

COVID-19 SAFETY AND SOCIAL DISTANCING POLICY:  
IN-PERSON WORKSHOPS

## Overview:

Despite the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, Western Edge Youth Arts (WEYA) is dedicated to delivering in-person workshops in schools and community spaces. The delivery of these programs will be in line with recommendations from the Australian Government Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Health and Human Services Victoria (DHHS) regarding social distancing, and will be regularly reviewed to remain up to date. All core staff, artists and volunteers must agree to abide by this policy prior to undertaking any in-person workshops, meetings or training sessions.

## Purpose:

This policy sets out guidelines for the delivery of in-person workshops, in a manner that minimises the risk of COVID-19 transmission. COVID-19 is a highly transmittable illness, and infected respiratory droplets can remain in the air for up to three hours, and on surfaces for up to 72 hours. This policy provides guidelines for:

- Factors to be considered prior to conducting in-person workshops;
- Conduct with other artists and participants in workshops;
- How to manage suspected cases of COVID-19 within workshops.

## Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of WEYA's Co-Artistic Directors and General Manager (WEYA Management) to ensure that:

- Communication with Venue or School staff has taken place to negate the risk of COVID-19 transmission;
- Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (i.e. face masks) and other safety equipment is provided for WEYA staff;
- WEYA staff are aware of this policy;
- any breaches of this policy are dealt with appropriately.

It is the responsibility of WEYA staff to ensure that:

- They follow the guidelines in this policy, and safeguard their own health;
- Inform the participants of the guidelines in this policy at the beginning of each session.

## Policy

### 1. Planning for Safety

#### 1.1 Summary

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In order to maintain the safety of core staff, artists and participants, several factors should be considered prior to undertaking any in-person workshops. These factors relate to the workshop space, the health of the artists and participants, and the policies and procedures already in place by the venue/school.

WEYA Management should use **Appendix A** of this Policy (Pre-Workshop Checklist) to ensure that this section of the policy is met.

### 1.2 Workshop Space

While DOH, DHHS and SafeWork Australia recommend 4 metres<sup>2</sup> of space per person in any work environment, the Department of Education and Training Victoria have not imposed physical distancing measures in schools, due to the low risk of transmission between young people. The below guidelines are designed to ensure that staff safety is maintained despite the relaxed restrictions within a school environment.

WEYA Management must ensure that the space is suitable as per the following:

#### 1.2.1 Requirements

- Size – the workshop space must allow for 4 metres<sup>2</sup> of space per staff member (adult) in attendance. Ideally the space should also allow participants to maintain 1.5m distance between other people at all times;
- Cleaning – the workshop space must be cleaned each morning/evening. If other activities take place in the space prior to or following WEYA's workshop, WEYA or the Venue/School should provide alcohol wipes or other cleaning equipment to maintain a sanitary environment;
- Disposal – rubbish bins must be provided for the safe disposal of tissues and other rubbish.

#### 1.2.2 Preferences

- Entrances/Exits - it is preferred that workshop spaces have separate entrances to exits, to minimise person-to-person contact at the beginning and conclusion of a workshop;
- Bathrooms – it is preferred that the workshop space has a dedicated hand washing space that can be easily accessed prior to and throughout the workshop;
- Airflow – there should be windows/doors/air-conditioning in place to ensure adequate air flow and temperature control in the space (warm, damp spaces increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission)
- Signage – health and hygiene signage, as related to COVID-19, should be placed in the space.

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### 1.3 Personal Preparation

Staff are advised to take ownership of their own health and safety, and are encouraged to undergo the following steps prior to attending a workshop:

- *Testing* – if a staff member suspects that they may have been exposed to COVID-19, they should undergo testing at least 3 days prior to attending any in-person workshops. This timeframe will allow adequate time for results to be returned. If suspected exposure takes place 1-3 days prior to a workshop taking place, the staff member should discuss their participation in the workshops with WEYA Management;
- *Personal and Familial Health* – if a staff member feels that they, or a member of their household are at risk of serious harm from COVID-19 due to having chronic conditions, being immunocompromised or any other health factors, they should discuss their participation in the workshops with WEYA Management;
- *Arrive ready* – It is advised that staff and participants arrive at workshops ready to work – eating, getting dressed and other personal hygiene should occur offsite
- *Protection* – While WEYA and/or the Venue may provide some PPE and safety equipment, staff members are responsible for their own actions and provision of any personal equipment that might maintain their health and safety.

### 1.4 Personal Protective Equipment and Safety Equipment

1.4.1 WEYA will provide, or ensure that the School/Venue will provide, the following equipment prior to staff members prior to undertaking any workshops:

- Hand sanitiser
- Alcohol surface wipes/disinfectant
- Face masks
- Tissues

1.4.2 Staff members can also request that WEYA or the School/Venue provides:

- Gloves
- Health and hygiene signage
- Plastic cups and water casks

These items will either be delivered to the workshop space at the commencement of the workshop or sent to workshop staff beforehand. Appropriate guidelines should be sent to staff for correct use of these items, including hygienic disposal of face masks and adequate hand washing.

### 1.5 Workshop Planning

Alteration to workshop activities and behaviour may have to be altered in order to enact this policy. Staff should consider the following questions when planning workshop activities:

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- Many organisations are promoting a “Get In, Train, Get Out” policy for resuming their activities. How can minimal social interaction be achieved in a culturally safe environment?
- Are there activities in which participants must be closer than 1.5m, or that require physical contact? Is there a way to alter this activity to maintain social distancing?
- If an activity cannot be altered, can you ensure that participants have quick and easy access to safety equipment (ie. hand sanitiser) directly afterward?
- Consider that there may be greater absences of staff and participants during this time, how can the creative process manage this?

## 2. Personal Conduct

### 2.1 Summary

Social distancing and hygiene is integral to preventing the spread of COVID-19 within the community. COVID-19 is spread through the transmission of respiratory droplets, which can occur in close proximity to other people. WEYA staff should ensure that they follow the guidelines in this policy for behaviour during workshops, while also modelling, promoting and implementing this behaviour among participants.

### 2.2 Physical Distancing

- Participants should attempt to maintain 1.5m between all other people while in WEYA workshops;
- While some activities may require participants to be closer during the course of the workshop, it is especially advised that participants not put their faces very near each other, in order to minimise the chance of respiratory droplets being transferred;
- Staff should make every attempt to avoid coming nearer than 1.5m to participants.

### 2.3 Physical Contact

- Until all restrictions regarding social distancing have been lifted by the Victorian Government, all physical contact between people who do not live in the same household should be limited;
- While some physical contact may be unavoidable, skin-to-skin (especially hand-to-hand) contact should not occur;
- In the event that physical contact does occur, the area of skin that has come into contact with another person should be adequately washed and dried, or sanitised.

### 2.4 Hygiene

- All staff and participants should use stringent Personal Hygiene before, during and after attending WEYA workshops;

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- If the workshop space has been used by another group and not professionally cleaned prior to the workshop taking place, staff are encouraged to wipe down surfaces with alcohol wipes or disinfectant prior to any participants arriving;
- Hand sanitiser should be placed at the door for all to use as they enter, or supervised hand washing should take place at the beginning of the workshop;
- Staff and participants should avoid touching their faces wherever possible, even if they have not had physical contact with other people;
- Any staff member or participant who wishes to wear a face mask or gloves should be encouraged to do so, and advised of the correct way to dispose of these items once no longer in use;
- Coughing, sneezing and any other mouth-related activities should be shielded from other people by the individual's elbow or shoulder. If hands come into contact with the mouth in any way, they should be washed immediately (preferred) or sanitised;
- The sharing of cups, water bottles and other food-related utensils must not occur;
- Eating food during the workshop at all should be avoided. If not possible, items should be individually wrapped or brought from home by the person who is consuming them.

**2.5 Informing Participants**

- While workshop participants may be aware of the restrictions put in place by DOH and DHHS, in relation to COVID-19, staff must never assume prior knowledge of WEYA's policies and procedures;
- At the commencement of each workshop, it is expected that staff members remind the participants of this policy;
- The mechanism for doing this is a COVID-19 Safety Checklist, that will be provided by WEYA and must be completed at the beginning of every workshop regardless of whether the participants have attended previous workshops.
- It is expected that any staff member or participant who owns a Smart Phone will have downloaded the COVID-Safe application and ensures that it is active during the workshop.

**2.6 Exceptions**

- Physical Distancing, Physical Conduct and Hygiene policies should only be disregarded if doing so would prevent staff or participants from physical, psychological or emotional harm;
- Examples of this might include:
  - Moving a person out of the way of physical danger;
  - Administering first aid;
  - Preventing physical violence or intervening in an aggressive situation;
- In these instances, it is expected that staff will retroactively ensure that all involved in the situation undergo hygiene practices (ie. hand washing) to minimise the risk of transmission.

### 3. Managing Potential Exposure

#### 3.1 Summary

The following outlines the procedures to follow in the event that a staff member or participant suspects that they may have COVID-19. While decisions are ultimately made by the individual involved, it is important to encourage open dialogue with Venue/School staff, WEYA Management and other staff members when managing potential exposure to COVID-19.

#### 3.2 Prior to attending

- Staff should use item 1.3 of this policy to determine whether they should attend a workshop. WEYA Management should be open to responding to queries regarding this. If there is a high risk of transmission, it is advised that staff should not attend the workshop;
- If the workshop is taking place in a school or similarly structured environment, staff should liaise with personnel from that school to ensure that there have been no suspected cases of COVID-19 in the community;
- Any person – staff or participant – who has had close contact to a confirmed case of COVID-19, or is showing symptoms, should not attend an in-person workshop.

#### 3.3 Exposure to COVID-19

The procedures in item 3.4 outline the actions to take place in the event that a case of COVID-19 is suspected to be present in the workshop. Participants should be invited at the beginning of the session to tell staff if they have had any exposure to the disease, at which time staff should assess the degree of exposure and enact the appropriate response level.

The four degrees of suspected exposure discussed are:

**3.3.1 Attendance at a gathering** – this applies if a staff member or participant suspects that they may have come into contact in the last two weeks with a case of COVID-19, but they have not developed symptoms and have not been contacted by relevant health authorities for testing. Examples of this situation may be:

- Attendance at a social gathering (2-20 people), particularly where any attendees have developed symptoms;
- Attendance at a mass gathering where social distancing was not strictly adhered to.

In this instance, it is suggested that **LEVEL 1** (item 3.4.1) measures are put in place.

**3.3.2 Exposure to an unconfirmed case** – this applies if a staff member or participant has had contact in the last two weeks with someone who has developed symptoms of COVID-19, but in which the symptomatic person has not been tested or has tested negative. Examples of this situation may be:

- A person in the household who has developed symptoms;

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- Social situations with people outside the household where another attendee has developed symptoms;
- Third hand exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19, where the person in direct contact with the confirmed case has not shown symptoms or been tested.

In this instance, it is suggested that **LEVEL 1** (item 3.4.1) or **LEVEL 2** (item 3.4.2) measures are put in place, at the discretion of the WEYA Management or staff member in attendance.

**3.3.3 Exposure to a confirmed case** – this applies if a staff member or participant has been in direct contact in the last two weeks with a confirmed case of COVID-19 and has not yet been tested. In this situation, it is suggested that **LEVEL 2** (item 3.4.2) or **LEVEL 3** (item 3.4.3) measures are put in place.

**3.3.4 Showing symptoms** – this applies if a staff member or participant shows symptoms of COVID-19, or reports showing symptoms in the last two weeks. The severity of symptoms is irrelevant. In this situation it is suggested that **LEVEL 3** (item 3.4.3) measures are put into place.

#### 3.4 Procedures

The below procedures are set out in 3 levels of increasing intensity, and provide a framework for the immediate action to be taken in a workshop when exposure to COVID-19 is suspected. When considering which level of isolation measures to enact, staff should consider the complexities of each situation, while also recognising that the safety of every staff member and participant should take precedent.

Further steps for WEYA Management to consider following the workshop are also included in item 3.4.4.

##### 3.4.1 LEVEL 1

In this instance, the workshop is allowed to continue, however extra social distancing measures should be enacted with the Potentially Affected Person (PAP) and all other participants.

The measures to be put in place are:

- *Identify* – identify any other participants in the room who have been in close proximity or physical contact with the PAP;
- *Distance* – the PAP should maintain a greater distance (2.5m or more) from other participants and physical contact must not occur;
- *Invite* – offer the chance for any other staff member or participant to leave, if they feel uncomfortable or are at heightened risk of infection;
- *Protect* – if possible, provide the PAP with protective equipment such as a face mask and gloves. Also offer this equipment to any other staff and participants;
- *Encourage* – staff should encourage the PAP to get tested, or to isolate themselves for the 2-week quarantine period;

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- *Report*- Inform all necessary personnel that there is a low-risk of transmission at this workshop. This includes (but is not limited to):
  - WEYA Managers and other staff
  - School staff
  - Venue staff

**3.4.2 LEVEL 2**

In this instance, the workshop is allowed to continue, however the PAP should be removed from the workshop in order to prevent transmission within the group.

The measures to be put in place are:

- *Identify* - identify any other participants in the room who have been in close proximity or physical contact with the PAP;
- *Protect* - if possible, provide the PAP with protective equipment such as a face mask and gloves. Also offer this equipment to any other staff and participants;
- *Isolate* - Ask the participant to wait in a separate space, outside the room or significantly distanced from other participants for the remaining steps;
- *Remove* - If in a school or similarly organised location, send the PAP to the on-site healthcare provider (ie. School Nurse). If not, call the parent/caregiver of the participant and request that they are picked up, or seek permission to send the participant home. If the participant is over the age of 18, they may be allowed to leave without parental permission;
- *Invite* - offer the chance for any other staff member or participant to leave, if they feel uncomfortable or are at heightened risk of infection;
- *Report*- Inform all necessary personnel that there is a low-risk of transmission at this workshop. This includes (but is not limited to):
  - WEYA Managers and other staff
  - School staff
  - Venue staff

**3.4.3 LEVEL 3**

In this instance, the risk of continuing the workshop is deemed too high to warrant continuing. The workshop should immediately cease and arrangements should be made for all participants to be sent home.

The measures to be put in place are:

- *Identify* - identify any other participants in the room who have been in close proximity or physical contact with the PAP;
- *Protect* - provide the PAP and all staff and participants with such as a face mask and gloves, and ensure social distancing and other hygiene measures are strictly implemented;



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- *Isolate* – Ask the participant to wait in a separate space, outside the room or significantly distanced from other participants for the remaining steps;
- *Remove* – If in a school or similarly organised location, send the PAP to the on-site healthcare provider (ie. School Nurse). If not, call the parent/caregiver of the participant and request that they are picked up, or seek permission to send the participant home. If the participant is over the age of 18, they may be allowed to leave without parental permission;
- *Disband* – make arrangements, either through the school or directly with parents/caregivers, for all participants to be isolated and sent home;
- *Report*– Inform all necessary personnel that there is a high-risk of transmission at this workshop. This includes (but is not limited to):
  - WEYA Managers and other staff
  - School staff
  - Venue staff

### 3.4.3 Further Action

Following the reporting of a PAP to WEYA Management, and the implementation of the above measures, further action may be taken by WEYA Management to protect the staff and participants of the workshop. WEYA Management may consult with other staff members, School/Venue Staff and external consultants to ensure that any further measures are appropriate to the situation.

Such further action may include:

- Informing the parents/caregivers of all participants present in the workshop of the risk of exposure;
- Requesting that the PAP is tested for COVID-19, and recommending they not return until a negative test has been received;
- Utilising online training methods (such as Zoom) for a two-week period following the potential exposure;
- Requesting that all staff members present in the workshop are tested for COVID-19 prior to any further in-person workshops.

## Review

It is recognised that this policy is enacted as per Monday 15 June, 2020, and is currently in line with recommendations from the Australian Government – Department of Health, Department of Health and Human Services Victoria, and Safe Work Australia. This policy will be reviewed monthly throughout 2020, or at each level of loosening restrictions as advised by the Victorian Government.

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## Agreement

Having read the above COVID-19 Safety and Social Distancing Policy, I agree to follow the guidelines and adhere to all procedures:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix A – Pre-Workshop Checklist

This checklist should be undertaken by WEYA Management, in conjunction with the Venue/School, prior to the workshop taking place.

If all items in the Checklist are not completed, WEYA Management or the Venue/School must take steps to implement them prior to the workshop taking place.

### Check out the Space

Is it big enough?

The space should allow for staff and participants to maintain 1.5 metres between people at all times. This may be difficult to achieve between participants, but WEYA must at least ensure that staff members can maintain this distance.

The calculation to attain minimum room size is:

Square Footage (length of room x width of room) / 4 = Number of Staff

There must also be ample space for the number of participants to encourage physical distancing.

How often is it cleaned?

The space must be cleaned each night/morning.

Ideally it should be cleaned in between other uses and WEYA's workshop.

If it is not cleaned, WEYA or the School/Venue must provide alcohol wipes or disinfectant so that staff members can clean commonly-touched surfaces (desks, door handles etc.) before the workshop commences.

Are there bins?

There must be bins that are emptied each night/morning, to allow for sanitary disposal of tissues, masks etc.

Are there separate entrances to exits?

Not required, but preferred if it can be set up

Is there a dedicated bathroom?

If not, ensure that staff know where the nearest bathroom is, and that there is hand soap and drying facilities.

Is there air-conditioning or windows?

Damp, warm spaces increase the risk of COVID-19 spread, try to make sure there is some form of air circulation

Is there health/hygiene signage?

If not, WEYA should provide

## Check in with Artists

- |  |       |   |
|--|-------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have the artists been tested?                   | _____ | A negative test result confirm whether they are definitely safe to be at a workshop   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are there additional health concerns?           | _____ | Check in about the health of the artist and their household, establish whether there is a high risk of medical complication |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have they done the training?                    | _____ | No artist/staff member should attend a workshop unless they have undergone training and signed this policy                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do they feel safe/supported?                    | _____ | Is there additional information or support that WEYA can provide to ensure artists feel safe to attend the workshop?        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have they thought about their workshop content? | _____ | If need be, spend some time talking through how the workshop will run in light of the situation                             |

## Resources

The following items must be provided for workshops, either by the Venue/School or by WEYA:

- Hand sanitiser
- Alcohol wipes
- Face masks
- Tissues
- Gloves
- Health and Hygiene signage
- Plastic cups and water casks

## Appendix B – Artist Checklist

The following items should be checked off by the Lead Artist at the beginning of each session:

### Before participants arrive:

- Have all staff present been briefed on this policy?
- Does everyone understand how activities will be run?
- Are there any surfaces in the room that need to be wiped down?
- Do you have access to all PPE and safety equipment?

### When participants arrive:

- Ensure all participants wash/sanitise their hands
- Offer PPE (ie. face masks) if anyone would like them
- Verbally provide a short safety briefing, including the following points:
  - WEYA values your health and the health of its staff above all things
  - Staff will attempt to maintain 1.5 metres between each other and you throughout the workshop. We encourage you to do the same.
  - Please avoid all physical contact with each other. If you do touch somebody, please wash/sanitise yourself quickly.
  - Please make sure that you cough/sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, avoid touching your face at all, and ensure that you wash/sanitise your hands throughout the session whenever you feel the need.
  - Please do not share water bottles or anything else food/drink related
  - Point out the location of hand sanitiser, other PPE and health/hygiene signage in the room
  - Invite participants to tell staff if they suspect they may have come into contact with COVID-19, and tell them that there are measures we will put in place ranging from increased distancing, to asking you to leave, to ending the workshop.

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Throughout the workshop:

- Maintain distance wherever possible
- Avoid physical contact (unless staff/participants are at risk of physical, mental or emotional harm)
- Wash/sanitise hands frequently
- Keep an eye out for symptomatic individuals
- Encourage such behaviour among participants

After the workshop:

- Thank participants for engaging in this way of working
- Remind participants that, if they suspect exposure to COVID-19 prior to the next session, they contact WEYA to discuss whether or not they should attend
- Ensure that everyone washes/sanitises their hands on their way out.



## Appendix C

### Suspected Exposure Action Plan

Use the below matrix to determine which Level of Response is required in any given situation. All descriptions refer to events that must have happened in the last two weeks  
Personal discretion may be used to determine this, however discussion with WEYA Management and other staff is encouraged. When in doubt, remember that the safety of staff and participants is paramount.

Degree of Potential Exposure	Description	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
Attendance at a gathering	If the PAP has attended a gathering where social distancing was not adhered to, and suspects COVID-19 may have been present	✓		
Exposure to an unconfirmed case	If the PAP has been in contact someone showing symptoms (who hasn't been tested), but the PAP themselves isn't sick	✓	✓	
Exposure to a confirmed case	If the PAP has been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19		✓	✓
Showing symptoms	If the PAP is showing symptoms, or has shown symptoms in the last two weeks, and has not received a negative COVID-19 test			✓

Once this has been determined, please implement the appropriate measures.

### LEVEL 1 – Extra Social Distancing Measures

- **Identify** – identify any other participants in the room who have been in close proximity or physical contact with the PAP;
- **Distance** – the PAP should stay at least 2.5 m away from, and not touch, anyone else.
- **Invite** – offer the chance for staff or participants to leave if they feel uncomfortable;
- **Protect** – provide the PAP with a face mask. Also offer this to staff and participants;
- **Encourage** – Encourage the PAP to get tested, or to isolate themselves for the 2-week quarantine period;
- **Report**– First to WEYA Management, and then to School/Venue staff if necessary.

### LEVEL 2 – Isolate the Potentially Infected Person

- **Identify** – identify any other participants in the room who have been in close proximity or physical contact with the PAP;
- **Protect** – provide the PAP with a face mask. Also offer this to staff and participants;
- **Isolate** – Ask the participant to wait in a separate space while applying the remaining steps;
- **Remove** – If in a school, send the PAP to the School Nurse. If not, call the parent/caregiver of the participant and request that they are picked up, or seek permission to send them home. If they are over 18 years, they may be allowed to leave without parental permission;
- **Invite** – offer the chance for staff or participants to leave if they feel uncomfortable;
- **Report**– First to WEYA Management, and then to School/Venue staff if necessary.

### LEVEL 3 – End the Workshop

- **Identify** – identify any other participants in the room who have been in close proximity or physical contact with the PAP;
- **Protect** – provide the PAP with a face mask. Also offer this to staff and participants;
- **Isolate** – Ask the participant to wait in a separate space while applying the remaining steps;
- **Remove** – If in a school, send the PAP to the School Nurse. If not, call the parent/caregiver of the participant and request that they are picked up, or seek permission to send them home. If they are over 18 years, they may be allowed to leave without parental permission;
- **Disband** – make arrangements, either through the school or directly with parents/caregivers, for all participants to be sent home;
- **Report**– First to WEYA Management, and then to School/Venue staff if necessary.