

Downs Industry Schools Co-Op (DISCO)

Policy: Epidemic & Pandemic

Policy number: 6.6		Date adopted: 12/12/2023
Authorised by: DISCO Management Committee		
Date last reviewed: 1/12/2023 Version 5 – Dec 2023	Reviewed by Mike Paton - CEO	Date of next review: 01/12/2024

Refer to Section 6 below for information on the process for policy review.

Policy context: This policy relates to:	
Queensland Standards for Community Services	Standard 6 (Protecting safety and wellbeing)
Other standards	As defined by the State or Commonwealth Departments of Health As defined by the World Health Organisation National Principles for Child Safe Organisations Commitment Charter for Children & Young People
Legislation or other requirements	Biosecurity Act 2015 (Cth) Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) Fair Work Regulations 2009 (Cth) https://www.health.qld.gov.au/ (State) https://www.health.gov.au/ (Federal)

1. Purpose: Why do we have a Epidemic & Pandemic policy?

The purpose of Epidemic and Pandemic Policy is to ensure the organisation can take appropriate and necessary steps in line with advice from Government and other agencies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all clients and staff.

A well-developed strategy will help DISCO focus on the protection and safety of all individuals.

2. Scope

This policy will apply to clients, staff and stakeholders connected to DISCO.

DISCO wishes as far as possible to protect its clients, its staff, its volunteers, and the general public from infection or contagion by epidemics and/or pandemics.

DISCO will facilitate, through its policies and procedures, strategies designed to reduce risks to its clients, its staff, its volunteers, and the general public.

DISCO will comply with all directions from authorised public health officers and recognised medical authorities in relation to an epidemic or pandemic.

3. Policy statement: Our commitment

DISCO is committed to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all stakeholders connected to its organisation.

Specifically, our services are available to all 15-24 year old young people including:

- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander young people

- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Young people with disabilities
- All young people irrespective of issues that they feel may preclude them from service

DISCO will, as far as it can, plan for and make advance preparations for the possibility that its operations will be affected by an epidemic or pandemic.

4. Risk Management Plan

DISCO recognises that in the eventuality of an Epidemic and/or Pandemic that a specific Risk Mitigation or Management Plan will be developed to ensure the organisation can manage all eventualities as required to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all clients, staff and stakeholders.

Any such Risk Management Plan will be developed by the CEO (or delegate) and approved by the Executive of the DISCO Management Committee prior to communication to all relevant parties and implementation.

In carrying out the procedures listed below, DISCO will be guided by the information and directions provided by local and federal health authorities and the World Health Organisation and its own occupational health and safety obligations.

In the event of an epidemic or pandemic, DISCO will, as far as possible:

- 4.1 Assist its clients, staff, volunteers and others, (as relevant) to minimise their exposure to the illness concerned
- 4.2 Encourage and assist those who have reason to believe that they are at risk of contracting the epidemic or pandemic to obtain a diagnosis and remain away from the organisation until provided with permission from a qualified medical practitioner to return to work
- 4.3 Support employees, volunteers, contractors and clients to take reasonable precautions to prevent infection or contagion
- 4.4 Provide standard precautions such as personal protective equipment (e.g. masks, anti-bacterial soap and gloves)
- 4.5 Maintain its services and operations throughout the period of concern – unless specifically directed by an agency (which may include the World Health Organisation) or an entity domestically authorised by Government or the Department of Health to take action specific to circumstances which apply at that point in time. The nature of these actions is unspecified but may include shutting offices, sending staff home to be quarantined or other measures which may be mandated or recommend at the time
- 4.6 In the event of an infectious disease being declared an epidemic or pandemic, DISCO requires people (clients, staff or stakeholders connected to DISCO) covered by this Policy to take the following precautions:
 - 4.6.1 *Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water*
 - 4.6.2 *Maintain at least a 1.5 metre distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing*
 - 4.6.3 *Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, or shaking hands with others*
 - 4.6.4 *Make sure you follow good hygiene and encourage others to do the same. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze and disposing of used tissues immediately. This should be followed by you thoroughly washing your hands.*

- 4.6.5 Consider staying/Stay home if you feel unwell. If you are well enough to work but would like to minimise the risk of infecting others, seek permission from your supervisor to see whether you can temporarily work from home
- 4.6.6 Keep up to date on the latest hotspots (cities or local areas where the pandemic or epidemic is spreading widely). If possible, avoid traveling to places - especially if you are more at risk
- 4.6.7 If you are or are likely to be contagious, notify your supervisor as soon as possible. It may be possible or necessary for you to self-isolate by staying at home until you recover
- 4.6.8 Seek medical advice promptly and follow the directions of your local health authority

5. Leave and Flexibility

- 5.1 DISCO recognises that staff may request or require paid and/or unpaid leave when they are unwell, at risk of or vulnerable to infection and/or at risk of infecting others.
- 5.2 Workers may make use of leave consistent with DISCO's leave policy, relevant industrial instruments and the National Employment Standards (including access to unpaid leave).
- 5.3 DISCO may, at its discretion, direct those affected or reasonably at risk of being affected by the pandemic or epidemic, to remain away from the workplace or work remotely and if so, DISCO will continue to pay staff in this situation.
- 5.4 It is important to note that communication should be undertaken by staff with their Supervisor before making any decision to not attend work.
- 5.5 Where possible during an epidemic or pandemic, DISCO will aim to provide workers with flexibility to work remotely and to attend medical appointments where this may be possible.

6. Following all Lawful Directions

It is extremely important to remember that if you are provided with a lawful direction by a Senior DISCO staff member as a result of either an internal management decision and/or a direction from the World Health Organisation or State or Commonwealth Health Department, that you must follow this direction.

Please be aware that if you refuse to follow this direction it may result in the termination of your employment.

5. Other related policies and procedures

Documents related to this policy	
Related policies	3.1 Client Service Charter Policy 6.2 Harm Response Policy 6.3 Risk Management Policy 8.1 Employee and Volunteer Induction Policy 8.7 Workplace Health and Safety, Risk Management and Harm Prevention Organisational Policy
Forms or other organisational documents	Risk Assessment Chart Risk Assessment Form DISCO Client Services Charter Accident-Incident-Near Miss Reporting Form Hazard Report Form QLD Government Incident Notification Form National Principles for Child Safe Organisations Commitment Charter for Children & Young People Other Undefined Forms

6. Review processes

Policy review frequency: This policy will be reviewed by annually or as necessary.	Responsibility for review: This policy will be reviewed by the CEO.
Review process: This policy will be updated and reviewed every twelve months and approved by the DISCO Management Committee annually.	
Documentation and communication: All volunteers, management and staff will be required to read and sign this policy upon employment commencement and review it annually (and as necessary) to ensure it can be implemented and adhered to correctly. Any alterations to the policy at any time will require all staff and management to reread it and sign it. Changes will be updated as necessary with an up to date version stored and available electronically.	