

1 Introduction

From time to time infectious diseases develop into epidemics or pandemics, and create increased risks for the community. These occasions require specific policies targeted at the particular disease in question and general efforts at preparedness.

SuniTAFE 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.

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

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

2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the strategies and actions that SuniTAFE intends to take to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases that are epidemics or pandemics, and control the transmission of infectious diseases when a case/s is identified.

For the purpose of this policy, infectious diseases mean diseases caused by pathogenic microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi; the diseases can be spread, directly or indirectly, from one person to another. This policy is focused on infectious diseases that are declared to be an epidemic or pandemic.

3 Scope

This policy applies to;

- Employees;
- Students;
- Contractors;
- Volunteers;
- Suppliers;
- Consultants.

4 Policy

4.1 SuniTAFE will as far as possible plan for and make advance preparations for the possibility that its operations will be affected by an epidemic or pandemic.

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

4.2.1 Assist its students, staff, volunteers and others, as relevant, to minimise their exposure to the illness concerned.

4.2.2 Encourage and assist those who have reason to believe that they are at risk of contracting the epidemic or pandemic to obtain a diagnosis.

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Authorised by: Board

Endorsed by: Governance Committee

Next review date: 30/03/2024

Maintained by: General Manager, Operations

Policy number: Current

Original issue: 20/03/2020

Last review date: 30/03/2021

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- 4.2.3 Support students, staff, volunteers, contractors and others to take reasonable precautions to prevent infection or contagion.
 - 4.2.4 Provide standard precautions such as personal protective equipment (e.g. masks, soap, and gloves).
 - 4.2.5 Maintain its services and operations.
 - 4.2.6 Communicate with staff, students and other stakeholders to ensure they understand the Institute response and any other requirements.
- 4.3** In the event of an infectious disease being declared an epidemic or pandemic, SuniTAFE requires people covered by this Policy to take the following precautions
- 4.3.1 Regularly and thoroughly clean their hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer wash them with soap and water.
 - 4.3.2 Practice social distancing, including maintaining at least 1.5 metres distance from others where possible.
 - 4.3.3 Avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth, or shaking hands with others.
 - 4.3.4 Follow good hygiene, and encourage others to do the same. This means covering the mouth and nose with a bent elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing, and disposing of used tissues immediately.
 - 4.3.5 Stay at home if they feel unwell, especially if presenting with the symptoms of the infectious disease. If are well enough to work but would like to minimise the risk of infecting others, ask your [manager/ supervisor] whether you can temporarily work from home.
 - 4.3.6 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 at greater risk of infection.
 - 4.3.7 Seek medical advice promptly and follow the directions of your local health authority.
- 4.4 Leave and Flexibility**
- 4.4.1 SuniTAFE recognises that staff may request or require paid and unpaid leave when they are unwell, at risk of or vulnerable to infection, and at risk of infecting others.
 - 4.4.2 Staff may make use of leave consistent with SuniTAFE's leave policy, relevant industrial instruments and the National Employment Standards (including access to unpaid leave).
 - 4.4.3 SuniTAFE 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.
- 4.5 Above and beyond provisions**

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- 4.5.1 SuniTAFE may, at its discretion offer any staff member who is diagnosed with the infectious disease in question additional paid leave entitlements to cover any period the person is required to spend in quarantine or self-quarantine, presuming that person cannot carry out their duties remotely.
- 4.5.2 Where possible during an epidemic or pandemic, SuniTAFE will aim to provide workers with flexibility to work remotely and to attend medical appointments.

5 Notes

- 5.1 In carrying out the procedures listed below, SuniTAFE will be guided by the information and directions provided by the relevant authorities, including the Department of Education and Training, Department of Health and Human Services and the Australian Government.

6 Definitions

Acronym/Term	Definition
Epidemic	An epidemic is a disease that affects a large number of people within a community, population, or region.
Infectious Disease	Diseases caused by pathogenic microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi; the diseases can be spread, directly or indirectly, from one person to another.
Pandemic	An epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people

7 Legislative Context

This policy & related procedures are not intended to override any industrial instrument, contract, award or legislation.

- Biosecurity Act 2015 (Commonwealth)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Fair Work Regulations 2009 (Cth)
- Victorian Disability Services (NGO) Agreement 2019

8 Associated documents

8.1.1 Associated Policies

- Nil.

8.1.2 Associated Procedures

- Nil.

8.1.3 Associated Forms

- Nil.

8.1.4 Other associated documents

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- Action Plan for COVID-19 Pandemic
- Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza (AHMPPI), Victoria
- SuniTAFE Disaster Recovery/ Business Continuity Plan

9 Responsibility

The General Manager Operations is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy, and its associated procedures and systems.

10 Review Frequency

This policy is to be reviewed every three years, and remains in force as amended from time to time, until rescinded.

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