Coronavirus Guidance for Community Groups 2.0/ October 2021

Contents

Introduction and purpose of this guidelines

The purpose of the Guidelines is to help community groups re-open safely once Victoria reaches their 80% vaccination target. This includes assessing the Coronavirus transmission risk to all members (staff, volunteers and participants), promoting key public health messages and updating COVIDSafe plan to protect the safety of all.

Restrictions have been in place in Victoria to help slow the spread of coronavirus and keep Victorians safe. This resulted in some community groups temporarily ceasing whilst others changed how they met. For example, moving to online platforms (Zoom) and telephone conference calls.

While the overall rate of infections in Australia is considered low compared to some other countries, it is critical that when we emerge from this lockdown and resume our meetings we do so safely as this is the first time we will be opening with active cases in the community.

These guidelines aim to prepare community groups for the gradual restoration of face-to-face service delivery. Community groups will need to, actively manage the coronavirus transmission risk for staff, volunteers, clients and community members. Groups need to understand how the Coronavirus pandemic may impact their service and community members and determine the actions required to minimise transmission.

Participating in a vaccinated community

Getting vaccinated is the most important thing individual members of groups can do to keep each other and our community safe. Following Victorian Government directions, Council venues will only be able to be open to members of the public who are fully vaccinated, unless a medical exemption applies, members will be required to show their vaccination statement, demonstrating that 2 doses of the vaccine have been received to the COVID Marshall on duty when entering the building. Community Groups that hire Council facilities will be required adherence to this direction as a condition of use.

Vaccination cards cannot be accepted to prove vaccination status, members are required to have a copy of their COVID-19 vaccination statement issued by the Australian Immunisation Register. To find the best way to get proof of vaccination that suits you situation visit Service Australia Website. (https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/getting-help-during-coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-vaccinations/how-get-proof) Alternatively, members can also call 1800 653 809 and ask to have their statement mailed to them, however this option can take up to a few weeks to receive.

If you would like more information about vaccinations or would like to book an information session for you group, please contact Sam Winnall from Starhealth on swinnall@starhealth.org.au or call 9525 1300 (translation is available on this call). This service is free.

For up to date information restrictions, please visit the Department of Health and Human Services' Website. (https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19)

Instructions for developing your COVIDSafe plan

<u>Six COVIDSafe principles for all community organisation/community groups are:</u>

- Ensure physical distancing (1.5 metres).
- Wear a fitted face mask that covers nose and mouth
- Practice good hygiene.
- Keep electronic records where possible and act quickly.
- Avoid interactions in close spaces.
- Create a workforce bubble.

Community organisations/community groups must review or develop a site /program specific COVIDSafe plan to guide safe practice and outbreak management. The following principles should be considered as you create your plan. A template COVIDSafe Plan template is included in page 4 of this document.

1 – Understand your responsibilities

Information on public health directions is available at creating a COVID-safe work place on the Business Victoria Website. (https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/creating-a-covidsafe-workplace).

Obligation that apply for Community Groups are:

- Nominate a COVID Marshall for each meeting.
- Have a COVIDSafe Plan in place that is regularly updated.
- Ensure all members check in using a QR code.
- Ensure all members attending are fully vaccinated.
- Room density is calculated at one person per four square metres of enclosed workspace or in shared areas. Check that you are aware of the density limits of place that you are meeting
- Where possible ensure that workers and volunteers do not work across multiple sites.
- If volunteers, staff or group members are unwell, send them home and direct them to be tested. They must stay home until they have their result.
- Report any positive cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), WorkSafe, Health and Safety Representatives, and notify your contact within Council.
- Conduct a touch point cleaning of high use surfaces including door handles, benches, chairs etc. This must occur at the commencement and completion of each new group activity.

- If you are using a privately owned facility please speak to your landlord to understand any cleaning requirements or assistance that will be provided.
- If you are using Council owned facilities please speak with your relevant contact person:
  Grattan Gardens Community Centre; Chris Gahan Community Centre – **Nat Bachiega**
  Orrong Romanis, Phoenix Park, Malvern Town Hall – **Kayleen Berry**
  Sports pavilions / facilities – **Jonathan Coyne**

2 – Prepare your plan

Your COVID-Safe Plan must set out, at a minimum:

- Your actions to mitigate the introduction of COVID-19 in your workplace or community group.
- The level of face-covering or personal protective equipment (PPE) required for your workforce, volunteers or members.
- How you will prepare for, and respond to, a suspected or comfirmed case of COVID-19 in your workplace or community group.

3 – Keep your plan up to date and ready

- Your COVID-Safe Plan should be reviewed and updated routinely, and when restrictions or public health advice changes. Community organisations/community groups operating at multiple premises will need to complete a COVID safe plan for each of those.
- You do not need to lodge your COVID plan with the Victorian Government. However, groups may be required to provide a copy of their COVID-Safe plan to their landlord, funding body, contact person within or venue officers.
- Groups may also be required to provide a COVID-Safe Plan to the Department of Health and Human Services or WorkSafe upon request or in the event of a comfirmed positive at your community group.

4 – Finalise and share your plan

- Once you have completed the plan, share it with your Committee, staff, volunteers and members.
- The pandemic is constantly changing, so it is vital that you continue to review and refresh your coronavirus (COVID-19) planning as restrictions or organisational circustances change. Organisations should also ensure they communicate their coronavirus (COVID-19) planning clearly within the organisation and that it is easily accessible to all staff and volunteers.

Template for COVID-Safe Plan

Our COVID-Safe Plan

Name of Organisation: _____

Contact Person: _____

Separate Space to be used by the Hirer: _____

Description of Activity, Program or Service: _____

Equipment to be used: _____

Total Number of Participants: _____

Date Completed: _____

Communication

Guidance	Action to mitigate the introduction and spread of COVID-19
Provide name of nominated person responsible as the key communication point for COVID-19 information for your group. Describe how they will stay informed about the latest advice on restrictions and how to stay safe.	
Nominated COVID marshal who will ensure members are check-in and vaccinated.	
Describe how you will communicate you COVID-Safe Plan to all members and volunteers.	
How will you co-ordinate and communicate any future changes to restrictions in your COVID-Safe plan to all your members and volunteers	
How will you communicate to members Council's requirements and changes to the centre's conditions of entry?	
What are your strategies to ensure your members and volunteers are following your club's COVID-Safe plan? What action will you take if members / volunteers do not follow this? Who will be responsible to implement non-compliance measures?	

Hygiene

Guidance	Action to mitigate the introduction and spread of COVID-19
What measures will you introduce to ensure group members are maintaining good personal hygiene? Ie. Hand sanitiser (Minimum 60% alcohol) stations for use on entering building and other locations, adequate supplies of hand soap and paper towels are available for group members, volunteers and staff.	
Where possible: What measures will be implemented to enhance airflow? Ie. Opening windows and adjusting air conditioning.	
What measures will be implemented to ensure face masks are being worn by all participants and staff.	
What training will be provide training to staff/volunteers on the correct use and disposal of face masks, use of PPE and on good hygiene practices?	
Outline how you will replace high-touch communal items and what alternatives can be used. Ie. Encouraging members to bring their own water bottle, leaving doors open to avoid touching door handles.	
If intending to serve tea and coffee, how will this be managed? Ie. Disposable cups, single serve sugar	

Cleaning

Guidance	Action to mitigate the introduction and spread of COVID-19
Please outline the measures you will implement to increase environmental cleaning and ensure high touch surfaces are cleaned and disinfected regularly. Ie. Disinfecting door handles, light switches.	
What measure will you implement to ensure that the used space and equipment are cleaned and disinfected after being used by the group	

Physical distancing and limiting attendance

Guidance	Action to mitigate the introduction and spread of COVID-19
Outline how you will limit the number of attendees permitted in the space to maintain social distancing. Ie. Taking bookings	
What measures will you implement for managing physical distancing between people? (1.5 metres) ie. Separating chairs, floor signage.	
What considerations has been given to determine how people will enter and exit the centre and access toilets and kitchenette? Ie. Allocating a different entry and exit point for each group.	
What measures will be implemented to limit participants' movements around the centre? Ie. Where possible allocating different toilets for each group.	
Please outline what modifications will be implemented to the activities, programs and services to comply with COVID-19 Restrictions.	

Record keeping and response to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19

Guidance	Action to ensure effective record keeping
How will you record the name and phone number of those in attendance?	
What steps would be followed to notify attendees in the event of an outbreak?	
What have you put in place to ensure group member are free of COVID-19 symptoms before attending?	

Date Submitted:

Reviewed by:

Comments/Further information required:

Tools and Support

Appendix one: Coronavirus Transmission Risk Assessment

When conducting a transmission risk assessment, community groups should consider the following factors and risk associated with them in the workplace and/or as part of service delivery:

- Number of people present
- Duration of the activity
- Available space in which the activity is conducted
- Contact between people, and ability to maintain physical distancing
- Whether people present would adhere to restrictions requiring all present to wear face masks.
- How staff and volunteers could respond if participants failed to follow restrictions, either in regard to physical distancing or waering a face mask.
- The impact of face masks on the participant's psychological wellbeing
- Whether 'at-risk' groups are present (aged 70 years and over, people 65 and older with chronic medical conditions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Ilander people 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions, and peopl with comprimised immune systems)
- If people are likely to touch surfaces or objects
- If people are likely to expel bodly fluids by coughing, sneezing, spitting or vomiting.

Organisations must stay up to date with current restrictions and to review coronavirus (COVID-19) planning as restrictions change. (https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19)

Table 1: Common considerations and actions relevant to all organisations

Common Considerations	Strategies and actions
Hygiene	- All staff and volunteers must wear face masks at all times while at work outside their homes. - Staff and volunteers should exercise good hygiene practices before, during and after contact with group members, in particular: - Frequent hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing or sneezing, before and after eating and after going to the toilet, and between visits and engagement with clients. If soap water is not available use alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol. - Practice good cough etiquette, by coughing into your elbow or a tissue. - Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth. - Exercising physical distancing measures and staying at least 1.5 metres apart from others. - Staff and volunteers should support clients with good hygiene practices – contact provides an important opportunity to reinforce public health messaging. - Provide and promote hand sanitisers that contain at least 60% alcohol for use on entering buildings.

	• Provide adequate supplies for good hygiene, including easy access to clean and functional hand washing facilities including soap, paper towels and alcohol-based sanitiser containing at least 60% alcohol. • Display signage outlining hygiene requirements, including hand washing and coughing etiquette. Ensure this information is easily accessible and available in a variety of languages. This could include using simplified English and pictures available from the promotional material webpage. (https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/promotional-material-coronavirus-disease-covid-19) • Implement a more frequent cleaning schedule and routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs, bannisters, countertops, taps, keyboards, phones, desks and change room surfaces. • In a change room, do not share items like towel and soap bars and wash your hands after changing. • Open windows, enhance airflow, and adjust air conditioning to use fresh air where possible. • Ensure the highest level of hygiene practices among food handlers and canteen workers. • Minimise the number of building access routes where possible (e. g. have a separate entry and exit points.
Physical distancing and limiting workplace attendance	• All staff and volunteers must wear a face mask at all times while at work and outside their homes. (Unless they have a lawful reason for not wearing one) • Plan ways to enable physical distancing of at least 1.5 metres to reduce in-person contact between workers, volunteers and group members. • When using indoor areas, seek spaces with high ceilings, and good ventilation. • Plan for how to ensure physical distancing at mealtimes and in communal areas, including lifts and waiting rooms. • Staff, volunteers and clients to avoid physical greeting such as handshaking, hugs and kisses. • Reduce/modify any activities where the required physical distancing cannot be maintained, for example face-to-face meetings. • Display signs at each entry to indoor areas which detail the maximum number of people that are allowed to be present in the indoor area. • Ensure information and signage on physical distancing requirements is easily accessible and available in a variety of formats and community language. This could include using simplified English and pictures to illustrate important information and placing clear markers in reception and relevant areas to mark 1.5 metres distancing for queuing. • Provide adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) and hygiene products for all staff and volunteers at the workplace. More information on workforce PPE requirement is available at the DHHS Website. (https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/community-services-all-sector-coronavirus-covid-19) • Establish a system that ensures staff members and volunteers are not working across multiple settings/work sites. • Configure communal work areas so that there is no more than one worker per four square meters of enclosed workspace, and employees are spaced at least 1.5 metres apart. • Use floor markings to provide minimum physical distancing guides between workstations or areas that are likely to create congregation of staff. • Modify the alignment of workstations so that employees do not face one another. • Minimise the build-up of employees waiting to enter and exit the workplace. • Provide training to staff on physical distancing expectations while working and socialising. • Review delivery protocols to limit contact between delivery drivers and staff.

	• Review and update rosters and timetables where possible to ensure temporal as well as physical distancing. • Where relevant, ensure clear and visible signage in areas that are open to the general public that specifies maximum occupancy of that space, as determined by the 'four square metre' rule. • Ensure staff and volunteers adhere to up-to-date public health advice regarding staying at home if unwell. (https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/how-stay-safe-and-well-covid-19) • Actively encourage sick workers to stay at home and to get tested if displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), even if symptoms are mild. • Plan for increased levels of workforce absences. • Plan for what to do if workers arrive sick at work (e. g. direct staff to go home, seek medical attention and be tested for the coronavirus) • Consider establishing fixed work teams to minimise interactions between workers. • Ensure all staff and volunteers are familiar with requirements to immediately support / facilitate isolating a person who shows symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
Service Delivery	• Encourage staff and volunteers to communicate key messages on hygiene and physical distancing verbally with service users who may not be able to access written information. • Consider how situations will be managed if a member attend a service without a face mask or refuse to wear a mask. • Screen group members in relation to their current health status (including whether anyone in their household has a confirmed case of coronavirus or is unwell) before allowing them to join group activities. • Prepare or update a continuity place to consider the impacts of an outbreak and potential closure. • Prepare for how you will manage a suspected or confirmed case in an employee or volunteer during working hours. • Prepare to notify the group, employees, volunteers and group members of a confirmed or suspected case. • Prepare to immediately notify WorkSafe Victoria on 13 23 60 if you have a confirmed COVID-19 case at your workplace. • Limit the size of meetings/group sessions in an indoor or outdoor area to not more than are permitted under the current restrictions, plus the minimum number of people require to safely facilitate the meeting or provide the support service. This includes planning for no more than one person per four square metres. • Seek to reduce person-to-person contact where possible, keeping such contact to a minimum. This includes during visits to client's homes. • Where it does not impact client safety or effectiveness of the service, reduce periods of face-to-face contact to less than 15 minutes. • Limit casual contact to less than two hours where possible. • Modify any planned face-to-face activities wherever possible to reduce the transmission risk – develop a plan/procedure incorporating the control measures and ensure staff/volunteers fully understand and implement this. • Consider specific ways to modify service delivery to 'at-risk' group members to minimise transmission risks. This includes people 70 years and older, people 65 years and older with chronic medical conditions, and people with compromised immune systems. • Consider how staff, volunteers and group members will travel to and from services and programs, for example can people maintain physical distancing on public transport or while waiting or queuing. • Plan contingency arrangements in case of an unexpected event occurring, for example a coughing attack, spitting or behaviours of concern.

	• Inform clients / participants prior to planned engagement about how their health will protected and what they will need to do.
Unexpected Events.	• Use your common sense to manage unexpected event and breaches of these procedures. Think about how you can protect yourself and the group members/colleagues through use of hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfecting surfaces etc. • If you, a group member or a colleague happen to sneeze, cough, vomit, or spit accidentally there could be a high risk of infection transmission. Do not touch contaminated surfaces. Keep others away. Ensure the areas are cleaned and disinfected before it is used again. • Be firm and clear when instructing others; this is in the interest of everyone's health.

Appendix two: Responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

Suspected case of COVID-19:

- Ensure unwell members, staff and volunteers with even the mildest symptoms of COVID-19 do not attend events or activities.
- Encourage members, staff or volunteers who are unwell to seek further advice by calling the 24-hour coronavirus hotline 1800 675 389 or contacting their doctor.
- Encourage members, staff and volunteers with symptoms of COVID-19 to get tested. For testing locations, click here. (https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/where-get-tested-covid-19)
- Exclude anyone who has been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days.

Confirmed case of COVID-19

- Report any positive cases of COVID-19 to the Department of Health and Human Services on 1300 651 160 (open 24 hours).
- Contact WorkSafe Victoria on 1800 675 398
- Notify your contact person within council and venue officers.

Further information

If you have any concerns about a known confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) or a close contact of a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19), please contact the department's public health unit on 1300 651 160.

Appendix three: Useful resources and links

Important Phone Numbers

Victorian coronavirus hotline: 1800 675 398

Translating or interpreting services: 131 450

National Coronavirus helpline: 1800 020 080

Relief assistance packages (Vic Emergency Hotline): 1800 226 226

Victoria Police Assistance Line: 131 444

Book your COVID-19 vaccine: 1800 675 398

Chief Health Officer

Follow the Chief Health Officer on Twitter (https://twitter.com/VictorianCHO)

Subscribe to the daily Chief Health Officer updates
(https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/newsletters)

Victorian Websites

DHHS Coronavirus website (www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus)

For information in other languages, scan the QR code or visit coronavirus (COVID-19)
translated resources (https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/translated-resources-coronavirus-
disease-covid-19)

Factsheet for Victorian Volunteers (https://www.volunteer.vic.gov.au/covid19)

Volunteering Victoria (https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/covid19response)

Coronavirus advice and information in different languages
(https://www.multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-language-advice-and-
information)

Translated Coronavirus Resources (https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/translated-resources-
coronavirus-disease-covid-19)

Promotional material for coronavirus (https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/promotional-material-
coronavirus-covid-19)

Signs, posters and templates for your community group
(https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/signs-posters-and-templates)

National Websites

Smart Traveller website (http://www.smartraveller.gov.au)

Australian health sector emergency response plan for coronavirus (COVID-19)
(https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/australian-health-sector-emergency-
response-plan-for-novel-coronavirus-covid-19)

Australian Government Coronavirus (COVID-19) resources
(https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources)

Education

Department of Education and Training, coronavirus advice
(https://education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/coronavirus.aspx)

Employers

WorkSafe Victoria, Preparing for a pandemic: a guide for employers
(https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/preparing-pandemic-guide-employers)

Commonwealth of Australia, Emergency management for business
(https://www.business.gov.au/Risk-management/Emergency-management)

WorkSafe Victoria alert, risks associated with potential exposure to coronavirus in workplaces (https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/safety-alerts/exposure-coronavirus-workplaces)

Australian Fair Work Ombudsman, Coronavirus and Australian workplace laws
(https://www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/news-and-media-releases/website-news/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws)

Appendix four: COVID-Safe Checklist

Before reopening

☐ Update or Develop a COVIDSafe plan and nominate a COVID Marshal.

☐ Ensure your members, staff and volunteers have been sent a copy of your COVID-Safe plan.

☐ Check the latest restrictions to ensure activity is permitted to proceed.

☐ Set up a system for recording members, staff and volunteers contact details (name and a contact number and arrival time) to support contract tracing, and where those will be stored.

☐ Encourage members, staff and volunteers who are unwell not to attend activities and be tested for COVID-19. Members, staff and volunteers must remain in isolation at home until they get the result and it is negative for COVID-19.

☐ Ensure members, staff and volunteers know who to speak to should they become unwell or notice another member with symptoms of COVID-19.

When reopen

☐ Ensure venue is set up to support social distancing ie. A limit of 20 patrons per separate space; one person per four square metres of the floor space.

☐ Place hand sanitiser (minimum 60% alcohol-based) at entry and exit points so that member, staff and volunteers can use when arriving and leaving.

☐ Ensure appropriate detergents and disinfecting products are available to all members, staff and volunteers to effectively clean and sanitise all surfaces.

☐ Wipe down all frequently touched surfaces and objects 2 hourly, eg counters, tables, door, equipment, handles, keyboards, taps, chairs, tables, handrails, switches and lift buttons, tills, phones, vending machines, terminals.

☐ Sanitise any shared equipment between each use. Equipment that cannot be effectively sanitised should not be used.

☐ Consider what additional accessibility requirements should be implemented to ensure people of all abilities can access your venue and events safely and that physical distancing measures recognise the needs of all people and abilities.

☐ Organise staffing of entrances to ensure appropriate patron numbers are not exceede