

Policy Approved by Board:
November 9, 2021

COVID-19 Safety Policy

Action Read works with vulnerable adults, seniors and adults with complex medical issues. Over 35% of our learners, approximately, self-identify as having a disability.

Action Read is committed to providing a safe work environment. We have taken several steps to limit the spread and transmission of COVID-19. Despite the many measures taken, there is still a risk that someone could get sick from attending an Action Read program. However, we follow the latest Public Health guidelines regarding COVID-19, and are doing everything we can to manage and minimize this risk.

All employees, staff, contractors, volunteers, students and members of the general public who enter our space must adhere to our COVID-19 safety protocols. Individuals who choose not to follow our COVID-19 policy and procedures, will be asked to leave the centre, and will be directed to online learning. Learners have the option to contact us by phone, email or text in order to utilize our services.

Action Read is taking a phased approach to reopening, based on the plan put out by the Province of Ontario “A Plan to Safely Reopen Ontario and Manage COVID-19 for the Long Term” (<https://files.ontario.ca/moh-plan-to-safely-reopen-ontario-en-2021-10-22.pdf>). Action Read will start Phase 1 of our Reopening Plan on November 15, 2021.

Action Read will tentatively start Phase 2 of our Reopening Plan on January 17, 2022. Phase 2 implementation details have not yet been finalized, and will depend on information provided by Public Health. Action Read acknowledges that our procedures, plans, dates, services and protocols may change as the status of the pandemic, legislation, mandates, advice, or research from Public Health change.

If a staff or board member becomes aware of a gap in our COVID-19 Safety and Vaccination Policy and Procedures, they are asked to communicate this as soon as possible to the Executive Director. Changes will be made as appropriate.

COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

All employees, staff, contractors, volunteers, students and the general public will be required to provide proof of **all required doses of a Covid-19 vaccine approved by Health Canada**, prior to or upon arrival to the office. All individuals will be required to show that the vaccination status record matches government approved photo identification.

Records will be kept that shows vaccination status and identification meet requirements. Action Read's Privacy Policy will be upheld to guide the handling of these records. Private medical or identification documents, or copies thereof, will NOT be retained by Action Read.

This policy is aligned with Action Read's general duty under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to take every reasonable precaution to protect its workers and the responsibility to assess the workplace for risks, including that of COVID-19 transmissions.

Staff who choose not to comply with this COVID-19 vaccination policy will be suspended without pay. They will be given 6 weeks to obtain their full vaccination. If they choose not to do so, their employment with Action Read will be terminated. For new hires, proof of vaccination must be provided before employment offers are given.

Medical exemptions

If an individual has an approved medical exemption, wherever possible, Action Read will direct them to a range of online learning options. Action Read will make every reasonable attempt to accommodate the learning needs of individuals with approved medical exemptions.

PROCEDURES

1. Program Changes

During Phase 1 of our Reopening Plan our office will be open for **in-person programs** from Monday to Friday from 10 am to 2 pm.

During this phase **online learning** will continue to be offered within our regular opening hours Monday 9:30 am – 9:00 pm, Tuesday 9:30 am - 4:30 pm; Wednesday 9:30 am - 4:30 pm and 6:00-9:00 pm, Thursday 9:30 am - 4:30 pm, and 6:00 am - 9:00 pm and Friday 9:30 am - 4:30 pm. It should be noted that some programs that were formerly offered online, will now be offered in-person after Nov 15th.

Learners must pre-register for **in-person programs**. Learners and volunteers will attend Action Read at a scheduled time. At this time, we cannot accommodate drop-ins and unscheduled visitors. To ensure social distancing, we ask that participants respect the scheduled arrival and departure times. Participants should arrive and leave the centre no more than 5 minutes before and after their scheduled appointment. In the event of an overlap between individuals entering the centre, we ask that you maintain 6 feet social distance at all times. If members need to be accompanied by a support person, please drop off-members at the door.

2. Office Changes

Action Read has taken the following of steps to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus in our space, including;

- Obtaining and renovating approximately 425 ft² of new space to allow for greater social distancing
- Changing the layout of desks and computers to allow for 6 feet social distancing
- Installing air purifiers and Plexiglas barriers throughout the space
- Installing new accessible sinks with hands-free taps
- New COVID-19 screening table upon arrival, and removal of waiting area sofa

- Providing hand sanitizer, masks and gloves
- Assigning designated individuals to give out coffee and tea (vs. self-service)
- Sanitizing pens and headphones after each use.
- New cleaning protocols (Plexiglas, tables, computers etc.)
- Cleaning and sanitization signage throughout the centre (e.g. for computers etc.)
- New entry protocols

3. Communication:

Our COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and Procedures will be posted on our website. Signage and phone messages will direct callers to our website in order to read the full COVID-19 policy and procedure.

Staff will reach out to members on an individual basis prior to reopening. A summary of the Vaccination Policy and most important procedures may be shared with our members.

Information about how to obtain Proof of vaccination may be included in signage. This can be obtained by using the following link: (Please note, you will need your health card number) <https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca/>.

4. Daily Screening and Contact Tracing:

Action Read will maintain appropriate attendance and contact tracing records. Participants must complete a short COVID-19 screening questionnaire and an attendance sheet whenever they attend a learning session. Members are asked to tell us when their contact details change.

An individual who **tests positive for COVID-19** or who has had close contact with someone who test positive for COVID-19 agrees to inform Action Read as soon as confirmation is received.

In the event of a **COVID-19 outbreak** at one of our programs, or in the space we use, we will contact you immediately. We will also share your contact information with Guelph Wellington Public Health. At that point, Public Health will reach out to you directly, assess your risk of exposure, and communicate the follow up actions required.

5. **Masks and Face Shields:**

Action Read requires all individuals to wear masks while in our centre.

Individuals who have a medical exemption do not have to wear a mask. Action Read will support learning partners if they choose not to work with mask-exempt individuals.

Action Read will offer plastic face shields to mask exempt individuals.

6. **Cleaning:**

All participants must wash their hands or use sanitizer upon arrival. Action Read will provide hand sanitizer and additional masks, as needed. We will disinfect high contact surfaces between pairs and groups.