (with 3 doses of COVID-19 vaccination as well as booster where due) or have a valid medical contraindication certificate exemption to attend work at either of our Camden or Narellan sites in accordance with our Vaccination Policy. A risk assessment will be conducted before a worker with a valid medical contraindication can attend work.

In accordance with Public Health guidance and advice from our regulatory bodies, 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, students, 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 to follow Australian and NSW entry requirements. We request that anyone returning from overseas travel not return to Mater Dei, our Camden or Narellan sites or any of our School, Early Childhood, Continuous Learning and Assessment and Therapy Programs until they are symptom free. 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 with 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 of food and/or drinks on the premises
- asking that sick and unwell staff, children, 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 symptom free or if they have persisting symptoms beyond the 7 day isolation period, are 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, high touch points and surfaces, door handles, hand rails etc
- reviewing parent/carer drop off procedures and limiting access to the School, Preschool and Playgroup 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 request that all volunteers, parents, carers, supporters and visitors not attend Mater Dei School or its Programs when unwell or displaying COVID symptoms. Where appropriate Management



reserves the right to refuse the entry of that person to the School, our Camden and Narellan sites and our Early Childhood, and NextPath Continuous Learning and Assessment and Therapy Programs. Instead they will be directed to seek immediate medical advice, undergo symptomatic testing and/or to isolate in accordance with NSW Health advice when testing positive.

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 premises. Staff and students will not be permitted to return to Mater Dei Programs until they have completed mandatory periods of self-isolation and/or received a negative COVID result and are symptom free. If symptoms persist, staff and students should remain in isolation until 24 hours after symptoms have resolved. If a person continues to have symptoms after this time, they are able to leave isolation with a medical clearance.

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 sites 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.

Fresh air is the most effective form of ventilation to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Mater Dei will keep doors and windows open to increase ventilation where possible provided there is no foreseeable risk to health and safety and/or in accordance with children, student and participant needs. Air purifiers will continued to be used in classrooms where available.

Furthermore, we will work in collaboration with the Public Health unit, and/or the Departments Health, Safety and Staff Wellbeing case management team for Schools to respond to local situations, including outbreaks of viral illness 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?

Travelling and interacting closely with people can put you at increased risk of COVID-19. 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 to comply with department of health requirements and any NSW requirements for testing and isolation.

At present NSW Health recommends:

that you **monitor closely for symptoms** of COVID-19 after arrival. If you develop symptoms, get tested for COVID-19 and stay home until your symptoms have resolved, even if you receive a negative result.

All international arrivals should ensure they follow the [NSW Health guidelines for all international arrivals](#).



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

If an employee tests positive to COVID-19, the employee is required to:

- advise their Director or Program Manager as soon as possible after receiving their positive RAT or PCR test result
- self-isolate in accordance with NSW health advice for high risk settings for 7 days (if symptoms persist after this time remain in isolation until 24 hours until symptoms have resolved. Should an employee continue to have symptoms after this time, they are able to leave isolation after this time with a medical clearance or negative RAT test result).

Once notified Mater Dei and/or NextPath Directors and Program Managers will 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 days while infectious in the workplace, then
- confidentially notifying any employee, volunteer, parent, carer, supporter, young adult, visitor or contractor that may have come into contact with that staff member of the need to be tested if they have any symptoms of COVID-19
- notifying Safe Work NSW in the event of staff hospitalisation or any fatality where the worker contracted or is likely to have contracted COVID-19 at Mater Dei.

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

Any child, student or young adult who tests positive to COVID is required to:

- Immediately notify their Principal, Deputy Principal, Director or Program Manager of any positive result to a COVID test (PCR or RAT)
- While no longer mandatory, it is encouraged that you report your positive RAT test to Service NSW to have access to timely advice and support from NSW Health
- Self-isolate for 7 days

Self-Isolate

Currently, our requirement is:

- isolate for 7 days following the positive test
- leave isolation after 7 days (and can return to Mater Dei) unless symptoms are still present (including, a sore throat, runny nose, cough, or shortness of breath).
- If symptoms are still present, remain in isolation until 24 hours after symptoms have resolved. If the child, student or young adult has other symptoms (eg fever, headache)



which are not getting better, they are able to leave isolation with a medical clearance or negative RAT test result.

The child, student or young adult is asked to self-isolate in accordance with NSW Health advice and only attend Mater Dei School and its Programs when they are symptom free. If your child or young person is unwell or experiencing the mildest of symptoms, you must keep them at home. Mater Dei will continue to send home children, students and young persons displaying symptoms.

After receiving notification of a positive test result for a child, student, or young adult the Deputy Principal, Director or Program Manager will act quickly to prevent further spread of the disease. This requires:

- asking who their child or young person may have been in contact with while infectious at Mater Dei or its Programs during the last two days

and confidentially notifying any employee, volunteer, parent, carer or contractor that may have come into contact with that child or young person of the need to monitor for symptoms and undergo symptomatic testing.

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 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 will be able to access available personal/carer's leave if they are unwell or if 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. Please note the High Risk Pandemic Payment ended on 31 March 2023.

Alternatively, in situations where the employee is able to perform their role working from home, this will be supported where possible.

13. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information about this policy can be sought from your CEO/Principal, Deputy Principal, Director, Program Manager or HR Manager.

14. PROCEDURE HISTORY

Version	10.0
Publication Date:	27 April 2020
Contact:	CEO/Principal, Deputy Principal, Director, Program Manager or HR Manager



MATER DEI

COVID-19 PANDEMIC PROTECTION AND RESPONSE POLICY

Review Date: 2 May 2023

Next Review Date: 21 July 2023