



# Coronavirus Policy

## Background

Coronavirus (COVID-19) can cause illnesses similar to the common cold, but it can also cause more serious respiratory diseases. Most people displaying symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, tiredness or shortness of breath are likely suffering with a cold or other respiratory illness—not coronavirus. However, the threats posed by the virus mean serious steps must be taken to stop the spread of the disease.

As outlined in our Infectious Disease and Health, Hygiene and Safe Food Policies, the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators and staff implement strict hygiene and infection control procedures at all times to prevent or minimise the spread of contagious illnesses. Hygiene measures and exclusion principles outlined in these policies continue to apply, and will be informed by current guidance on coronavirus issued by relevant Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments

## Purpose

The service will minimise our staff and children’s exposure to COVID-19 by adhering to recommended guidelines from the Australian Government- Department of Health and local Public Health Units to slow the spread of the virus. We will implement practices that help to reduce the transmission of the virus including the exclusion of any person (child, educator, staff, parent, visitor or volunteer) that is suspected or has tested positive to having COVID-19. Our Service will implement effective hygiene practices as per our existing policies and procedures and increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting high touch areas as per SafeWork Australia recommendations.

The service will provide up-to-date information and advice to parents, families and educators sourced from the Australian Government, Department of Health and state Ministry of Health about COVID-19 as it becomes available. Recommendations and health measures mandated by the Federal Government Department of Health will be strictly adhered to at all times.

## Implementation

PROCEDURE Minimising the transmission of COVID-19 –

### Risk Management

1. The service has effective and systematic risk management processes in place to identify any possible risks and hazards to our learning environment and practices related to COVID-19. Where possible, we have eliminated or minimised these risks as is reasonably practicable.



2. Control measures are reviewed in consultation with staff members. Due to the constant changes in managing the service during the pandemic, our approach to risk management is ongoing and fluid.
3. Effective 15 March 2020, the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee made recommendations to the general public to help manage the spread of COVID-19. These measures include implementing good hygiene, self-isolation and social distancing.
4. Amendments to this statement were made on April 6 and included recommendations for risk mitigation measures such as:
  - a. exclusion of unwell staff, children and visitors
  - b. reducing mixing of children by separating cohorts
  - c. enhanced personal hygiene for children, staff and parents
    - I. make sure liquid soap and running water, or alcohol-based hand sanitiser is available at the entrance of the facility and throughout
  - d. adherence to the NHMRC childcare cleaning guidelines, in addition:
    - I. clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces daily (e.g. tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remotes, handles, desks, toilets, sinks)
    - II. wash and launder play items and toys including washable plush toys as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely
  - e. discouraging excursions to local parks, public playgrounds or other venues
  - f. recommending influenza vaccination for children, staff and parents.
5. The AHPPC also notes that alternative arrangements should be considered for highly vulnerable children.
6. Parents and carers of children with complex medical needs are encouraged to seek medical advice from their health practitioner to support decision-making regarding the suitability of their child accessing onsite education. Although this statement directly relates to primary schools, the service recommends families to seek medical advice and relay this information to management. (AHPPC 24 April)
7. Staff with compromised immune systems are also requested to seek medical advice whilst working in early education and care during the pandemic.
8. Relevant staff have completed Australian Government COVID-19 infection control training.



## **Immunisation**

9. ECEC staff who live in the 12 LGAs of concern and work outside of the LGA will also be required to have their first vaccination by 19 September 2021 and their second dose by 8 November 2021.
10. Staff who live and/or work in LGAs of concern who are not yet vaccinated will have until the end of Wednesday 8 September to book their vaccination.
11. From 9 September authorised workers who live and/or work in LGAs of concern will be required to carry evidence of their booking. Without this evidence, they will not be able to attend their place of work.
12. If an authorised worker who lives and/or works in an LGA of concern is not vaccinated or does not have a medical contraindication form, they will not be able to attend work after 19 September 2021.
13. ECEC staff across the state are required to have received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination by 8 November 2021.
14. Any staff members who have not received mandated COVID-19 vaccinations by the above dates and are who unable to obtain a medical contraindication certificate from their doctor will not be able to attend early childhood educational settings.
15. To support our educators in their health and wellbeing, the service will cover the out-of-pocket cost of the influenza vaccine (for those educator's ineligible for free vaccination).

## **Temperature Check**

16. Temperature checks will be conducted with a non-contact forehead thermometer.
17. Any child or staff with a temperature reading of above 38 degrees Celsius will be excluded from the service and advised to seek medical advice. The child/staff may return to care once medical clearance has been obtained.

## **Hygiene practices**

18. The service will ensure signs and posters remind employees and visitors of the risks of COVID-19 and the measures that are necessary to stop its spread including hand washing and hand rub procedures and information about COVID-19.
19. These measures will also be communicated to families through email, newsletters and other communication methods, where applicable.
20. Alcohol-based hand sanitiser will be kept available for adults to use. Children will be encouraged to wash their hands with soap or use sanitiser under supervision.
21. The service will supply disposable tissues and have bins available with plastic liners available in several locations for disposing used items.



22. In accordance with school rules, children should not use the bubblers. Children should bring their own water bottle each day.

23. Information provided to families may include:

- a. symptoms of COVID-19
- b. transmission of the virus
- c. self-isolation and exclusion
- d. prevention strategies- including hand hygiene and self-isolation e. contact details for health assistance

### Face masks

#### Adults

24. Masks are recommended in indoor and outdoor settings in Early Childhood Education and Care settings across NSW.

25. Exemptions for wearing masks for staff in ECE apply:

- where a child is deaf or hard of hearing; or
- the clear enunciation or visibility of the educator's mouth is essential.

26. Where an exemption for wearing a mask applies, physical distancing should be practiced where possible as another measure to limit COVID-19 transmission.

27. Masks are recommended to be worn by staff when engaging with other adults, such as during pick-up and drop-off, and in administrative areas of the service, including staff rooms.

28. All parents are recommended to wear mask when dropping off or picking up children.

#### Children

29. Masks are recommendation Out of School Hours Care services and vacation care.

### Exclusion/ Self-isolation/ Self-quarantine

**The following employees, children and visitors are not permitted to enter the premises:**

30. Those who have returned from overseas in the last 14 days

31. Those who have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days.

- a. A contact is defined as anyone who has been in contact with a known case, including the 24 hours before the case became symptomatic.

32. Those with fever or symptoms of acute respiratory infection (e.g. cough, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath, fatigue) symptoms.

- a. Any person with symptoms of illness should seek medical attention and must not present to the service unwell.



- b. b. It is currently recommended that anyone, even with even mild symptoms, be tested for COVID19.

- 33. Those who are currently being tested for COVID-19 and awaiting a result.
- 34. Any staff member who is currently being tested must immediately advise the service and self-isolate for the recommended period of time, as advised by NSW Health.
- 35. Any child who is currently being tested must immediately advise the service and self-isolate for the recommended period of time, as advised by NSW Health
- 36. Staff must immediately advise the service if they, or anyone deemed a close contact, receives a positive result of the virus and self-isolate for the recommended period of time, as advised by NSW Health.
- 37. Parents of children who have attended the service must advise the service if their child receives a positive result of the virus
- 38. The Public Health Unit will provide further information on a case-by-case basis as to the length and place of isolation. (see: COVID-19 self-isolation). Any individual given orders to self-isolate must comply to those orders
- 39. Signage will be displayed stating current visitor restrictions in place at the service
- 40. Authorised persons (e.g: parents) dropping off/collecting should drop off/collect children in a manner which limits contact and time at the service
- 41. Any person (staff, enrolled child, parent, caregiver, visitor or contractor) who is displaying symptoms such as: fever, coughing, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath must seek urgent medical attention to determine if they need to be tested for COVID-19 and not attend the service under any circumstance.

### **Implement effective hygiene measures**

- 42. The national campaign Help Stop The Spread and Stay Healthy, launched by the Australian Government has emphasised that effective handwashing is a vital strategy to help reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds whenever you cough, sneeze or blow your nose, prepare food or eat, touch your face or use the toilet is recommended.
- 43. The service will adhere to National Regulation requirements and Government guidelines to ensure all educators, children, families and visitors to the service implement best practice.
- 44. The service will ensure:



- a. all employees, parents, children and visitors must wash their hands with soap and water or use the alcohol-based hand sanitiser provided upon arrival to the Services
  - b. after washing, hands must be thoroughly dried using disposal paper and disposed of in the bin provided
  - c. disposable tissues must be used to wipe noses, eyes or mouths and disposed of in the bin provided immediately after use
  - d. hands must be washed thoroughly using soap and water before and after using the toilet
  - e. cough and sneeze etiquette must be used- cover your cough and sneeze with your hand or elbow
  - f. educators and staff must adhere to our Handwashing Policy at all times
  - f. children are supervised when washing hands, where possible
45. Educators and staff must adhere to effective food preparation and food handling procedures
46. Educators will wash their hands or use alcohol based sanitiser, before wearing gloves and wash their hands after wearing gloves
47. Educators and staff must adhere to our Health and Safety Policy for cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and equipment (such as toys, puzzles, outdoor toys, bedding, playdough etc) as per Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services recommendations
48. Staff will maintain a cleaning register of all surfaces and equipment conducted
49. Equipment, resources and surfaces including high-touch surfaces- taps, door handles, light switches, and toys will be cleaned and disinfected more frequently as per Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Principles for COVID-19
50. Washroom facilities for employees have adequate supplies of soap, toilet paper and alcohol-based sanitiser

**NOTE: According to the World Health Organization, COVID-19 may survive on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days. (March 14 2020)**

#### **Social/Physical distancing in childcare**

51. Social or physical distancing is important because COVID-19 is most likely spread from person-to-person through close contact with a person while they are infectious, close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes or from touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection and then touching your nose or mouth. (source: Australian Government Department of Health. Coronavirus disease)





**52.** Social or physical distancing in early childhood education and care is not feasible for educators to perform their job, however we will implement measures to minimise the risk of exposure as reasonably practicable. Guidelines have been developed according to Safe Work Australia- Early childhood education and care workers: Minimising the risk of exposure to COVID-19

**53.** To reduce the spread of COVID-19 parents are reminded of the following:

- a. if your child is sick, do not send them to the service
- b. do not visit the service if you or another family member is unwell
- c. sanitise your hands at regular intervals throughout the day
- d. avoid physical contact with other people who may be sick- such as older people and people with existing health conditions
- e. clean and disinfect high touch surfaces regularly (door handles, car seats, mobile phone, toys)
- f. promote strictest hygiene measures when preparing food at home

**54.** To minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 the service will:

- a. undertake a risk assessment to identify potential risks and mitigate with consideration risks to children and staff
- b. revisit the risk assessment whenever new risks or potential risks are identified and adjust our management plan
- c. restrict the number of visitors to the service (including students, delivery of goods)
- d. restrict the number of parents/carers visiting the service and/or coming into the service
- e. install signage and markings on the floor near the front entry indicating a 1.5 metre mark for parents/families to use
- f. where possible, reduce mixing of children by separating cohorts (including staggering meals and play times)
- g. where possible, outdoor play will be promoted within the service to provide children with additional personal space
- h. large groups will be monitored to provide flexible learning to ensure groups are smaller in both the indoor and outdoor environment
- i. increase ventilation within the service
- j. where possible, seat children at opposite ends of a table when playing and eating
- k. where possible, avoid any situation when children are required to queue- waiting their turn to use bathroom for handwashing or toileting, waiting their turn to use a piece of equipment etc, or practice physical distancing
- l. contact parents of children who have chronic medical conditions or immunosuppression as they may be at an increased risk of disease and require additional support/care
- m. cancel all group outings to public places (excursions to local shops, schools, libraries, aged care facilities)



- n. cancel large group celebrations
- o. discourage use of public transport by staff if possible and recommend that staff:
  - a. travel directly from home to work (avoid stopping at shops or petrol station)
  - b. wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or sanitise hands with alcoholbased sanitiser before and after travelling to work
  - c. if using public transport, maintain physical distancing measures during any trip.

### **Suspected cases of COVID-19 at our Service**

- 55.** As per our Illness Policy we reserve the right to refuse a child into care if they:
- a. are unwell and unable to participate in normal activities or require additional attention
  - b. have had a temperature/fever, or vomiting in the last 24 hours
  - c. have had diarrhoea in the last 48 hours
  - d. have been given medication for a temperature prior to arriving at the Service  
Children should not attend the service if they have been administered fever reducing medication in the 12 hours prior to presenting at the service. If they have been administered paracetamol/other fever reducing medication, the child must be kept at home.
  - e. have started a course of anti-biotics in the last 24 hours or
  - f. if we have reasonable grounds to believe that a child has a contagious or infectious disease (this includes COVID-19)
- 56.** If your child becomes ill whilst at the service, educators/staff will respond to their individual symptoms of illness and provide comfort and care.
- 57.** Educators will take your child's temperature. If the temperature is above 38°C you will be contacted immediately and required to collect your child within 30 minutes. If you are unable to collect your child, an emergency contact person will be contacted, and they must collect your child within 30 minutes.
- 58.** Educators will attempt to lower your child's temperature by:
- a. removing excessive clothing (shoes, socks, jumpers)
  - b. encourage your child to take small sips of water
  - c. move your child to a quiet area where they can rest whilst being supervised
- 59.** Educators will wear disposable gloves and a face mask to avoid possible contamination.
- 60.** Educators will keep accurate records of the child's temperature, time taken, time parent/s were contacted, staff member's name and time of collection.
- 61.** All information will be recorded in our Incident, Illness, Accident and Trauma Record. Parents will be required to sign this record upon collection of their child.
- 62.** Parents are reminded to ensure their contact details are current and emergency contact details are updated if required.





- 63.** The service also reserves the right to prevent employees, parents, family members or visitors to enter our premises if the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor suspects instances of COVID-19.

Health Information hotline on 1800 020 080 of any confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19. In addition, the Approved Provider must also notify the Regulatory Authority in their state or territory within 24 hours.

- 64.** Management reserves the right to request employees to self-isolate if they suspect they have come into contact with someone who has a confirmed COVID-19 infection

### **Talking to children about COVID-19**

- 65.** As per our Relationships & Interactions with Children Policy, our service is committed to maintaining positive interactions and relationships with children and their families. Information provided to children about COVID-19 will be age appropriate and sensitive to their emotional wellbeing. Educators will both acknowledge children's concerns and be open to discussions about COVID-19.
- 66.** Educators will inform children about the virus and emphasise preventative measures such as handwashing, use of tissues, cough and sneeze techniques and limiting touching other children's faces.
- 67.** Posters to demonstrate correct handwashing methods will be referred to and educators will model techniques.
- 68.** Children's emotional wellbeing will be closely monitored by all educators and staff and any concerns communicated with parents and families. Children's questions will be respected and supported.
- 69.** In the event of the service being closed as a precaution to limit the spread of the virus, information will be provided to parents/families to help explain the situation to young children.

### **Communicating with families**

- 70.** Our service will continue regular communication channels with families and share information about the program, any changes to the routine, information for health and wellbeing as well as any other important information about COVID-19, or government changes as required.

### **Caring for our community**

- 71.** We understand that the outbreak of COVID-19 and the constant amount of information received through the media may be very stressful to young children and parents. The anxiety about this virus may be overwhelming and cause fear and anxiety to some people, especially children.



**72.** Our service is committed to continue to provide quality education and care to all children and support families responsibly during this unprecedented challenge with the COVID-19 outbreak.

**73.** Knowing how to look after yourself and others is especially important during this crisis.

**74.** We will promote a safe and supportive environment by:

- a. reassuring children they are safe
- b. acknowledging and listening to children's questions
- c. promoting and implementing hygiene routines for handwashing and cough and sneezing
- d. keeping regular and familiar routines within our service
- e. ensuring children eat well throughout the day
- f. engaging children in play, games and other physical activities
- g. being alert to children's level of anxiety and provide quiet and relaxing activities
- h. ensuring children are provided with rest and sleep when needed
- i. providing information to families and support services as required



Education and Care Services National Law & Regulations	National Quality Standards & Elements	Links to other service policies	Other documentation/ evidence
<p>S165, 167, 170, 171</p> <p>R93, 99, 102, 123, 158, 160</p>	<p>National Quality Standard (NQS)</p> <p>2.1.1 Wellbeing</p> <p>7.1 Governance</p> <p>7.2 Leadership</p>	<p>Excursion, Child Protection, Delivery and Collection of Children, Administration of Medication, Supervision, and Providing a Child Safe Environment Policies.</p> <p>Excursion Policy</p> <p>Fees Policy</p> <p>Health Hygiene and Safe Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy</p> <p>Infectious Diseases Policy</p> <p>Relationships with Children Policy</p> <p>Work, Health and Safety Policy</p>	<p>Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations</p> <p>Fair Work Ombudsman</p> <p>'Coronavirus and Australian Workplace laws'</p> <p>Federal Department of Health coronavirus information sheets</p> <p>National Quality Standard</p> <p>Work, Health and Safety Laws and Regulations</p> <p>NSW Department of Education</p> <p><a href="https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/coronaviruses">https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/coronaviruses</a></p> <p>Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) coronavirus (COVID19) statement on 3 April 2020</p> <p><a href="https://www.health.gov.au/news/australian-health-protection-principalcommittee-ahppc-coronavirus-covid-19-statement-on-3-april-2020">https://www.health.gov.au/news/australian-health-protection-principalcommittee-ahppc-coronavirus-covid-19-statement-on-3-april-2020</a></p>



			<p>Environmental cleaning and disinfection principles for COVID-19  <a href="https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/environmental_cleaning-and-disinfection-principles-for-covid-19.pdf">https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/environmental_cleaning-and-disinfection-principles-for-covid-19.pdf</a></p> <p>SafeWork Australia  <a href="https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industryinformation/early-childhood-education/about-covid-19?tab=tab-toc-employer">https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industryinformation/early-childhood-education/about-covid-19?tab=tab-toc-employer</a></p>
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**VERSION CONTROL AND ENDORSEMENT**

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1	12.4.20	12.4.20	12.4.20
2	8.9.21	8.9.21	8.9.22
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