

Covid Safety Policy

This plan was approved by the committee on 12 November 2021. The plan applies to all activities undertaken by U3A Myrtleford from 13 November 2021. All members are asked to follow the requirements set out in this policy including:

- Safety briefings are to be conducted at the beginning of each term and amended from time to time to reflect the COVID-19 Safety Plan and Victorian Government Health Directions
- Members engaged in U3A activities should also be mindful of the Covid Safety arrangements in any venue they use or attend.

The committee will monitor developments in government policy relating to COVID-19 and adjust the plan when necessary to reflect state and national health directions.

Vaccination Status of Members

From Monday 1 November 2021, all members need to provide proof that they are fully vaccinated against COVID19 or that they have a valid medical exemption (exception) from being COVID vaccinated.

In line with Government Health Directions, from Monday 1 November 2021, U3A Myrtleford members who are not fully vaccinated will not be permitted to participate in face-to-face activities.

Members who are medically exempt (excepted persons) can only access U3A courses online.

Tutors and committee members must check the vaccination status of guest speakers or tutors as part of organising a course or an activity.

All other current COVID rules must still be observed.

Reducing Face to Face Contact

Members are encouraged to use our website to join, renew membership and find out about courses.

To minimise cash transactions members are asked to use other forms of payment such as direct deposits to the U3A account:

BSB: 633 000; Account Number: 161859533; Name: U3A Myrtleford and District Inc.

Activities involving singing, orchestras, dance and physical movement, must comply with any additional VicHealth requirements for their type of activity, e.g., line dancing.

Physical distancing

The one person per 4 square metre rule applies in all premises used by Myrtleford U3A but may change from time to time to reflect current Department of Health advice

Participants should keep 1.5m distance between themselves and others regardless of whether they are sitting or standing. Tutors and course leaders will remind members to manage physical distancing.

Extra chairs will either be removed from teaching rooms or stacked at the side, so it is easier to arrange less chairs to meet the distancing requirements.

Course start times will be staggered to avoid participants crowding in hallways and entrances. Members are asked to move straight through hallways and entrances to their teaching room and not to gather in common areas. If members wish to catch up with friends, they should do this after the class in outdoor areas while still maintaining social distancing.

Face masks

Victorian government Public Health Orders require that face masks must be worn indoors when outside your own home. However, a person is not required to wear a face mask if they have a physical illness or mental health condition, or disability, which makes wearing a face mask detrimental to their condition. Failure to follow Public Health Orders may have serious consequences, including the risk of being fined.

Members who are exempt from wearing a face mask cannot be excluded from an activity. Arrangements should be made for them to sit in as safe a position as possible within the room. There is no requirement for documentation to show the exemption.

Members may take masks off when speaking as part of the course e.g. learning a language, speaking to someone who cannot hear them if they speak with a mask on, or when consuming refreshments.

Members who are not mask exempt and refuse to wear masks cannot attend U3A activities. If a member does not meet the mask exemption requirement (or refuses to wear a mask) and attends a course, they are in breach of Public Health Orders. The course leader should ask the member to leave the activity. If the member refuses to leave, the course leader should terminate the session immediately and contact the health and safety officer.

Hand washing and hygiene

Hand sanitiser stations will be set up in all teaching rooms and spare bottles of sanitiser are kept in store cupboards. Members should be asked to use hand sanitiser stations at the beginning and end of their session.

U3A Myrtleford Committee will liaise with Alpine Shire to ensure bathrooms are stocked with soap and paper towels.

Ventilation

Doors and windows in each room used for U3A activities are to be left open as much as possible to improve air circulation. Tutors are to ensure that all doors and windows are properly closed and locked at the end of each session.

Refreshments

Members may bring drinks or refreshments for their own consumption. Refreshments may not be shared.

Members may prepare morning or afternoon teas as part of their activity, but they must wash up and clean the kitchen area in a Covid responsible way.

Cleaning

U3A rooms are not in continuous use. Alpine Shire provides cleaners who have been instructed to wear gloves and wash their hands thoroughly with soap or use an alcohol-based sanitiser before and after wearing gloves

Members should use disinfectant wipes supplied by U3A to clean any hard areas they touch, such as on their chair and table, at the beginning and end of every course session or other activity in U3A premises.

Used wipes and all other waste are to be placed in bins

If any equipment is used, only one person should handle it and the equipment should be cleaned with disinfectant wipes before and after use. The course leader will nominate a person in each course to help members manage this cleaning process and to cover any areas not covered such as cleaning doorknobs and light switches.

Monitor symptoms and isolate

Members must stay home if they are sick or have any COVID-19 symptoms. This includes:

- fever,
- cough,
- sore throat
- shortness of breath,
- loss of taste or smell, or
- runny or blocked nose.

Less common symptoms include muscle pain, joint pain, diarrhoea, nausea, headache, vomiting, loss of appetite and fatigue and should be monitored.

Members should get tested if they develop any of the symptoms listed above that could indicate COVID-19. Following testing, they should isolate and follow the Vic Health instructions.

Members MUST NOT attend any activity if they have been required to quarantine or self-isolate.

Management and Implementation of this policy

The U3A Myrtleford and District Committee is responsible for the implementation of this plan and for championing COVID-19 safe practices. This will be managed in conjunction with the management of other local venues used by U3A such as the Lawn Tennis Club, Club Savoy, Myrtleford P-12 School and the Alpine Shire Library.

If there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 on U3A Myrtleford premises, members must advise the Health and Safety Officer of details of the case immediately. This advice needs to occur even if the case has already been notified to health authorities.

The Health and Safety Officer will notify the relevant venue manager of the case under the terms of our occupancy agreement and will also notify the Committee. The Health and Safety Officer will provide advice to the Committee, in conjunction with the relevant venue manager, on any requirements to close, deep clean and reopen affected premises.

The relevant venue manager will arrange for a specialised cleaning company to deep clean the premises as required.

Members are required to use the Service Victoria app to check in using their mobile phones when attending U3A or may use the written register.

Course leaders / tutors will keep attendance registers that include date and time of attendance, name and phone contacts for all persons attending U3A premises for the purposes of contact tracing.

Personal health information will be treated confidentially and in line with privacy requirements.

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