



PANDEMIC RESPONSE POLICY & PROCEDURE

Applies to: Management Committee, all staff and service stakeholders	Version: 3
Specific responsibility: Manager & Management Committee	Date approved: 28-Oct-2021
	Next review date: Oct 2023

Policy context: This policy aims to provide, during a declared Pandemic, that all staff, volunteers and stakeholders at Early Connections- Manning and Great Lakes 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 - Public Health (COVID-19 Vaccination of Education and Care Workers) Order 2021 - Public Health (COVID-19 Care Services) Order 2021 - Public Health (COVID-19 General) Order 2021 - NSW Health COVID-19 self-isolation guidelines
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 - Manning and Great Lakes 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 - MGL will:

- Ensure all Staff, Committee Members and Volunteers to be double vaccinated as directed. Please see below the Public Health Order, October 2021.

Direction—vaccination of person providing disability services The Minister directs that a person who provides disability services must not provide the services unless— (a) if the work is done on or after 9am on 25 October 2021 but before 9am on 29 November 2021—the person has received at least 1 dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, or (b) if the work is done on or after 9am on 29 November 2021—the person has received at least 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.

- Have the right to ask clients (families/parent/carer) and external agencies to complete a Vaccination questionnaire. Whilst vaccination status is not required by clients and families, through attaining a non-vaccinated or decline to answer status, staff can increase PPE and distancing measures as required. For all contractors vaccination is required under the current Public Health Orders.
- Ensure privacy and store staff vaccination evidence in a secure file. Permission from staff will be sought to share vaccination status with external agencies as required (schools, childcare centres etc) and families as deemed appropriate.
- 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. **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	- ALL Early Connections – MGL staff and Management Committee are COVID-19 double vaccinated. - Face to Face – EC visits continued where appropriate, social distancing where possible, sanitisation pre and post service delivery (hands and equipment). PPE (incl masks) where mandated and/or appropriate. - Tele practice/ 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 (PPE where mandated).
Staff location	- Client Facing staff – onsite where possible (social distancing and PPE recommended) - Admin staff – onsite (Masks where mandated).
Building access	Centres open for service delivery – spaces booked, and entry supported to encourage social distancing. QR code and COVID-19 exposure questionnaire required.

STAGE 2:

Social Distancing	1.5 metres - enforced
Sanitisation/ Hygiene	- Frequent hand/washing/sanitization – essential - workstations and equipment sanitised pre and post use, PPE such as masks essential and others as required.
Service delivery	- ALL Early Connections – MGL staff and Management Committee are COVID-19 double vaccinated. - Face to Face – only where clinically essential and at EC centres only. PPE to be worn. - tele practice/ home program – primary service delivery.
Staff location	- Client Facing staff – offsite (limited onsite booking system/ increased social distancing). - Admin staff – onsite (2 staff minimum with increased social distancing enforced).
Building access	- Entry doors locked, access only where essential - strict social distancing and sanitisation measures. - PPE, QR code and COVID-19 exposure questionnaire required.

STAGE 3:

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

- Manager to monitor NSW Health and government releases for updated information and to notify Management Committee, Staff and Clients of any changes needed.
- All staff encouraged to download security apps eg COVID Safe / NSW Health to increase safety measures for all parties.
- All clients/Families and stakeholders accessing client facing supports encouraged to download security app eg COVID Safe / NSW Health and provide evidence.
- EC centres to display appropriate signage eg social distancing, hand washing/sanitisation and make available information regarding Pandemic requirements.
- Any changes to funding requirements or legal obligations lodged with relevant agency eg NDIS Safeguards Commission.
- Early Connections – MGL staff to be mindful of other organisation's pandemic policies and procedures and to discuss any conflicts with EC-MGL policy with Manager.

Service viability / Financial response to Pandemic:

Early Connections- Manning and Great Lakes 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	Staff Health Policy & Procedures Home Visiting Policy Mobile, Flexible and Supportive Work Practices Policy Workplace Health and Safety Policy and Procedure Workforce Development and Planning
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents.	Risk Assessment Client/External Form 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	15-May-2020	Management Committee	May 2021
2	28-Aug-2020	Management Committee	Aug 2023
3	28-Oct-2021	Management Committee	Oct 2023
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Management Committee: Oct 2021

Signed: 

Name: Michelle Richardson

Date: 28-Oct-2021