

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 Campuses. 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.

Due to the spread of the pandemic, a number of countries have been designated as "Higher Risk Countries" for the purposes of travel. For those who have travelled or recently returned from overseas, there are additional guidelines (referenced in Section 8) and self-isolation requirements.

Mater Dei is committed to implementing these measures as far as reasonably practicable in accordance with advice from the Government and regulatory bodies.

4. WHAT IS COVID-19?

Coronaviruses (COV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness from the common cold to more severe diseases including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

The COVID-19 virus is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans.

Common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- fever
- cough
- sore/ scratchy throat
- runny nose, and
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.

5. HOW IS COVID-19 SPREAD?

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

- direct close contact with a person while they are infectious or in the 48 hours before their symptoms appeared
- contaminated droplets passing from an infected person who coughs or sneezes to other people, 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.

Close contact is defined as having face-to-face contact for more than 15 minutes with someone who has a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) – or alternatively sharing a closed space with them for more than two hours.

6. 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 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 social 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 campuses and also when at home and out in public until otherwise directed. It is important to recognise that social 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 from 27 April 2020, the Australian Government has advised that schools are now exempt from social distancing requirements in classrooms. Whilst adults must adhere to 1.5 metre social distancing rules, our students (in classrooms) need not. Currently, we recognise the need for students to remain with their 'cohorts' as a form of social distancing.

Contact tracing is the process of identifying all people that a COVID-19 patient has come in contact with in the last two weeks. To help us keep track of any employees, volunteers, parents, carers, supporters, visitors or contractors to our Programs, 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.

7. OUR PROTECTION AND RESPONSE MEASURES

Mater Dei has reviewed and 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.

We have communicated 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:

- 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
- adhering to social distancing measures as appropriate, including the passing on of government recommendations that parents, carers and supporters keep their children at home (when and wherever possible)
- adhering to external advice from our regulatory bodies CSNSW, 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 external advice provided there is no disruption to the School or our Early Childhood, Continuous Learning and Assessment and Therapy Programs in accordance with government advice
- requiring that anyone who has travelled overseas (to a country not currently listed as an exemption) self-isolate in accordance with Public Health advice for 14 days (or until they are symptom free) prior to returning to Mater Dei, our Camden or Narellan Campus 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 their recent travel movements in this regard. *Please refer to Section 8 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
- requesting sick and unwell children, or employees or volunteers contact their GP before going to an appointment at the Medical Centre if they are concerned about symptoms, and stay at home, avoiding contact with others to reduce contamination
- regularly disinfecting learning, teaching and assessment resources and playground equipment, 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.

We also require that all employees, 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 employee, volunteer, child, student, young adult, parent, carer, supporter, visitor or contractor 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 Public Health Orders.

As part of this Declaration, we ask that any person entering the premise review the list of *COVID-19 case locations in NSW* (which is updated daily) and reserve the right to refuse that person entry if they have been to any of the locations or hot spots within the nominated timeframes.

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 the Public Health Unit and/or National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080 and 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 (delete or be picked up from) the premise. Staff and students will not be permitted to return to Mater Dei Programs until they have received a negative COVID result or are symptom free. Further, Mater Dei will require evidence for the 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.

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.

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

The risk of exposure to COVID-19 is believed to be highest for those people who have travelled through a higher risk country. However, there are an increasing number of other countries at risk of COVID-19.

As there is increasing community transmission in a number of countries around the world, anyone who has travelled overseas in the past 14 days is at increased risk and apart from those countries listed as by the NSW Government as exemptions, will be required to enter a period of hotel quarantine.

Given the fluidity of the situation surrounding international travel (and countries identified as exemptions for hotel quarantine purposes), we will continue to monitor daily updates and ask all our Programs and participants to adhere to these. Further updates are available from:

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/what-you-can-and-cant-do-under-rules/quarantine>

Apart from overseas travel to countries identified by the NSW Government as exemptions, for any employee, child, student, young adult, parent, carer, supporter, volunteer, visitor or contractor that has been in, departed from, or transited through a higher risk country in the last 14 days, we require you to:

- self-isolate from others for 14 days from the day you departed the affected country (or last experienced symptoms), and:
- monitor yourself for symptoms.

If you develop a fever or respiratory symptoms, please:

- call your doctor or Healthdirect 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 with variants of concern will not be released from quarantine until

- at least 14 days after their symptom onset and
- they have not had any COVID-19 symptoms in the previous 72 hours and
- they have had a negative COVID-19 test (PCR swab) at the end of their quarantine period.

9. 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, 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 for a period of 14 days or until 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" (See Clause 5 for a definition) with during the last two weeks, then
- 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 self-isolate for 14 days from the date of last contact with that person
- notifying the Public Health Unit there is an active case within the workplace and facilitating a deep clean of the premise.

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

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

Employees who are required to self-isolate for any reason are able to access their personal leave where available or at half pay by arrangement if accessed by 29 March 2021.

Alternatively, full time, part-time and casual employees are eligible to access up to two weeks (14 days) unpaid pandemic leave if accessed by 29 March 2021.

The leave **does not provide an entitlement to employees caring for others** who are compelled to self-isolate. Personal/carer's leave may be available to staff who have an entitlement in those situations.

11. FURTHER INFORMATION

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

12. PROCEDURE HISTORY

Version	3.0
Publication Date:	27 April 2020
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