COVID–19 PHYSICAL DISTANCING AT WORK, ALTERNATIVE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS & WORKING FROM HOME

The health and wellbeing of Monash staff and students is a key priority for the University, whilst sustaining our capacity to provide quality education, research and support services.

The University will continue to operate in line with Government guidelines and with endorsement from the University’s Chief Medical Officer. For up-to-date information regarding changes to our operations, please visit our dedicated website and fact sheet.

**OUR CURRENT OPERATIONS**

- In line with the Victorian Government’s roadmap to reopening, working from home arrangements will continue for all staff (unless deemed a permitted worker), until further notice.
- All professional staff who work from home in response to COVID-19 must have completed the COVID-19 Working from Home Registration form. This is mandatory so we can meet our obligations to provide a safe work environment.

**Permitted workers**

- The State Government has applied additional directives regarding permitted workers. These staff groups are exempt from working from home during the Stage 4 restrictions and can continue to attend campus or work from home to deliver essential services.
- In line with Victorian Government requirements, staff will need to have an authorised permitted workers’ permit, approved by Monash, if you are to come to campus, effective from 11.59pm Wednesday 5 August.
- Only the Chief Human Resources Officer, Bridgid Connors, is authorised to issue such permits.

**Childcare arrangements for permitted workers**

- From Thursday 6 August, access to childcare/kindergarten, is restricted to staff:
  - with vulnerable children who need to attend childcare/kindergarten; or
  - who are deemed to be a permitted worker (either working onsite or working from home) and are unable to supervise their children at home whilst delivering their permitted work.

  Only one carer needs to be a permitted worker to access childcare. If there is another carer in the household, permitted workers can still access childcare if the other parent/carer cannot supervise the child/ren. This could be for a number of reasons - for example, their partner or co-parent:
  - has a medical condition, or chronic illness which prevents them from caring for the child;
  - has a disability;
  - is completing full time study and must attend onsite;
  - works from home, but in a role that means they cannot supervise the children - resulting in the permitted worker not being able to do their job

- We understand this will present challenges for some staff who will not be eligible for a permit as they are not permitted workers but have children at home.
- The University does not have any flexibility and must comply with government directions to ensure it issues permits to permitted workers only.
• Staff should talk with their supervisor if they have any questions regarding whether they will be deemed a permitted worker under Stage 4 restrictions. Staff deemed eligible for a permit, are to submit a request to their supervisor.
• Faculties and divisions will be required to send their consolidated list of requests to hr@monash.edu. Please do not submit requests for staff who clearly are not permitted workers.
• Individual requests are not to be made to Human Resources and will not be actioned.

General guidelines
• In line with Government advice, face masks/coverings must be worn by all students, staff and visitors on campus.
• Managers and supervisors are responsible for managing their teams while working remotely which includes holding regular team meetings, maintaining regular contact with teams and setting and documenting performance expectations whilst working remotely.
• Where a staff member is unable to work from home and does not wish to work from the University, staff can access their annual leave or long service leave.
• A staff member and supervisor may agree to a temporary reduction in fraction to meet personal circumstances.

University travel
Staff must comply with Government guidelines.
The University recommends all domestic travel is avoided unless it is absolutely essential for the performance of your work. Work-related international travel is not possible at this time. Where it is essential to travel, the following applies:
• For travel to restricted areas, staff must, prior to booking, obtain the relevant State exemption or permit.
• Approval for travel must be strictly in accordance with the University’s Travel Procedures.
• For more information on State requirements visit Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for travellers.

THE WORK ENVIRONMENT
It’s important we continue to keep our University community safe and we all play a role in slowing the spread of COVID-19.
If staff are required to be on campus, each work area is responsible for ensuring physical distancing practices are adopted. This includes:
• Arranging the work area to accommodate physical distancing of 1.5m.
• Open plan office environments will require 4m² of floor space per person and accommodate physical distancing of 1.5m between people and workstations.
• In an enclosed space (e.g. lecture theatre, function room) have no more than 1 person per 4m² of floor space on average and have fewer than 100 persons.
It may be necessary to implement alternative arrangements to accommodate physical distancing such as:
− relocating teams or parts of teams to alternative nearby work locations e.g. using spare offices, break out areas or meeting rooms; or
− rotating members of teams to work from home where they cannot be accommodated in the workplace; or
− staggering start times to reduce congestion within the office or to avoid peak public transport times.

Face coverings
In line with the Victorian Government advice, it is a condition of entry to our campuses that a face mask or covering is worn by all students, staff, and visitors to campus.
Staff will be required to wear their own personally supplied face mask, with some exceptions as directed by the government, such as for medical reasons. Satisfactory evidence to support an exception (such as documentation from a registered medical practitioner) should be carried at all times and produced when requested by an authorised officer of the University.
Permitted staff who remain on site must wear a mask at all times. Masks are optional when working alone in an individual office, however one will need to be worn, if others enter the office or you enter an open plan area.
Teaching staff are not required to wear a face mask while teaching, so long as 1.5 metre physical distancing can be met. However, a mask must be worn in between classes, while on campus and/or if determined by a risk assessment to do so.

Masks must also be worn to and from campus in line with the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) guidelines.

The University will supply masks:
- where the University has conducted a risk assessment and deemed that a surgical, or other grade, mask is required; and
- to Monash Residential Services (MRS) residents in Clayton and Peninsula.

**University wide safety measures**

The University is implementing a number of initiatives such as:
- Implementing physical distancing guidelines and signage for all learning, research, work and community spaces on campus. Each space has been reviewed for adherence with physical distancing laws and activities have been adjusted accordingly.
- Increasing cleaning on our campuses, including regular disinfection of high-traffic community spaces (including bathrooms and kitchens) and cleaning learning and research spaces in between each activity.
- Increasing hand sanitiser stations across our campuses.

See additional guidance set out in the OHS Return to Work guidelines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>EQUIPMENT TO SUPPORT WORKING FROM HOME</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Staff who are approved for a temporary working from home arrangement in response to COVID-19 are to use their existing laptop to work from home. In the event that they do not have a laptop, staff should contact the eSolutions service desk <a href="mailto:servicedesk@monash.edu">servicedesk@monash.edu</a> for a temporary laptop kit to be loaned for the duration of the Working from Home Period. This kit will include the items required to work from home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- For staff to work effectively home, it is recognised it may be necessary to supplement the technology available in their homes with University-owned IT equipment such as keyboards, monitors and docking stations. This excludes office furniture such as chairs and desks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Under no circumstances are staff to remove existing desktop computers or office furniture from work environments. The University must have access to its equipment in the event it needs to deploy equipment to other areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Do not order new equipment. eSolutions have loan laptops available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Under no circumstances is a Monash credit card to be used to purchase IT equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Additional equipment can be accessed through eSolutions and will be allocated on a priority basis. Requests should be sent to <a href="mailto:servicedesk@monash.edu">servicedesk@monash.edu</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- eSolutions have implemented a new process to record all University-owned IT equipment that has been relocated to allow staff to work from home and identified some key risks this presents to staff and the University.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Return of University equipment**

Upon our safe return to the workplace, all University-owned IT equipment must be returned in accordance with the following:
- Staff who borrowed IT equipment from their department/faculty (e.g. staff members work laptop, keyboards, monitors and docking stations) must be returned to the original location when the business unit returns to normal operations.
- Staff who borrowed IT equipment from eSolutions (e.g. temporary laptop kit or mobile device) must return all items within 30 days of the business unit returning to normal operations. eSolutions have tracked all loaned IT equipment, and will work with each department to ensure University assets are returned within this time frame. Please note that after 30 days any outstanding loan devices will be disabled for use and business units will be charged the full cost for such devices.
Expense reimbursement

- Any purchase of personal IT equipment or home office furniture are categorised as personal expenses and no claim for reimbursement by the University will be approved.
- The ATO has a comprehensive list of working from home items that you can claim on your tax return. This includes:
  - electricity expenses associated with heating, cooling and lighting the area from which you are working and running items you are using for work
  - cleaning costs for a dedicated work area
  - phone and internet expenses
  - computer consumables (for example, printer paper and ink) and stationery
  - home office equipment, including computers, printers, phones, furniture and furnishings
- Staff should seek their own taxation advice for claiming any deductions arising from such personal expenses. Staff may also refer to the ATO for further information.
- Where staff incur out of pocket expenses directly related to working from home for charges relating to broadband/data which are over and above their normal home use charges, these reasonable excess charges can be claimed through an expenditure claim form with appropriate evidence of the increased costs provided.
- Other reasonable expenses incurred by you which are directly related to carrying out your role, and which are not supported by the ATO, may be submitted for consideration of reimbursement by the University in accordance with the Corporate Credit Card and Reimbursements Procedure.

OHS risks and equipment damage

- Regularly check in on the wellbeing of your staff - both email and phone calls.
- Staff working from home should take regular breaks from the computer, get up and walk around and also practice these helpful desk exercises.
- When removing IT equipment practice safe manual handling and only take equipment that can safely be carried by one person (equipment should not weigh more than 10kg).
- Appropriate steps should be taken to mitigate the OHS risks of removal, including use of trolleys where necessary.
- IT equipment is fragile and can be easily damaged when not handled correctly or appropriately protected during removal.
- All University-funded IT equipment that is relocated must be returned to the original location when the University returns to normal operation.
- Damage to relocated IT equipment will be the responsibility of the faculty/division, noting that the end-user IT equipment is not insured against damage or loss.

RETURNING TO CAMPUS

Following campus reactivation, a formal WFH arrangement which existed before COVID-19 can continue in accordance with the agreed term. Refer to Working from Home Procedure.

We will accommodate working from home arrangements for the following staff where the current health advice is that they should continue to work remotely:

- Staff aged 70 years and over;
- Staff aged 65 and over with chronic medical conditions;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 50;
- Staff with chronic medical conditions or who are immunocompromised.

Arrangements for staff with carer responsibilities for an immunocompromised member of their household, will be considered on a case by case basis by your supervisor and Monash HR.

Whilst it will take some time to adjust to returning to campus, staff are expected to return to work (unless otherwise exempt) in accordance with University and government announcements.

Physical Distancing Practices

- When interacting with people, keep 1.5m distance between each other and avoid personal contact. Please don't shake hands.
- Maintain good hand, sneeze and cough hygiene. Wash hands regularly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- Limit food handling and sharing of food in the workplace. Eat lunch at a workstation/desk or outside rather than in the lunchroom.
- Regularly clean workstations.
- Considering the room size, meetings can still take place where physical distancing can occur.
- Meetings can also be held via video conferencing (zoom) or conference call.
- It may be sensible to have a hybrid face to face (accommodating appropriate physical social distancing) and zoom meeting for larger meeting sizes.
- Weather permitting, also consider alternative arrangements for large meetings or gatherings such as smaller repeat meetings (e.g. for staff updates) or meeting outside.

### HOME-SCHOOLING/CHILDCARE RESPONSIBILITIES

**Home-schooling and childcare/kindergarten closures**

Staff working from home who are having difficulties balancing their home-schooling/childcare and work commitments, may access one day per week carer’s leave (pro rata for part-time staff) from their existing accrued sick leave credits until further notice.

**Other flexibility options**

The University will be flexible in order to assist staff to assist with home-schooling/childcare responsibilities, subject to staff being able to deliver the full range of duties and outputs over a week, in accordance with cl.16.1.1, Schedule 6 – The COVID-19 Schedule.

Where staff are not able to fulfill the full requirements of their role as a result of home-schooling/childcare responsibilities but have the capacity to perform a percentage of their duties/percentage of total hours, we ask staff to:

1. Temporarily reduce their fraction of employment to reflect the amount of work they are able to perform, in accordance with cl.16.1.2, Schedule 6 – The COVID-19 Schedule; or
2. Temporarily reduce their fraction and at their election, top up salary by using accrued annual leave or long service leave to maintain their normal salary (at their normal fraction); or
3. Alternatively, where the staff member’s preference is to not perform any duties, they should consider applying for annual or long service leave (where accrued) or purchasing additional leave in accordance with cl. 16.1.3, Schedule 6 – The COVID-19 Schedule.

- In any request by a staff member for one of the above flexible work arrangements, the University will continue to pay superannuation and leave accruals on their substantive fraction in accordance with Schedule 6 – The COVID-19 Schedule.

- Where, as a result of home-schooling/childcare responsibilities, staff are not able to carry out their duties, staff should apply for annual leave, long service leave or leave without pay. **(Note: requirement to exhaust all accrued paid leave before applying for LWOP is not a prerequisite where the absence is a direct result of home-schooling/childcare due to COVID-19 restrictions)**

- Staff with home-schooling/childcare responsibilities, should discuss options with their supervisor.

### IF STAFF ARE FEELING UNWELL

Everyone is responsible for protecting their own health as well as the health and safety of others.

Staff who are feeling unwell and showing COVID-19 symptoms, even if very mild, should not come to work and are strongly encouraged to get tested for COVID-19.

COVID-19 symptoms include:

- Runny nose
- Loss of sense of smell
- Cough or difficulty breathing
- Sore or scratchy throat
- Fever, chills or sweats

- Staff who come to work and are feeling unwell may be directed by their supervisor to go home and not to return until they are fit to do so. The staff member is required to apply for sick leave unless they are well enough to work with the approval of their supervisor.

- If a staff member is unable to perform their work due to illness, they must notify their supervisor and apply for any accrued sick leave.

- If a staff member has exhausted their accrued sick leave, they may take annual leave or long service leave (where accrued).
- If a staff member subsequently tests positive with COVID-19, any sick leave taken will be substituted by isolation leave. See additional guidance set out in the COVID-19 Staff Leave Guidelines.

### A STAFF MEMBER APPEARS TO BE UNWELL
Everyone is responsible for protecting their own health as well as the health and safety of others.
- Where a staff member is displaying COVID-19 symptoms, supervisors should respectfully and in an appropriate private setting, talk to the staff member about their health. It is reasonable to ask them for an explanation for their symptoms e.g. asthma or hay-fever.
- If the supervisor is concerned that the staff member is unwell and displaying COVID-19 symptoms, they may direct the staff member to go home and not to return until they are fit to do so. The staff member is required to apply for sick leave if they are too unwell to perform their role adequately from home. Contact Access HR for further advice.

### OTHER RESOURCES
**Monash Resources**
- Employee Assistance Program is available 24/7 to all Monash staff on 1300 360 364.
- Monash Health & Wellbeing Services
- Monash Counselling Services
- Monash Student Support (incl. Financial Assistance and Student Emergency Grants Scheme, International Student Support, and Financial support for Indigenous students)

**Emotional Support & Wellbeing**
- LifeLine (Call 13 11 14, or access support online)
- Beyond Blue (Call 1300 224 636, or access support online)
- Kids Helpline (Call 1800 55 1800, or access support online)
- Headspace
- Reach Out
- LGBTIQA+ specialised: Switchboard, Thorne Harbour Health

**Other Information**
- For HR guides refer to the COVID-19 HR Resources webpage.
- For OHS matters, contact the helpline on (03) 990 51016 or ohshelpline@monash.edu
- If you have questions relating to this guide, contact Access HR on (03) 990 20400 or hr@monash.edu
- The Department of Health & Human Services - 1300 651 160