



HOLY FAMILY SERVICES

*A Ministry of the Sisters of
the Holy Family of Nazareth*

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Dear Families

As you would be aware, the Delta Strain of COVID 19 that has Greater Sydney on 'stay at home orders' is highly contagious and is spread very easily, particularly in indoor settings. Blacktown Local Government Area (LGA) where Holy Family Services (HFS) is located has now been placed on 'stay in the LGA' orders and are at higher risk with an increase in the number of cases in the LGA.

I appreciate how difficult it must be for families not being able to visit in person, however as it is the resident's Home, no one in Greater Sydney is allowed to visit others outside their own home or have people, including family, in their own home. As such, visiting at HFS is only via prearranged window visits, skype/zoom or phone calls. If required, end of life or other essential visits are discussed with the NSW Public Health unit prior to being approved. Only essential workers are currently allowed into the Home.

I am writing to update you on measures we have been taking at HFS during this outbreak of COVID 19 to keep residents safe and continue to provide for their social, spiritual, clinical, psychological and physical needs.

Vaccination

Residents – of our 130 current residents, all who have wanted to be vaccinated for COVID 19 have had either one (15 residents) or two vaccinations (102). The other rest have chosen not to be vaccinated. The 15 will have a second vaccination on Tuesday 27th July.

Staff – approximately 40% of working staff have had both vaccinations and another 45% will have their second on Tuesday 27th July. The remaining 15% are predominantly on maternity leave, long service leave, or casual employees. All remaining staff may be required to have a first dose of vaccine by 17th September as per Commonwealth Government advice if they want to continue to work, however this is not yet legislated. As I mentioned in my last update, we have had great difficulty obtaining vaccines for the staff due to the Government roll out program, however we are pleased that our lobbying has resulted in getting an in-reach clinic who return on Tuesday 27th July for second doses mentioned above.

Outbreak Planning & Infection Control

Outbreak Planning – we have a Pandemic Risk Plan, and Outbreak Plan and 'A First 24hours in an Outbreak Plan'. These plans outline both prevention strategies and procedures in the event of an outbreak. They are updated regularly and they have been audited on a number of occasions by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission and the NSW Health Western Sydney Public Health Unit.

Infection Control – we have an Infection Control Lead (ICL) who oversees our Infection Control Program at HFS. All staff wear masks at all times in the Home. We have additional cleaning occurring regularly of high touch surfaces. All staff have completed handwashing competencies. We are maintaining at least 1.5m social distancing when not providing personal care. Activities are still occurring, however we are doing mostly 1 to 1 activities. We are also providing meals in rooms or if residents come to the dining rooms, we only have one person per table and we limit the number of people in the rooms. The Sisters are providing 1 to 1 pastoral and spiritual care.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – we have plenty of stock of PPE for current needs and in the case of an outbreak.

Residents with symptoms – if a resident has any acute respiratory symptoms they are immediately isolated in their room and an infection control station set up outside their room. They are seen by their GP and a swab for COVID and other respiratory illnesses is collected. We send a list of all symptomatic residents to Western Sydney Public Health Unit daily.

Staffing

Single Site Arrangements – The Government have introduced single service working arrangements for aged care staff in this current lockdown. This means aged care staff can only work at one aged care home and we are required to cover all their total working hours. Of 21 staff who work in more than one aged care home, 15 have chosen to stay working with HFS, meaning that we have plenty of staff to cover all shifts.

Staff with symptoms or possible/actual close or casual contact – staff are aware that if they have any symptoms at all that they are not to come to work. They are aware that we will support them if they are out of leave. They are also required to check prior coming to work the case locations on NSW Health Website so that if they or the people they live with have been a close or casual contact they are not to attend work. All staff are screened on entry to work and all staff sign in via the NSW QR code and our online Mirus Works program to ensure tracking. Staff who live in SW Sydney are required to show a negative COVID test every 3 days prior to attending work. We send a list of all symptomatic staff to Western Sydney Public Health Unit daily.

Administration Team – due to the transmissibility of the Delta strain of COVID 19, the Admin team are rotating working from home so that essential operating functions could continue if there is an outbreak. For the past 16 months we have been and will continue to review the Government and Health circulars and information updates daily and implement the changes as required.

Staff Separation and Tracking – we have 4 Homes in HFS – Brother Albert Home, Mary Home, Joseph Home and Anne, Luke and Gabriel Home. Each Home has its own staff room now so staff don't have to leave the area. We roster staff to reduce the cross over of staff by having the same staff in each designation working in one Home wherever possible. This is not always possible on night and evening shifts where the Registered Nurse (RN), however all staff movements are tracked through our care management documentation system and roster. Catering, cleaning and laundry staff are also allocated sections to limit in their movements in the Home.

NSW Government Orders – below are the current orders for those in Greater Sydney

Temporary stay at home restrictions in Greater Sydney

People from Greater Sydney (or who have been in Greater Sydney since 21 June and it has been less than 14 days since they were last in Greater Sydney) cannot leave their residence unless they have a reasonable excuse.

Reasonable excuses include:

- obtaining food or other goods and services
- Only one person in the household can leave their residence to obtain food, goods or services once a day. This restriction does not apply if it is not reasonably practicable (e.g. if a parent needs to take their dependent child to the shops with them)
- Browsing in shops is prohibited and not a reasonable excuse to leave your home
- travelling to attend work or education (where it is not possible to do at home)
- exercise outdoors in groups of no more than 2 (excluding members of the same household):
- People must stay in their Local Government Area or within 10 kilometres of their home for exercise and outdoor recreation
- No carpooling between non-household members is permitted if a person is travelling to exercise or engage in outdoor recreation
- A person over 18 must carry documentary evidence showing their address and show it to Police on request
- obtaining medical care or supplies – including obtaining a COVID-19 vaccination
- providing care or assistance to a vulnerable person
- In Greater Sydney: attending a funeral of no more than 10 persons (excluding the person conducting the service and any other person necessary for the conduct and preparation of the service). A funeral cannot occur in a place of residence.
- Outside of Greater Sydney: if the person is a spouse (including de facto), parent, child, or sibling of the deceased.

Taking a holiday is not a reasonable excuse. Attending a wedding is not a reasonable excuse.

A person over 18 who is leaving Greater Sydney must carry evidence showing their address and produce it to a police officer on request.

Additional restrictions apply to those who live in for [Fairfield, Liverpool, Canterbury-Bankstown, Blacktown and Cumberland Local Government Areas](#).

Questions or Suggestions

As always, if you have any questions or suggestions for improvement, please contact either Natalie Fraser (General Manager Aged Care), Anna Rutkowski (Manager Clinical Care) or myself.

Regards



Alexandra Davis
Chief Executive Officer