

## **DEALING WITH CORONAVIRUS IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY**

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### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Ability Plus Disability Services is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all those in the workplace. To this end, this policy sets out steps that Ability Plus is taking in order to tackle the coronavirus outbreak, alongside expectations that are placed upon you.

For the safety of yourself and others in the workplace, this policy must be followed at all times.

### **1.2 INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES**

We strongly encourage you to follow guidelines from the World Health Organisation on infection control, both whilst at work and in your daily life. These include:

- frequently cleaning your hands by using alcohol-based hand sanitiser or soap and water
- when coughing and sneezing, covering your mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue, throwing this tissue away immediately and washing your hands, and
- avoiding close contact with anyone who has fever and cough.

### **1.3 CORONAVIRUS DIAGNOSIS OR EXPOSURE**

#### **i) If you contract the virus**

If you begin to display symptoms of the virus, you must follow Government guidance to find out what to do next. You must seek medical attention and notify your manager at the earliest opportunity.

In order to protect your fellow colleagues, you are required to remain absent from the workplace on personal leave and provide us with a medical certificate. You are required to get a medical clearance from your doctor prior to returning to the workplace.

#### **ii) If you have contact with a confirmed case of the coronavirus**

If you have been in contact with someone who has a confirmed case of the coronavirus, you are required to notify management immediately.

In order to protect your fellow colleagues, we ask you to seek medical attention and remain absent from the workplace on personal leave and provide us with a medical certificate. You are required to get a medical clearance from your doctor prior to returning to the workplace.

In the case you are not sick, Ability Plus will consider on a case by case basis whether it is possible for you to work remotely. Advance authorisation to work remotely is needed in every case.

**iii) If you have contact with a suspected case of the coronavirus**

If you have been in contact with someone who has a suspected case of the coronavirus, you are required to notify management immediately.

Even if you are not displaying any symptoms, we may take the decision to send you home and require you not to attend work as a safety precaution. In these circumstances, we may require you to work remotely.

## **1.4 SELF-ISOLATION**

You must not attend the workplace during any self-isolation period that the Government requires you to undertake.

If you are unwell during this self-isolation period, you should follow the usual sickness procedure to notify Ability Plus Disability Services that you require personal leave and obtain a medical certificate in support of your leave. You are required to get a medical clearance from your doctor prior to returning to the workplace.

If you are well during this period of isolation, Ability Plus Disability Services will consider any available type of leave that may be taken to cover the absence. Ability Plus Disability Services will also consider on a case by case basis whether it is possible for you to work remotely.

If there are no forms of accrued paid leave available, the absence will be unpaid.

## **1.5 INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL**

Travel restrictions and guidance can change on a daily basis and range from global travel bans to specific country travel bans. It is important for any employee considering international travel to keep up to date on the advice of the Australian Government Department of Health in relation to this.

**i) If you have planned international travel**

Ability Plus Disability Services accepts that you may have plans to travel in the near future, including pre-booked and paid for holidays. Certain countries have been identified as having been severely affected by the virus and we would therefore ask that you consider, for your own health, whether travelling to these areas is the best thing to do. If a decision is made to travel, we ask that you let your manager know of the countries to be visited so that your return can be managed appropriately.

We also ask that you keep yourself up to date with Government guidance on self-isolation upon return from international travel, and bear in mind that this guidance can change on a daily basis. You should also familiarise yourself with the health and safety recommendations for the country which you are visiting. This could include staying away from farms, touching animals, etc.

Note that if you are planning, or have already planned, international travel, you should factor any known self-isolation period into your approved leave period. Ability Plus Disability Services expects that you will return to work on the agreed date.

If you would like to cancel any pre-booked annual leave, you should discuss this with your manager.

**ii) If you undertake international travel**

You are required to notify your manager if you travel to, or transit through, any country other than Australia.

Upon returning from such travel, you are required to follow any Government advice to self-isolate and remain absent from the workplace.

Prior to returning to work, you are required to provide Ability Plus Disability Services with evidence that you have served any self-isolation period required by the Government. Evidence should be in the form of a copy of your flight itinerary for your flight into Australia, that is dated at least 15 days prior to your first day back at work.

Where a requirement to self-isolate is known in advance of travel, it is expected that this will be factored into your agreed leave period. Where you fail to factor this in, and as a result are unable to return to work on the agreed date, your continuing absence will be considered unauthorised and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Where circumstances outside of your control mean you cannot return to work on the agreed date, you are required to immediately notify Ability Plus Disability Services.

**iii) If you come into contact with someone who has travelled internationally**

If you come into close contact with someone who has travelled internationally, you can continue to attend work unless Government guidance dictates otherwise.

## **1.6 THE CONTINUATION OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS**

**i) Attendance at work**

It is our expectation that you attend work as normal during this time, unless:

- you are on a period of authorised leave (personal, annual or long service)
- you are not attending work under our specific instruction, or
- there is a safety reason why you cannot be at work that has been discussed and agreed with your manager.

**ii) Temporary business closure**

As time progresses, it may become necessary for the business to temporarily reduce or cease operations, for example if someone in the workplace is diagnosed with coronavirus.

Ability Plus Disability Services will do everything possible to continue operating in these circumstances, however ultimately will take the action that is necessary to comply with Government advice and ensure safety within the workplace.

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In the unlikely scenario of a shutdown, we may have no choice but to place you on an unpaid stand down. For clarity, this will only occur under specific circumstances in line with the Fair Work Act 2009, and all alternatives will be considered prior to taking this step.

### **iii) Working from another location**

Ability Plus Disability Services will take all available steps to maintain normal business operations.

To maintain normal business operations, it may be necessary for us to require you to work from an alternative work location if, for example, instructions from a third party mean that entry into our current workplace is not permitted. Your flexibility in this regard will be required.

It likewise may be necessary for you to work remotely. Advance authorisation to work remotely is needed in every case.

### **iv) Harassment/bullying**

We operate a zero tolerance policy to all forms of harassment and bullying in the workplace. We will not tolerate any unacceptable behaviour to colleagues, suppliers, members of the public etc. Any complaints of this nature will be investigated in line with our usual policy and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.