

Policy 6.2 Epidemic/Pandemic

Relevant Documents: Occupational Health and Safety

Date of Committee of Governance Endorsement: 16 March 2021

Next Review Date: 2025

Policy Statement

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 Holden Street Neighbourhood House Inc. wishes as far as possible to protect its participants, its staff, its volunteers, and the general public from infection or contagion by epidemics and/or pandemics
- 1.2 Holden Street Neighbourhood House Inc. will facilitate, through its policies and procedures, strategies designed to reduce risks to its participants, its staff, its volunteers, and the general public

Holden Street Neighbourhood House Inc. will comply with all directions from authorised public health officers and recognised medical authorities in relation to the epidemic or pandemic

- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to outline the strategies and actions that Holden Street Neighbourhood House 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

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to:

Employees	Committee members	Contractors (including employees of contractors)	Volunteers	Suppliers	Consultants
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

3 Procedures

Holden Street Neighbourhood House Inc. 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

3.1 In the event of an epidemic or pandemic, Holden Street Neighbourhood House Inc. will, as far as possible:

- 3.1.1 Encourage and assist its participants, staff, volunteers and others, as relevant, to minimise their exposure to the illness concerned
- 3.1.2 Encourage and assist those who have reason to believe that they are at risk of contracting the epidemic or pandemic to obtain a diagnosis
- 3.1.3 Support employees, volunteers, contractors and participants to take reasonable precautions to prevent infection or contagion
- 3.1.4 Provide standard precautions such as personal protective equipment (e.g. masks, soap, and gloves)
- 3.1.5 Maintain its services and operations throughout the period of concern if possible and safe to do so

3.2 In the event of an infectious disease being declared an epidemic or pandemic, Holden Street Neighbourhood House Inc. will require people covered by this Policy to take precautions as directed by health authorities. For the current Covid 19 pandemic, any person wishing to attend the House will be required to follow the following precautions

- 3.2.1 Regularly and thoroughly clean hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water
- 3.2.2 Follow government guidelines to physical distance, and in its absence maintain a distance of 1.5 metres
- 3.2.3 Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth, or shaking hands with others.
- 3.2.4 Make sure to follow good hygiene and encourage others to do the same. This means covering mouth and nose with a bent elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing and disposing of used tissues immediately
- 3.2.5 Stay home if feeling unwell. If well enough to work, but would prefer to minimise the risk of infecting others, ask the manager whether you can temporarily work from home
- 3.2.6 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 in the higher risk demographic
- 3.2.7 If there is a likelihood that a person covered by this policy is, or is likely to be, contagious notify the manager as soon as possible. It may be possible or necessary to self-isolate by staying at home until recovered
- 3.2.8 Seek medical advice promptly and follow the directions of your local health authority

3.3 Holden Street Neighbourhood House Inc. 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

- 3.3.1 Workers may make use of leave consistent with Holden Street Neighbourhood House Inc. leave policy, relevant industrial instruments and the National Employment Standards (including access to unpaid leave)

- 3.3.2 Holden Street Neighbourhood House Inc. may, at its discretion, direct those affected or reasonably at risk of being affected the pandemic or epidemic, to remain away from the workplace or work remotely
- 3.3.3 The Committee of Governance of Holden Street Neighbourhood House will follow guidance from all levels of government in the first stages but will make a final decision as to whether the organisation is closed for any societal lockdowns. A decision will then be made regarding wages for staff whilst any shutdown occurs

4 Notes

In carrying out the procedures listed below, Holden Street Neighbourhood House Inc. 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.

5 Above and beyond provisions

- 5.1 Holden Street Neighbourhood House will require any infected workers to obtain medical clearance for the infectious disease before returning to work
- 5.2 Any workers who have a positive contact in their close family/living/social circle are required to advise the Manager immediately and will be required to seek medical clearance for the infectious disease before returning to work
- 5.3 Holden Street Neighbourhood House may, at its discretion offer any staff member who is diagnosed with the infectious disease in question additional paid entitlements to cover any period the person is required to spend in quarantine or self-quarantine, presuming that person cannot carry out their duties remotely
- 5.4 Where possible during an epidemic or pandemic, Holden Street Neighbourhood House will aim to provide workers with flexibility to work remotely and to attend medical appointments

6 Related Documents

6.1 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](#)

6.2 Trusted Information Sharing Network (TISN) for Critical Infrastructure Resilience:

[Template Pandemic Emergency Management Plan](#)

7 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)*
- *Neighbourhood Houses and Adult Community Educations Centres Collective Agreement 2016*