



COVID – 19 RESPONSE POLICY

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1. Introduction.

As an incorporation and a community of people, we are committed to ensuring that LIVEfree CHURCH is, in every respect, a safe place for those who join with us.

This policy will help ensure that LIVEfree CHURCH provides practices that are safe, respectful and demonstrate care, hope and love. It will assist in the prevention of unhealthy practices and the consequences associated.

This policy will be available to all persons involved in paid or voluntary roles within the expression of LIVEfree CHURCH and be accessible on the LIVEfree CHURCH website. The Governance Team will review this policy every three years.

2. Defining COVID – 19

Definition: 'CO' stands for corona, 'VI' for virus, and 'D' for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as '2019 novel coronavirus' or '2019-nCoV.' The COVID-19 virus is a new virus linked to the same family of viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some types of common cold.

What are the symptoms? The virus can cause a range of symptoms, ranging from mild illness to pneumonia. Symptoms of the disease are fever, cough, sore throat and headaches. In severe cases difficulty in breathing and deaths can occur.

Who can COVID -19 effect? People of all ages can be infected by the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV). LIVEfree CHURCH advises people of all ages to take steps to protect themselves from the virus, for example by following good hand hygiene and good respiratory hygiene.

Who is more vulnerable? Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus.

Where COVID - 19 exists? Since first being recorded late last year in China, the Covid-19 coronavirus has spread around the world and been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization. Our duty of care in regarding this pandemic that has swept the world is one that encompasses our moral and legal responsibility that we have, as individuals and corporately, towards all those we encounter in the various programs and operations of our organisation. It involves care to act in a manner that will protect these people from infection or distress through our actions or negligence.

3. Government Health Outline

3.1 *Responsibilities and compliance*

Staff /Ministry Leaders and volunteers within the organisation are entrusted with the authority to influence other people. Staff / leaders and volunteers need to be aware that this brings great power, even while they may be dealing with those who are their peers in terms of age, maturity, profession etc.

Every person under our care and service is entitled to be safe and feel safe at all times. Staff / Ministry Leaders and volunteers paid or voluntary should therefore make every reasonable effort to avoid acting, or failing to act, in a way that is likely to cause harm to another person, or compromise another's sense of physical, emotional or spiritual safety and well-being especially when it comes to COVID -19 as the measures of control come down to individual adoption of safe practises.

All staff / Ministry Leaders /volunteers will adhere to the boundaries and guidelines set out in the '*LIVEfree CHURCH Code of Conduct Policy*' and related policies. This will help ensure the safety of the people who place themselves into the church's care and protect the integrity and personal well-being of Staff / Ministry Leaders and volunteers.

People of high profile have and need to be aware this comes with a degree of influence, both positive and negative. There should be consideration for what they say in public sector in order to avoid the potential for undue pressure or demand, or any other form of manipulation. In addition, special care must be taken to never reference any person without expressed approval of the individual concerned.

3.2 *Accountability and training*

LIVEfree CHURCH understands that Staff / Ministry Leaders and volunteers are a crucial resource to the effectivity of care, and we are committed to empowering our staff / Ministry Leaders and volunteers with knowledge, skills and awareness.

All leaders / workers or volunteers will be screened according to the '*LIVEfree CHURCH Covid -19 Response Policy*' and include the provision of training, material to read, ways to stay informed and PPE when working or volunteering for LIVEfree CHURCH. Staff / Ministry Leaders and volunteers will be provided with an induction which clearly states who they are accountable to and supported by – in most cases a staff member on duty and director.

Ongoing training and information opportunities for leaders are provided by organisations director. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Covid -19 safety plan available on website
- Policy, procedure and updates and information available on website
- Safe practices for working with COVID -19 vulnerable people available on website
- Online presence through social media, webpage and emails containing updates and information on reminders of safe practices.

3.3 Ongoing vigilance and updates

LIVEfree CHURCH will stay informed and vigilant in the implementing of COVID – 19 safety updates from the World Health Organisation. We will release / inform our staff and volunteers of relevant updates that change our practises or services to ensure current methods for infection control are both up to date and relevant in its application to practises, services, programs and conduct. We will also communicate COVID - 19 safe practices on various platforms messages that will serve as a reminder and on-going awareness of the need to remain vigilant in these practises.

4. Safe practices in working with people and the risks associated with COVID – 19 and identifying vulnerable people

LIVEfree CHURCH is strongly committed to compliance of the World Health Organisation standards and government guidelines within the operation of our organisation's response to Covid – 19. We aim to always create an environment where people can confidently trust that we will adhere to World Health Organisation standards, recommendations and expectations to create a safer community.

Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus. Other known vulnerabilities are those people experiencing immune compromises due to health, disease, treatment of a known illness that compromises overall health such as cancer treatment, these people especially deserve our adherence to health practises so that we can serve our community, deliver programs and services with Covid -19 safety guidelines adhered to.

4.2 Social Distancing

LIVEfree CHURCH recognises the importance of connection and gathering together for wellbeing and good mental health and a person's emotional enmeshment with community. With Covid -19 the involvement of persons in LIVEfree CHURCH programs and services will look and feel different because of the social distancing and hygiene regulations outlines by the Australian Health Organisation.

4.3 Hand Washing and personal hygiene

Coronavirus is a sickness that can spread from person to person. We can all stop and are responsible to do our part to stop the spread of COVID -19 in our communities.

To stop the spread:

- Where possible wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds – do this after you cough, sneeze, go to the toilet and before you make any food.
- Cover a cough with the inside of your elbow instead of your hand
- Avoid touching your face with dirty hands – especially your eyes, nose and mouth, this is where the virus can enter your body
- Remember if you feel unwell, stay at home

4.4 Hand Sanitising

Alcohol-based hand sanitiser is the gold standard of care for hand hygiene practice in healthcare settings i.e. first aid or when soap and water are not available or practical. Hand sanitisers maintain quality hand care because they:

- *Substantially reduce* bacterial count on hands
- Require *less time* than handwashing
- Are more *accessible*
- Are *self-drying*
- Are gentler on skin and cause *less skin irritation* and dryness than frequent soap and water washes, since all hand sanitisers contain skin emollient (moisturisers).

4.5 Safe touch – Greeting and farewell

All safe touch information around people and vulnerable persons, can be found in our code of conduct policy. However, it is inappropriate to initiate physical contact with people in the Covid safe environment (other than protecting a person from harm). We now need to engage other methods of affirmation and connection as these are still part of a person feeling a sense of belonging and connection with others in their community.

Examples of appropriate COVID - 19 physical contact include:

- Elbow taps, ankle tap's and the nod provide ways of safely saying hello and it's kind of fun
- Air-hugs and Air-hi fives are an appropriate alternative to our embrace of a side hug or shoulder tap for affirmation.

Examples of inappropriate physical contact include:

- Shaking Hands
- Hugs
- Shoulder tapping or touching
- Kissing – even on the side of the cheek or air kisses inside the 1.5m distancing allowance.

4.6 Managing inappropriate behaviour in people in a Covid -19 compliant environment

LIVEfree CHURCH will endeavour to prevent the occurrence of difficult behaviour through careful program planning, positive reinforcement, and by clearly communicating acceptable and unacceptable behaviour to people participating in programs.

However, despite best efforts, should behaviour arise that requires correction the following guidelines may be noted:

- Observe the Covid -19 safe engagement of a person – this means no physical contact.
- If a person was a danger to themselves or others and needed restraint arose, this would need to be actioned only as a last resort and all measures to protect the person as best as possible keeping the Covid -19 safety guides in mind.

- It is never acceptable to sneeze, cough or spit with intent to infect as a way of responding to another person – this will result with total withdrawal from programs and services. Withdrawing the person from programs and services is our safe precaution measure if others are being impacted by the behaviour or there is risk to others and a police report made.
- Use verbal correction, with a respectful and calm tone and manner.
- Make it clear to the person what behaviour is inappropriate.
- If the behaviour continues, repeat the process and where possible involve a higher authority.
- Shouting, physical punishment or the threat of physical punishment is **NEVER** acceptable.

4.7 Driving and transport

LIVEfree CHURCH will create a COVID – 19 safe environments when transporting people in cars, avoiding unnecessary contact and minimising contact where possible with people in our programs and transportation of clients and or other workers or volunteers. In these circumstances the following guidelines should be considered:

- Car cleaned frequently.
- Social distancing still observed as best as possible.
- Fresh air flow to be provided through the car whilst people are travelling as passenger in the vehicle.
- Hand sanitizers and hand hygiene wipes available for clients and workers / volunteers to have in cars – people taking own responsibility to replenish these when necessary.

4.8 Toileting of children

LIVEfree CHURCH agrees that the best practice for toileting of small children or children who need assistance is to call the parent/guardian.

Refer to our code of conduct policy in regarding these vulnerabilities.

However, the introduction of Covid-19 safety standards requires us to maintain good handwashing and sanitising around these areas. LIVEfree CHURCH will incorporate these safety measures to continue including the use of soap, sanitiser, bacterial wipes in all dealings with children and vulnerable people around this issue.

5. Privacy and Confidentiality

LIVEfree CHURCH recognises that the names, phone numbers and addresses that people give in the process of making safe places for operation of LIVEfree CHURCH programs and services, will be respected with the highest degree of privacy and confidentiality. All records of information about any person that are required by Australian Health Organisation in the management of the COVID – 19 response, will adhere to the '*LIVEfree CHURCH Privacy and*

Confidentiality Policy' and are required to be stored or disposed of in a secure manner that ensures confidentiality and respect.

5.1 Registration and indemnity forms, signing in and out

Attendance documentation is required for persons entering, working, volunteering and attending programs and meetings including name, phone number and or email address. These will be stored in compliance with our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.

If a person is attending a program, the information required will also include emergency contact numbers, and arrangement details for the collection of unwell people if necessary. Please refer to the LIVEfree CHURCH registration forms that will be used in these instances.

6. Building/Environment Safety and WHS practices

LIVEfree CHURCH values the safety of all persons who enter the spaces and buildings owned / rented and operated by LIVEfree CHURCH. As part of our efforts in keeping all staff, volunteers and participants safe we recognise and adhere to the principal WHS law in NSW consisting of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, supported by the *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011*.

LIVEfree CHURCH is guided by their '*Work, Health and Safety Policy*' which offers detailed requirements and considerations. Please access this policy on the LIVEfree CHURCH website for further information regarding WHS practises.

6.1 Cleaning and building hygiene

- Wear gloves when cleaning and dispose after use
- Thoroughly clean surfaces using detergent and water
- Use disinfectant – leave on for 10 minutes to be effective
- Use sanitizer spray on surfaces and use paper towel or disposable cloths and then let air dry
- Cleaning should be done pre-programs/ meetings
- Cleaning should be done as needed whilst program/ meetings are in operation
- Cleaning should be done after programs / meetings

6.2 Appropriate ratios for areas

Ratios for defined spaces has been outlined by the Australian Government and these guidelines are to be adhered to by all LIVEfree CHURCH Staff / Ministry Leaders and volunteers to the best of our ability.

- Front Courtyard: Capacity is 12
- Entry Foyer: Capacity is 3 people
- House of Hope: Capacity 12 people
- Auditorium: Capacity 54 people
- Middle Auditorium: Capacity 22 people
- Creche Area: Capacity 5

- Kitchen Area: Capacity 4
- Backyard Area: Capacity 44

6.3 Communication COVID -19 messages on a digital platform

LIVEfree CHURCH recognises our responsibility to continue to communicate and educate our staff, volunteers and client in safe methods of conduct in regard to COVID – 19 and stopping the spread.

At LIVEfree CHURCH, the following guidelines are to be considered:

- Posting on Social Media regularly to encourage responsible interaction with one another.
- COVID -19 updates available on our website regularly or as needed
- COVID-19 Policy and procedure available on our website for both staff and volunteers.

6.4 Reporting and responding to cases of COVID -19

Staff and volunteers have been briefed on symptoms of COVID-19 and have been told to stay home if they aren't feeling well.

- If a staff or volunteer member becomes unwell at work, a process is in place to isolate them and arrange for them to be sent home to receive medical attention.
- Report COVID safe officer
- Secure the site as outlined by Safe Work Australia. (Isolate person quickly)
- Use the register for employment / programs to gather information on who else has been in contact with the person.
- Complete incident report.
- If the person tests positive to the virus contact will need to be made with others who have been in contact with the person involved, using client and staff / volunteer records call these people to arrange for them to be tested, closure of some programs or areas of business may need to be closed for deep cleaning and self-isolation of people while waiting for testing results.
- Suitable work that can be done contactless away from clients or workplace and carried out in the home can be still carried out whilst the person / persons remain in isolation for designated time period as outlined by Australian Government.

7 First Aid

First aid kits, together with kits for offsite use, are located at several signed locations throughout the organisation's premises. These kits are to be used by trained first aiders who have completed relevant training.

All First aid kits will be regularly checked and updated in accordance with SafeWork Australia guidelinesⁱ and the SafeWork NSW *'First aid in the workplace code of practice 2015'*.ⁱⁱ In addition to all safety practises involved in treating a person needing first aid we will also include the following measures to help stop the infection of COVID - 19.

7.1 When an accident or emergency occurs:

- Hand sanitiser used
- Disposable gloves to be worn when attending anyone
- First aid should be given by appropriately trained persons;
- Medical advice should be sought regardless of the apparent degree of the injury;
- Relevant family members are to be notified;
- An incident form is to be completed by organisations leaders or appropriate volunteers involved in the incident.

8 Food Safety

LIVEfree CHURCH values offering hospitality in ways that are consistent with Australian food safety standards and safe practices. LIVEfree CHURCH are guided by the '*LIVEfree CHURCH Food Preparation and Hygiene Policy*', which offers detailed requirements and considerations that need to be made when handling and serving food and beverages. Please access this policy on the LIVEfree CHURCH website for further information regarding food safety. In addition to all safety practises involved in food preparation and service we will also include the following measures to help stop the infection of COVID-19.

8.1 Communication of COVID -19 safe practises:

All workers/ volunteers will be briefed and trained on what the areas of compliance are through instruction, signage, emails and our online platforms with social media and website.

8.2 Hand Sanitiser:

All workers/ volunteer will use hand sanitiser regularly throughout food preparation and service of food as you transfer jobs in the food prep process with people connection

8.3 Disposable gloves:

All workers/ volunteer will use disposable gloves throughout food preparation and service of food as you transfer jobs in the food prep process with people connection.

ⁱ Safe Work Australia. (2020) *World Health Organisation (2020) Safe Work Australia (2017) First aid*. [online] Available at: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/firstaid> [Accessed 6 May 2017]. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia License.

ⁱⁱ First aid in the workplace code of practice. (2014). 1st ed. [ebook] Gosford NSW: Workcover Publications. Available at: https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/52152/first-aid-in-the-workplace-code-of-practice-july-2015-3834.pdf [Accessed 6 May 2017]. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia License.