

Infectious Disease and Illness Policy & Procedures

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| Policy Name | Infectious Disease and Illness Policy & Procedures |
| Previously | <i>COVID-19 Policy and Procedures for In-Person Events</i> |
| Effective Date | 19 December 2024 |
| Date Last Reviewed | November 2025 |
| Scheduled Review Date | November 2026 |
| Responsible Person | CEO |

Summary of Key Points

Policy Purpose and Scope

- **Purpose:** This policy aims to ensure the health and safety of National Youth Science Forum (NYSF) staff, participants, volunteers, and hosts during In-Person Events, including residential programs, in response to Infectious Diseases or Illness.
- **Scope:** The policy applies to NYSF employees, volunteers, program participants, hosts, and event attendees at any NYSF event, program, or activity that is held in-person or face-to-face, including residential programs.
- **Government Directives:** This policy may be overridden by government directives and laws, which take precedence. Government websites should be referred to for up-to-date information on health regulations.

COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements for employees and volunteers attending NYSF residential programs

- **Employees and Volunteers:** Unless an exemption applies, NYSF employees and volunteers who attend residential program(s) as part of their role must confirm to NYSF via the [COVID Vaccine Declaration form](#) every 12 months that they have Up-To-Date COVID-19 Vaccination Status. Failure to do so may result in alternative duties or, in the case of NYSF employees, the employee taking leave with or without pay during residential program(s).
- **Program Participants, Hosts, and Event Attendees:** NYSF does not require proof of vaccination for entry to NYSF In-Person Events, including residential programs, but attendees must comply with federal, state/territory, and host vaccination requirements.

Procedures

- **Measures Taken by NYSF:** NYSF will provide a safe environment, information, and facilities for hygiene. It will integrate health and safety into decision-making, monitor health issues, and take health concerns seriously. NYSF may require attendees to do a NYSF-supplied rapid antigen test (RAT)

before attending and/or during In-Person Events and may require attendees to confirm a negative RAT prior to entry or during the In-Person Event in order to remain at the In-Person Event. Refusal to undertake a RAT may lead to exclusion from In-Person Events.

- **Measures Taken by Attendees:** Attendees must follow this policy, take care of their health and others', cooperate with NYSF and hosts, not attend if unwell, follow quarantine and testing requirements, and practice good hygiene. Attendees must disclose if they are a close contact before attending NYSF programs. Attendees must also comply with any extra rules imposed by venue hosts.
- **Infectious Disease or Illness: Diagnosis or Symptoms:** In the case of an infectious disease or illness diagnosis, or display of symptoms which, in the opinion of NYSF staff, is indicative of an infectious disease or illness, attendees must inform NYSF, not attend In-Person Events, and follow government advice. They can return to events after their exclusion period has ended. Refer to Appendix 1 for exclusion periods.
- **Infectious Disease or Illness at Residential Programs:** Special measures are in place for residential programs to minimise transmission of an infectious disease or illness. Early departure due to illness does not result in refunds and families are strongly encouraged to organise travel insurance privately to mitigate this risk. NYSF is not liable for costs associated with changed travel arrangements.
- **Travel:** Use of private transport to travel to and from programs is encouraged, but if not possible, attendees should follow state/territory health guidelines.
- **Preventative Measures:** All attendees should take preventative measures to avoid the transmission of an infectious disease or illness, including maintaining distance, avoiding physical contact, and following hygiene practices, including handwashing and using hand sanitiser. Attendees must wear masks if mandated by the government, or under the direction of event venue hosts or NYSF staff or volunteers. Close contacts may need to be isolated or sent home. Refer to Appendix 1 for guidelines.
- **Failure to Comply:** Failure to follow the policy may result in removal from the event.
- Where relevant, vaccination against other diseases (e.g., influenza, whooping cough, measles) is strongly encouraged in line with government health department guidelines. The NYSF also complies with any additional requirements or directions issued by the relevant state or territory health authority in which a program or activity takes place.

Definitions

- **“In-Person Event”** refers to any NYSF event, program, or activity that is held in-person or face-to-face, including residential programs.
- **“Up-To-Date COVID-19 Vaccination Status”** means:
 - one dose of a one dose COVID-19 vaccine or two doses of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine; and
 - further COVID-19 booster vaccinations every 12 months, or every 6 months if 75 years or older.
- **“Close Contact”** refers to someone who lives with a person confirmed to have COVID-19 or has spent more than 4 hours with a person confirmed COVID-19 positive in a household or household like setting including accommodation or care facilities.

Policy

Purpose

1. NYSF takes the welfare and well-being of our staff, participants, volunteers, and hosts seriously. This policy outlines NYSF's policies and procedures to ensure the health and safety of any participants, staff, volunteers, and hosts involved in NYSF In-Person Events in response to an infectious disease or illness.
2. This policy and procedures apply to NYSF employees, volunteers, program participants, hosts, and other event attendees.

Government Directives and the Law

3. This policy represents NYSF's approach to responding to an infectious disease or illness. However, this policy is in all respects subject to any overriding government directive or law. For example, if the government mandates that you must remain at home and gatherings are not permitted, then such directive overrides this policy.
4. We refer you to the various government websites (both federal and state/territory) which contain up-to-date information on government policies.
5. In addition to government regulations and this policy and procedures, all persons must abide by any additional health rules set by individual event or visit hosts, transport operators, accommodation or catering providers.
6. Details of all state and territory government health departments where you can find information on current health rules can be accessed on the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care website: www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/local-state-and-territory-health-departments

COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements for Employees and Volunteers Attending NYSF Residential Programs

Employees and Volunteers

7. Unless an exemption applies, NYSF employees and volunteers who attend residential program(s) as part of their role must confirm to NYSF every 12 months that they have Up-To-Date COVID-19 Vaccination Status. Failure to do so may result in the person being provided with alternative duties or, in the case of NYSF employees, the employee taking leave with or without pay during the residential program(s).
8. Any vaccination or health information provided to NYSF in accordance with this policy will be treated confidentially by NYSF, handled in accordance with NYSF's Privacy Policy, and will only be used to determine compliance with this policy and to enable NYSF to undertake statistical analysis with respect to vaccine coverage amongst its employees and volunteers.
9. NYSF understands that some NYSF employees and volunteers may not be able to receive a COVID-19 vaccination due to a relevant disability, medical condition or other valid reason. In such circumstances, an NYSF employee or volunteer may apply to NYSF via email at nysf@nysf.edu.au for an exemption to obtaining the COVID-19 vaccine on the basis they are unable, due to a disability, medical condition or other valid reason, to be COVID-19 vaccinated. Applications should include any relevant documentation (e.g., medical certification).
10. The NYSF will respond to a request for an exemption via email and confirm any safeguards or alternative duties.

11. Employees and volunteers seeking an exemption must re-apply for an exemption every 12 months. If employees or volunteers wish to apply for an exemption, please contact nysf@nysf.edu.au.

Program Participants, Hosts, and other Event Attendees

12. NYSF does not require proof of COVID-19 vaccination as a condition of entry to NYSF events for participants, hosts, or other event attendees. However, all attendees must comply with vaccination requirements of the federal government, the relevant state/territory, and the host of the premises where an In-Person Event is located.
13. Program participants, hosts, and other event attendees may be required to confirm to NYSF that they have Up-To-Date COVID-19 Vaccination Status to enter the premises of an In-Person Event if vaccination is required by the federal government, the relevant state/territory, or by the host of the premises where the event is located.
14. NYSF will endeavour to advise participants, hosts, and other event attendees of any changes in vaccine requirements prior to the event and as early as possible.
15. Where possible, we will ask that the host handles vaccination requirements with participants or attendees directly. However, NYSF may need to confirm your Up-To-Date COVID-19 Vaccination Status for the purpose of enrolling you in a specific In-Person Event if the host, content providers, or relevant state government requires attendees to be vaccinated. If you do not confirm your Up-To-Date COVID-19 Vaccination Status, you may not be able to enrol in or attend that event.
16. Any health information collected (e.g., RAT results, illness disclosures) will be handled confidentially and in accordance with NYSF's Privacy Policy. Please refer to our Privacy Policy for more information about how we handle and protect your personal information, including vaccination information.

Procedures

Measures taken by NYSF

17. To promote the health and safety of those participating in In-Person Events, NYSF will:
- Endeavour to provide and maintain a safe environment during the In-Person Events for all staff, participants, volunteers, and hosts;
 - Provide information, instructions and supervision so far as we can to promote health and safety;
 - Provide access to adequate facilities to practise good hygiene;
 - Integrate work health and safety issues and risk management processes into all of our decision-making and risk analysis;
 - Put in place mechanisms for monitoring work health and safety issues; and
 - Take any health concerns raised by you seriously.
18. To promote the health and safety of those participating in In-Person Events, NYSF may require attendees to do a NYSF-supplied rapid antigen test (RAT) before attending or during In-Person Events and may require attendees to confirm a negative RAT prior to entry or during the In-Person Event in order to remain at the In-Person Event. Refusal to undertake a RAT may lead to exclusion from In-Person Events.

Measures taken by Attendees

19. While participating in any In-Person Event hosted by the NYSF and its partners, you must:

- Follow all aspects of this policy;
- Take reasonable care to ensure your own health and safety, and that of other participants, volunteers, staff, and visit hosts;
- Not place others at risk or jeopardise the safety of the environment by any act or omission, such as participating in an event while unwell;
- Follow any procedures or protocols that NYSF staff, the visit host organisation or NYSF volunteers on the day, implement at any time;
- Cooperate with NYSF and the visit host organisation to meet our statutory work health and safety obligations;
- Comply with any additional health requirements imposed by program venues, transport providers, or accommodation providers;
- Observe social distancing where possible;
- Disclose if you are a close contact;
- Not attend an In-Person Event if you feel unwell;
- Not attend an In-Person Event if you are required to isolate or quarantine in accordance with government directives;
- Not attend an In-Person Event if you have had a rapid antigen test (RAT) or any other test for an infectious disease or illness and not yet received a negative result;
- Practise cough etiquette (cough away from other people; cough or sneeze into your elbow; sanitise your hands after sneezing or coughing on them); and
- Wash your hands thoroughly and regularly.

Infectious Disease or Illness Diagnosis or Symptoms

20. If you are diagnosed with an infectious disease or illness, you must:

- Immediately inform the NYSF;
- Not attend an NYSF In-Person Event under any circumstances; and
- Follow any relevant government advice.

21. If you think that you may have symptoms of an infectious disease or illness or are awaiting results of a test, you should immediately do the following:

- Inform the NYSF;
- Not attend an NYSF In-Person Event under any circumstances;
- Isolate and wait for the results (if applicable). Continue to follow government and medical advice and instruction from NYSF Staff and Volunteers or visit hosts (e.g., you may be asked to wear a mask).
- You should not attend an In-Person Event until you have completed the exclusion period. Refer to Appendix 1 for details.

22. If you are feeling unwell while at an NYSF In-Person Event, you must immediately notify an NYSF staff member or volunteer. If NYSF forms a reasonable view that you are unwell, you will be directed to isolate or depart the program. NYSF will work with the event hosts to determine if the visit can resume.

23. You are welcome to return to NYSF In-Person Events if you have completed your exclusion period and requirements. Refer to Appendix 1 for details.

Infectious Disease or Illness at Residential Programs

24. NYSF recognises the increased risk of transmission of an infectious disease or illness during residential programs.
25. To minimise the likelihood of transmission between program participants, staff, volunteers, and other program stakeholders, including vulnerable attendees, NYSF will take appropriate measures in response to attendees displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or illness. Such measures may include:
- Mandatory testing (where applicable test exists);
 - Isolation in Program accommodation until departure or until symptoms resolve (where departure cannot be easily arranged);
 - Departure from the Program at earliest convenience, in consultation with parent/guardian and having regard for the health and safety of the attendee;
 - Provision of available appropriate medical care, including medical consultation.
26. NYSF may require attendees to do a NYSF-supplied rapid antigen test (RAT) before attending or during residential program(s) and may require attendees to confirm a negative RAT prior to entry or during residential program(s) in order to remain at the program. Refusal to undertake a RAT may result in exclusion from In-Person Events.
27. Where a participant departs from a program early due to symptoms or diagnosis of an infectious disease or illness, or does not fully participate in the program, no refund of any program fee or reimbursement for any costs incurred will be made. NYSF is not liable for costs associated with changed travel arrangements. To mitigate this risk, the NYSF strongly encourages families to consider taking out travel insurance to cover their costs in the event of illness or injury.

Travel

28. We encourage staff, participants, volunteers, and hosts to minimise their use of public transport to travel to and from NYSF In-Person Events as is practicable. At all times, travel must comply with any state, territory, or federal government restrictions.
29. If you choose to travel to and from an NYSF in-person program event, we encourage you to travel by means of private transport to limit the potential of contracting an infectious disease or illness.
30. If you are unable to travel to and from an event by means of private transport, please always use appropriate social distancing and hygiene practices as advised by your state or territory health department.

Preventative Measures

Social distancing and good hygiene

31. Whilst at an NYSF event, we encourage reasonable social distancing wherever possible:
- Try to maintain a distance of at least 1.5 metres between you and others wherever possible in your group, including when walking, sitting, standing, and when eating;
 - Refrain from close physical contact such as shaking hands or hugs;

- Enjoy social time during a visit in the open air or somewhere with good ventilation;
- Promote and apply good hand washing, sneeze, and cough hygiene;
- Use hand sanitiser frequently (before and after eating, using the toilet, touching surfaces in public areas, and coughing or sneezing);
- Limit food handling and do not share food.

32. Hand sanitiser and soap will be available at most host sites; however, you are strongly advised to carry your own supply.

Hand washing

33. Washing your hands is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs:

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap;
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails;
- Wash your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds.;
- Rinse your hands well under clean, running water; and
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Face masks

34. Face masks provide an extra layer of protection against infectious diseases or illnesses.

35. In settings where face masks are government mandated, are a requirement of the event venue host or directed by the NYSF, all attendees must wear an appropriate face mask per the government, venue host or NYSF requirements.

36. In settings where face masks are not required, individuals may choose to wear a face mask for their personal protection. NYSF respects the right of any person to wear a face mask, and will support them to do so, including providing them with the opportunity self-exclude from any activities which may require removal of masks. Participants, staff members and volunteers will not be treated unfavourably or discriminated against for choosing to wear a face mask.

Failure to Comply

37. Any person attending an In-Person Event who fails to follow this policy and any further directives relating to this policy may be asked to leave the event and return home.

Contact

38. You can discuss this policy with the NYSF via nysf@nysf.edu.au. You should also refer to your NYSF agreement for information about how an infectious disease or illness may affect your attendance at a specific program.

Appendix 1 – Infectious Disease and Illness Exclusion Requirements

39. The below table outlines the exclusion requirements for common infectious diseases and illnesses and less-common infectious diseases and illnesses with specific exclusion requirements. For infectious

diseases and illnesses not listed, exclusion requirement should follow medical practitioner advice and current government health department guidelines. Close contacts must follow relevant government directives and must disclose if they are a close contact before attending NYSF programs. Attendees must also comply with any extra rules imposed by venue hosts.

| Condition | Exclusion period for person with condition | Exclusion of close contacts |
|---|--|--|
| Chickenpox | Exclude until all blisters have dried, approximately 5 days. | Exclude anyone with immune deficiencies (e.g., leukaemia) or receiving chemotherapy, for their own protection. |
| Conjunctivitis | Exclude until all discharge from eyes has ceased. | Not excluded |
| COVID-19 | Exclude until a negative test result and your symptoms have resolved. | Monitor for symptoms and test if symptoms present. |
| Diarrhoeal Illness or worms | Exclude until vomiting and diarrhoea has ceased for 48 hours, if an outbreak of gastroenteritis. Or after 24 hours for all other diarrhoeal illnesses. | Not excluded |
| Influenza and Influenza-like Illnesses | Exclude until well. | Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Chief Health Officer. |
| Measles | Exclude for 4 days after the onset of rash. | Unimmunised contact should be excluded until 14 days after the first appearance of a rash. |
| Meningococcal Infection | Exclude until after treatment is completed. | Not excluded if receiving carrier eradication therapy. |
| Mumps | Exclude for 5 days, or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner). | Not excluded |
| Poliovirus Infection | Exclude for at least 14 days from onset. Can re-admit after receiving a medical certificate of recovery. | Not excluded |
| Rubella (German Measles) | Exclude until fully recovered or 4 days after the onset of rash. | Not excluded |
| Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) | Exclude until a medical certificate is produced. | Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Chief Health Officer. |
| Tuberculosis (excluding latent tuberculosis) | Exclude until a medical certificate is produced, stating that the individual is no longer considered infectious. | Not excluded |
| Whooping Cough (Pertussis) | Exclude until 5 days after an appropriate antibiotic treatment or for 21 days from the onset of coughing. | Not excluded |