COVID Safe plan – **Ballarat East Neighbourhood House**

Our COVID Safe Plan

Business name:	Ballarat East Neighbourhood House
Site location:	Barkly Square, 25-39 Barkly Street, Ballarat East 3350
	Eureka Hall, 104 Stawell Street South, Eureka, 3350
	Eureka Centre, 102 Stawell Street South, Eureka, 3350
Contact person:	Sarah Greenwood-Smith (If unavailable, Holly Skilbeck is the Responsible Person)
Contact person phone:	0428 775 945 / 0422 612 052
Date prepared:	26 July 2022
Version	7
Relevant workplace policies:	Epidemic/Pandemic Policy
	Health Policy
	Safe Workplace Policy (Working from home section)
	Incident Reporting and Response Policy
	Flexible Working Arrangements
Current Restriction Level:	The Victorian Government has introduced a **framework** specific to pandemics in the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 – Part 8A. The full register is located: https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register
	The **Pandemic (Public Safety) Order** 2022 (No. 3) commenced at 11:59pm on 12 July 2022 and ends at 11:59pm on 12 October 2022. It replaces the Pandemic (Public Safety) Order 2022 (No. 2). https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/public-safety-order-2022
	The **Quarantine Isolation and Testing Order** 2022 (No. 10) commenced at 11:59pm on 12 July 2022 and ends at 11:59pm on 12 October 2022. It replaces the Quarantine Isolation and Testing Order 2022 (No. 9). https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/quarantine-isolation-and-testing-order
	The **Workplace Order** (No. 10) commenced at 11:59pm on 12 July 2022 and ends at 11:59pm on 12 October 2022. It replaces the Workplace Order (No. 9). https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/workplace-order
	REVOKED ORDERS The COVID-19 **Mandatory Vaccination (General Workers) Order** (No. 4) was revoked at 11:59pm on 22 April 2022.
	The **Movement and Gathering Order** 2022 (No. 5) commenced at 11:59pm on 12 April 2022 and was revoked at 11:59pm on 22 April 2022.
	The **Open Premises Order** (No. 6) commenced at 11:59pm on 12 April 2022 and was revoked at 11:59pm on 22 April 2022.

Current Restrictions:	**Workers** (**Employees, Volunteers, Tutors and Contractors)** must be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccination to enter the building and wear a mask inside unless it affects their ability to communicate with a group of people (e.g. running a class/activity) – in which case they should make all efforts to remain at least 1.5 m from other people.
	Visitors and participants are strongly encouraged to be fully vaccinated and wear face masks inside.
	Employers must record the vaccination status of workers.
	No **Density Limits** apply. However, some activity numbers are limited and keeping at least 1.5 m from other people is strongly recommended.

COVID-19 advice for Victorians to stay well in winter

https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/how-we-work-current-restrictions#guide-to-covidsafe-workplaces

"Sensible changes to pandemic orders and public health recommendations and requests came into place at 11:59pm 12 July 2022:

- In line with AHPPC advice, the period when someone is considered a recently confirmed case (and therefore exempt from testing and isolation/quarantine requirements) has been revised to **four weeks**, down from 12 weeks. This reflects the emerging evidence that new variants of COVID-19 can evade prior immunity gained from infection and may cause reinfection.
- Positive cases are still required **to isolate for seven days from the day they took their test** but an additional reason to leave home has been added – to provide transport for a household member to obtain essential food, only if transport is essential or if other arrangements cannot be made. The infected person will need to remain in the car and wear a face covering at all times.
- A significant new investment will **boost public health messaging** and engagement efforts with the community to encourage third and fourth COVID-19 vaccination doses, flu vaccination, the benefits of wearing a mask and maximizing ventilation indoors. The **Stay Well This Winter** campaign will run across TV, radio, outdoor and digital channels. This investment will support community leaders and business to encourage the uptake of sensible, preventative actions to keep well this winter.
- The Government has also announced another round of its **Small Business Ventilation Grant Program** to help businesses invest in equipment that will keep their workers and customers safe in indoor settings.
- **Mask wearing in indoor and crowded settings is strongly recommended** to protect yourself and the most vulnerable Victorians through winter – but there are **no changes to current face mask requirements** with these new pandemic orders.
- The Minister for Health also requested that **employers consider working from home arrangements** that are most appropriate for their workplace and employees based on individual requirements."

AVAILABILITY:	This COVID Safe Plan can be accessed by staff on a shared drive.
	This plan is to be;
	* emailed to all 'workers' (staff, volunteers and contractors – teachers/tutors/trainers)
	* displayed in the Team Office, Training Room and at Eureka Hall and Eureka Centre
	* reported to the BENH Committee of Management
	* printed copies will be available in the Team Office on request

DEFINITIONS

A '**worker**' is someone who is part of the Ballarat East Neighbourhood House team including:

- an employee
- a contractor (engaged by the employer or a third party)
- a volunteer
- a student on placement.

A '**work premises**' is anywhere you are required to be for your work outside the home (for example, a real estate work premises would include a home inspection, not just head office).

1. Hygiene

RELEVANT EMPLOYER OBLIGATIONS (including links)

Government Guide

To keep our workers and participants safe, the Ballarat East Neighbourhood House team has carefully considered the mandatory COVIDSafe requirements in the Government pandemic orders that apply.

In addition, we aim to minimise COVID-19 transmission and protect others. The Victorian Government's recent advice to Victorians to stay well this winter sets out the latest recommendations and changes to settings to help reduce COVID transmission:

https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/how-we-work-current-restrictions#guide-to-covidsafe-workplaces

"You can stay well this winter by choosing to:

- get vaccinated
- wear a face mask indoors
- let fresh air in
- stay home if unwell
- get tested if unwell
- get antiviral medicines, if at risk."

We also encourage our workers, participants and visitors to practise good hygiene, ensure physical distancing and minimise interactions in enclosed spaces.

Worksafe
The latest information about coronavirus (COVID-19) and preventing exposure in the workplace:
https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19

More information on what to do to provide a safe workplace:
https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/safety-alerts/exposure-coronavirus-workplaces

Guidance	Action to mitigate the introduction and spread of COVID-19
Provide and promote hand sanitiser stations for use on entering building and other locations in the worksite and ensure adequate supplies of hand soap and paper towels are available for staff.	1. **Hand Sanitiser** is located at the entrance to buildings, in Training/Activity spaces (x 3) and throughout the Team Office. 2. **Hand soap** in all bathrooms / kitchens. 3. **Hand dryers** in bathrooms and paper towel available as required. 4. Department of Health posters on **hand washing** are located in high-traffic areas. 5. Workers use **gloves** (if practical) or hand sanitiser when handling items touched by other people e.g., enrolment forms, registration forms and cash. 6. **Contactless payments** available (online and with support from BENH Team).
Where possible: enhance airflow by opening windows and adjusting air conditioning.	7. **Windows** and **doors** opened as needed to encourage air flow. 8. **Fans** and **heaters** used to circulate air as appropriate.
In areas or workplaces where it is required, ensure all staff wear a face covering and/or required PPE, unless a lawful exception applies. Ensure adequate face coverings and PPE are available to staff that do not have their own.	9. Disposable **face masks** are available to everyone, free of charge. 10. All **workers are required** to wear face masks indoors (unless an exemption applies or they are teaching a class). 11. **Participants and visitors are strongly encouraged** to wear face masks.
Provide training to staff on the correct use and disposal of face coverings and PPE, and on good hygiene practices and slowing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).	12. All workers to complete the **'Infection Control Training – Covid 19'** course - https://covid-19training.gov.au/ and provide the certificate to the Manager. 13. **Face Mask Bin** – for disposable face masks and contaminated items only.

	14. Desks have paper recycling boxes only. Two **foot-pedal bins** for general rubbish available in each room (one for face masks and contaminated items). Rubbish bins to be emptied daily.
	15. Workers are to keep **desks clear** of items and minimise paperwork around their desks. Desk sharing minimised.
	16. Department of Health COVID-19 **safety posters** located throughout the Team Office and three Training/Activity spaces.
Replace <u>high-touch communal items</u> with alternatives.	17. Shared BENH **Reception mobile phone** wiped with antibacterial wipes between uses. Where possible, one person responsible for it each day.
	18. Workers to clean **pens** after use by participants.
	19. Preparing/sharing of **food/drinks** minimised. External catering used rather than homemade food. Cakes and biscuits individually **wrapped**.
	20. Where food is part of an activity, **disposable** plates/cups/cutlery used instead of shared crockery/cutlery/cups.
	21. Mail and paperwork, where possible, to arrive in or be transferred to a **digital format** to minimise risk of infection from paperwork.
	22. **Brochures and flyers limited** on display to essential items for vulnerable clients.
Availability of Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs)	23. Provide **free RATs** to workers and vulnerable participants, as needed
	24. Distribute free RATs to **vulnerable people**

2. Ventilation

RELEVANT EMPLOYER OBLIGATIONS (including links)

The risk of transmission is highest where there is an overlap of the 'Three C's':

- crowded places

- close-contact settings (such as face-to-face conversations)

- confined or enclosed spaces.

An important approach to lowering the concentrations of indoor air pollutants or contaminants including any viruses that may be in the air is to increase ventilation – the amount of outdoor air coming indoors.

Increasing ventilation with all or mostly outside air may not always be possible or practical. In such cases, the effective rate of ventilation per person can also be increased by limiting the number of people present in the building in general, or in specific rooms.

Ventilation Guidance: https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/ventilation

Guidance	Action to mitigate the introduction and spread of COVID-19
Increasing ventilation	1. Open **windows and doors** (when the weather permits)
	2. Operate the **heaters and fans** to circulate air
	3. Regularly **clean** the heaters
	4. **Limit numbers** of people in rooms

3. Vaccination – workers: employees, contractors, volunteers and anyone working in the BENH Team Office/Activity Spaces. Also participants, visitors and other users of the three buildings from which BENH operates.

RELEVANT EMPLOYER OBLIGATIONS (including links)

The COVID-19 **Mandatory Vaccination (General Workers) Order** (No. 4) was revoked at 11:59pm on 22 April 2022.

Ballarat East Neighbourhood House Workers are encouraged to be up to date with their vaccinations to keep themselves safe. They are encouraged to keep the Manager informed of their vaccination status.

Guidance	Action to mitigate the introduction and spread of COVID-19
Promote State Government Vaccination Campaigns	1. **Posters** encouraging people to get vaccinated with QR links to get more information put up at all three Activity/Training sites and Team Office. 2. Workers regularly encouraged to be **up to date with their vaccinations** and keep the Manager informed. 3. Promotion opportunity in **local community newsletter** delivered to over 7500 households.
Vaccination	4. Manager attends **vaccination briefings** and Neighbourhood House sector meetings. 5. Manager advises workers (including volunteers) of benefits of being **up to date with vaccination** and encourages them to get vaccinated. **6.** Workers able to be **vaccinated in work time.** 7. Manager collects **proof of vaccination status** from workers (not mandatory). 8. **Participants and visitors encouraged** to be vaccinated. 9. Free Digital Literacy support is available to all workers and participants to make their **digital vaccination certificate** available on their phone and link to relevant Apps. if required.

4. Cleaning

RELEVANT EMPLOYER OBLIGATIONS (including links)

https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/how-we-work-current-restrictions#how-to-clean-and-disinfect-after-a-covid-19-case-inthe-workplace

https://covid19.swa.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/general-industry-information/hygiene

Guidance	Action to mitigate the introduction and spread of COVID-19
Increase environmental cleaning (including between changes of staff), ensure high touch surfaces are cleaned and disinfected regularly (at least twice daily).	1. Team Office and all three Training/Activity spaces have **cleaning spray and wipes** or sanitising wipes. 2. Workers cleaning **high traffic areas** during the day e.g. tables/ chairs/door handles/light switches/yoga mats and customer touch points cleaned after all activities. 3. Barkly Square, Eureka Hall and Eureka Centre **cleaned regularly** by contract cleaners. **4.** Workers responsible for **cleaning their own areas.** 5. **Sharing of desks minimised**. When this does occur, each Worker will clean their desk at the end of every day.
Ensure adequate supplies of cleaning products, including detergent and disinfectant.	6. **Cleaning supplies** checked regularly by workers.

5. Physical distancing and limiting workplace attendance

RELEVANT EMPLOYER OBLIGATIONS (including links)

https://covid19.swa.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/general-industry-information/physical

Guidance	Action to mitigate the introduction and spread of COVID-19
Ensure that all staff that can work from home, do work from home.	1. Workers are encouraged to be up to date with their **vaccinations**. 2. **Working from home** available to all workers. 3. Workers to complete a **Working from Home Assessment** and Work Station Self-Assessment 4. Training in Microsoft Teams / Zoom provided for non-essential **meetings and training to be held online**.

Establish a system that ensures staff members are not working across multiple settings/work sites.	5. Staff and volunteers who **deliver newsletters** must:
	  - wear masks when 2+ workers are in vehicles when collecting boxes from the printer and delivering to volunteers,
	  - follow social distancing and hand sanitising, and
	  - take all precautions when out of the House
	6. **Shopping** for the House where possible (and in line with BENH policy to 'buy local') should be
	  - Ordered online for delivery
	  - Ordered online for click & collect
	  - Or if in person, limited to buy in bulk or in larger orders (fewer visits) and all safety precautions should be followed (masks, social distance, hand sanitising, etc) by workers when out of the House
	7. The Manager is responsible for **Banking, Post Office** Collection / posting mail and other administration duties outside of the House.

Establish a system to screen employees and visitors before accessing the workplace. Employers cannot require employees to work when unwell.	8. If **unwell**, staff are directed to have a COVID-19 test and must stay **home for 7 days** from the time of their positive test. They may choose to take leave or work from home. 9. If a participant or visitor is **unwell**, they are asked not to attend the Ballarat East Neighbourhood House. 10. **Refunds** are provided to those who have pre-paid for a class but has to miss it due to being unwell or caring for someone who is unwell.
Provide training to staff on physical distancing expectations while working and socialising (e.g. during lunchbreaks).	11. Office **restricted to workers** only. Participants asked to wait outside until workers are available to meet them in the hallway. 12. **Large community areas** used for interactions with others as a first preference. 13. Staff given **social distancing information** via email, individual conversations and signage. 14. Staff are **not to have physical contact** with anyone unless it is required e.g. to provide first aid. 15. People should **avoid touching others** when working together e.g., place items on a desk instead of handing them to the other person.
Review delivery protocols to limit contact between delivery drivers and staff.	16. **Deliveries** staggered, low in volume.
Where relevant, ensure clear and visible signage in areas that are open to the general public that specifies maximum occupancy of that space.	17. Department of Health **signage** installed in common areas. 18. Signage is **laminated** for easy cleaning. 19. Visitors and participants **prevented from entering Team Office** due to a 'Staff only' sign. Main Reception is managed by BGT staff at Barkly Square and our team meet visitors in common areas with good ventilation, where physical distancing is possible.

6. Record keeping

RELEVANT EMPLOYER OBLIGATIONS (including links)
Government Directive

Guidance	Action to ensure effective record-keeping
Provide guidance to staff on the effective use of the workplace OHS reporting system (where available).	1. Completed a **checklist** for Site Audits compliant with SafeWork Australia. 2. **Incident Reporting** process in place. 3. **OHS update** provided to all workers in team meeting and via emails. 4. **Business Continuity Plan** updated as necessary. 5. **Secondary support** to Manager is Holly Skilbeck.

7. Preparing your response to a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case

DoH
Follow DoH guidelines if a person is infected:

https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/case-workplace

https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/report-confirmed-covid-19-diagnosis
https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/notifiable-incidents-involving-coronavirus-covid-19

Guidance	Action to prepare for your response
Prepare or update your business continuity plan to consider the impacts of an outbreak and potential closure of the workplace.	1. Business continuity plan created in March 2020 and reviewed as needed
Prepare to undertake cleaning and disinfection at your business premises. Assess whether the workplace or parts of the workplace must be closed.	2. Normal cleaning now permitted

Prepare for how you will manage a suspected or confirmed case in a worker during work hours.	**When someone is unwell at work**
	3. Isolate any person who becomes unwell whilst in the building into an empty room.
	4. Ensure they are wearing a face covering.
	5. Provide them with a Rapid Antigen Test and take appropriate action depending on the test result.
	
	From: https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/case-workplace (26/07/2022)
	
	Once BENH is aware of **a case of COVID-19 at the workplace**, we will do the following as soon as possible:
	
	1. Direct the worker to return home and self-isolate for 7 days from the date they were tested (if they are on site), even if they don't have symptoms.
	    • If the worker is unable to return home immediately, direct the worker to isolate themselves at the workplace and, while doing so, to wear a face mask and remain at least 1.5 metres from any other person.
	2. Inform all workers that:
	    • an infectious staff member attended the workplace.
	    • the infectious staff member is required to notify anyone they came into contact with for 15 minutes face-to-face, or 2 hours in the same indoor space.

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- remind staff to be vigilant about the onset of COVID-19 symptoms.
- advise all workers to use a rapid antigen test (or a PCR test if they can't access a rapid antigen test) if they have symptoms. If they test positive on any rapid antigen test, they must report their result (https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/report-your-rapid-antigen-test-result), isolate for seven days and follow their checklist (https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist-cases).

3. Put in place recommended appropriate control and/or risk management measures to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 at the workplace. For example, increase the use and enforcement of PPE (i.e. face masks), encourage use, as well as physical distancing.

4. Notify the Department of Health if there have been 5 or more cases within a 7-day period via the COVID-19 outbreak notification form(https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/outbreak-notification-form).

In this case, BENH is not required to deep clean our place of business but must follow routine cleaning to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. See: Coronavirus (COVID-19) cleaning guidelines for workplaces (https://www.health.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-cleaning-guidelines-for-workplaces-doc).

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Frequently asked questions for managing a confirmed case in a worker during work hours.

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Case in the workplace: Information and advice for businesses who have a COVID-19 case in the workplace (copied 26 July 2022) https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/case-workplace

What should I do if a worker develops one or more symptoms of COVID-19 but has not been tested yet?

You must direct the worker to go home immediately and get tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible. Workers must stay home until they receive their test results. They should still stay home until symptoms have resolved.

You must inform all workers (including the health and safety representative) to be vigilant about the onset of symptoms of COVID-19 and advise all workers to take a rapid antigen test (or a PCR test if they can't access a rapid antigen test) if they have symptoms.

Should employers expect to be contacted by the Department of Health or their Local Public Health Unit, and within what timeframe?

No. Businesses will self-manage the exposure by following the guidance provided.

What happens if multiple workers are identified as cases?

If there has been 5 or more cases within a 7-day period, you are required to notify the department via the COVID-19 outbreak notification form. https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/outbreak-notification-form

What happens if a worker finds out they have tested positive for COVID-19 while at work?

No one should be at work whilst awaiting a COVID-19 PCR test result. Anyone awaiting a PCR test result must stay home and not attend work until they get a negative COVID-19 test result. If a worker is taking rapid antigen

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tests as part of routine surveillance, they should take the test prior to attending work.

If a worker finds out they have tested positive for COVID-19 while they are at work, they must immediately go directly home and self-isolate.

If the worker is unable to leave work immediately, support them to isolate at work, preferably in a separate room. They must wear a face mask and remain at least 1.5 metres from others at all times.

When can a worker who has tested positive for COVID-19 return to work?

Anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 must self-isolate for 7 days from the date they got tested. Workers can return to work once they have completed their 7-day self-isolation. Visit Checklist for COVID cases for more information: https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist-cases

Once someone with COVID-19 has completed their self-isolation period, they are no longer considered infectious. However, they might need more time away from work after their isolation period, as even though they are no longer infectious; they may not feel well enough to return to work.

Recovered cases may continue to have symptoms such as fever, runny nose, cough, or shortness of breath, if these symptoms continue, they are recommended to stay at home until they feel better. As their employer, you should support them to do so.

They do not require a negative test result at the end of their isolation period in order to return to work.

Recovered cases are exempt from quarantine and testing requirements if they are re-exposed within 4 weeks of ending isolation.

When can a workplace contact return to work?

Workplace contacts who had symptoms can return to work if they return a negative result from a rapid antigen test (or a PCR test if they cannot access a rapid antigen test). They are recommended to stay home until their symptoms have resolved.

When can a worker who is identified as a household contact return to work?

Household contacts are not required to quarantine and can return to work if they:

- wear a mask indoors
- avoid hospitals and care facilities
- undertake at least five negative rapid antigen tests over the seven days that would previously have been their self-quarantine period.

See more information at checklist for contacts.
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist-cases

	Does a worker who has recently recovered from COVID-19 need to self-quarantine again if they become a close contact?
	No. If a worker who has recently recovered from COVID-19 becomes a close contact of a case, they do not need to self-quarantine again if the re-exposure was less than 4 weeks from the end of their isolation period.
	Within this 4 -week period, the worker:
	- can continue to attend high-risk settings - does not need to be identified as a workplace contact if re-exposed - does not need to participate in surveillance testing as part of their employment or education if re-exposed.
	Workers should always comply with all instructions from the Department of Health regarding self-isolation and self-quarantine. If you test positive for COVID-19, refer to the text message from the Department of Health for guidance on clearance.

I understand my responsibilities and have implemented this COVID Safe plan in the workplace.

Signed *Hard copy signed*

Name Sarah Greenwood-Smith

Date 26/07/2022

ACRONYM	Meaning
BENH	Ballarat East Neighbourhood House
CHANH	Central Highland Association of Neighbourhood Houses
DOH	Department of Health
OHS	Occupational, Health and Safety
NHVic	Neighbourhood Houses Victoria
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
QR	Quick Response Barcode
RAT	Rapid Antigen Test
WHO	WHO World Health Organisation