



1 HEAD OF POWER

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Local Government Regulation 2012*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)*
- *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (Qld)*
- *Public Health Act 2005 (Qld)*

2 POLICY PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear framework for Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council's (Council) response to pandemic events, including COVID-19. It provides directives for managing infectious cases in the workplace to ensure the continued health, safety and wellbeing of employees and the community.

3 POLICY OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to safeguard the health, safety and wellbeing of council employees and the Pormpuraaw community, while ensuring the continuity of essential council services during a declared pandemic.

4 POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all council staff, contractors and volunteers. It covers all workplace behaviours, attendance requirements and health directives related to the management of pandemic across all council locations.

5 COMMENCEMENT

This policy does not operate continuously. It is only in effect during a declared pandemic, public health emergency or localised infectious disease outbreak as determined by State or Federal health authorities or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

6 POLICY STATEMENT

6.1 ALTERNATIVE DUTIES

During a pandemic, council may direct an employee to perform suitable alternative duties. Any such direction will be reasonable and will take into account the employee's personal circumstances, including family and carer responsibilities.

6.2 WORKPLACE HYGIENE PROTOCOLS

To minimise the risk of infection, all workers must adhere to the following hygiene protocols:

- maintain good hand, sneeze and cough hygiene
- wash hands frequently at regular intervals throughout the day
- use provided hand sanitiser and wear face masks where directed or appropriate
- regularly clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces e.g. door handles, desks, phones and light switches

6.3 SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIREMENTS

While at work, all workers must observe social distancing rules, which include:

- maintaining a distance of at least 1.5 metres from other employees
- avoiding physical contact greetings, such as handshakes
- cancelling non-essential in-person meetings in favour of video conferencing or phone calls
- limited food handling and sharing of food in the workplace
- opening windows and avoiding the use of air-condition, where climate conditions permit

6.4 FEELING UNWELL AT WORK

Employees who begin feeling unwell at work must immediately notify their direct supervisor or manager. If council forms a reasonable view that an employee is unwell, they will be directed to leave the workplace immediately.

6.5 EXPOSURE, TESTING AND DIAGNOSIS PROTOCOL

If an employee is identified as a close contact of a confirmed pandemic case, they must not attend the workplace. They may only return when they:

- receive a negative test result
- provide a copy of the negative test result to their manager prior to recommencing work

6.6 WORKERS WITH PANDEMIC SYMPTOMS

If an employee tests positive for a pandemic illness, they must:

- immediately inform council via email or phone
- not attend the workplace under any circumstances
- follow all health directives and advice from their medical practitioner

- only return to work once they have received medical clearance, returned a negative test result and have been symptom free for 24 hours.

7 LEAVE AND REMOTE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

7.1 LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS DURING ISOLATION

- symptomatic or diagnosed: employees who are unwell can access accrued personal leave. Applications for sick leave exceeding two (2) days require medical evidence. An official confirmation of a positive test notice is accepted as medical evidence.
- close contact (asymptomatic): personal leave is only available if the employee is actively caring for a dependant who is unwell. Otherwise, isolating employees may access annual leave, TOIL, long service leave or unpaid pandemic leave.

7.2 REMOTE WORKING DURING ISOLATION

Where operationally feasible, council will attempt to transition isolating employees to remote working arrangements.

- working from home must be approved by the CEO, and the employee must adhere to the remote working arrangement policy
- remote work will only be approved if the employee's condition is stable enough that working will not compromise their health
- employees working remotely must adhere to their ordinary rostered hours, take award-mandated meal breaks, follow ergonomic setup guidelines and use approved workstations
- if remote work is not practicable, the employee must not undertake active duties and will be placed on appropriate leave

7.3 FLEXIBLE ROLES AND LOCATIONS

Staff may be directed to work from alternative locations or undertake flexible work arrangements, If these options are not appropriate, employees may utilise accrued leave or unpaid pandemic leave.

8 COMPLIANCE AND DIRECTIVES

8.1 MANDATORY VACCINATIONS

Acknowledging that the severe risks of a pandemic poses to the health and safety of the workforce and the broader community, council requires all existing and prospective employees to be fully vaccinated with a vaccine approved by the therapeutic goods administrative (TGA) for use in Australia. Exemptions to this requirement will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

8.2 GOVERNMENT DIRECTIVES AND THE LAW

This policy outlines council's internal approach to workplace safety during a pandemic. However, this policy is strictly subject to any overriding State and Federal government directives, public health orders or legislation.

- if a government mandate requires a workplace closure or mandates that residents remain at home, that directive overrides this policy
- council expects all staff to familiarise themselves with official government websites for the most up-to-date public health information

9 HUMAN RIGHTS COMPATIBILITY STATEMENT

This policy has been assessed as compatible with Human Rights protected under *the Human Rights Act 2019*.

10 DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
Close contact	A person who has a face-to-face contact or spent a significant amount of time with a confirmed case of a pandemic illness, as defined by current State or Federal health directives
Council	Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council
Declared pandemic/public health emergency	An outbreak of an infectious disease that has spread across a large region, officially declared by State or Federal health authorities, or as determined by the CEO for the purpose of enacting this policy
Fully vaccinated	Having received the required number of doses of a vaccine that is approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for use in Australia
Medical clearance	Formal, written confirmation from a registered medical practitioner stating that an employee is medically fit to safely return to the workplace and is no longer infectious
Negative test result	A negative result from a medically recognised testing method for specific pandemic illness, as accepted by State or Federal health authorities
TGA	Therapeutic Goods Administration; the regulatory body for therapeutic goods in Australia
TOIL	Time off in lieu; paid time off granted to an employee for having worked additional hours beyond their standard roster
Unpaid pandemic leave	A specific category of unpaid leave available to employees who are unable to work or access other paid leave types due to pandemic-related isolation, illness or caregiving responsibilities
Worker/Employee	For the scope of this policy, this includes all direct council staff, contractors and volunteers

11 RELATED POLICS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

- appendix A: confirmed or suspected pandemic infection management plan
- appendix B: health pandemic leave entitlement scenarios
- remote working from home policy
- remote working from home agreement and safety checklist

12 MONITORING AND REVIEW

Notwithstanding the above, this policy is to be reviewed every four (4) years for relevance and to ensure that its effectiveness is maintained.

13 RESPONSIBILITY

This Policy is to be:

- implemented by the CEO; and
- reviewed and amended in accordance by the Governance and Records Officer.

14 VERSION CONTROL

Version	Details	Resolution No	Date
V1	Developed and adopted	2022/01/12	January 2022
V2	Adopted	2026/193	19 October 2026

REPORT TO WORK FIT FOR DUTY

If you have contracted, suspect you have contracted or are exhibiting symptoms of an infectious disease, do not report to the workplace. You must notify your supervisor immediately regarding your status.

If you are a close contact of someone with an infectious disease, do not come to work. Contact your supervisor immediately.



REPORTING TO WORK WITH INFECTIOUS ILLNESS SYMPTOMS

Anyone who comes to work showing symptoms of an infectious illness will be isolated immediately and given a face mask. They will then be sent home to seek medical advice or testing and must isolate as directed.



MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Ensure the employee has safe transportation home or to a medical facility

Managers must immediately notify the CEO and the WHS Officer



SANITISING PROCEDURES

Supervisors must immediately isolate all potentially exposed common areas and equipment, and arrange for them to be cleaned

Ensure that anyone conducting cleaning activities wears appropriate PPE and has completed infection control training.

Appendix B: Health pandemic leave entitlement scenarios

Scenario	Current Arrangements
Employee identifies as a close contact and must isolate in accordance with QLD health directives	While isolating, employees may use accrued annual leave, TOIL, LSL (if eligible) or unpaid leave. Personal leave can only be used if the employee becomes sick during isolation.
Employee is unwell and is getting tested for an infectious illness	Employees may use personal leave, accrued annual leave, LSL (if eligible) or unpaid leave. A medical certificate or other evidence is required for absences of more than two consecutive days.
Employee tests positive for an infectious illness	Employees may use personal leave, accrued annual leave, LSL (if eligible) or unpaid leave. A medical certificate or other evidence is required for absences of more than two consecutive days.
Employee caring for sick family or household member/s	Carers leave can be deducted from accrued personal leave, or the employee may use personal leave, accrued annual leave, LSL (if eligible) or unpaid leave. A medical certificate or other evidence is required for absences of more than two consecutive days.
Employee caring for children due to closure of schools or childcare centres	While isolating, employees may use accrued annual leave, TOIL, LSL (if eligible) or unpaid leave. Remote working arrangements may be established where possible.
Employee shows symptoms of illness while at work	Employee may be directed to leave the workplace. Employees may use personal leave, accrued annual leave, LSL (if eligible) or unpaid leave. A medical certificate or other evidence is required for absences of more than two consecutive days.
Employee refuses to attend work for fear of contracting the virus	Council expects employees to attend work as usual. Alternatively, employees may apply for leave.
Employees report to work but the site is unavailable due to quarantine or a council-directed shutdown	Employees may be directed to work from an alternative location or use flexible working arrangements. If no alternative work is available, employees will be stood down with pay. Employees may also be given the option to take accrued annual leave, TOIL, LSL (if eligible) or unpaid leave.
Employee is required to work in an alternative location or alternative duties	Flexible work arrangements, including telecommuting, are available upon request at the CEO's discretion.

If a pandemic is officially declared, the government may offer support programs. Affected employees should monitor government channels to determine their eligibility.

This table is a general guide, not an exhaustive list. Council may take alternative actions based on an individual employee's specific circumstances.