

	MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19	Document No:	WHS-PRO-042
		Approval Date:	29/07/2021
		Approved By:	M. Willett
		Review Date:	As required
	Responsible Officer: Employment Relations Manager	Expiry Date:	N/A
		Issue No:	29/07/2021
Authorising Officer: Chief Operating Officer			

1. Purpose

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (Conference) is committed to providing, as far as reasonably practicable, a safe place of work for our workers, volunteers and visitors. That includes minimising the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and other infections.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared the outbreak to be a “Public Health Emergency of International Concern”. WHO and our local Australian Health authorities are taking action to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. All sectors of the society, including organisations and employers, will need to play a role to stop the spread of the disease.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all Conference Agencies. It covers all workers and visitors at Conference and Conference-controlled premises.

3. Related Documents

[ACBC Work Health & Safety Policy](#)
[WHS-PRO-025 Working Off Site](#)
[WHS PRO-026 Working from Home](#)
[HR-PRO-019 Flexible Work Arrangements](#)
[HR-PRO-023 Personal and Carers Leave](#)
[HR-PRO-031 Employee Assistance Program](#)

4. Definitions

Coronavirus COVID-19

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems are more likely to develop serious illness.

Current evidence suggests that the main way the virus spreads is by respiratory droplets among people who are in close contact with each other. The virus can spread from an infected person's mouth or nose in small liquid particles when they cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathe heavily. These liquid particles are different sizes, ranging from larger 'respiratory droplets' to smaller 'aerosols'. People may be highly infectious before their symptoms show. Even people with mild or no symptoms can spread COVID-19.

Self-isolation or Self-quarantine

Self-isolation or self-quarantine means that the person who has to be isolated must stay in their own home and avoid public places, in particular work, school, childcare or any other public space. Only people who usually live in your home or other place of residence should be permitted on the premises. Visitors should not be allowed into the home.

Close Contact

A close contact is someone who has been close to a person with infectious COVID-19 and might have become infected with the COVID-19 virus. The exact definition of a close contact differs by state/territory.

Worker

A worker is any individual that carries out work for the Conference. A worker can be:

- An employee
- A contractor or sub-contractor
- An employee of a labour-hire company
- An apprentice or trainee
- A work experience student
- A volunteer

Supervisor

The Supervisor is an Agency Head, Director, Manager, Coordinator or Team Leader, who is responsible for the day-to-day supervision of one or more workers.

5. Responsibilities

Workers

Workers must:

- Comply with this procedure.
- Report any suspected or confirmed infection to their Supervisor.
- Be mindful of and comply with the requirements of both the Conference and the applicable state/territory health authority as they relate to COVID-19.

Supervisors

Supervisors must ensure that:

- Their workers are made aware of this procedure and that they are expected to comply.
- They report any suspected or confirmed infection to the Chief Operating Officer.
- Implement any recommended infection control process based on current local health authority advice.

Chief Operating Officer

The Chief Operating Officer must:

- Notify the General Secretary of any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 among Conference staff.
- Notify the COVID-19 Working Group of any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 among Conference staff.
- Notify all Conference employees, particularly those who work near the infected (or suspected infected) worker. **Do not disclose the identity of the confirmed case** unless they have given you permission to do so.
- Communicate information to the local health authority

6. What to do if you suspect that you have COVID-19

The symptoms of COVID-19 include (but are not limited to) fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath. People may be highly infectious however before their symptoms show.

If you develop symptoms or suspect you may have come in contact with someone who may be infectious:

- Do not come to work. Stay at home and notify your Supervisor as per section 5.
- Attend your nearest COVID-19 testing clinic to be tested for COVID-19. You must wear a mask on your way to attend medical testing.
- You must remain isolated (self-isolate) either in your home or a healthcare setting until Public

Health authorities inform you it is safe to return to your usual activities.

- You can return to work when you have obtained clearance from a medical practitioner or the local health authority

7. Controlling the Spread of Infection

Personal Hygiene: Practicing good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against most viruses. You should:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet.
- Cover your cough and sneeze with your elbow.
- Dispose of used tissues in a covered bin
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitisers
- If feeling unwell, avoid contact with others (stay 1.5 metres or more away from people) and take action as described in Section 6.

If you have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19

If you have been in close contact with a person who has been confirmed as infected with COVID-19, you must self-isolate for 14 days following the exposure or as advised by the local health authority. If you develop symptoms, take action as described in Section 6.

Infection Control Measures at Work:

Coronavirus working group – a Coronavirus working group has been set up to monitor the situation and to provide information to Conference workers and to recommend and implement infection control measures. Up-to-date information on work arrangements will be provided through emails and other electronic means as appropriate, and at general staff meetings.

Cleaning regime – the cleaning regime at workplaces has been strengthened by additional disinfectant cleaning of work surfaces, especially those which are in common use such as kitchens; bathrooms; doors, cupboard and fridge handles. A supply of personal disinfectant wipes for keyboards and phones are available.

Physical distancing – maintain social distancing, in line with the health advice in your state/territory.

Hand sanitisers – Alcohol-based hand sanitisers are provided and placed at entrances and other prominent areas in the workplace.

Signage – Signage is posted at appropriate locations to instruct workers and visitors to workplaces on the specific requirements implemented at each workplace to contain the spread of infection.

Communication – There will be regular communication with workers on the status of return to workplaces and requirements while at workplaces.

QR Codes – QR codes are posted at the front entrance to most buildings. McGilvray House, Gilroy House chapel and the Dougherty Centre in Braddon are all registered venues with the QR sign in code posted at all entrances to the building. Staff and visitors are required to check-in through a mobile app each time they attend the office. Any staff or visitors without a mobile phone must be checked in by another member of staff.

Travel

- All non-essential travel overseas to cease until further notice. Essential travel is travel that is required to meet legal or regulatory requirements.
- All non-essential travel interstate should be carefully considered, taking into account restrictions

in that state/territory or restrictions required upon returning.

- Where possible, use video or telephone conferencing facilities to conduct meetings rather than travel.
- Staff must abide by any restrictions on movement as advised by the relevant health authority.

8. Self-isolation, Remote Work and Personal Leave

Where a worker has developed symptoms and has gone into self-isolation, ways of working from home should be explored. If it is possible for work to be carried out from home, the Conference's [Working from Home](#) and [Flexible Work Arrangement](#) procedures will apply. To prepare for this, Supervisors will need to conduct a mapping exercise with the workers who will be impacted, identifying the tasks which can be carried out from home. Arrangements may need to be made to enable workers to work from home and/or cover for workers who will be absent from the workplace.

Where a worker who has developed symptoms and has gone into self-isolation is not able to work from home, their absence from work will be treated as personal leave and the Conference's personal leave procedure will apply.

If the worker does not have sufficient accumulated personal leave, additional personal leave can be granted in advance. Negative leave balances can be worked off or claimed back if employment is terminated before this is achieved.

9. Conference Workers in Shared Work Locations

A number of Conference workers work in offices that are managed by other organisations. These workers must comply with the requirements put in place by the organisations and maintain good personal hygiene practices.

10. Employee Assistance Program

Employees should be made aware of the availability of the Employee Assistance Program during this time. Our provider has its own measures in place to provide the service without risk of infection to its clients and their own staff.

11. Visitors

- Do not have visitors in offices unless this is essential. Conduct meetings using video or phone conferencing.
- Visitors must comply with good hygiene practices for infection control.
- Where it is necessary to have visitors to the office, including visitors from another Conference Agency or building within the Braddon precinct, the visitor must sign in with the QR code and the visitor register. Visitor sign-in records must be retained for a minimum of 28 days.

12. If there is a suspected case of infection

1. Guided by local health authority procedures, immediately identify persons who may have recently come into close physical contact with the infected worker.
2. Advise all affected workers identified in step 1 (Note: Most likely those who are in the same team) to self-isolate and, if well enough, work from home. They should:
 - Monitor their health for COVID symptoms,
 - Practise good personal hygiene,
 - Get tested immediately should they become unwell or develop symptoms,
 - Provide regular updates to their Supervisor and the HR Function on their health. The HR Function will notify other employees when an update of the outcome of tests for any suspect cases is received.

13. If there is confirmed infection

1. If someone at the workplace is a confirmed case, the Chief Operating Officer will contact the local

health authority who will engage to identify any persons at the workplace who may have had close contact with the confirmed case. Ensure that all staff cooperate with the health officers and provide them with necessary information and assistance.

2. The local health authority will assess whether any staff should be placed in isolation.
3. For employees who are not placed in isolation, advise them to monitor their health closely.

If notified of a confirmed case:

1. Notify and send all employees from the affected site home immediately. Await further instructions from the local health authority.
2. Request cleaners to carry out thorough cleaning and disinfecting of the affected site, in consultation and accordance with health authority guidelines.
3. Provide follow up information and updates to employees regularly and as soon as possible.
4. The HR function and Supervisor to regularly keep in contact with an employee who is a suspected/confirmed case and ensure that support is given to the staff from a mental health perspective.

Note: In cases of a confirmed COVID-19 infection of an employee, the employee should take sick leave until they receive medical clearance.

5. Office closure will be considered (and may well be mandated) if a worker or visitor has a confirmed case of COVID-19. In this case, business continuity measures will be taken to ensure that any essential work of the Conference continues. In general, this will be a reversion to working from home arrangements.
6. The Chief Operating Officer and the Coronavirus Working Group will consult with health authorities and determine when it will be safe to return to the office, in consultation with the General Secretary.
7. The Coronavirus Working Group will determine how to manage the return to offices and how this information will be communicated to workers, in consultation with the General Secretary.

Workers, visitors and clients will be informed so that appropriate measures can be taken to minimise the spread of infection.

14. More Information

Visit the [Australian Government Department of Health homepage](#)

Call the Public Health Information Line on 1800 004 599.

Contact your state or territory public health agency:

[Vic Health](#) or call 1300 651 160

[ACT Health](#) or call 02 5124 9213

[NSW Health](#) or call 1300 066 055

[Queensland Health](#) or call 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84)

[South Australia Health](#) or call 1300 232 272

Appendix A – Confirmed case in the workplace checklist

The following checklist should be used as a guide only. It is not all-encompassing.

Confirmed case in the workplace checklist	Date	Actions taken
<p>You must do the following immediately after being notified that a worker or staff member has tested positive for COVID-19. Do not disclose the identity of the confirmed case to other members of staff unless they have given you permission to do so.</p>		
<p>1. Notify the state/territory health authority If the worker attended a work site anytime while they may have been infectious.</p>		
<p>2. Provide documentation to the health authority Provide all applicable documentation as requested by the state/territory health authority. This may include visitor sign in records, staff attendance records, contact names and phone numbers.</p>		
<p>3. Notify all workers and visitors to the Conference Advise all workers and visitors to the Conference that there has been a positive case and to watch for COVID-19 symptoms, get tested and isolate if they have any symptoms. The Conference will work with the local health authorities to ensure adherence with relevant local guidelines. Do not disclose the identity of the confirmed case unless they have given you permission to do so.</p>		
<p>4. Close or vacate the workplace if required. The local health authority will advise on the measures you need to take and advise when it is safe to reopen. If the workplace is required to close, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Executive Support Officer to take home cable gate phone <input type="checkbox"/> All landlines redirected <input type="checkbox"/> Buildings locked and alarmed <input type="checkbox"/> Mail deliveries to be held <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate signage erected to notify how deliveries should be managed <input type="checkbox"/> Contact details for IT helpdesk provided to all staff <input type="checkbox"/> Staff requiring IT equipment as per COVID preparedness survey to be dispatched <input type="checkbox"/> Non-urgent maintenance and repairs cancelled/postponed <input type="checkbox"/> If possible, turn off non-essential electrical devices (monitors, printers, kitchen appliances, aircon, etc) 		
<p>5. Deep clean as required. Engage cleaning company (currently the Conference use City Group) to undertake a deep clean of both office buildings.</p>		
<p>6. Update staff Keep staff informed of developments via email, including when it is safe to return to the office</p>		
<p>7. Returning to the office On return to office, if it has been closed, revisit item 4 above and reinstate actions.</p>		