

Community Living Association

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

COVID 19 -Workplace Health & Safety

POLICY

Principal Requirements

- Under **WHS** laws, we have a duty to eliminate or if not possible, minimise, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- This includes a duty to manage the risk of a person in our workplace spreading and contracting COVID-19, including the risk that persons with COVID-19 enter the workplace.
- We must implement control measures which are known to reduce the spread of the virus in the workplace, such as **physical distancing, good hygiene and increased cleaning**.
- These measures must remain in place, even if workers are vaccinated.
- On 10 November 2021, a Queensland Public Health Order was issued under the *Public Health Act (2005)* for workers in healthcare. This Public Health Order is referred to as "*Workers in a Healthcare Setting (COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements) Direction*." It applies from time of publication until the end of the declared public health emergency, unless it is revoked or replaced.

References

- National Guide for Safe Workplaces – Covid19
- National Covid19 Safe Workplace Principles
- Safe Work Australia
- Fair Work Australia
- [Office of the Australian Information Commissioner](#)
- [Workers in a HealthCare Setting \(Covid 19 Vaccination Requirements\) Direction](#)
- [Understanding the Workers in HealthCare Setting Direction](#)

Definitions

Cleaning

Cleaning means physically removing germs, dirt and organic matter from surfaces.

Disinfecting means using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces.

Section 1.32

It's important to clean before disinfecting because organic matter and dirt can reduce the ability of disinfectants to kill germs. A combination of cleaning and disinfection will be most effective in removing the COVID-19 virus.

In the context of Covid19, and as referenced throughout this policy, cleaning includes disinfecting surfaces.

Physical Distancing

Health advice states that in order to reduce the risk of contact and droplet spread from a person, directly or indirectly, and from contaminated surfaces, people should maintain physical distance of at least 1.5 metres.

Physical distancing can also include limits on the number of people allowed in enclosed spaces (for example, one person per 4 square metres of space) as well as limits on gathering sizes. These requirements differ across states and territories, industries, business sizes and types of premises.

Good Hygiene

Below are measures to ensure good hygiene in the workplace.

- Washing hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, and dry them completely, preferably with clean, single-use paper towels. If paper towels are unavailable, other methods such as electric hand dryers can be used.
- If hand washing facilities aren't available, using a 60-70% alcohol-based hand sanitiser

Everyone must wash and dry their hands:

- before and after eating
- after coughing or sneezing
- after going to the toilet, and
- when changing tasks and after touching potentially contaminated surfaces.

Good hygiene also requires everyone at the workplace to, at all times:

- cover their coughs and sneezes with their elbow or a clean tissue (and no spitting)
- avoid touching their face, eyes, nose and mouth
- dispose of tissues and cigarette butts hygienically, e.g. in closed bins
- wash and dry their hands completely before and after smoking a cigarette
- clean and disinfect shared equipment after use
- wash body, hair (including facial hair) and clothes thoroughly every day
- have no intentional physical contact, for example, shaking hands and patting backs, and
- wear personal protective equipment (PPE) as recommended or required

Shared Office Spaces and Equipment

Spaces and equipment that are used by different staff through-out the day.

Spaces: meeting rooms; office door handles; can also include desks where workers are hot-desking.

Equipment: items like the printer/photocopier, car keys, office phones.

Healthcare

Means services, support and medical treatment provided to a person to support, promote or improve their health and wellbeing and includes:

- medical care
- allied healthcare, including Social Work
- other healthcare, support services and personal care
- disability support services

CLA services and supports that involve more than incidental contact with service users, would be considered 'healthcare'.

Healthcare Setting

Means a setting or premises where **healthcare** is provided.

Examples of a healthcare setting include, but is not limited to:

- Public and private healthcare facilities
- Residential aged care facilities
- Shared disability accommodation services
- Not for profit health organisations providing and/or commissioning public healthcare under a service agreement with any State or Commonwealth agency
- Non-Government Organisations (NGO) delivering healthcare services
- In home delivery of intensive disability support services
- School based healthcare
- Healthcare services provided in other settings such as gyms
- Mobile services
- Outreach services

CLA considers all its facilities and spaces 'healthcare settings', including the entire CLA Office (5 Nundah St, Nundah), the Shed (23 Nundah St, Nundah), the Op Shop, the SQW Office, and the BEROS Houses.

We want service users to be able to access, engage, and receive healthcare services from CLA in these spaces.

Worker in Healthcare

Means a person who works, undertakes an educational placement (ie: students), or volunteers in a healthcare setting.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- anyone in the [National Registration and Accreditation Scheme](#)
- all self-regulated [allied health professionals](#), including Social Workers
- other allied health service providers whose services are eligible for a Medicare or private health insurance rebate
- contractors or independent third-party providers of services or supplies
- all other individuals who work in healthcare
- other healthcare, support services and personal care
- disability support services, including personal care
- any other person who works as a health professional, contractor, independent third-party provider, other employee or volunteer in a **healthcare setting**, whether employed by the **healthcare setting** or performing the work under another arrangement.

Section 1.32

CLA considers all its staff, students, and volunteers 'workers in healthcare' for the purpose of the *Workers in a Healthcare Setting (COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements) Direction*. This includes administrative and cleaning personnel who will enter, work in, or provide services in CLA's **healthcare settings**.

SQW Trainees are also required to be fully vaccinated following consideration of health and safety issue by CLA Committee.

Covid-19 Vaccination Requirements

- By 15 December 2021, a worker in healthcare must be **fully vaccinated**;
- All workers in healthcare at CLA must be fully vaccinated if their employment starts after 15 December 2021; and
- As soon as reasonably practicable after each dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, the worker in healthcare must provide evidence of complying with the COVID-19 vaccination requirements to their Team Leader and/or the Compliance and Systems Development Team Leader where applicable, and any other responsible person for a healthcare setting.

Evidence of complying with the COVID-19 vaccination requirements is:

- a COVID-19 digital certificate; or
- an immunisation history statement (IHS); or
- an International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate for overseas travel.

If a worker in healthcare is unable to be vaccinated for COVID-19 due to a medical contraindication, they must:

- Provide a medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner stating the medical contraindication to their Team Leader, and the Compliance and Systems Development Team Leader.

If the time period for the medical contraindication is temporary:

- the timeframe for the medical contraindication must be specified on the medical certificate
- if the medical contraindication continues beyond the specified period, they must provide a new medical certificate from their medical practitioner.

Fully vaccinated

Means a person has received the prescribed number of doses, including a prescribed booster dose, of a COVID-19 vaccine approved for use in Australia by the Therapeutic Goods Administration, or endorsed by WHO-COVAX and the vaccine was received overseas.

Booster doses are administered from 6 months after the person's second dose of the Covid19 vaccine.

Workers

Where this policy references 'workers', it includes staff, students and volunteers of CLA.

PROCEDURE

We have a shared obligation to each other – staff, students, constituents, young people, visitors etc – to do all that is reasonably practicable to keep each other safe and minimise the risk of anyone in our workplace(s) contracting and/or spreading Covid 19.

The organisation must:

1. Provide cleaning supplies and PPE to staff.
2. Increase cleaning and disinfecting of its offices to once every workday.
3. Provide and adhere to physical distancing guidelines in office spaces eg: the amount of people that can safely be in a space.
4. Have the QLD Government "Check In QLD" QR codes clearly displayed in all office and business spaces, and sign-in sheets available for those who are unable to use the QR code or application on their phones.
5. Provide clear direction to workers who are sick and/or have Covid19 symptoms to stay home and get tested, and:
 - a. Not to physically return to work until they receive a negative test result, are symptom free, and have fulfilled any other requirements as mandated by QLD Health.
 - b. This includes providing workers with the option to work from home, where this is reasonable and practicable as determined by their Team Leader.
6. Promote good hygiene, including signs providing guidance on the most effective hand-washing practices and placing hand sanitiser through-out office spaces.
7. Enable and allow staff to be vaccinated during paid work hours, ie: workers will be paid for their vaccine appointment time.
8. Provide a lawful and reasonable direction to staff, students, and volunteers to wear masks, as is needed to meet the Principal Requirements of this policy.
9. Take all reasonable steps to ensure the organisation and its staff, students, and volunteers comply with statutory obligations, including all Public Health Orders and Directives. This includes ensuring that a worker in healthcare does not enter, work in, or provide services in a healthcare setting if the person is prohibited from doing so under the 10 November 2021 Public Health Order (PHO), *Workers in a Healthcare Setting (COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements) Direction*. All reasonable steps includes disciplinary action, stand-downs, and termination of employment.
10. Require all staff, students, and volunteers, to be fully vaccinated in accordance with the *Workers in a Healthcare Setting (COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements) Direction* and this Policy.
11. Where a staff member, student, or volunteer is unable to be fully vaccinated due to a medical contra-indication, CLA must:
 - a. Sight, verify and record evidence of the medical contra-indication
 - b. Assess the risk to the staff member, other staff, patients, clients, and other persons at the healthcare setting; and
 - c. Determine whether the unvaccinated worker may continue to work outside of CLA's healthcare settings; or

Section 1.32

- d. Determine whether the unvaccinated worker may continue to work in a healthcare setting where their work cannot be performed outside the healthcare setting, and subsequently ensure compliance with paragraph 11 of the PHO.
12. Collect, use, and disclose only the minimum amount of personal information from staff, students, and volunteers, as reasonably necessary to maintain a safe workplace and demonstrate compliance with statutory requirements.

Specifically, the organisation will not store staff, students, or volunteers Covid-19 vaccination evidence. Rather, the organisation will sight this evidence and make a record of it, including the person's name and vaccination date. These records will be securely stored on CLA's Sharepoint site, accessible only to authorised personnel (Team Leaders), and utilised only as needed to ensure, state, and demonstrate compliance with the PHO and this Policy on an organisational level.

Staff, students, and volunteers must:

13. Maintain good hygiene during work, in the workspace and in vehicles used for work.
14. Clean and disinfect all vehicles used for work purposes, after each use.
 - a. Once they have finished transporting someone – including themselves - they must clean and disinfect the car.
 - b. This involves wiping down all high-touch surfaces with either anti-bacterial wipes or anti-bacterial spray and a cloth, including:
 - Steering wheel, indicators, parking brake, gear stick, seat belt
 - Doors – handles on the inside and outside, top of doors, the boot handle/button
 - Windows – window buttons, window high-touch points, grab handles
 - Buttons – radio, aircon, seat belt latch/lock etc
 - Car keys
 - c. Remove rubbish.
15. Follow the 'Cascading Decision Tree' for transportation:
 - a. When transporting anyone in a vehicle for work purposes, workers will:
 - Wear a mask
 - Have windows open
 - Turn off the air-con
 - Use this as an opportunity to speak about the importance of social distancing.
 - Check with people prior to transport whether they have symptoms. Acting on this information, the worker may decide not to transport the person/people.
 - b. CLA workers will aim to only transport one person at a time in a regular vehicle and will invite them to utilise the back seat.
 - c. There are cases where a worker may decide there are grounds to relax the above conditions of transport:
 - Two people are requesting transport and one is dependent on the other for care (e.g. a child)

Section 1.32

- They are members of the same household and there is a good reason for them to be transported together
 - The person becomes escalated if/when they sit in the backseat
- d. There are occasions where a worker may decide to transport someone without wearing a mask. This would only be in rare situations and possibly ones where the wearing of a mask is a trigger to the constituent/young person and where there are not alternative transport options such as CLA purchasing a train ticket, use of taxi or uber, use of ambulance. Staff should explore other possibilities and contact their Team Leader before taking this action.
16. Ensure vehicles used for work purposes have cleaning supplies and PPE in them.
- a. If the worker uses up any of the cleaning supplies and/or PPE in the car(s), they must replace them for the next user.
17. Clean and disinfect shared office spaces and equipment, after each use.
18. Check-in to CLA spaces using the "Check-in QLD" application, or the Covid19 sign-in sheets if use of the application is not possible.
- a. And support anyone else – constituents, young people, visitors etc – to do the same.
19. Maintain physical distancing.
- a. Workers must be conscious of implementing this whilst in each other's company, and in the company of constituents, young people and others.
20. Wear masks, when mandated by the Government, or as directed by their Team Leader and/or the organisation.
- a. And dispose of any masks in a safe manner i.e.: worn masks are not to be left in work cars.
21. Not come to work if they are unwell, particularly if they have any Covid19 symptoms. Workers should get tested if they have any Covid 19 symptoms and:
- a. Not physically return to work unless they receive a negative Covid test result and are free of symptoms.
 - b. Abide by any QLD Health directive which may require a period of isolation (e.g. there could be a directive to self-isolate for 14 days even after a negative test).
 - c. Make a request to their Team Leader to work from home if they wish to.
22. Be fully vaccinated, in accordance with the *Workers in a Healthcare Setting (COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements) Direction* and this Policy.
23. Recognise and understand that complying with a PHO, if it applies to them under this Policy, is an inherent requirement of their role/job, and an inability to meet an inherent requirement of a role/job can lead to disciplinary action, stand-downs, and termination of employment.
24. Provide the requisite evidence of their compliance with the PHO, as outlined by the PHO and this Policy, to their Team Leader and/or the Compliance and Systems Development Team Leader:

Section 1.32

- a) As soon as reasonably practicable, and before the 15 December 2021 deadline in the PHO, and
 - b) As required in an ongoing way, to demonstrate compliance with the PHO and this Policy, e.g.: evidence of Booster shots as required.
25. If a staff member/student/volunteer is engaged by CLA after the 15 December 2021, and they are covered by the PHO as outlined in this Policy, they must submit their evidence of compliance BEFORE their start date with CLA.
26. If no evidence is submitted by the PHO applicable staff member/student/volunteer by the required date(s), CLA will interpret this as failure to comply with the PHO and an inability to fulfil the requirements of the role.
27. If unable to be fully vaccinated by the required date in the PHO, staff/students/volunteers must advise their Team Leader and/or the Compliance and Systems Development Team Leader as soon as reasonably practicable and before the 15 December 2021.

If no communication is supplied by the required date, CLA will interpret this as a failure to comply with the PHO and an inability to fulfil the requirements of the role.