

26th March 2020

UPDATE ON COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS AND ACCESS TO LEAVE

Dear Valued Employees,

The situation with the COVID-19 coronavirus is changing frequently and I want to assure all employees and volunteers of Centacare FNQ that the Leaders of the organisation are monitoring the situation and seeking advice in regards to the health and wellbeing of people in the workplace.

Each Agency of the Cairns Catholic Diocese has or will implement its own measures, independently applying mitigation measures and providing special leave arrangements. While we hope to be spared the worst aspects of this health emergency, we must nevertheless be prepared for the challenges and manage the immediate impact to employment conditions. We must accept that the disruption to our “usual” mode of work may be over several months and decisions must be made to ensure the continuity of core business services.

The following Employee Arrangements are available to employees of Centacare FNQ.

Note: Paid leave arrangements only apply to Permanent and Part-time Employees. Casual employees should speak to their line manager regarding unpaid leave arrangements.

Below please find our response to certain situations.

1. What if I am diagnosed with or I am being tested for Covid-19 and the workplace remains open?

If an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19 or is being tested for COVID-19, the employee is able to access their paid Personal/Carers Leave. If this is exhausted, Centacare FNQ will approve one instance of up to 5 days (five working days based on your current work roster) additional Emergency Leave.

To assist with reducing the risk of further spread, the employee is required to notify their line manager upon diagnosis. A Medical Certificate or other evidence may be required to obtain this leave. Please consult your Manager regarding this requirement.

Where there is a Covid-19 diagnosis a Medical Clearance is required prior to returning to work (in any capacity).

2. What if I am required to care for a member of my family or household who has been diagnosed with or is being tested for COVID-19?

Refer to Question 1

3. What if I have not been diagnosed with COVID-19 however I am directed not to work?

You will be provided one instance of 5 days Emergency Leave (five working days based on your current work roster).

In circumstances where duties cannot be performed, either at an alternate workplace or from home, a staff member will be required to utilise accrued Annual or Long Service Leave or apply for Leave Without Pay after the Emergency Leave has been exhausted.

4. What if I have been diagnosed with or I am being tested for COVID-19 and the workplace is closed?

Refer to Question 1.

If an employee recovers from COVID-19, but the workplace remains closed, refer to Question 3.

To assist with reducing the risk of further spread, the employee is required to notify their manager upon diagnosis. A Medical Certificate or other evidence may be required by the employee in these circumstances and a Medical Clearance is required prior to returning to work (in any capacity).

5. What if I have been required to self-isolate (in Australia) in accordance with Government advice (either due to returning from overseas or if I have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19), and my workplace remains open?

An employee may be required to carry out their duties or alternate duties from home for the duration of the self-isolation period (currently 14 days). Evidence may be requested.

If an employee is unable to work from home during this period, an employee can access leave entitlements as under Question 1.

6. What if I have leave booked and wish to now cancel it?

Please discuss any request to cancel any pre-booked leave with your Manager.

7. What if I have diminished work duties due to the impacts of the health emergency?

Centacare FNQ hope's to work together with employees to find appropriate solutions to meet the needs of the individual workplaces and employees.

Managers will liaise with employees to discuss options available which may include:

- Where employees have excess Annual Leave, employees may be directed to take Annual Leave.
- Accessing Annual Leave and Long Service Leave
- Reducing work hours

In some circumstances employees may be asked to stand down from paid duties when there is a stoppage of work. A stand down does not break the continuity of employment of the employee for the purpose of any entitlements. In some exceptional circumstances redundancy provisions may apply.

8. How do I apply for COVID-19 Emergency Leave

Employees are to use the [COVID-19 Emergency Leave Application](#) form. Employees are asked to complete the form and submit to their line supervisor for authorisation. All applications are to be emailed to human.resource@centacarefnq.org for endorsement and forwarding to the Diocesan Payroll Department. Personal/Careers Leave, Annual Leave, Long Service Leave and Leave Without Pay are to be submitted via WSS. The usual Payroll cut off dates apply.

Support

If you are experiencing anxiety, hardship or other circumstances that require special consideration please talk to your line manager in the first instance or contact our HR Department on p: 07 4046 5647, m: 0402 805 741 or email hr@cairns.catholic.org.au . Additionally employees of Centacare FNQ have access to the Employee Assistance Program by phoning 1800 818 728 for free confidential counselling if you feel it would be of benefit to you. Please note due to current risk mitigation measures you may only have access to telephone counselling.

During these challenging times it is important we remain vigilant and understand our obligation to communicate our individual and family health status with line managers. Finally it is important that we remain true to the values of the Catholic Mission and Ethos and demonstrate understanding, compassion and care for others.

Yours sincerely



Anita Veivers
Executive Director
Centacare FNQ