

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this document is to identify the infection control procedures Cahoots has in place to minimise the transmission of infection and to prevent cross infection.

This policy and procedure must be adhered to by all members of the Cahoots team, whether paid staff, volunteers, Board Members, participants or other stakeholders across all offices and services.

All the Cahoots team are responsible for working within the policy to reduce the risk of infection.

Policy

Cahoots is committed to maintaining a safe and hygienic service delivery environment and providing a safe workplace for participants, staff and volunteers.

Cahoots will minimise the risk of infection by following good infection control practices, and following the Commonwealth and Western Australian Health Department guidelines for infection control.

Individual cases of controlled infectious disease e.g., HIV, Hepatitis B, TB etc will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and individualised management strategies implemented.

Cahoots takes a risk management approach to preventing, managing, and controlling infectious illnesses or conditions at an appropriate level for the organisation and may put in place additional temporary policy and procedures in response to health emergencies, outbreaks or other health matters affecting Cahoots. In this instance changes and updates will be communicated to Cahoots participants, leaders, staff, and stakeholders as required

Policy Principles

Staff, volunteers, Board Members, participants, and other stakeholders are responsible for taking all reasonable measures available to protect their own health and safety and that of others during a Cahoots service.

It is expected that staff, volunteers, Board Members, participants, and other stakeholders will;

- Not attend a Cahoots service if they are feeling unwell or have symptoms of an infectious condition;
- Take the necessary precautions, identifying and managing potentially infectious contagious conditions i.e., head lice, prior to attending a Cahoots service,
- Follow good general hygiene practices;
- Utilise personal protective equipment (PPE), as required; and
- Alert a staff member if they become unwell during a Cahoots service

It is expected that Cahoots staff will;

- Be aware of and follow any individualised health and safety instructions, recorded in a participant's profile.
- Promptly recognise and manage potentially infectious conditions, that occur during a Cahoots service, including sending a participant, leader, staff member or stakeholder home from a Cahoots Service as soon as possible.

- Ensure Cahoots service delivery environments i.e., offices, Overnight support sites, venues etc, equipment and vehicles are well maintained and kept clean to minimise the spread of infection.
- Minimise risk of food poisoning by ensuring foods provided during a Cahoots service are correctly prepared, cooked, stored, and transported either through outsourcing to a registered food business or by Cahoots staff when fruit and light snacks are provided.
- Minimise the risk of potential workplace hazards (service delivery and office environments alike) by utilising Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as required.

Definitions

Infectious Disease

Illness caused by infectious agents (bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi or their toxic products) i.e., influenza, measles, COVID-19, chickenpox etc.

Contagious/Communicable Disease

Is an infectious diseases or condition that can be passed from one person to another, through direct bodily (close) contact with an infected individual or their bodily discharges, or an object or surface they have contaminated (i.e., COVID-19, head lice).

Standard Precautions

Basic infection prevention and control strategies that apply to everyone, regardless of their perceived or confirmed infectious status. Strategies include hand hygiene, personal protective equipment, cleaning, and appropriate handling and disposal of sharps.

Personal Protective Equipment

Equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses i.e., gloves, face masks, goggles, gowns/aprons.

Disinfect/Sanitise

To reduce or eliminate infectious agents (such as bacteria) from surfaces

Vaccine Preventable Diseases

Cahoots follows the direction and advice from the Western Australian and Commonwealth Health Departments in relation to immunisation requirements.

Influenza

Influenza is a very contagious infection of the airways and can affect people of all ages. Although it can be a mild disease, it can also cause serious illness,

Cahoots staff and volunteers are strongly encouraged to get an Influenza vaccination every year when they become available.

COVID-19

COVID-19 is a contagious respiratory illness that can spread between people through respiratory droplets and close contact. Cahoots recognises the importance of implementing appropriate infection control measures to reduce the risk of transmission during services.

Cahoots will follow the advice and direction provided by the Western Australian Department of Health and the Australian Government Department of Health in relation to COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses.

Staff, volunteers and participants are expected to follow recommended public health guidance, including staying home when unwell, practicing good hand hygiene, and using appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) where required.

Training of Workforce

Cahoots will ensure all staff and volunteer leaders receive infection control education. All staff are required to complete an online learning module/s at the commencement of employment that covers information relating to:

- Prevention and management of infectious conditions
- Standard Precautions and minimising the spread of infection
- Hand Hygiene
- Use of PPE
- COVID-19 basics
- Waste management

Additional support and education is provided to leaders and staff during induction and inhouse training.

Procedures

All Cahoots participants, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders are expected to maintain good hygiene practices, utilising recognised standard precautions to ensure the health and safety of all during a Cahoots service. Stopping the spread of infection is everyone's responsibility and includes:

- Following general hygiene practices
- Practicing good hand hygiene
- Wearing PPE where required
- Identifying and managing potentially infectious conditions
- Correctly cleaning and managing spills
- Correctly handling food, waste, and linen

Standard Precautions

Standard infection control procedures require a person to assume that the blood and body fluids of any individual are a potential source of infection and to treat all body substances as such, regardless of their perceived risk.

Standard Precautions are work practices for the basic level of infection control and are to be used within Cahoots for all staff/participant contact and care, and in the handling of:

- Blood and
- any other fluid containing blood
- Serum
- Weeping wounds
- Pus
- Urine
- Faeces
- Saliva
- Vaginal secretions
- Semen
- Vomit

- Body tissue
- Non-intact Skin

General Hygiene Practices

Good personal hygiene is vital in preventing the spreading germs and infectious diseases. All Cahoots participants, staff, leaders, and stakeholders must:

- Maintain personal hygiene through regular washing and/or showering to ensure a clean presentation
- Wash hands and/or utilise hand sanitiser regularly (see guidance below)
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue, elbow or sleeve when sneezing or coughing
- Cover any cuts, abrasions or breaks in the skin with a waterproof dressing
- Regularly clean and disinfect shared equipment such as vehicles, toys, and games after use.
- Regularly clean and disinfect shared living areas i.e., bathrooms and kitchens.
- Use the Personal Protective Equipment provided, as and when required (see guidance below)

Additionally, in accordance with the Cahoots Dress Code for Staff and Volunteers:

- Fingernails must be clean and short as long fingernails, either natural or artificial, can puncture gloves easily, increase the risk of tears or scratches to participant’s skin and may limit the worker’s performance in hand hygiene practices.
- Artificial nails (including shellac, signature nail systems and acrylic nails) are not permitted on any Service where participants require assistance with personal care.
- Jewellery should be kept to a minimum as the cracks and crevices in jewellery can harbour bacteria and viruses

Hand Hygiene

Cleaning hands at with soap and water or hand sanitizer is vital to reducing the transmission of microorganisms. Washbasins, liquid soap, paper towels and hand sanitiser are available at all Cahoots services.

Hands can be cleaned with soap and water or hand sanitiser but there are differences in when they should be used and how effective they are.

When to Use:

Soap and Water	Alcohol-based Hand Sanitizer
If your hands are visibly dirty or greasy Before, during, and after preparing food Before eating food Before and after providing mealtime assistance to participants Before and after administering or taking medications	If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol , and wash with soap and water as soon as you can. DO NOT use hand sanitizer if your hands are visibly dirty or

<p>Before and after attending to participants personal care needs, including changing continence aids</p> <p>Between personal care procedures e.g., assisting with showering then brushing teeth.</p> <p>Before and after caring for someone who is unwell i.e., runny nose, vomiting etc</p> <p>Before and after providing first aid and treating cuts or wounds</p> <p>After using the toilet</p> <p>After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste</p> <p>After handling rubbish or waste, touching dirty surfaces or objects</p> <p>After smoking</p> <p>After removing Personal Protective Equipment i.e., gloves, masks</p>	<p>greasy—for example, after gardening, playing outdoors or fishing.</p> <p>If a handwashing station is available, wash your hands with soap and water instead.</p>
<p>After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, you should clean your hands by immediately washing your hands with soap or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer to avoid spreading germs.</p>	

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Use of PPE is an important element of standard precautions in protecting participants, staff, leaders, and stakeholders from potential infection. PPE available on a Cahoots service includes gloves, disposable aprons, face masks and eye protection (goggles).

Gloves

Gloves are not a replacement for hand hygiene and should be worn when;

- There is potential for contact with blood and bodily fluids i.e., assisting a participant with toileting or when dressing a wound.
- Touching equipment or surfaces that may come into contact with blood or body fluids
- Caring for a person who may have an infectious disease
- If the staff member has broken skin on their hands
- Preparing food

Remember:

- Perform hand hygiene before and after using gloves
- Change gloves in between tasks even when supporting the same person
- Gloves must be changed for each individual you are supporting, even for non-invasive tasks, such as applying sunscreen.
- Gloves are single use only and must be disposed of immediately after use

Aprons

Disposable, waterproof aprons are used to stop contamination of clothes and skin where there is a risk of splashes or sprays of blood or bodily fluids (e.g., vomiting or diarrhoea) or when the staff members clothes might get wet i.e., when assisting with showering

When using aprons:

- Perform hand hygiene before and after using them
- Ensure arms are bare below the elbow
- Remove apron as soon as care task is completed
- Only use apron once and dispose of immediately after use

Face Masks

Face masks protect the wearers nose and mouth from exposure to infections agents. If the wearer has a cough or infectious respiratory condition i.e., COVID 19, wearing a mask will reduce the potential of cross infection.

When using face masks:

- Wash or sanitise your hands before putting on or taking off your mask.
- Ensure the mask covers your nose and mouth and fits snugly under your chin, over the bridge of your nose and against the sides of your face.
- Refrain from touching the front of your mask while wearing or removing it.
- Do not use a ripped or torn mask
- Do not allow the mask to hang around your neck or under your nose.
- Have at least two masks with you, so you have a clean one available.
- Do not use scarfs and bandannas in lieu of a mask, they do not offer the same amount of protection as a well fitted mask

Surgical/Single Use Masks

- The darker coloured side should face outwards
- Change your mask approximately every 4 hours or if soiled or damp
- Do not reuse surgical/single use masks
- Place used masks in general waste bins, they cannot be recycled

Reusable Cloth Masks

- To ensure adequate protection, cloth masks should have at least 3 layers of fabric.
- Change your mask if soiled or damp.
- Cloth masks should be washed thoroughly in hot soapy water, after each use or at least daily.

Eye Protection (goggles)

Eye protection protects the wearers eyes from exposure to infections agents and are used if there is a risk of droplets or aerosols from coughing or sneezing or splashes or sprays of blood or body fluids from vomiting, spitting etc.

When using protective eyewear/goggles:

- Remember the outside of the eyewear is contaminated
- If reusable, clean the eyewear after each use with detergent and water, allow to dry
- If single use; dispose of after completion of the care activity
- Wearing glasses is not a replacement for protective eyewear

Maintaining Infection-Free Environments

To maintain an environment free from infection on Cahoots Services, regular cleaning and upkeep is required. Cleaning products, including cleaning solutions, disinfectant and paper towels will be available for everyday cleaning at all Cahoots services.

During Cahoots Services, it is expected that

- Shared living and activity areas will be kept tidy
- Participants belongings will be looked after and kept separate from others belongings.
- All items used for the consumption of food, drinks or medication will be washed after each use in hot soapy water and dried with a clean and dry tea towel. If using an industrial dishwasher, air drying of items is recommended.
- High touch points such as doorknobs, light switches, counter tops, fridge handles and communal surfaces like tables, chairs, and benches will be wiped with disinfectant each day.
- Where applicable; Showers, toilets, basins, and bathroom floors will be washed and rinsed every day,
- Plastic bowls and buckets used for cleaning or medical use are to be washed in hot soapy water, rinsed, and stored dry.

Equipment

A range of equipment is used during Cahoots services, equipment may include; sports equipment, books, games, art and craft materials, audio visual equipment etc. As Cahoots equipment is shared between the participants, so it is paramount they are kept clean to minimise the spread of infection.

Showering and Toileting Equipment

After each use the equipment must be cleaned, disinfected, dried and be ready for the next use.

Cleaning and Sanitisation Procedure

1. Wear gloves and/or an apron
2. Wash the equipment thoroughly with hot, soapy water – removing any bodily fluids or solids
3. Remove excess water before wiping down the equipment with liquid disinfectant and allowing it to dry
4. Dispose of cleaning cloths and gloves
5. Wash hands thoroughly

Sporting and Other Equipment

All equipment used on Cahoots services must be cleaned and disinfected daily.

Daily Sanitization Procedure

1. Wear gloves
2. Lay out equipment to be cleaned, on a clean surface in a well-ventilated space.
3. If the item has hard surfaces, put on gloves, and wipe down item with liquid disinfectant and allow the item to dry.
4. If the item is soft e.g., plush toy, put on gloves and spray item with disinfectant, allow the item to dry.
5. Dispose of cleaning cloths and gloves
6. Wash hands thoroughly

Where equipment becomes soiled with bodily fluids or visible mess, it will need to be cleaned and disinfected immediately, or removed from use if necessary.

Immediate Sanitization Procedure

- Leaders must notify the Facilitator immediately if equipment has been exposed to bodily substances e.g., put in a participant's mouth, the item is to be removed, cleaned, and disinfected
- If the item cannot be effectively disinfected e.g., a coloring book discard the item into the bin and advise the coordinator.

Remember

All Equipment must be cleaned, disinfected and ready for use, prior to returning it to the office or storage facility.

Vehicles

Vehicles used on Cahoots services must be cleaned and disinfected at the end of each service. However, circumstances may require the vehicles to be cleaned and disinfected more frequently.

Immediately sanitise vehicles when:

- The vehicle becomes soiled with bodily fluids or visible mess
- A person that has travelled in the vehicle becomes unwell with a potentially infectious condition.

Daily sanitise the vehicles:

- During an outbreak or pandemic

Sanitization Procedure

1. Wear gloves
2. Spray all soft surfaces (seats) with an aerosol disinfectant
3. Using disinfectant and a cleaning cloth, wipe down all inside surfaces including windows, arm rests, wall, dash, steering wheel, and consoles
4. Disinfect the floor using another cleaning cloth and liquid disinfectant
5. Leave vehicle open to allow surfaces to dry and air out. Ensure the vehicle is in a safe place to leave open
6. Dispose of cleaning cloths and gloves
7. Wash hands thoroughly

Infectious Diseases

Participants displaying symptoms of infectious diseases may be sent home or collected by their support network as soon as practicable.

These symptoms include but are not limited to fever, coughing, running nose, wheezing, visible rash, vomiting, diarrhoea etc.

In supporting a participant with a suspected infectious illness or condition:

- Make the participant comfortable and where possible, separate them from other participants to prevent any spread of infection.
- Phone the participants decision maker (parents/guardian) as soon as possible to give them an account of the symptoms and support given.
- Make arrangements for the participant to be collected from the Cahoots Service immediately.
- Where possible reduce spread of infection to others by;

- Caring for the participant away from others, and;
- Allocating one or two team members to only care for the affected participant
- If the nature of the illness is vomiting and/or diarrhoea, ensure strict hygiene and cleanliness is maintained. Wear PPE when supporting the participant, clean up spills immediately, disinfecting toilets, taps and soiled surfaces.
- If the participants condition is serious, contact 000 (if emergency) or take to nearest urgent care clinic.
- Complete progress notes and send home reporting requirements

Head Lice

If head lice are found, the Facilitator will notify parents/guardians and the participant will have to be removed from the Cahoots service immediately.

When head lice are found on overnight support, Facilitators can use discretion to take precautionary measures in case other participants, leaders or staff have contracted them through contact with the infected participant. With approval from the coordinator, head lice treatments can be purchased on behalf of:

- staff and volunteers, should they request it
- participants, where consent for treatment has been obtained from the participant or their decision maker.

If necessary, a follow up note should go home with participants warning parents/guardians that there has been some evidence of head lice found on Cahoots services and to check their participant upon arrival at home.

Treating Wounds

Most injuries do not result in the transmission of blood or other bodily fluids, however standard precautions must be followed when providing first aid or changing dressings. When providing first aid the following procedures must be followed:

1. Wash hands thoroughly and apply disposable gloves.
2. A wound containing dirt or other contaminants should be cleaned with either saline, an antiseptic solution or soap and water.
3. The wound should be dried thoroughly before the dressing is applied.
4. Avoid direct finger or hand contact with the wound or the central part of the sterile dressing.
5. Apply a light dressing to the wound and secure it with a bandage or tape.
6. If the wound has any obvious discharge present, use an absorbent dressing on top of the first sterile dressing and bandage it in place firmly.
7. Remove gloves and place them with any soiled dressings in a plastic bag.
8. Dispose of rubbish in a covered general waste bin.
9. Wash hands thoroughly.

Managing Exposure to Blood or other Bodily Fluids

In the event of an incident involving a person coming into contact with the blood or bodily fluids of another person the following procedures must be followed:

- Remove contaminated clothing

- If blood or body fluids get on the skin, irrespective of whether there are cuts or abrasions, wash well with soap and water
- if the eyes are splashed, rinse the area gently but thoroughly with water while the eyes are open
- if blood or body fluid gets in the mouth, spit it out and rinse the mouth with water several times, spitting the water out each time.
- Seek medical advice immediately.
- Report accident/incident immediately to the on-call staff member

Managing Spills

If blood or body fluids are spilled on surfaces, the following cleaning procedures should be used:

- Deal with the spill as soon as possible, ensuring that the area where the spill has occurred is secure from other people.
- Avoid all unnecessary exposure to bodily substances and product.
- Protect yourself by wearing disposable gloves. Eye protection and a plastic apron should be worn where there is a risk of splashing.
- Remove as much of the spill as possible with a paper towel.
- Clean area with warm water and detergent, using a disposable cleaning cloth or sponge.
- Thoroughly dry the surface then wipe down the area with disinfectant
- The area should be left clean and dry.
- Remove and dispose of gloves, paper towel and cleaning cloth in a sealed plastic bag after use. The plastic bag may then be thrown away with household waste.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.
- Where spills have occurred in a 'wet' area, such as a bathroom or toilet area, the spill should be carefully hosed into the sewage system and the area flushed with hot water and detergent. The area should then be disinfected.

Soiled Linen and Laundry

Care must be taken when managing clothing and linen soiled with bodily fluids or substances the following cleaning procedures should be used:

- Always wear gloves when handling soiled linen.
- Soiled linen or clothing must be removed as soon as practical, avoiding contact with clothing, other linen, the floor, and other surfaces.
- Never carry soiled linen against the body, carefully roll it up, to prevent contamination of other areas and transport to the designated laundry area.
- If there is any solid excrement on the linen, such as faeces or vomit, where possible put it in the toilet.
- Soiled items must be rinsed to remove any remaining bodily fluids or substances before washing. Rinsing must occur in an area appropriate for the purpose e.g., not in hand basins or onto lawns.
- If a washing machine is not immediately available, put the soiled item in a plastic bag and label it with the participant's name.

- All soiled items must be washed using warm to hot water and laundry detergent, and items dried fully.
- Do not mix soiled items during rinsing, bagging, or washing as this can lead to cross contamination.
- Any plastic bags used to carry soiled linen or clothes are then placed in the bin.

Waste Management

All waste generated during Cahoots services will be managed in accordance with legislative and local council requirements to:

- Minimise risk to participants, staff, volunteers, or other stakeholders
- Ensure waste is disposed of appropriately

Waste generated in the delivery of Cahoots services can be categorised as; general, clinical, or pharmaceutical.

General Waste Disposal

General waste constitutes the bulk of waste generated by Cahoots, including PPE, incontinence pads and disposable nappies and is no more of a public health risk than standard domestic waste.

General waste bins are readily available at all Cahoots service locations and staff are provided with plastic rubbish bags for use during services. General waste is to be bagged before disposal and internal bins are to be emptied when $\frac{3}{4}$ full or daily at a minimum.

All general waste is to be placed in the general waste bin at the location for disposal. Where recyclable bins are available Cahoots staff will separate recyclables from general waste.

Clinical Waste

Clinical waste is waste that has the potential to cause disease or injury. Cahoots does not usually produce clinical waste.

Sharps: On occasion, splinter removers or disposable razors may be utilised, and these are to be managed as sharps. A small sharps container is available in each first aid kit, when $\frac{3}{4}$ full it is to be taken to a pharmacy for disposal and replaced.

Potentially infectious material: Cahoots services do not generate waste heavily soiled with blood or bodily fluids. Where waste is soiled with blood or potentially infectious matter, it is to be double bagged, sealed securely and disposed of in the external general waste bins.

Pharmaceutical Waste:

Pharmaceutical waste includes expired or unused medications. All medication which is unused, no longer required, or expired at the conclusion of a Cahoots service is returned to the participant and their support network for disposal. This includes tablet medication that has been dropped or spilled, that has been collected and placed in an envelope for return.

Reference and Related Documents

- The National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (NDIS Act)
- Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (NHMRC)

- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Practice Standards
- Disability Services Act (1993).
- World Health Organisation
- Government of Western Australia Department of Health
- Australian Government Department of Health
- Work Health and Safety Act 2022
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 3.2
- Risk Management Policy
- Incident and Hazard Management, Reporting and Recording Procedure
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Training Policy
- Individual Needs Management Policy
- Camp and Program Facilitator Manual

Versions

Version Number	Date	Description of Amendment
1.0	17/1/13	Policy Created – due for review June 2015
2.0	30/10/15	Updated
3.0	28/06/18	Reviewed (TT)
4.0	17/06/19	Updated SS
5.0	29/04/20	Updated MP
6.0	10/06/2020	Updated PC
7.0	08/03/2021	Reviewed, COVID updated – JK
7.1	17/03/2021	Amendment made - DB
8	10/04/2022	Reviewed and updated to include; amendment to vaccination requirements, inclusion of waste management and amalgamation of previous PPE, Sanitisation of Vehicles and Sanitisation of Equipment policies.
9	22/06/2023	Updated COVID-19 vaccination requirement
10	4/03/2026	Policy reviewed and updated to align with current infection control guidance, including updates to COVID-19 requirements and improvements to clarity and terminology.

Owner	Approver	Next Review
Quality & Safeguarding Lead	CEO	March 2028