

# **DREAM PUPPETS - COVIDSafe Plan 2021**

## **Introduction:**

As artists and educators, we take our role seriously in helping to reduce the spread of COVID- 19 in the community and in keeping each other safe .

Dream Puppets' COVID-19 safety plan is designed to maintain a safe work environment at all times and we have implemented best practices as advised by the Victorian Government, Education Departments and WHO officials. When we visit Schools, Early Learning and other centres, we will do everything necessary to protect the health and well-being of children and other members of the community and will also comply with each individual workplace's restrictions and guidelines and any hygiene protocols they have in place.

The plan sets out the actions and strategies that are in place to: prevent the introduction or potential spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) to our clients - children, students, teachers, parents and other audience members while delivering Dream Puppets' performances and programs.

Dream Puppets' response and actions will also be modified to reflect the evolving COVID-19 conditions and restrictions as outlined by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Education and Training.

## **Our Responsibilities:**

### **Staff health**

We at Dream Puppets understand the role we play in limiting the spread of COVID-19 and will not perform if unwell and experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, fatigue) or if we have been in contact with a suspected positive case, are awaiting test results or have recently travelled overseas. We understand how the virus is spread, the importance of physical distancing, practising good hygiene, wearing a mask and keeping up to date with developments in infection control and changing restrictions.

Generally only one staff member is on-site to set up and perform each puppet show. If it is anticipated that another member may be required to attend or assist the performer, the company will inform and seek the advice of the school or centre.

# 1. Ensuring physical distancing

## **Actions:**

### ***Performances:***

Only 1 member of the company on site to deliver the program (unless otherwise negotiated).

Follow physical distancing practices of 1.5m

Ensure there is no more than one person per four square meters of enclosed workspace while setting up the stage and props.

Rearranging furniture or cordoning off areas to ensure physical distancing while setting up and dismantling the show.

Using floor markings to provide minimum physical distancing guides when presenting the performance for the audience.

Encouraging the supervising teachers to assist with social distancing.

We have modified some of the interactions during question time after the performance so that there is no contact.

### ***Workshops :*** (about 15 % of business)

Adapting workshops for reduced numbers and for adherence to the 1.5 meter social distancing rule.

Run the workshop in a large, open space to maintain social distancing.

Assign workers to specific work stations and minimise worker movement between these stations, where reasonably practical. If not practical, clean with detergent/disinfectant between use.

Thorough cleaning of resources between programs.

All staff to carry gloves, antibacterial wipes, hand sanitiser and face masks.

# 2. Wearing a face covering

## **Actions:**

All performers to wear masks when when bumping in, setting up stage areas and dismantling sets, when physical exertion is required.

We carry a supply of disposable masks as these can get sweaty during the physical set up.

We have been instructed on how to put on, correctly wear, remove and dispose of masks.

The performances take place within an enclosed booth which is only entered by the performer. The audience sits at a distance of at least 2 metres from the front of the stage. During the performance a velvet hood is worn over the performer's face so that the puppeteer remains invisible. This also acts as an aerosol barrier.

When addressing the children from the stage area and while maintaining physical distancing, a mask can also be worn if required by the centre or school.

We will observe each school or centre's protocols.

Masks will be worn at all times during workshops.

### **3. Practising good hygiene**

#### **Actions:**

We are informed and understand how COVID-19 spreads, how to limit the spread, and the importance of hygiene and physical distancing.

#### *Performances:*

Dream Puppets provides all its own equipment, sound system, lights, electrical cables and adaptors. We do not need access to tables, or chairs. Only the centre's power point is used and this is cleaned with a disinfectant wipe before and after use.

Dream Puppets' performers carry their own hand sanitiser and will sanitise their hands on entry to the school or centre and periodically during the visit.

We ensure all our materials are disinfected appropriately both before and after visiting each site .

We ensure that we are the only ones who handle our belongings, puppets and props.

Shows do not involve the use of shared equipment or objects.

We encourage teachers to assist with 'no touching the puppets' rule. This may include erecting physical barriers. (furniture)

We are equipped with gloves, wipes, hand sanitiser and face masks and disinfectant solution.

We maintain disinfectant solutions at an appropriate strength and use in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

We provide our own drink bottles so we are not required to use centre's facilities.

We adhere to recommended hygiene practices such as coughing and sneezing into a tissue (that is immediately disposed of ) ,or into the crook of the arm.

### *Workshops:*

Ensure all students and teachers attending have washed or sanitised their hands before commencing the workshop.

All equipment supplied will be sanitised before during and after the workshops.

Students can use their own materials if preferable.

Physical distancing and mask wearing to be practised.

Instructors encouraged not to lean in closely when assisting students.

Participants are taught to sneeze into their elbow and to sanitise hands after sneezing and to avoid touching their face.

## **4. Keeping records and acting quickly if workers become unwell**

### **Actions:**

We have undertaken as performers to undergo testing if experiencing even mild symptoms associated with COVID-19 and to follow government guidelines regarding isolation and quarantine, e.g. when waiting for test results or following exposure.

Undertaking a risk assessment and identifying potential contamination.

Withdrawing the show if infected performer may have contaminated puppets/props etc. and undergoing appropriate sterilisation procedures.

Notifying DHHS immediately and providing risk assessment and contact details of close contacts, and 'at risk' settings.

Contacting WorkSafe Victoria on 13 23 60 immediately to notify instance of infection.

Immediately contacting previous performance venues and advise re. risk assessment.

Keeping detailed records of contacts.

## **5. Avoiding interactions in enclosed spaces**

### **Actions:**

Dream Puppets does not perform or hold workshops on our business premises; we take our programs into external venues. There are only two performers who do not perform together at the same time, (except in special circumstances such as overseas festivals). The required physical distancing of 1.5 metres is applied in interactions with clients - teachers and students during performances as outlined in Section 1.

Everyone (children, staff and media) are *strongly discouraged* from entering the performance booth due to other OHS considerations. There are signs on the back of the stage booth (entry points) reminding clients of this.

Developing new performances which utilise outdoor space.

## **6. Creating workforce bubbles**

**Actions: N/A**

Dream Puppets comprises 2 performer/puppet makers/designers and a composer/musician .

We communicate with our composer online. We performers keep each other informed re. our contacts and our booking record is shared. Although we share accommodation, neither of us is currently working for other employers.

## **Cancellation, refunds and rescheduling**

During this challenging time we are committed to supporting schools, pre-schools and kindergartens. We are very flexible with regards to changes in bookings, rescheduling and cancellations due to COVID-19 issues, even last minute decisions. It is part of our plan to assist schools and ELCs to reschedule at the most suitable time or provide a full refund.

### **References:**

[coronavirus.vic.gov.au](https://coronavirus.vic.gov.au)

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

<https://education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>

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[www.dreampuppets.com.au](http://www.dreampuppets.com.au)