

# **Infectious Disease and Pandemic Policy**

## **PURPOSE**

*It is the goal of Promised Future, Inc. is to provide support and services to families and children in an environment that is as safe and healthy as possible. We will make every effort to continue to operate our services and protect employees and clients/families from emergency situations including pandemics.*

**In the event of a pandemic, our goal is to remain available as much as possible until authorities dictate otherwise. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for Promised Future to mitigate risk and prepare for the potential impacts of a pandemic from reduced services to potential closures.**

## **WHAT IS A PANDEMIC?**

A pandemic is a global event. A flu pandemic starts with a new strain of virus to which people have little or no immunity. To be considered a pandemic, the new virus must be able to spread easily from person to person and cause illness in many of the people who are infected. When it spreads around the world, it is called a pandemic. The World Health Organization (WHO) sets the pandemic alert level globally. The pandemic level is set based on the spread of the virus, not the severity of the illness.

## **POLICY**

Promised Future, Inc., is required to follow guidelines set out by the Public Health Agency of Canada, Ontario Ministry of Health, and the Regional Public Health/Medical Officer of Health for proper infection prevention. Our responsibility is to ensure infection prevention practices are carried out properly to prevent the spread of illness among employees, placement students, children, and volunteers. Policies and procedures are assessed and monitored to ensure our employees, placement students, and volunteers are consistently and carefully carrying them out.

Promised Future, Inc., will ensure our pandemic plan and service continuity/interruption plans align with the (municipal/regional plans)

## **IMPACT PLANNING**

Promised Future will review and plan for the following:

- Sudden increase in employee and child absenteeism
- Maintaining staffing ratios
- Interruption of supplies and services (food, paper product, cleaning products)
- Regular program services and supplies scaled back or not available
- Maintenance services reduced or cancelled
- Administration activities are changed, reduced, or cancelled
- Cross training additional employees to ensure organizational stability in case the Supervisor is unable to be in charge
- Reduction of outside supports (consultants, children's services etc.)
- Temporarily or permanently laying off employees
- Potential closure (short term and long term)
- Financial loss due to decreased revenue, funding, and increased or additional costs
- Potential changes or additional duties for employees
- Spread of the infection within the centre and within the community
- Communication of the plan with employees, families/clients, and community
- Re-opening of the organization after a shutdown
- Occupational health and safety implications

## **INFECTION PREVENTION**

Promised Future, Inc., will take all steps required to ensure a safe and healthy environment in our program including:

- Early identification of ill employees and children
- Isolating children who become ill, during the program, until they are picked up
- Sending employees home should they become ill during the day
- Sending children home if they have been exposed to an identified contagion
- Sending staff home if they have been exposed to an identified contagion
- Following all governmental/public health recommendations related to removing staff, children, students, volunteers and parents from the program if they have been exposed to a potential health risk.
- Requiring an employee, placement student who has been placed in quarantine or has a contagious illness to acquire a fit for duty or medical clearance before they return to the organization.

- Requiring an employee, placement student who has travelled or been in contact with someone who has travelled to areas deemed a health risk to follow government guidelines regarding self-isolation
- Requiring employees to sign a declaration stating they have not traveled during a pandemic or have been in contact with someone who has travelled to areas deemed a health risk or travel advisory.

## **EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION**

The Owner/Supervisor will oversee implement Promised Future's emergency communication plan Internal communication to all employees, families/clients will be by (email, posted on the Promised Future's Website, posted on the Bulletin Board entrance/exits, etc.)

Information will be specific to the nature of the situation:

- Safety and well-being of everyone at the centre/program
- Reduction of services and programs
- Changes in delivery of services and program
- Shutdown of the organization
- Refund/no refund policy to be shared with clients
- Status updates
- Evacuation plan/location
- Reopening of the organization
- External communication to the municipal, regional, licensing bodies, and the community (possibly media) will be by email and/or phone.

## **AUTHORITY TO SHUTDOWN THE ORGANIZATION**

Promised Future, Inc., will follow all directions and recommendations from Public Health officials and the Provincial/Federal Government should a pandemic be declared.

The Public Health Act and The Emergency Measures Act authorize all levels of government to order a shutdown of services during a pandemic.

## **PROCEDURES**

Promised Future, Inc., will proactively develop a contact list of alternatives to provide supports and services to the centre. The list of names and contact information will be kept by the Supervisor

- Supply Staffing
- To deliver supplies (cleaning, program, personal protection equipment (PPE), etc.)
- To deliver food
- To provide cleaning services
- To authorize funds to acquire emergency supplies

If a pandemic is declared and the organization remains open:

- Secure staffing to maintain ratios and safety utilizing all available, supply, or an outside agency staff
- Ensure additional staff are available to provide relief where required
- Modify shifts where required
- Identify the program that can be modified to accommodate possible increased or decreased needs
- Ensuring shared spaces and structures can be cleaned and disinfected
- Secure additional cleaning supplies, routine-care supplies, and program supplies
- Ensure extra personal protection supplies are available
- Ensure policies and procedures are updated including health and safety
- Ensure food service/delivery is secure
- Secure/access reserve funding for additional expenses
- Ensure families/clients are informed as per the organization's communication plan
- Ensure any other reporting requirements (licensing, municipal, etc.) are done

If the organization is ordered to close:

- If the centre is open all parents will be contacted immediately by various means (email/phone calls/texts to pick up their children)
- Provide a letter or send out an email with specific details including refund/no refund policy
- Ensure families/clients who are absent are informed
- Inform the required regulatory bodies

- Inform all employees who are not present
- Initiate emergency closure plan
- Ensure all confidential information, records, and files are secured and locked
- Implement business continuity plan

### **PANDEMIC BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN**

Pandemics will have an impact on the business continuity of the organization and may not be evident immediately however, it is important to have a plan to deal with the financial losses due to decreased revenues and increased or additional costs. It is important for Promised Future, Inc., to continue to manage basic functions should the organization face reduced operations or complete closure. The purpose of developing a business continuity plan is to identify critical areas that require immediate decisions to reduce/minimize the financial risk to the organization. To ensure Promised Future, Inc., will be able to carry on operations in the event of a disaster or pandemic, the Promised Future, Inc., Board of Directors will decide what organizational functions are critical to maintain, and which services or programs can be postponed or cancelled.

The following areas will require decisions to be made in the best interest of Promised Future, Inc., and its families/clients based on the length of limited services or complete closure.

- Operating Costs
- Payroll obligations (short-term)
- Temporary Layoffs (refer to Extended Closure/Layoff Policy)
- Depending on the financial circumstances of the organization at the time a mandatory closure is declared, the organization will have to assess whether it is economically feasible to continue paying staff for a limited period of time not exceeding one week prior to laying them off
- Possibility of employee's working from home (completing documentation, program plans)
- Receiving grants and subsidies
- Collecting fees
- Payment of rent
- Payment of utilities (phone, internet, hydro etc.)
- Payment of suppliers and services (food, etc.)

### **PREPARING FOR POSSIBLE SHUTDOWN**

In the case of a mandatory shutdown, an off-site office will be set up by the Director with the log-in and password to access information from the cloud along with a hardcopy of the data on (laptop, hard drive back-up discs) off site.

A binder and an electronic file of essential services and contacts is ready to be taken off-site and includes:

- Written instructions on how to access essential services
- How to set up remote access to the organization's computer, emails, website, phone system
- Contact information for the Board Members/Owner, Licensing Advisor
- Contact information, account numbers, and passwords for Financial/Banking Institution
- Contact information and policy for the Insurance Company
- Contact information for the Accountant, Bookkeeper
- Ensuring continued access to payroll, finances, and accounting systems
- Current list of families/clients
- Current list of employees
- Current list of suppliers, services, and service agreements
- Keys
- Any additional documents/records that are vital to the continuing functions the organization

### **SECURING RECORDS AND BACK-UP OF ALL INFORMATION**

- Ensure all records, documents, and computer files are backed-up both to the cloud and to a hard drive
- Keep a back-up copy of the computer's operating system, and critical software off-site
- Ensure all filing cabinets are locked
- Ensure the office is locked down
- Ensure the facilities are locked down

### **COMMUNICATION AND MONITORING**

Promised Future, Inc. will establish the following system to communicate with employees and with clients/families. The organization will provide timely updates regarding the status of the closure by email and on our website. Promised Future will monitor information and updates from the local Officers of Health, and the Provincial Government.

## **RECOVERY**

Promised Future will follow the directions of the Government, Public Health, and the school boards regarding re-opening the centre once the shutdown has been lifted.

The Board of Directors will meet regarding establishing priorities and assess what needs to be done to restore the premises, resume services and program that was interrupted or affected by the pandemic.

Promised Future will review our Risk Assessment and take into consideration:

- Possible changes in staffing/children ratios
- Clients/parents who do not return
- Changes in enrolment patterns
- Increase or reduction in space requirements
- Additional costs in requiring new personal protection equipment, sanitizing equipment, cleaning services etc.
- Developing procedures for drop off and pick up in line with physical distancing measures outlined by Public Health
- Reviewing policies and procedures to reflect any updating requirements under the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour, and the Ministry of Education

**The Supervisor will ensure all updated policies are in place in all relevant manuals.**

Under the Health and Safety Act, the obligation to provide a safe and healthy work environment includes:

- Ensuring the premises have been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before re-opening the centre
- The Supervisor will confirm with the Board of Directors once the premises are ready to be opened
- Ensure critical supplies (cleaning products, disposable gloves, face masks etc.) are re-stocked to protect both staff and children
- Recall employees to review policies around changes in routines, cleaning protocols, ill children, and sick leave policy for staff
- Have employees read and sign return to work declaration stating they have not traveled during a pandemic nor have they been in contact with someone who has travelled to areas deemed a health risk or have a travel advisory

## **BEST PRACTICES**

**Families/Clients Returning to Promised Future, Inc.**

- We will send out a letter/email/video, welcoming families/clients and thanking them for their understanding during a very difficult and challenging time.
- Details will include information regarding start dates and what has changed
- Confirm and share with families the new practices that will be put in place regarding how suspected illnesses will be handled.
- Review and update policies in the Parent Handbook as required
- Prior to starting, all families must read and sign a return declaration stating they have not traveled during a pandemic or have been in contact with someone who has traveled to areas deemed a health risk or have a travel advisory.

***Promised Future, Inc., will review this policy and make adjustments as required***