

PANDEMIC RESPONSE POLICY & PROCEDURE

Applies to: Management Committee, all staff and service stakeholders
Specific responsibility: Manager & Management Committee

Version: 1
Date approved: July 2022
Next review date: July 2023

Policy context: This policy aims to provide, during a declared Pandemic, that all clients, staff, volunteers and stakeholders at Early Connections- Coffs Coast Inc. are kept safe. It also considers the requirements in maintaining organisational sustainability.	
Standards or other external requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Disability Insurance Scheme Guidelines (Quality Indicators)2018 - National Disability Insurance Scheme (Restrictive Practices and Behaviour Support) Rules 2018 - National Disability Insurance Scheme (Incident Management & Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018
Legislation or other requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safe Work Australia (information from National COVID-19 Safe Workplace Principles) - Constitution - NDIS Terms of Business for Registered Providers - National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 - NDIS Quality and Safeguards Framework
Contractual obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employment Agreements - Client Service Agreements and Schedule of Supports - NDIS Service Registered Service Provider obligations - DoE (Sector Capacity Building project contract) Funding Terms and Conditions (Funding Agreement)

Terms of reference:

- Pandemic – an epidemic of disease that has spread across a large region, for instance multiple continents or worldwide, affecting a substantial number of people.
- Coronavirus – Coronaviruses form a large family of viruses that can cause a range of illnesses. These include the common cold as well as more serious disease such as SARS and COVID-19.
- COVID-19 – is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Early Connections – Coffs Coast aims to:

- a) First and foremost, make every attempt to keep its clients, families, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders safe at all times. During a state of Pandemic, such as COVID-19, measures in addition to our regular health and safety procedures must be enforced.
- b) Ensure the sustainability of the service during a state of Pandemic, monitoring, analysing and acting on financial, staffing and procedural impacts on the service.
- c) Recognise that Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is a public health emergency, that all actions in the respect of COVID-19 should be founded in expert health advice that follows measures agreed upon and implemented by the government. Information gained will be used in navigating decisions on organisational management, service delivery in a way that reduces safety risk for clients, families, staff, volunteers and stakeholders.

EARLY CONNECTIONS – Coffs Coast will:



- Offer clear communication with clients/families, staff and stakeholders regarding any changes to service delivery
- Offer appropriate notice in writing of any changes to service delivery, charges or regulations being enforced by the organisation
- Use available resources and government released advice on timeframes for changes to service delivery or workplace conditions.
- Maintain regular communication and collaboration with all parties throughout Pandemic state.
- Use financial sustainability measures available where possible, such as funding grants, government schemes and National Disability Insurance Scheme measures to assist service viability.
- Take measures to ensure staff roles and levels are maintained.
- Ensure not only the physical health but also mental health welfare of clients, families, staff and is considered at all times.

PROCEDURES

Following declaration of a state of Pandemic:

- 1. Manager: sources all information and convenes a meeting with Management Committee to determine actions required.**
- 2. Refer to Health NSW Alerts and Mandates – ensure that procedures and systems are implemented into the work-place.**
- 3. Refer to NDIS / NDIA Health Alerts and Mandates - ensure that procedures and systems are implemented into the work-place.**
- 4. Stage of Pandemic Response determined and communicated to clients/families, staff and stakeholders:**

STAGE 1:

Social Distancing	1.5 metres - recommended
Sanitisation/ Hygiene	- Frequent hand washing/ sanitizing – essential - workstations and equipment sanitised pre and post use
Service delivery	- Face to Face – EC visits continued where appropriate, social distancing where possible, sanitisation pre and post service delivery (hands and equipment). - Telepractice / home program – made available to all clients/families as optional service delivery - School /Child Care / Home visits – where allowed by centres/families and deemed appropriate by staff
Staff location	- Client Facing staff – onsite where possible (social distancing recommended) - Admin staff - onsite
Building access	Centres open for service delivery – spaces booked, and entry supported to encourage social distancing

STAGE 2:

Social Distancing	1.5 metres - enforced
Sanitisation/ Hygiene	- Frequent hand/washing/sanitization – essential - workstations and equipment sanitised pre and post use



Service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Face to Face – only where clinically essential and at EC centres only. - Telepractice / home program – primary service delivery
Staff location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Client Facing staff – offsite (limited onsite booking system/ increased social distancing) - Admin staff – onsite (2 staff minimum with increased social distancing enforced).
Building access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entry doors locked; access only where essential - strict social distancing and sanitisation measures. - Non-contact temperature taken on entry (staff, clients and stakeholders)

STAGE 3:

Social Distancing	Minimum 1.5 metres - enforced
Sanitisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frequent hand/washing/sanitization – essential - workstations and equipment sanitised pre and post use
Service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NO Face to Face service delivery offered - Telepractice / home program – service delivery
Staff location	- ALL staff offsite
Building Access	One or both centres closed

Additional recommendations:

- All staff encouraged to download security apps e.g. CovidSafe to increase safety measures for all parties.
- All clients/Families and stakeholders accessing client facing supports encouraged to download security app eg CovidSafe and provide evidence.
- EC centres to display appropriate signage e.g. social distancing, hand washing/sanitisation and make available information regarding Pandemic requirements.
- Any changes to funding requirements or legal obligations lodged with relevant agency e.g. NDIS Safeguards Commission.

Service viability / Financial response to Pandemic:

Early Connections- Coffs Coast will monitor financial risks and impacts related to Pandemic events and take every measure in ensuring the continued viability of the service where possible. These measures may include:

- Adjustments to charges for service
- Application for financial supports – government and philanthropic
- Reduced or altered access to service delivery
- Temporary or permanent reduction of staff hours/roles where needed in accordance with award condition and government regulations.

Decision Making:

All decisions relating to Pandemic responses will be made by Management Committee with support from Manager and Finance Manager. Appropriate external sources for advice will be used and decisions where possible made in line with government advice.

Risk Management register to reflect Pandemic risks and monitored where required.

DOCUMENTATION



Documents related to this policy	
Related policies	WHS Policy & Procedures Workplace Health and Safety Policy and Procedure Risk Management Policy and Procedure
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents.	Risk Management Plan Staff Employment Contracts Client Service Agreements

Reviewing and approving this policy		
Frequency	Person responsible	Approval
Annually	Manager/Finance Manager	Management Committee

Policy review and version tracking			
Review	Date Approved	Approved by	Next Review Due
1	25/07/2022	Management Committee	July 2023
2			
3			
4			

Management Committee:

Signed: Management Committee:

Signed:

Name: Ian Braine

Date: 25/07/2022