

PROCEDURE C23.3-P23.3

INFECTIOUS DISEASE AND INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Related Policy

Infectious Disease and Infection Prevention and Control Policy

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the responsibilities and processes at Scentia Holdings Pty Ltd and its subsidiaries, the Australasian College of Health and Wellness Pty Ltd (ACHW), the Australian Institute of Management Education and Training Pty Ltd (AIM) operating as AIM Business School (ABS), and AIM VET, a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), (collectively 'the Scentia Group') and Third-Party Partners (TPP), to prevent and minimise as far as possible the risk of harm to students and Workers caused by infectious disease and infection.

1.3 Scope

This procedure applies to all students and Workers (defined by legislation as employees, contractors, agency staff, labour hire staff, people on work experience, sub-contractors, volunteers, trainees, and outworkers) of the Scentia Group and TPPs.

This procedure applies to all facilities/environments used by the Scentia Group and TPPs, including physical offices, campuses, hired facilities, and clinics.

1.4 Scope Exceptions

None.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Individual and positional (e.g., 'Officer') responsibilities and duty-of-care for health and safety as legislated in the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 apply to this procedure. Refer to the Health, Safety, and First Aid in the Workplace Policy for detail on those responsibilities.
2. The Scentia Group Executive Leadership Team, under the leadership of the Chief Executive Officer, is required to comply with the directions of State and Territory Health departments in the event of an infectious disease outbreak, such as COVID-19, and ensure those directions are carried out across the Group.

3. Executive Directors, the Head of People and Culture, and TPPs are responsible for ensuring:
 - this procedure is implemented effectively within their area of responsibility, including the provision of suitable resources;
 - students and Workers who are at risk of exposure to blood and/or body fluids (students and Workers of ACHW) are appropriately trained in correct handling procedures, are aware of the associated risks, are supplied with any required personal protective equipment (PPE), and have complied with any mandatory vaccinations; and
 - in the event of an exposure to blood or body fluids, the correct process is followed and confidentiality is maintained.
4. Students and Workers are responsible for:
 - complying with the directions of State and Territory Health departments and the Executive in the event of an infectious disease outbreak, such as COVID-19;
 - complying with their medical practitioner's directions if they have an infectious disease, including directions on when it is safe to return to the workplace;
 - undertaking any activity associated with blood and/or body fluids in a manner which does not adversely affect their own health and safety, or that of others, by following this and relevant WHS procedures;
 - adopting work practices that minimise potential incidents;
 - reporting all incidents arising from exposure to blood and/or body fluids and sharps;
 - using and disposing of sharps in accordance with this procedure; and
5. ACHW students and staff are responsible for showing evidence that they have had Hepatitis B vaccination, prior to attending clinics.
6. ACHW Facilitators are responsible for supervising students in clinics. Facilities Management, and the relevant personnel in clinics, are responsible for ensuring that sharps containers and bins for sharp rubbish are available in all facilities and that required notices, such as for handwashing and Personal Protection Equipment, are displayed appropriately.

3.0 PROCEDURE

The following measures and procedures are applicable in general terms across the Scentia Group but have particular applicability to ACHW's students and Workers in clinics. More detailed information for ACHW students and Workers who attend clinics is provided in the Clinics Policy and Procedure and the clinic manuals, equipment procedures, and Australian Standards that are referred to in those documents.

3.1 General Preventative Measures

1. Education regarding infectious disease and infection prevention and control is provided to all Workers via the Scentia induction process.
2. Education regarding infectious disease and infection prevention and control is provided to all students by the Head of School at orientation to their studies.
3. Education regarding infection prevention and control is provided to all ACHW students by the National Clinic Supervisor and their Facilitator at their orientation to clinics, as well as information about specific risks in the clinic, including from equipment.
4. Notices about hand washing are displayed in toilets.
5. Sharps containers are provided in toilets.

3.2 Notifiable Infectious Disease

1. The Scentia Group is required to notify the Public Health Unit (part of the Health Department in each State) in the event of an outbreak of any of the following: food-borne illness in two or more related cases or gastroenteritis among people of any age in an organisation.
2. Infectious diseases that are notifiable -see Definitions- including measles and tuberculosis will be notified to the Public Health Unit by the individual's medical practitioner. The Public Health Unit will follow up close contacts for any notifiable disease, and the Scentia Group would be notified by them if the infected person is a student or Worker and must then follow the Public Health Unit's directions.
3. If the individual or their doctor discloses the notifiable disease directly to the Scentia Group, and the Scentia Group has not received communication from the Public Health Unit, a follow up must be made by the relevant Executive Director (students) or Head of People and Culture (Workers) to gain advice from the Public Health Unit on the implications for other students and Workers. The Public Health Unit will advise on, and possibly coordinate, the required response.

3.3 Standard Precautions

1. Standard precautions, the presumption that all blood and body fluids have the potential to be infected and spread infection, are applied in all situations in which students or Workers may have contact with blood and/or body fluids.

3.4 Hand Washing and Hand Care

1. Hand washing and hand care are considered a vital measure in infection control and is important at all times across the Scentia Group.
 2. Hands must be washed and dried before and after any direct client contact in clinics and/or the application and removal of gloves. Hands should be washed with a soap or cleaning agent covering all surfaces. Protective gloves must be worn for all treatments, with additional Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) if required.
 3. Skin is a natural defence against infection. Cuts and abrasions on exposed skin should be covered with a water-resistant dressing and changed as often as necessary.

3.5 Personal Protection Equipment

1. ACHW students and Workers must wear the PPE required when observing or conducting procedures in clinics where blood and/or body fluids may be released or splashed, or there is a risk of needle-stick injury. PPE may include gloves, safety eyewear, gowns, and other equipment. Refusal to wear the required PPE will result in the student or Worker being required to leave the area where the procedure is being conducted.
 2. General-purpose utility gloves should be worn for housekeeping tasks including general cleaning and handling chemical disinfectants.
 3. Where blood and/or other body fluids are present, PPE must be worn while cleaning clinical instruments.
 4. PPE such as gloves and other protective barriers such as band-aids are to be discarded if they are peeled, torn, or punctured or have other evidence of deterioration.

3.6 Quarantining

1. Students and Workers experiencing infectious, or potentially infectious, conditions must seek advice from their medical practitioner regarding when it is safe to attend the workplace, and refrain from doing so during the infectious period of the condition.
 2. ACHW students and Workers also must not attend any of ACHW clinic premises and activities during the infectious period of the condition.

3.7 Risk Management

1. The Scentia Group's infection risk management processes reflect those in the Health, Safety and First Aid in the Workplace Policy and Procedure and include the following on identifying an infection risk:
 - eliminating the risk factors;
 - modifying or changing procedures, protocols and work practices if required;
 - monitoring student and Worker compliance with infection control procedures; and
 - providing information/education and training to students and Workers.

3.8 Infection Risk Assessment

1. The Scentia Group and TPPs identify and assess infection hazards by considering the likelihood of infection and the consequences if a person is infected. Factors such as frequency of exposure, levels of training and knowledge, existing controls, environmental factors, and the experience of Workers are considered.
2. Infection risk assessment and control is particularly important in ACHW clinics and is provided in more detail in the Clinics Policy and Procedure and the documents referred to in them.

3.9 Needles and Sharps

1. Bins for sharp rubbish should be available in all facilities.
2. Sharps containers must be available in toilet facilities and in clinics for disposal of syringes.
3. Special care must be taken to prevent injuries during procedures, when cleaning sharp instruments, and in the use or disposal of sharps (needles).
4. Sharps must not be passed from one student or Worker to another unless specifically required for the proper conduct of the procedure.
5. Needles must not be removed from disposable syringes for disposal nor re-sheathed before disposal. Where special circumstance requires re-sheathing, it is preferable to use forceps or a protective guard.
6. Sharps containers in clinics should be placed as close as practical to the client care area, not easily accessible to visitors and out of the reach of children. Containers should be clearly labelled with the biohazard symbol and never overfilled.

3.10 Response to Possible Infection from Blood and/or Body Fluids

1. ACHW students and Facilitators must provide evidence to the National Clinic Supervisor that they have had Hepatitis B vaccination before attending clinics.
2. When potentially infected body fluids come into contact with a student or Worker, steps are taken to decrease the impact of such contact, including first aid and assessment at a medical service.
3. Response to such incidents includes notification to the person's supervisor as soon as possible and a WHS incident report form completed. The process outlined in the Health, Safety and First Aid in the Workplace Procedure is then followed.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- **Infection** requires three main elements - a source of the infectious agent, a mode of transmission such as via a needle-stick injury or splashing blood into an eye, and a susceptible host.
- **Infection control** - is establishing procedures, and providing training, information and resources which aid in preventing the transmission of infectious organisms and managing infections if they occur.
- **Infectious agents** - are biological agents that cause disease or illness to their hosts.
- **Infectious Disease** - a disease such as cholera, hepatitis, influenza, Covid 19, measles, or tuberculosis) that is transmissible by contact with infected individuals or their bodily discharges or fluids (such as respiratory droplets or blood), by contact with contaminated surfaces or objects, by ingestion of contaminated food or water, or by direct or indirect contact with disease vectors (such as mosquitoes, fleas, or mice).
- **Needle-stick injury** - a penetrating stab wound from a needle (or other sharp object) that may result in exposure to blood or other body fluids. The main concern is exposure to the blood or other body fluids of another person who may be carrying infectious disease.
- **Notifiable diseases** - a disease with significant public health implications, typically a highly infectious disease, for which the diagnosing clinician has a statutory responsibility to notify government authorities. The collation of information allows the authorities to monitor the disease and provides early warning of possible outbreaks. Examples: Measles, Whooping Cough, Tuberculosis, Influenza. State Public Health Unit websites list notifiable diseases.
- **Standard precautions** - are work practices which require everyone to assume that all blood and body substances are potential sources of infection, independent of perceived risk.

- **Students** - all individuals enrolled in an education program with a member of the Scentia Group, or TPP, either online, in face-to-face mode or in blended delivery.
- **Workers** - are defined in the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (C'wealth) as those who 'carry out work for a person conducting a business and include employees, contractors, agency staff, labour hire staff, people on work experience, sub-contractors, trainees, volunteers and out-workers'.
- **Work Health and Safety Act (2011)** - the Commonwealth Work Health and Safety Act (2011) implements the Model Work Health and Safety Act in the Commonwealth jurisdiction, helping to form a system of nationally harmonised work health and safety laws. It was passed in Parliament on 24 November 2011 and received Royal Assent on 29 November 2011.

5.0 REFERENCES AND ASSOCIATED INFORMATION

- ACHW Clinic WHS Manual
- ACHW Clinic Quality Assurance Framework
- ACHW Equipment Procedures
- ACHW Clinics Policy and Procedure
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth)
- Health, Safety and First Aid in the Workplace Policy and Procedure
- [Human Rights Commission](#)
- Infectious Disease and Infection Prevention and Control Policy
- Privacy Act 1988
- [State and Territory government health departments](#)
- Staff Grievances Policy
- Student Grievances and Complaints Policy
- Work Health and Safety Act (2011) (Commonwealth) and Regulations

6.0 POLICY/PROCEDURE OWNERSHIP

Policy Owner	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Status	Reviewed on July 2024
Approval Authority	Scentia Corporate Board
Date of Approval	29 October 2024
Effective Date	11 November 2024
Implementation Owner	Head of People and Culture
Maintenance Owner	Head of Compliance
Review Due	October 2027
Content Enquiries	Liz Douglas - Head of People and Culture Email: ldouglas@scentia.com.au

7.0 AMENDMENTS

Version	Amendment Approval (Date)	Amendment Made By (Position)	Amendment Details
C23.0-P23.0	10 July 2017	Head of Compliance / Director ACHW	Initial document review after purchase of MHMHE
C23.1-P23.1	10 March 2020	Academic Board	General review
C23.2-P23.2	21 October 2021	Scentia Corporate Board	<p>Policy and Procedure separated.</p> <p>New template.</p> <p>The Term 'Worker' introduced to comply with legislation.</p> <p>Additional clauses on notifiable diseases.</p> <p>Becomes a Scentia corporate policy applying across all of the Scentia Group and TPP's.</p> <p>Aligned with the corporate Health, Safety and First Aid in the Workplace Policy.</p> <p>Additional definitions and references.</p>
P23.3-P23.3	29 October 2024	Head of Compliance	Updated references to staffing titles and ACHW-owned clinics.