

WHS Health Policies

Communicable Disease Protocols

At Generocity Church, we are committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all our staff, volunteers, and congregation members. This section outlines our standards and procedures for managing communicable diseases.

Definition and Scope

1. Definition:

- Communicable diseases are illnesses caused by pathogens (such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites) that can be spread from person to person through various means, including direct contact, airborne transmission, or contact with contaminated surfaces.

2. Scope:

- These protocols apply to all church activities, including but not limited to:
 - Regular worship services
 - Sunday school and youth programs
 - Community outreach events
 - Office operations
 - Any other church-sponsored activities or events

General Prevention Measures

1. Hand Hygiene:

- Promote regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Provide hand sanitizer stations throughout church facilities, especially at entrances and high-traffic areas.

2. Respiratory Etiquette:

- Encourage covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of the elbow.
- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles throughout the church.

3. Cleaning and Disinfection:

- Implement a regular cleaning schedule for all high-touch surfaces, including door handles, light switches, handrails, and shared equipment.
- Use EPA-approved disinfectants effective against common pathogens.

4. Physical Distancing:

- When necessary, implement physical distancing measures in accordance with current health guidelines.
- Consider modifying seating arrangements or limiting capacity in church spaces to maintain appropriate distancing.

5. Ventilation:

- Ensure proper ventilation in all church spaces.
- When possible, increase outdoor air circulation by opening windows or adjusting HVAC systems.

Specific Disease Management Protocols

1. Identification and Reporting:

- Encourage staff, volunteers, and congregation members to self-report any symptoms of communicable diseases.

- Maintain confidentiality of health information while following reporting requirements to local health authorities.

2. Isolation and Exclusion:

- Implement a clear policy for excluding individuals with symptoms of communicable diseases from church activities.
- Provide guidance on when it is safe to return to church activities following an illness.

3. Contact Tracing:

- Develop a system for recording attendance at church events to facilitate contact tracing if necessary.
- Cooperate with local health authorities in the event contact tracing is required.

4. Vaccination:

- Encourage vaccination against preventable communicable diseases in accordance with public health recommendations.
- Consider hosting vaccination clinics in partnership with local health authorities when appropriate.

Outbreak Management

1. Outbreak Definition:

- Define what constitutes an outbreak within the church context (e.g., a certain number of cases within a specific timeframe).

2. Outbreak Response Team:

- Establish an Outbreak Response Team, including key church leadership and health professionals from the congregation if available.

3. Communication Plan:

- Develop a clear communication plan for informing the congregation about outbreaks and necessary precautions.
- Use multiple communication channels, including email, social media, and church announcements.

4. Enhanced Measures:

- Implement enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocols during outbreaks.
- Consider temporary closure of affected areas or suspension of specific activities if necessary to control the spread.

Specific Protocols for High-Risk Activities

1. Food Service:

- Implement strict food safety protocols for any church events involving food service.
- Consider individually wrapped food items or served meals rather than self-serve options.

2. Children's Ministry:

- Implement additional hygiene measures in children's areas, including frequent toy cleaning and disinfection.
- Train children's ministry volunteers on recognizing symptoms and proper hygiene practices.

3. Communion:

- Modify communion practices to minimise the risk of disease transmission (e.g., using individual cups and pre-packaged elements).

Training and Education

1. Staff and Volunteer Training:

- Provide regular training on communicable disease prevention and management protocols.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their roles in implementing these protocols.

2. Congregation Education:

- Regularly educate the congregation on the importance of disease prevention measures.
- Provide resources on recognizing symptoms and when to stay home from church activities.

Compliance and Monitoring

1. Compliance Checks:

- Conduct regular compliance checks to ensure protocols are being followed.
- Address any non-compliance issues promptly and constructively.

2. Protocol Review:

- Regularly review and update communicable disease protocols based on current public health guidance and church experiences.
- Seek feedback from staff, volunteers, and congregation members on the effectiveness of protocols.

Special Considerations for Pandemic Situations

1. Pandemic Response Plan:

- Develop a specific pandemic response plan that can be quickly implemented if necessary.
- Include provisions for transitioning to online services and remote operations if required.

2. Flexibility and Adaptation:

- Remain flexible and ready to adapt protocols quickly in response to changing pandemic conditions or public health guidance.

By implementing these comprehensive communicable disease protocols, Generocity Church demonstrates its commitment to protecting the health and safety of all individuals involved in church activities. Regular review and updating of these protocols will ensure ongoing effectiveness in managing the risks associated with communicable diseases.

Hygiene Standards

At Generocity Church, we are committed to maintaining high hygiene standards to protect the health and safety of our staff, volunteers, and visitors. This section outlines our guidelines for maintaining hygiene in the workplace.

General Hygiene Practices

1. Hand Hygiene:

- Promote regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Provide hand sanitizer stations throughout church facilities, especially at entrances and high-traffic areas.
- Encourage hand washing or use of an antibacterial solution after toileting, sneezing, coughing, blowing the nose, touching public surfaces, or contact with others.

2. Respiratory Etiquette:

- Encourage covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of the elbow.
- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles throughout the church.
- Teach children and provide signage to demonstrate coughing/sneezing hygiene.

3. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- Use gloves when providing first aid and handling potentially contaminated items.
- Wear gloves, face masks, and protective eyewear when cleaning up blood and body substances.

Cleaning and Disinfection

1. High-Touch Surfaces:

- Implement a regular cleaning schedule for all high-touch surfaces, including door handles, light switches, handrails, and shared equipment.
- Use EPA-approved disinfectants effective against common pathogens.

2. Frequency:

- Clean and disinfect shared high-touch surfaces between and at the end of every service.
- For children's ministry areas, ensure all toys and craft equipment are washed and disinfected between and at the end of every service.

3. Specific Areas:

- Kitchens/Café/Lunch Rooms: Inspect and clean quarterly.
- Childcare areas and play equipment: Inspect and clean quarterly.
- Outdoor playgrounds: Inspect and clean quarterly.
- Cleaners/maintenance storage: Inspect and clean quarterly.
- Offices, reception, foyer: Inspect and clean every 6 months.
- Auditorium, meeting rooms, baptismal: Inspect and clean every 6 months.

Food Safety and Hygiene

1. Food Handling:

- Train staff and volunteers required to handle food in Food Hygiene/Handling practices.
- Maintain rigid food hygiene standards throughout food handling and serving areas.
- Serve any tea/coffee or food, rather than allowing self-serve with multiple contacts with serving utensils.

2. Kitchen Hygiene:

- Regularly clean and sanitise food preparation surfaces and equipment.
- Implement strict food safety protocols for any church events involving food service.
- Consider individually wrapped food items or served meals rather than self-serve options.

Waste Management

1. General Waste:

- Provide waste disposal for hand waste and feminine hygiene products in toilets.
- Ensure adequate supplies and regular emptying of waste receptacles.

2. Contaminated Waste:

- Place contaminated waste in dedicated waste bins.
- Wear gloves when handling contaminated waste and when removing waste bags from bins.

3. Sharps Disposal:

- Provide a sharps container for people to place their own sharps.
- Follow proper procedures for safe disposal of sharps found on church property.

Ventilation

1. Air Quality:

- Ensure proper ventilation in all church spaces.
- When possible, increase outdoor air circulation by opening windows or adjusting HVAC systems.

2. Maintenance:

- For churches with evaporative air conditioning systems, ensure proper maintenance to prevent bacterial growth (e.g., Legionella).
- Implement a maintenance contract with a qualified service company for regular inspections and record-keeping of air conditioning systems.

Personal Hygiene

1. Staff and Volunteer Hygiene:

- Encourage staff and volunteers to maintain good personal hygiene practices.
- Provide facilities for staff and volunteers to wash hands and change clothes if necessary.

2. Illness Policy:

- Clearly communicate with all staff, volunteers, and congregation members the expectation of non-attendance if they have been in contact with someone ill or are ill themselves.
- Ensure all families have a copy of your illness policy for children's ministry.

Training and Education

1. Hygiene Training:

- Provide regular training on hygiene practices for all staff and volunteers.

- Include hygiene practices in induction processes for new staff and volunteers.

2. Signage and Communication:

- Display hygiene reminders and instructions throughout the church facilities.
- Regularly communicate hygiene standards and expectations to the congregation through various channels (e.g., announcements, newsletters, social media).

Monitoring and Review

1. Regular Inspections:

- Conduct regular inspections of church facilities to ensure hygiene standards are being maintained.
- Use checklists to ensure all areas are covered during inspections.

2. Continuous Improvement:

- Regularly review and update hygiene procedures based on new information, incidents, or changes in church activities.
- Seek feedback from staff, volunteers, and congregation members on the effectiveness of hygiene practices.

By implementing these comprehensive hygiene standards, Generocity Church demonstrates its commitment to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all. Regular review and updating of these procedures will ensure ongoing effectiveness in managing hygiene risks and promoting the well-being of our church community.

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