



SECTION 3

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

3.19 EPIDEMIC/PANDEMIC POLICY

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 disease in question and general efforts at preparedness.

- The Gums Childcare Centre wishes as far as possible to protect its children, families, staff, volunteers, and the public from infection or contagion by epidemics and/or pandemics.
- The Gums Childcare Centre will facilitate, through its policies, procedures and risk assessments, strategies designed to reduce risks to its children, families, staff, volunteers, and the public
- The Gums Childcare Centre will comply with all directions from authorised public health officers and recognised medical authorities in relation to the epidemic or pandemic.

2. Purpose

- The purpose of this policy is to outline the strategies and actions that we intend 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	Families	Nominated Officers	Contractors	Volunteers / Students	Suppliers	Members of the public
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

4. Policy

- We 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.
- In the event of an epidemic or pandemic, we will, as far as possible:
 - 4..1 Assist families, staff, volunteers and others, as relevant, to minimise their exposure to the illness concerned.
 - 4..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..3 Support employees, volunteers, and families to take reasonable precautions to prevent infection or contagion.
 - 4..4 Provide standard precautions such as personal protective equipment (e.g. masks, soap, and gloves) where appropriate and as advised by the World Health Organisation.
 - 4..5 Maintain its services and operations throughout the period of concern.
- In the event of an infectious disease being declared an epidemic or pandemic, The Gums Childcare Centre requires people covered by this Policy to take the following precautions
 - 4..1 Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.
 - 4..2 Maintain at least 1.5 metre distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing, where appropriate.
 - 4..3 Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, or shaking hands with others.
 - 4..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..5 Stay home if you feel unwell. Keep your child home if they are feeling unwell.
 - 4..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..7 If you are or are likely to be contagious, notify the Director as soon as possible. It may be possible or necessary for you to self-isolate by staying at home until you recover.
 - 4..8 Seek medical advice promptly and follow the directions of your local health authority.

Date of Implementation: June 2020

Date of Last Review:

Date of Next Review: June 2023

5. Leave and Flexibility for Staff

- The Gums Childcare Centre 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.
- Workers may make use of leave consistent with The Gums Childcare Centre's leave policy, relevant industrial instruments and the National Employment Standards (including access to unpaid leave).
- The Gums Childcare Centre may, at its discretion, direct those affected or reasonably at risk of being affected by the pandemic or epidemic, to remain away from the workplace or work remotely.

6. Related Documents

- Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza ([AHMPPI](#))
- SA Health website [SA - South Australia](#)
- The following policies, that can be found on The Gums Childcare website <https://www.thegumscgcc.com.au/>
 - Work Health Safety Policy
 - Staff Leave Policy
 - Health Policy
 - Fee Policy

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*
- *Fair Work Regulations 2009*
- *Children's Services Award 2010*

Refers to Quality Area 2 – Children's Health and Safety
Refers to Quality Area 7 – Governance and Leadership
National Law and National Regulations 168, 170,175,176,

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EPIDEMIC/PANDEMIC PROCEDURE

1. Responsibilities

The Director is responsible for:

1.1 Carrying out the procedures listed below, we will be guided by the information and directions provided by local health authorities and the World Health Organisation, and our occupational health and safety obligations.

1.2

- Ensuring that the organisation's Leave and Workplace Health and Safety policies are consistent with the intention of the Epidemic Policy
- Assessing the organisation's vulnerabilities, in the light of the epidemic or pandemic, to:
 - The Gums Childcare Centre own human resources
 - The Gums Childcare Centre suppliers of goods and services
- In the event of an epidemic or pandemic,
 - Giving notice to staff, volunteers, families, 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 The Director is responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff and volunteers are aware of the epidemic procedures in effect at any time.
- The preparation of a comprehensive epidemic plan / risk assessment
- Advising staff when epidemic procedures should be activated
- Familiarising staff with recommended procedures regarding epidemic avoidance
- Notifying families, staff, contractors, suppliers and ACECQA if The Gums has an outbreak or is advised to close for a period of time. <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

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

2. Procedures

The following procedures apply in the event of the Director giving notice that epidemic or pandemic procedures are in effect.

2.1 Events

- The Director, 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.

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2.2 **Work procedures**

- The Director, will consider on a continuing basis whether:
 - staff travel for professional development, (or other activities that may cause them to come into contact with other people in Australia or overseas) should be modified or terminated.
 - excursions and special events cease or be reduced to minimise risks for all parties.
- The Director 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 Leave/ Annual Leave.
- The Director may require any member of staff to provide satisfactory evidence that they are fit to return to work.

2.3 **Contractors and suppliers**

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