

COVID-Safe Mentoring Information pack



MATES Mentoring Program

WIMMERA
SOUTHERN
MALLEE
LLEN



mates
mentor assist target engage skills

INTRODUCTION

COVID-Safe Mentoring

Actions required by mentors	This document contains information, policies and procedures necessary to implement a COVID-Safe MATES Mentoring Program.
Decide whether a return to mentoring during COVID-19 pandemic is right for you	<p>Attachment 1: Risk Factors for Self Assessment</p> <p>Information to assist mentors to assess the potential risk to their health posed by COVID-19 and to aid their decision on whether to mentor during the current COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
Undertake additional online COVID-Safe training and submit Certificate of Completion	<p>Attachment 2: MATES Mentoring Program Changes and Additions</p> <p>Outlines changes to the MATES Mentoring Program that are necessary due to COVID-19, including compulsory COVID-Safe Training (online) for all mentors.</p>
Read and understand COVID-safe practices	<p>Attachment 3: Stop the Spread</p> <p>Provides information from the Australian Government Department of Health regarding COVID-Safe practices to stop the spread of COVID-19.</p>
Keep up to date with COVID-19 restrictions	<p>Attachment 4: Communication and Understanding Restrictions</p> <p>Assisting mentors to understand their obligations regarding COVID-19 restrictions and their responsibilities to receive and respond to information updates.</p>
Complete all of the requirements outlined in the COVID-Safe Code of Conduct, and return the signed Code of Conduct to mates@llen.com.au	<p>Attachment 5 - COVID-Safe Code of Conduct</p> <p>Additional requirements to the MATES Mentoring Code of Conduct relating specifically to conduct during the COVID-19 pandemic—to be signed by all MATES mentors</p>

ATTACHMENT 1

Australian Department of Health Risk factors for self-assessment

This information is provided by Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN (WSMLLEN) for Volunteers to self-assess their level of risk and seek appropriate medical advice. Please read this information thoroughly and use the COVID Safe Code of conduct (Attachment 5) as a checklist to ensure this important step is complete before engaging in mentoring.

Individuals thinking of volunteering need to consider issues of privacy and self-care and avoid putting themselves and others in the community at risk. This means adhering to recommended social distancing guidelines and other official guidance as it emerges in the coming months.

According to the Australian Government Department of Health website, 'some people are at greater risk of getting very sick if they contract COVID-19. However, everyone is different. It is important to talk to your doctor if you have a more serious illness or more than one condition'.

First Nations people can be at higher risk in any public health emergency.

Who is at high risk of severe illness

You are at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 if you:

- are 70 years of age or over
- have had an organ transplant and are on immune suppressive therapy
- have had a bone marrow transplant in the last 24 months
- are on immune suppressive therapy for graft versus host disease
- have blood cancer eg leukaemia, lymphoma or myelodysplastic syndrome (diagnosed within the last 5 years)
- are having chemotherapy or radiotherapy

Who is at moderate risk of severe illness

You are at moderate risk of severe illness from COVID-19 if you have:

- chronic renal (kidney) failure
- heart disease (coronary heart disease or failure)
- chronic lung disease (excludes mild or moderate asthma)
- a non-haematological cancer (diagnosed in the last 12 months)
- diabetes
- severe obesity with a BMI ≥ 40
- chronic liver disease
- some neurological conditions e.g. stroke, dementia, etc (speak to your doctor about your risk)
- some chronic inflammatory conditions and treatments (speak to your doctor about your risk)
- other primary or acquired immunodeficiency (speak to your doctor about your risk)
- poorly controlled blood pressure (may increase risk—speak to your doctor).

Other things that might affect your risk

Having two or more conditions might increase your risk, regardless of your age. If your condition is severe or poorly controlled, this might also increase your risk of serious illness from COVID-19. Speak to your doctor about your risk.

Other factors might also increase your risk of severe illness if you contract COVID-19, including:

- age (risk increases as you get older, even for those under 70)
- being male
- poverty
- smoking.

WSMLLEN recommends every volunteer consider the risk factors and talks to their doctor before volunteering if they have a more serious illness or more than one condition.

*Volunteer insurance provided by WSMLLEN does not cover serious illness such as Covid-19.

WSMLLEN has a duty of care and will ensure Volunteers have access to a suitable level of communication, best practice and prevention information, and up-to-date restriction guidelines. Individuals should only consider returning to volunteering with due consideration to the risk factors involved and may wish to seek independent legal advice.

For advice on how to seek medical help or get tested for coronavirus (COVID-19) you can contact the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, or call the coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline on 1800 020 080 at any time.

WSMLLEN Points of Contact

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ATTACHMENT 2

Reintroducing MATES Mentoring Program Changes & Additions

WSMLLEN has reviewed the risk management plan that governs our volunteering programs, to consider any new or heightened risks posed by COVID-19. As a result, WSMLLEN has made a number of decisions and adjustments to the MATES Mentoring Program in order to support the program moving forward in accordance with the Victorian State Government's roadmap to 'COVID Normal'.

Please read the statements below carefully and confirm your understanding via the COVID-Safe Code of Conduct (Attachment 5)

- The hiatus state of mentoring for all in-school mentoring programs continues for the remainder of 2020. Non-essential volunteers in schools are likely to remain prohibited until at least the next step in the roadmap to COVID Normal. To start new mentoring relationships so close to the Christmas and January school holiday closure, would be irresponsible and potentially damaging to the young person and their mentoring relationship. WSMLLEN does not currently authorise volunteers in the MATES Mentoring Program Wimmera region to visit or engage in mentoring on school premises. This applies to the local government areas of Hindmarsh, Yarriambiack, West Wimmera and Horsham.
- MATES Mentoring relating to out-of-school programs such as Connecting the Service Puzzle initiative or through other organisations can be reintroduced with strict adherence to COVID-19 safety protocols. This type of mentoring relationship does not rely on access to schools and can continue during the Christmas and New Year break. A WSMLLEN representative will be available during the school closure period for mentors to contact with questions or concerns.
- All information sessions, volunteer communications and mentor training will be conducted virtually and/or using the online modules until further review in 2021. Any changes will be promoted via the nominated communication strategies as arranged with each individual mentor.
- Mentors should understand the 'Stop the Spread' information as outlined in Attachment 3 including maintaining a distance of 1.5 metres and reducing close contact with mentees. This will include providing appropriate control measures and clearly communicating with mentees on expectations and best practice.
- All mentoring is to be conducted outdoors under all circumstances until further review in 2021 e.g. If catching-up at a café, a mentoring session must be outdoors. Mentors are provided with up-to-date information on government restrictions. Mentors should ensure any mentoring activities comply.
- The MATES Program will introduce a logbook and reporting system, provide a hygiene kit and a Covid-safe Code of Conduct.
- **All returning and new mentors will undertake the Australian Government Department of Health's COVID-19 Infection Control Training until further review in 2021.**

ATTACHMENT 3

Australian Government Department of Health Stop the Spread Information

Please ensure you are following the best practice processes to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Mentees have been advised of this information but some coaching may be necessary. Setting good boundaries and role modelling the standards below from the outset is best practice for all involved.

Hand Hygiene.

It is believed that COVID-19 is spread when someone touches a person or surface contaminated with droplets containing the virus, then touches their eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter the body and cause illness. Please adhere to the following processes:

- Regular and thorough hand washing with soap and water throughout the day, particularly after using the bathroom and before eating is vital for preventing infections
- Alcohol-based hand-gel can be used to sanitise hands when soap and water isn't available (provided in the MATES hygiene kit)
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose
- Avoid shaking hands or any other greeting that involves contact including touching elbows or hugs
- When meeting with your mentee, encourage them to follow hand hygiene practices
- Avoiding high-touch surfaces such as door handles, telephones and benches as well as common areas helps prevent contamination.

Respiratory Hygiene

COVID-19 can spread when someone inhales droplets containing the virus when a person with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes. Wearing a face covering provides an additional physical barrier and helps to reduce community transmission.

Wearing a mask in whole of Victoria is a mandatory requirement when leaving your home. Mentors and mentees (aged 12 +) are expected to comply unless there is a lawful reason not to such as a medical exemption. A list of lawful exceptions can be found by online at <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/face-coverings-covid-19#what-does-wearing-a-face-covering-mean>. A suitable mask must cover your nose and mouth. Five disposable face masks are included in the MATES hygiene kit. More can be obtained by contacting the WSMLLEN MATES Mentoring Coordinator.

Cover the mouth and nose with a bent elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing, then dispose of the used tissue immediately. Ensure to follow hand hygiene immediately after.

Physical Distancing

One way to slow the spread of viruses, such as coronavirus, is physical distancing. The more space between you and others, the harder it is for the virus to spread.

- Keep 1.5 metres away from others wherever possible including when meeting with your mentee
- Avoid physically greeting your mentee including handshaking and hugs
- Use tap-and-go instead of cash where possible if you are purchasing something
- Arrange to meet your mentee at the mentoring point—reduce the use of public and/or shared transport.
- Avoid crowds and busy places—if you see a crowded space do not enter and move to another mentoring point.
- Avoid large public gatherings. Do not agree to a mentoring point that involves large public gatherings such as a concert, group activities, or anything indoors.
- Arrange for mentoring points to be outdoors including seating at cafés.
- Stay home if unwell. If you are unwell, even just a little bit, you must stay home and avoid seeing your mentee. Cancel the appointment immediately.

According to the Australian Government Department of Health, symptoms of COVID-19 can range from mild illness to pneumonia. Some people will recover easily and others may get very sick very quickly. People with COVID-19 may experience symptoms such as:

- fever
- respiratory symptoms
- coughing
- sore throat
- shortness of breath.

Other symptoms can include runny nose, headache, muscle or joint pain, nausea, diarrhoea, vomiting, loss of sense of smell, altered sense of taste, loss of appetite and fatigue. To stop the spread of COVID-19 people with even mild symptoms of respiratory infection should get tested.

If you are unwell and have even mild symptoms of respiratory infection you should seek medical attention (call in advance), and follow the local health authority instructions.

Self-isolate as per the local health authority instructions.

Stay home and avoid mentoring until fully recovered.

If required, work with the Department of Health and Human Services and provide close contacts for tracing.

If a mentee becomes ill whilst with you, isolate them by placing them in a room or an area away from others and arrange for the mentee to be sent home or to access medical assistance.

Call the Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) if you are seeking information on Covid-19. You can also call Healthdirect Hotline on 1800 022 222 (24 hours a day, 7 days per week) to speak to a registered nurse about your health concerns.

ATTACHMENT 4

Communication and Understanding the Restrictions

As restrictions across the country continue to change during this COVID-19 pandemic, and with Victoria under the strictest lockdown we have seen in Australia, it is essential that the MATES Mentoring Program remains fluid in response to the changing roadmap and to future restrictions.

At any given time, the COVID situation may change. WSMLEN will continue to make informed decisions, program adjustments, and changes necessary to protect staff, mentors, mentees and the broader community.

WSMLEN will provide necessary and important updates including information from the Australian Government via the following methods for Wimmera participants:

- Email direct to active mentors
- Facebook post into an active mentoring group
- Conversation posts into the active community of practice.

If a volunteer cannot access the above methods, the WSMLEN MATES Coordinator will discuss an alternative plan on an individual basis including telephone updates.

WSMLEN will provide information that comes to hand. It is important that volunteers also keep abreast of Government restrictions and policy changes and not rely solely on WSMLEN communications. This is important. Whilst we are confident that the MATES community will take due care, sometimes information can be missed, emails can be overlooked, people may not check or log-in to communication pages, phone calls won't be answered, people will interpret differently and mistakes can be made. This is human nature and errors occur. However, given the current global pandemic, we must all work together to reduce risks and ensure our program remains safe.

If at any stage you have concerns with the communication being received, including the method, frequency and content, please access the points of contact listed at the bottom of this document.

This document only applies to MATES Mentoring in the Wimmera Area.

Accessing Restriction Information

For further information on the Victorian Government's current restrictions and roadmap, please visit - <https://www.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-restrictions-roadmaps>.

MATES Mentoring Restriction Steps

This information is subject to change based on information provided by the Australian Government and health experts.

First and Second Step restrictions

All MATES mentoring programs in the Wimmera area will be in a state of hiatus.

Third Step restrictions

MATES Mentoring Programs that are not run in schools can, operate with restrictions.

Last Step and COVID Normal

All MATES Mentoring Programs can operate subject to non-essential volunteers being unrestricted in schools and participating schools having suitable COVID-Safe Volunteering plan.

Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN Points of Contact

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COVID-Safe Code of Conduct

Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN MATES Mentoring program has outlined a range of requirements that mentors must understand and meet to be able to mentor in a COVID-safe way. It is important that every WSMLEEN staff member and volunteer works together to minimise the risk of COVID-19.

Please ensure that you fully understand the information provided and meet the requirements as set out below. Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN contacts are listed at the bottom of this document if you require further information or clarification.

Please sign and return this form to mates@llen.com.au. Adherence to all steps must be completed prior to entering into a mentoring relationship.

- I have given due consideration to returning to volunteering under the guidelines of WSMLEEN's duty of care and The Australian Government Department of Health's advice on risk factors (refer Attachment 1). Individuals thinking of volunteering need to consider issues of privacy and self-care and avoid putting themselves and others in the community at risk. Volunteers are under no obligation to volunteer if they do not feel comfortable doing so.
- I have completed the Australian Government Department of Health COVID-19 Infection Control Training and have provided a certificate of completion to the WSMLEEN to mates@llen.com.au. (Training link - <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-infection-control-training>)
- I have signed the new Code of Conduct (Attachment 5) to return to mates@llen.com.au
- I have received and I understand the 'Stop the Spread' checklist (refer Attachment 3).
- I have read and I understand the Understanding Restrictions and Communication document (refer Attachment 4) and I have provided my email address to the WSMLEEN MATES Mentoring Coordinator and confirmed working, and/or joined the MATES Mentoring Community of Practice communication pages to ensure I receive up-to-date communications. Points of receiving communication:
- I have provided my email address to mates@llen.com.au
- I will keep up to date with important information and I understand that I can receive information updates by the following methods:
 - Join the MATES Community of Practice Facebook group (private group—note separate from the WSMLEEN MATES Page). Visit – <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2793405850872472>
 - The MATES page on the WSMLEEN website where documents are stored, <https://www.llen.com.au/programs/mates/>
 - By providing my phone number and electing to be contacted by phone with each update.
- I have received the WSMLEEN MATES Mentoring hygiene kit (alcohol based hand sanitizer, 5 disposable face masks, packet of disinfecting wipes, COVID Safe Card).
- I have received logbook access and reporting instructions.

I, (PRINT NAME) _____ confirm that I have received, read, understood and completed each of the requirements outlined in the MATES Mentoring COVID-Safe Code of Conduct. As a volunteer of Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN, I agree to comply with all COVID-Safe practices and advice provided.

Volunteer Signature: _____ Date: _____

Volunteer Signature: _____

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