



Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

Dear Relatives & Friends.

The situation in WA has settled down – and our potential contact risk resolved so we have again returned to ‘normal.’ Now we are dealing with potential issues in Victoria.

On reflection: what a year we have lived through – and there is still quite a journey ahead until the Covid-19 Pandemic is controlled – worldwide. I feel blessed everyday living in Australia with such wonderful leadership steering us through.

### **FORMAL Fluvax Advice 2021.**

*Since 1 May 2020, vaccination against seasonal influenza has been a mandatory requirement for all staff and visitors to enter and remain on the premises of a residential aged care facility in South Australia. This is a legal requirement under the [RACF Emergency Management Direction](#).*

*On 23 January 2021, the Australian Health Protection Principle Committee (AHPPC) released a statement recommending that “all available interventions should be relied on to maximise influenza vaccine coverage for the aged care workforce, aged care residents and their carers.”*

*Advice from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) is that the preferred minimum interval between administration of the either of the Pfizer/BioNTech or the University of Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines and any influenza vaccine is 14 days. This is the current precautionary advice.*

*Given this advice, it is expected that mandatory flu vaccination will remain a requirement for all staff and visitors to RACF in 2021. However, the exact date by which persons entering a RACF will need to be vaccinated with the 2021 influenza vaccine is still being finalised, in consideration of the anticipated timeframe for rolling out the COVID-19 vaccine in RACF.*

Longridge is currently liaising with our local contracted Immunisation Service Provider (Country Connect / SA Health) to undertake the Fluvax & Covid-19 Vaccine Programs for our residents & staff.

We have no definitive dates at this time – but the advice verbally is that aged care will be the highest priority for the Covid vaccine so this will happen as soon as stock is available. We have asked the Immunisation Lead Nurse to provide us with all the information as it becomes available. We will then forward the information package and proposed program for vaccines (& consent forms) onto our residents & families for their due consideration.

Please be assured we are keen to maximise the safety and health of our residents at Longridge.

The following visiting RULES APPLY at this time:

- No masks are required by staff or visitors. (Unless the visitor has an approved exemption as negotiated with the EO/DoC)
- ALL visitors must have had a 2020 fluvax & Longridge be supplied evidence of this immunisation PRIOR to entry.
- ALL the standard rules of monitoring residents, staff and visitor health via temperature monitoring, etc continue.
- Visitors will be able to visit residents in their rooms but with the expectation the rules of social distancing (1.5 metres apart) will be maintained.
- Visitor numbers are unlimited / day – but in the interest of maintaining social distancing rules, no more than 4 guests to visit a resident in their room at any one time.
- Residents continue to enjoy visits off site with family members / friends – periods of leave unlimited. (Please book these visits off site with the senior RN or Admin to ensure staff have the residents dressed and any medication available if they are out for meals, etc.) Visits to public venues such as hotels & shopping centres is now permitted.

- Due to the ongoing requirements to maintain contact tracing records, temperatures, etc **we will continue to maintain Monday – Friday between 9.30 am – 4.30 pm visiting as a general rule.**
- Visitors may attend common areas / lifestyle activity events, however please be aware you will be attending under the guidance of Lifestyle Staff as they maintain room capacity limitations. Please advise Admin if you have attended an activity to assist with our contact tracking systems.

Due to the ongoing monitoring requirements we would prefer not to host weekend visits. ***In exceptional circumstances*** weekend visits may be negotiated **by PRIOR ARRANGEMENT** with the EO/DoC or CN if visitors are unable to attend Monday – Friday. (Contact Liz or Nicky 8762 1340 to discuss your personal requirements.)

#### REMEMBER YOUR ONGOING RESPONSIBILITY:

- **If you are unwell (temp, cough, sneezes, sore throat, etc,) please get tested.**
- Hands Hygiene, hands hygiene, hands hygiene!
- Social distancing! As much as we want to hug & kiss – please be mindful! Keep your distance.

*Thank you for your efforts over this last year. It has been a truly challenging time –  
but together we have ensured your family and friends at Longridge (& our staff) have remained fit & well.*

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