

## COVID-19 Management policy

### Policy statement

Above and Beyond Disability Solutions Pty Ltd (AABDS) is committed to protecting all participants and employees. This policy includes the measures we are actively taking to mitigate the spread of Coronavirus, as well as employees' and participants' rights, responsibilities, choice and control.

The COVID-19 pandemic does not change the obligations of all NDIS. These obligations are to protect and prevent people with disability from experiencing harm arising from poor quality or unsafe supports, abuse, neglect and exploitation, or poorly managed changes to supports.

AABDS has an obligation under our Code of Conduct, the NDIS Code of Conduct and the NDIS Practice Standards to deliver safe, quality supports and services, and the management of risks associated with the participants we support.

These risks include the possible COVID-19 infection of our employee or participants.

In accordance with AABDS's duty of care to provide and maintain a workplace that is free of known hazards, we are adopting this policy to safeguard the health of our employees and their families; our participants; and the community at large from infectious diseases, such as COVID-19.

This policy will comply with all applicable laws and is based on guidance from Queensland Health, the Australian Department of Health, the NDIS Commission, Fair Work Australia and Work, Health and Safety laws.

This policy includes the measures we are actively taking to mitigate the spread of Coronavirus. All employees should follow these rules diligently to sustain a healthy and safe workplace in this unique environment.

This coronavirus (COVID-19) policy is susceptible to changes with the introduction of additional governmental guidelines.

### Scope

All employees and contractors are responsible for working within this policy and reporting when they, a participant, or a fellow employee show signs or symptoms of Coronavirus. This policy is owned by the Governing Body.

AABDS's policy on privacy and risk management applies at the same time as this policy.

### Principles

All employees should take the appropriate measures to protect themselves, their co-workers and AABDS participants from a potential Coronavirus infection.

- AABDS Management's responsibilities include:
  - Provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner with care and skill.
  - Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that might have an impact on the quality and safety of supports provided to people with disability.
  - Encourage all employees and participants to sign up to the Federal Government's COVIDSafe app and/or equivalent check-in apps.
  - Encourage all employees and participants to become fully vaccinated at the earliest time they are able to.
  - Stay up-to-date with current local arrangements and health advice via the Queensland Government COVID-19 information website.
  - Regularly keep all employees and participants up to date on latest COVID-19 advice and directives from the appropriate health and government bodies via email and newsletters.
  - AABDS Management and Support Work staff must regularly check in (via phone or home visit) on the organisation's vulnerable participants (as per Vulnerable participant register) during lockdowns to ensure they are being cared for and have all necessary essentials.
  - Notify the NDIS Commission of any event that significantly affects AABDS's ability to comply with any of our conditions of registration, including:
    - a worker or participant's confirmed COVID-19 infection;
    - where border closures or other restrictions in Queensland affect our ability to access participants or provide supports and services;
    - changes to our available workforce due to border closures or other state or territory restrictions;
    - the temporary or permanent cessation of supports or services as a result of border closures or other restrictions in Queensland.
  
- AABDS employees' responsibilities include:
  - If you have cold symptoms, such as cough/sneezing/fever/sore throat, then you must request sick leave or work from home (if appropriate for the role) and immediately get a COVID-19 test.
  - If you have a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, you can return to work *only after* you've fully recovered, with a negative COVID-19 diagnosis and doctor's note confirming your recovery.
  - If you have recently returned from areas that have been identified as a COVID-19 Hotspot, (based on directives from state or federal health departments), you'll be asked to work from home (if applicable) for 14 calendar days, and return to work only if you are fully asymptomatic; or take unpaid leave for 14 calendar days (if applicable). You will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues or participants during this time.
  - If you've been in close contact with someone infected by COVID-19, you'll be asked to work from home (if applicable) for 14 calendar days and return to work only if you are

- fully asymptomatic; or take unpaid leave for 14 calendar days (if applicable). You will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues or participants during this time.
- It is the responsibility of all AABDS employees and contractors to provide timely, accurate and honest information if they have visited an identified hotspot or been in contact with someone infected by COVID-19. Should AABDS management become aware that a staff member or contractor has not provided accurate information and continued to be in contact with participants and co-workers, this would be deemed as a serious breach and this would result in the termination of employment or the contracting agreement.

### General hygiene rules

- Wash your hands after using the toilet, before eating, and if you cough/sneeze into your hands. You can also use hand sanitizers which AABDS can provide if necessary.
- Cough/sneeze into your sleeve, preferably into your elbow. If you use a tissue, discard it properly and clean/sanitize your hands immediately.
- Open the windows regularly to ensure open ventilation.
- Avoid touching your face, particularly eyes, nose, and mouth with your hands to prevent from getting infected.
- If you find yourself coughing/sneezing on a regular basis, immediately get a COVID-19 test, immediately inform AABDS management, avoid close physical contact with your coworkers and participants, and take extra precautionary measures (such as requesting sick leave).

### Vaccination

AABDS has a duty under the model Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws to eliminate, or if that is not reasonably practicable, minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace.

AABDS Management believe that due to the fact that many of our participants are considered to be 'vulnerable' and 'high risk', a COVID-19 vaccine is a reasonably practicable control measure to manage the risks of Coronavirus in the workplace.

There are currently no laws or public health orders in Australia that specifically enable employers to require their employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

As such, although AABDS management highly recommends all employees receive the free COVID-19 vaccine, the organisation will **not** make COVID-19 vaccination mandatory. This is in compliance with the model WHS laws, and advice from the NDIS Commission and the Australian Health Department.

State and federal health agencies may make public health orders that require some workers to be vaccinated, for example, those considered to be working in high-risk workplaces. If public health orders are made, AABDS and its employees must follow them.

To meet AABDS's duty of care under the model WHS laws and minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace, all employees must continue to apply all reasonably practicable COVID-19 control measures including physical distancing, good hygiene and regular cleaning of work environments. AABDS and its employees must also comply with any public health orders made by state and federal governments that apply to the workplace and your employment.

### **The rights, choice and control of our participants**

Although AABDS will not make COVID-19 vaccination mandatory for its employees, our participants may choose to use their choice and control to request supports be provided *only* by those employees who have been vaccinated. This is the right of the participant.

In this situation, AABDS management will remove those employees who choose not to vaccinate from supporting those participants who only want to be supported by employees who are vaccinated. AABDS will endeavour to find alternative participants/work opportunities for those employees.

### **Related policies**

- Code of Conduct policy
- Choice and Control policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Privacy policy
- Workplace Health and Safety policy

### **Related links**

- [The Department of Health's Standard 1: Rights](#)
- [National Standards for Disability Services](#)
- [National Standards for Mental Health Services.](#)
- [NDIS Practice Standards](#)
- [NDIS Act 2013](#)
- [NDIS Quality & Safeguarding Framework](#)
- [National Standards for Disability Services – evidence Guide](#)
- [Carers Recognition Act 2010](#)
- [Disability Services Act 1993 \(WA\)](#)
- [Guardianship & Administration Act 1990](#)
- [Code of Practice for the Elimination of Restrictive Practice 2014](#)

### **Acknowledgements**

AABDS adheres to the [NDIS Code of Conduct](#) and [NDIS Practice Standards](#) for providers and workers. Our Quality Services and Supports promote the [National Standards for Disability Services – evidence Guide](#)

The organisation promotes the Human Rights principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## POLICY HISTORY

Policy name	COVID-19 Mgmt	Policy owners	Governing Body
Policy created	Feb 2021	Approved by Board	Feb 2021
Policy reviewed	Aug 2021	Approved by Board	Aug 2021
Current version no.	V2	Due for review	Aug 2023